

CONCERNING THE WAY

May 11, 2010

LESSON 101: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



Chapter 20

Acts 20:1-3 When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the disciples and encouraged them. Then he said goodbye to them and left to go to Macedonia. (2) He went through those regions and encouraged the people with everything he had to say. Then he went to Greece (3) and stayed there for three months. When he was about to sail for Syria, a plot was initiated against him by the Jews, so he decided to go back through Macedonia.

The uproar was in the last chapter, where some of Paul's companions were dragged into the theater in Ephesus because of what they had been teaching. During this time Paul probably ministered as far as Illyricum, which is roughly in the area of present day Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia (Romans 15:19; 2 Corinthians 10:13). During the apostle's three-month stay in Achaia he wrote Romans (Romans 15:23-16:2) from Corinth.

Each year ships full of Jewish pilgrims left for Syria taking them to the Passover. Paul apparently was planning to sail on one of those ships, but he somehow found out that there was a plot against his life. The plot was evidently to assassinate him on board ship and dispose of his body at sea. So Paul decided he would celebrate the Passover with his friends in Philippi, and the best he could hope for was to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost (verse 16). Paul was very sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in his life and ministry. Sometimes the Spirit of God led him into difficult circumstances; other times the Spirit protected him from things like this.

Acts 20:4-5 He was accompanied by Sopater (the son of Pyrrhus) from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. (5) These men went on ahead and were waiting for us in Troas.

These are the men that make up the party now. It is believed that these men were bringing financial offerings from each of the churches they came from, and went with Paul all the way to Jerusalem to give the gifts to the saints there. Notice that in verse 5 (waiting for us) Luke is about to join the party again.

Acts 20:6-7 After the days of Unleavened Bread, we sailed from Philippi, and days later we joined them in Troas and stayed there for seven days. (7) On the first day of the week, when we had met to break bread, Paul began to address the people. Since he intended to leave the next day, he went on speaking until midnight.

Luke joins Paul and the rest of the party in Troas. The "days of Unleavened Bread" is the week following Passover.

Verse 7 is the first mention of people gathering on "the first day of the week". People have always used this verse to point to scriptural support for Sunday morning services, but actually this says nothing about morning services, nor does anywhere else in the Bible. It may not even be Sunday, because, to a Jew, the first day of the week would begin at sundown on Saturday evening. So this could be a Saturday evening service, or if Luke is using the Greek method of describing a day, it could

be a Sunday evening.

The point is, **it is appropriate for a church to hold worship services any day or time of the week** because it is not stipulated anywhere in scripture. In those times Sunday would normally be a workday (there was no two-day weekend back then!), so they would probably have to wait until early evening to meet. This would also explain why Paul was preaching at Troas until midnight and why Eutychus fell asleep (Acts 20:9). The first day of the week eventually became known as “the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:10) and it became a tradition for many Christian churches to meet on Sunday morning.

The Jewish believers continued to worship on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. The Book of Hebrews tells us that Christ and His finished work is our Sabbath, our rest (see Hebrews 4:8–10).

Acts 20:8-9 Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. **(9) A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in a window, began to sink off into a deep sleep as Paul kept speaking longer and longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.**

Luke mentions the fact that there were many lamps in the room, which along with the likelihood that the room was filled with people, tells us it was probably very warm. That’s one reason this young man fell asleep. Paul probably didn’t start teaching until early evening, because most people would have had to work that day, but he still spoke for hours, until midnight! These people were hungry for the Word of God.

We think we’re being abused if the pastor goes over twenty minutes in his sermon, but these people listened for hours. Of course, with some pastors’ sermons twenty minutes is too much, but I would certainly sit and listen to Paul all night!

The young man falls to his death, and Luke, the physician, probably confirmed that he was dead. So, of course, the lesson is that if you’re going to fall asleep in church, make sure you’re not sitting somewhere where you might fall a long ways!

Acts 20:10-12 But Paul went down, bent over him, took him into his arms, and said, **"Stop being alarmed, because he's still alive."** **(11) Then he went back upstairs, broke bread, and ate. He talked with them for a long time, until dawn, and then left. (12) They took the young man away alive and were greatly relieved.**

Paul performs a miracle here. The young man, whose name appropriately means “fortunate”, is resurrected from the dead. There’s nothing like a resurrection to wake you up and make you want to hear more preaching! They all went back up to the room, had a meal, and Paul continued teaching all night long!

