

The Long Road Home

Acts 21:1-40

Introduction

v.1 Cos was the birthplace of Hippocrates and “modern” medicine. Rhodes had one of the wonders of the ancient world.

v.2 To Patara.
Then for Tyre of Phoenicia.

v.3 They stay for seven days to unload the ship.

v.4-6 And sought out the saints of Tyre, some of whom were prophets who again predicted dangers.

But Paul “set his face for Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51)

v.7 Then down the coast to Ptolemais (Acco) and again the Christians came out to honor Paul.

v.8 Now they head by land to the church formed by Philip 20 years earlier.

Again the Christians welcomed Paul.

v.9 Philip by now is the pastor with four daughters who are prophetesses, who undoubtedly ministered to Paul.

v.10 He stayed in Caesarea for “some days”

v.11 Agabus from Jerusalem with a prophecy.

v.12 Again men plead with Paul to play it safe.

v.13-14 But Paul echoes Christ’s words of Luke 22:42 and the words of Ruth.

v.15 From Caesarea to Jerusalem is 64 miles.

v.16 The Caesarea saints escort Paul’s party on horseback. And bring him to Mnason, an old Christian dignitary.

v.17 And the Jerusalem brethren receive him gladly. There is an open house at the house of Mnason.

v.18 Then there is an official meeting of leaders.

“James the Just” the leader of the Jerusalem church.

Plus Paul and Luke and all the leaders.

v.19 “Look what God has done!”

v.20 “Glory to God!”
But James voices a problem. Many Christian Jews were zealous for the law. This was not “Faith plus law” salvation but merely the maintaining of the Jewish Mosaic lifestyle.

Why are they not, as Paul, free and “under grace?”
Because they were not as astute and wise as Paul.

v.21 But they have heard slander.
Such accusations were not true.

v.22-24 James proposes a solution.
Paul would openly honor four Christian Jews in their Nazarite vows.

He would inform the priests and pay for their sacrifices as well as purify himself from being outside the country.

v.25 But in no way would apply to Gentiles as that would be theologically wrong.

v.26 Paul said “no problem”
“I have become all things to all men that I may by all means save some.” So Paul heads to the Temple.

v.27 But God had bigger plans!
The Asian Jews had their plans thwarted at Ephesus but now they have Paul on their own home court.

They assume because of Trophimus that Paul had taken him into the temple.

v.28 Their cry was that Paul had violated the highest of temple laws.

v.30 The crowd set upon Paul dragging him into the Outer Court.
The Gates to the Inner Court were immediately shut.

v.31-32 Paul’s life would have been taken had not the Roman garrison responded from the Fortress of Antonia.

v.33 The Tribune immediately rescued Paul by arresting him.

v.34 He asked for the infraction but there was none given so he takes Paul within the fortress.

v.35 He is physically lifted up to spare him from the crowd’s vengeance.

v.36 “Away with him!!” 27 years earlier the same words were spoken in the same place about Jesus.

v.37-40 The following circumstances insure Paul one last pulpit to Israel.

Conclusion: