

Bible Study # 19

3 1 16

Acts 20

Early Christian Time Line

- 53-58 Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23 – 21:16)
 - Paul writes the letter to the *Galatians* from *Ephesus* (53-54)
 - *Three Christians from Corinth deliver a letter to Paul at Ephesus asking for clarification (57)*
 - *Paul writes his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus (57)*
 - *Paul writes his second letter to the Corinthians from Philippi and arrives at Corinth (57-58)*
 - Paul writes his letter to the Romans (58)
 - ***Paul leaves Corinth and returns to Jerusalem where he ends his third missionary Journey in Jerusalem (58)***

Acts 20

- **Acts 20:3-6** *“and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria,...where we stayed for seven days”*
 - Paul’s original plan was to go by boat from *Corinth* to *Caesarea* until he became aware of a plot to kill him enroute
 - This led him to go overland through *Macedonia*
 - When he arrived in ***Troas*** he met several companions

Paul's Third Missionary Journey *map 112*

map 112



Acts 20 (Cont)

- **Acts 20:7-12** *“On the first day of the week,...And they took the lad away alive, and were not a little comforted.”*
 - The first day of the week was Sunday
 - He celebrated a vigil Mass beginning in the middle of Saturday night
 - This became a common practice in the early Church
 - A young man named *Eutychus* fell asleep and fell to his death from the second floor during Paul’s lengthy homily
 - After embracing the young man, Paul ensured that he was all right and then returned to the upper room to complete the Eucharistic celebration (1K17:17-24; 2K 4:30-37; Mk 5:39)

Acts 20 (Cont)

- **Acts 20: 13- 36** *“But going ahead to the ship,...And they brought him to the ship.”*
 - Paul arrived at *Miletus* and sent for the elders of the Church at *Ephesus*
 - Elders were the *presbyteros* – priests, bishops or clergy of whom he referred to as shepherds
 - Paul then presented a **long farewell speech** which he ended with a quote from Jesus that is **not in the gospels**
 - **“It is more blessed to give than to receive”**

Acts 20 (Cont)

- This can be seen as an example of the *Sacred Tradition* as it was something attributed to Jesus that had only been passed on orally
- Once again this is another argument against *Solo Scriptura* even though the quote is found in the Book of Acts

Acts 21

Acts 21

- **Acts 21:1-16** *“And when we had parted from them and set sail,...an early disciple with whom we should lodge.”*
 - Paul traveled by sea to *Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenicia*, around *Cyprus* and landed at *Tyre* where he stayed with some disciples for seven days
 - At this point the Spirit warned Paul **not to go to Jerusalem**
 - Again, we see a tearful farewell from his disciples followed by a sea voyage to *Ptolemais* and then on to *Caesarea* where he entered the house of *Deacon Philip*
 - While in Philip’s house a prophet from *Judea* proclaimed that Paul would be bound by the Jews in *Jerusalem*
 - Yet, in spite of this Paul traveled to *Jerusalem*

Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 53-58 Paul's final return to Jerusalem (Acts 21:17 – 23:23)
 - Seven days with Philip the Evangelist in Caesarea
 - The Prophet Agabus from Judea prophesied that Paul would be bound by the Jews at Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles
 - Paul was received by James and the elders in Jerusalem where he related his ministry to the Gentiles
 - James asked Paul to participate in a Nasserite vow of four men to demonstrate his Jewishness
 - Jews from Asia started a riot against Paul in the Temple

Acts 21 (Cont)

- **Acts 21:17-29** *“When we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly ... supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.”*
 - Paul spent the first day with family and friends and then met with James the Bishop of Jerusalem along with the clergy of the Church in Jerusalem
 - Here, perhaps in James’s home, Paul spoke to them about his successful missionary journey
 - His theme was about what he had accomplished among the uncircumcised Gentiles
 - Look at the language used here to describe what Paul had done

Acts 21 (Cont)

- Remember, nothing in the decision of the *Council of Jerusalem* discussed what the Jewish Christians were to do
- Paul's logic within the theology of Baptism concluded that one did not need to follow the *Torah* once Baptized ! **(Romans 7:4-6)**
 - He said that a Jewish Christian could keep the Law but it would have no impact on his salvation
 - At that point Paul was not keeping the Law when he was around the Gentiles
 - That was why he told the Jewish Christians in the *Church of Jerusalem* to be like him

Acts 21 (Cont)

- Thus, there were well-founded rumors in Jerusalem about his teachings
- Even though we are not sure what James thought about this, it appears that James as the Bishop of *Jerusalem*, asked Paul not to continue with this teaching because it was causing rumors
- Further, James asked Paul to support four men under a Nazarite vow in order to demonstrate to the Jewish Christians that Paul had not abandoned the Faith
- The main point here is that the circumcision and Kosher law issue was still very serious within the early Church

Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

53-58 Paul's final return to Jerusalem (Acts 21:17 – 23:23)

- Paul was rescued from the Jews by the Roman tribune
- Enroute to the Roman barracks Paul makes an appeal to the Jews ending in a riot
- Paul is taken before the Jewish council which he divides by appealing to the Pharisees over the Sadducees
- Paul hears about a plot against his life and the tribune moves him under guard at night to Caesarea

Acts 21 (Cont)