Remember that these people were starving for the Word of God. They did not have the New Testament like we have. They did not have a library of Bible commentaries. They did not have anyone to teach them, so they probably kept begging Paul to keep telling them more. This should be a slap in the face for us. We should always realize how blessed we are to have the completed Word of God available to us in so many ways today. Most of us have at least several Bibles in our homes, we can read it on our computers or cell phones, and we can hear it on CD or on the radio. **Never take it for granted. We should always be hungry for the Word, like these people were.**

Acts 20:13-15 We proceeded to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we intended to pick

up Paul. He had arranged it this way, since he had planned to travel there on foot. (14) When he met us in Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. (15) We sailed from there and on the following day arrived off Chios. The next day we crossed over to Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The day after that we came to Miletus.

Paul sent the rest of the party, including Luke, on ahead. The journey across land from Troas to Assos is much shorter than by sea, so Paul was able to stay a little longer in Troas.

Chios and Samos are islands in the Aegean Sea that they stopped at as they sailed south from Troas, eventually landing at Miletus on the western coast of Asia Minor. The text doesn't tell us, but they probably didn't just pass through, but stopped and preached in all of these places.

Acts 20:16-17 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in Asia, as he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost, if that was possible. (17) From Miletus he sent messengers to Ephesus to ask the elders of the church to meet with him.

Paul decides not to take the time to go back to Ephesus, but asks for the elders of the Ephesus church to meet him at Miletus so he can give them instructions. He seemed to know he would not be able to come back there again.

The use of the word "elders" here confirms that the churches were led by men in this position. They were and still are intended to be the overseers of a church.

Acts 20:18-21 When they came to him, he said to them, "You know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day I set foot in Asia. (19) I served the Lord with all humility, with tears, and with trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. (20) I never shrank from telling you anything that would help you nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. (21) I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

Here's another excerpt from a sermon by Paul. Notice that Paul taught "publicly", and house to house. This would probably mean he preached the gospel in public areas like the synagogues and marketplaces, and taught Bible studies in homes. Each elder was probably the overseer of a house church.

In verse 21 "repentance to God" and "faith in our Lord Jesus" are not two separate things, they are connected. **Repentance is turning to God *through* faith in our Lord Jesus.**

Acts 20:22-24 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, (23) except that in town after town the Holy Spirit assures me that imprisonment and suffering are waiting for me. (24) But I don't place any value on my life, if only I can finish my race and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Paul knew he was facing much more suffering by returning to Jerusalem, but he was driven to go there by the Holy Spirit, and his purpose was probably to bring offerings from the churches to the saints in Jerusalem.

Stop a minute and ask yourself if you can say the same thing as Paul did in verse 24. Most of

us place at least some value on our lives. There are things about our lives that are important to us that we would not want to give up. We have things we love, dreams that we want to reach, etc. Paul was only driven to do the tasks that Jesus had set before him and finish the race. When I get to heaven, Paul is one of the first I want to find so that I can go up to him and thank him for his faithfulness to preaching the gospel, for his sacrifices, and for the wonderful letters that he wrote to the churches that are so important to our understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

Compare verse 24 with what Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7.

Acts 20:25-27 "Now I know that none of you among whom I traveled preaching about the kingdom will ever see my face again. (26) I therefore declare to you today that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, (27) for I never shrank from telling you the whole plan of God.

Paul taught about the coming kingdom where Jesus Himself would rule the whole world from David's throne in Jerusalem. He taught them the entire plan of God, which means he not only taught about salvation and living the Christian life, but also about the end times, the coming millennial kingdom, heaven, and the eternal state. **It is important that each church, especially its pastors, make a point to teach its members the whole Word of God, not to concentrate on a few pet doctrines.**

Acts 20:28-30 Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to be shepherds of God's church, which he acquired with his own blood. (29) I know that when I'm gone savage wolves will come among you and not spare the flock. (30) Indeed, some of your own men will arise and distort the truth in order to lure the disciples into following them.

Paul instructs the elders to "pay attention to themselves first". If they can't keep themselves from straying, how are they going to oversee the flock? The offices of "elder" and "bishop" were the same in the early church. In the Greek, "elder" is presbuteros (from which, of course, we get our ecclesiastical term "presbyter") and "bishop" is episkopos (where we get the term "episcopal"), meaning simply "overseer."

