

Third Apostolic Journey Part 3

Acts 21:1—22

Paul traveled from Antioch to Ephesus through the region of Galatia in southern modern-day Turkey. He was traveling with a number of apostles and helpers of his ministry. He stayed in Ephesus for about three years before moving on. While in Ephesus, he performed many extraordinary miracles and cast out many demons. Many people were saved and turned away from worshipping Artemus, a fertility goddess. This led to a downturn in business for the silversmiths who were selling small silver idols. They instigated a riot, turning the people against Paul and those with him. He left the city shortly after that.

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of him into Macedonia before the riot in Ephesus. He presumably met up with them shortly after and traveled through Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea with them. From there, he traveled south to Greece where he probably stopped in Corinth, and stayed in that area for three months. He intended to board a ship and sail to Syria, but because of a plot against him he traveled back into Macedonia and stayed in Philippi until after the Feast of Unleavened Bread had passed. Following that, he traveled to Troas, arriving five days after leaving Philippi. He met up with those who were helping him in the ministry: Timothy, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus. It is possible that they were involved in bringing the monetary gift to the poor saint who were in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1; Romans 15:25-26).

Paul and company traveled along the southwestern coast of Asia Minor. The elders of the church at Ephesus came to meet Paul in Miletus since he desired to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost. He warned the leaders of the church that savage wolves were going to come into the congregation and destroy the flock with heretical doctrine. This was the last time they would see each other.

To Jerusalem (verses 1–14)

Sailing along the southern coast of Asia from Miletus, they pass by Coz and then Patara in the region of Lycia. They boarded another ship and headed for Tyre in the region of Phoenicia. They stayed there for a week while the ship was unloading its cargo. Paul used this time to visit with some of the disciples who were telling him, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem. I believe it was the Holy Spirit who revealed to them that Paul was going to go through much hardship in Jerusalem. The Spirit was not telling him that he wasn't to go. Paul was not disobeying God by going to Jerusalem, although there are those who think he was living a carnal life at this time. Going to Jerusalem actually resulted in Paul being able to minister to many government officials in Rome. This was God's work, not Paul's.

After the week was up, they sailed out of Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais, 25 miles south of Tyre. The next day they traveled 30 miles south to Caesarea. This was the home of Philip the Evangelist who was one of the seven who were chosen to serve in Acts 6:5. He worked alongside Stephen who was later stoned, bringing in the Dispensation of Grace (Acts 7). Philip was also preaching Christ and performing miracles in Samaria (Acts 8:5). Although Philip was able to perform miracles, he was unable to give them the Holy Spirit after they believed. That was done by Peter and John (Acts 6:4–17). It should be obvious by this account that being baptized in the Spirit (Matthew 3:11) in early Acts is not the same as the Spirit baptizing believers into Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). Paul had also given the Holy Spirit to a group of Kingdom believers in Acts 19:1–7. Kingdom believers did not have the assurance of the indwelling Holy Spirit as we do in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

Philip's four virgin daughters were prophets, which means that God was using them to speak His word. The Bible calls five women prophets in the Old Testament. There is only one other woman called a prophet in the New Testament, Anna, who is shown serving in the temple when Jesus is brought in to be

circumcised (Luke 2:36). Both Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, are shown to have made prophecies, but they are not specifically called prophets.

Paul and his traveling companions were staying with Philip for a number of days. The prophet, Agabus, traveled from Judea to Caesarea to give Paul a message from God. He warned Paul that the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem will capture Paul and give him into the hands of the Gentiles. Those hearing the prophecy pleaded with Paul to not go to Jerusalem, but Paul was adamant in his desire to go into Jerusalem, even if it meant his death, for the name of the Lord Jesus. Again, Paul was not going against anything the Lord said through the prophet Agabus.

In Jerusalem (verses 15–22)

Paul's group traveled with him to Jerusalem and he was gladly received by the Hebrew church. He met with James, the head of the church, and with the church elders and he shared with them the work that God was doing among the Gentiles. They glorified God in how He was working. However, there were some concerns about reports that they were receiving about what Paul was preaching.

Word on the street was that Paul was telling the believers who were saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom to forsake the Mosaic Law. These Kingdom saints, who were meeting at the Hebrew church, were still following the Law because they were never told not to. Paul is being accused of telling Jews saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom to turn away from the Law. The vow Paul took before God in Acts 18 was to show the Jews that he was not interfering with those saved under Peter's ministry (Romans 15:20, Galatians 2:7–11).

While many see Paul living in a carnal state for not calling out the Jews to stop living according to the Law and start living by Grace (Romans 6:14), It actually highlights that there are two different groups of believers active during this time. The group in the Hebrew church at Jerusalem was the Little Flock who believed under the ministry of Jesus Christ and the Disciples preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). This gospel will be preached after the Rapture during the seven-year Tribulation (Matthew 24:14). This is the group mentioned in Galatians 6:16 as the Israel of God. This is the children of the promise that Paul speaks of in Romans 9:6–8. The believing remnant will receive the Millennial Kingdom.

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