- **Acts 21:30 - 40** *“Then the city was aroused, and the people ran together;...and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language,...”*
 - The Tribune was surprised that Paul spoke Greek for most of the local people the Romans interacted with spoke Aramaic
 - Greek was the administrative language of the Roman Empire
 - Thus, Paul spoke to the soldiers in Greek which he had learned in Tarsus as a child
 - Because he spoke Greek the Tribune thought that he was an insurrectionist from Egypt

Acts 21 (Cont)

- He asked Paul who he was to which Paul responded that he was a Jew and a citizen from *Tarsus*
 - This meant that he was a Roman citizen and as such had special rights
 - The soldiers knew that if he has done nothing wrong they could be in trouble for arresting him
 - So they gave him permission to speak to the crowd
 - Most likely he spoke to them in Aramaic as most people did not speak Hebrew at that time

Acts 22

Acts 22

- **Acts 22:1 -16** *“Brethren and fathers, hear the defense which I now make before you....Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”*
 - Paul began his argument by speaking to his listeners as his equals and elders
 - He then proceeded to give the speech about Jesus that he had given a number of times to Jews in the past
 - This was the gospel that Paul had preached

Acts 22 (Cont)

- **Acts 22:17 -21** *“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple I fell into a trance ... And he said to me, Depart; for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”*
 - Again, Paul mentioned the hot button issue of the Gentiles
 - This led the Jews to start screaming all over again that he should be put to death

Acts 22 (Cont)

- **Acts 22:22 -30** *“Up to this word they listened to him;... and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them”*
 - This caused the Roman soldiers to bodily carry him into the barracks for his safety
 - Then the tribune ordered that he be “**examined by scourging**”
 - Paul then played the **Roman citizen card!**
 - Then on the next day trying to find out why the Jews were so exercised, the tribune summoned the Sanhedrin and took Paul to them for examination

Acts 22 (Cont)

- This was similar to what happened to Jesus when he visited Nazareth where the town folks listen patiently until He spoke about Elijah and Elisha ministering to the Gentiles rather than the Jews
- Paul's speech was followed by a full blown riot
- The Roman tribune decided to interrogate Paul by the lash until he revealed that he was a Roman citizen
 - It was against Roman law for a citizen to be interrogated under torture without first being brought to trial

Acts 22 (Cont)

- Like many Romans, this tribune had paid a large amount of money to purchase his citizenship and was in fear of what might result from his decision to arrest and interrogate Paul
- So he decided to take Paul before the Jewish Sanhedrin in order to determine what they were accusing him of doing

Acts 23

Acts 23

- **Acts 23:1-5** *“And Paul, looking intently at the council said, ‘Brethren,...You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”*
 - Paul had been absent from Jerusalem for a long time
 - As he sat in the council chamber about to give his testimony he saw that some of the council were dressed as Pharisees and some as Sadducees (perhaps ½ and ½)
 - This presented the perfect opportunity for him to present his opening line

Acts 23 (Cont)

- **Acts 23: 6-11** *“... he cried out in the council, Brethren I am a Pharisee... Take courage for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also at Rome.”*
 - This does not mean that his father was a Pharisee, rather that he was a disciple of the Pharisees
 - Also remember what Paul said in his letter to the Romans about hoping to pass through Rome on his way to evangelize Spain (Rom 15:24;28)
 - At this point *Jesus* appeared to him and told him that he wanted Paul to testify for him in Rome

Acts 23 (Cont)

- This implied that Paul could preach the gospel in *Rome* and then the faith would spread like wildfire
- Remember that all roads lead to Rome
- At this point Christianity had gradually spread throughout the Roman Empire
- But once Paul got to Rome the gospel would spread like rays from the sun
- After he preached in Rome everyone leaving Rome would be carrying the message of the gospel

Acts 23 (Cont)

- **Acts 23:12-35** *“When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul....And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod’s Praetorium.”*
 - Once *Claudius Lysias*, the Roman tribune heard of the plot against Paul from Paul nephew, he decided to get him out of *Jerusalem* under military guard
 - He sent a letter to Felix, the procurator (governor) of Judea explaining why he was sending Paul to *Caesarea*
 - The soldiers took him to *Caesarea* because it was a major Roman fortified city and none of the Jews would follow him there

Acts 23 (Cont)

- *Caesarea* was also heavily populated with Roman soldiers and Gentiles
- In *Jerusalem* almost everyone was a Jew and the Romans could easily be outnumbered by a mob at 100 to 1 if a situation arose
- So if the Jews decided that they were going to kill Paul in *Jerusalem*, most likely the Romans could not stop it
- Therefore, the Roman soldiers took Paul out of town in the middle of the night under a major military guard where he was imprisoned in Herod's *pastorium* *

The Roman Procurators of Judea

	PROCURATOR	TENURE
1.	Ethnarch Archelaus	4 B.C. - A.D. 6
2.	Coponius	A.D. 6 - 9
3.	M. Ambivius	A. D. 9-12
4.	Annius Rufus	A.D. 12-15
5.	Valerius Gratus	A.D. 15-26
6.	Pontius Pilate	A.D. 26-36
7.	Marcellus	A.D. 36-37
8.	Marullus	A.D. 37 ?
9.	Herennius Capito	A.D. 37-41
19.	Cuspius Fadus	A.D. 44-46
11.	Tiberias Julius Alexander	A.D. 46-48
12.	Ventidius Cumanus	A.D. 48-52
13.	Antonius Felix	A.D. 52-60
14.	Porcius Festus	A.D. 60-62 ?
15.	Clodius Albinus	A. D. 62-64
16.	Gessius Florus	A.D. 64-66