"Overseer" or "guardian" is the role of the elders. They were to guard and shepherd the congregation. The sense of the Greek here in verse 28 is that they are to continually be alert, to watch out for and warn their people, just as a shepherd would be with his flock. You see a clear statement that Jesus is God here – "God's church, which he acquired with his own blood."

"Shepherd" is "poimaino" in the Greek, and it's where we get the word "pastor". What's important to get from Paul's message here is that he sees no difference in the offices of pastor, elder, or bishop. **There is no scriptural support for having a pastor being over an elder, or a bishop over a pastor. They are all the same position.**

These distortions of the truth in verse 30 refer to teachings that would undermine repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). These false teachers would come from within the Ephesian congregation, even among the elders themselves, and would try to draw the disciples away after them.

Acts 20:31-32 So be alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped tearfully warning each of you. (32) "I am now entrusting you to God and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up and secure for you an inheritance

among all who are sanctified.

Notice that the “message”, the Word of God, is what builds us up. What does he mean “secure for you an inheritance”? These people Paul was speaking to already had their inheritance, they were saved. Paul must be referring to **recognizing** that we already have that inheritance through our salvation.

This is speaking of the positional sanctification we receive at salvation (1 Corinthians 6:11), as you can see in all other verses that speak of our inheritance, it is received at salvation. (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:18-19; Colossians 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4-5). It is not a second blessing after salvation.

Acts 20:33-35 I never desired anyone's silver, gold, or clothes. (34) You yourselves know that I worked with my own hands to support myself and those who were with me. (35) In every way I showed you that by working hard like this we should help the weak and remember the words that the Lord Jesus himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

This phrase that Jesus said is actually not in any of the four gospels, but it's very consistent with what Jesus taught. It must have been an oral tradition that was passed down to Paul and the church.

Acts 20:36-38 When Paul had said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. (37) All of them cried and cried as they put their arms around Paul and kissed him affectionately. (38) They were especially sorrowful because of what he had said — that they would never see his face again. Then they took him to the ship.

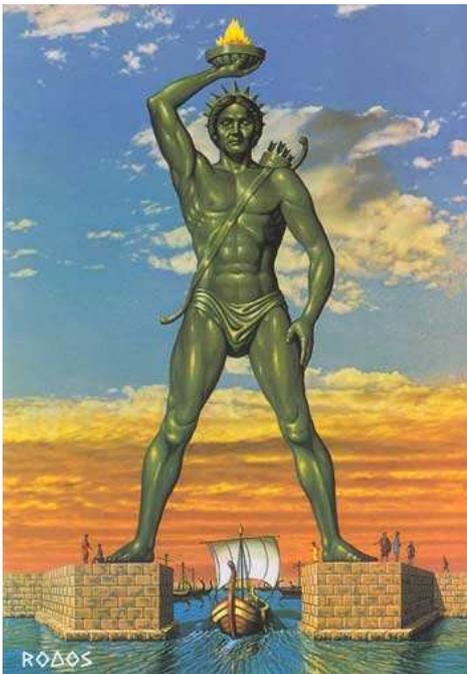
This shows you the close relationship Paul had with the people he disciplined and how important he was to them. That closeness developed from the teaching that Paul gave them, the fact that Paul had shared with them the way to a relationship with God. We should stop and think about how we can appreciate those who have brought the Word of God into our lives, those who introduced us to the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God for the free gift of salvation, and thank those who have worked to bring His message to us!

Another application we can get from these verses is that real men aren't afraid to show their emotions!

Chapter 21

Acts 21:1-3 When we had torn ourselves away from those brothers, we sailed straight to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. (2) There we found a ship going across to Phoenecia, so we went aboard and sailed on. (3) We came in sight of Cyprus, and leaving it on our left we sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre because the ship was to unload its cargo there.

Luke is still in the group, as you can see by the “we's”. We're nearing the end of Paul's 3rd missionary journey, and you can see this leg of the journey on the map at the end of the lesson. The island of Rhodes was the location of another of the seven ancient wonders of the world – the “Colossus of Rhodes.” It was a huge ten-story lighthouse built as a bronze statue of the god Helios, whose right arm held up a torch, left arm a javelin, and it is said that its legs were planted on each side of the harbor. According to Wikipedia, “The design, posture and dimensions of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor are based on what the Colossus was thought by engineers in the late 19th century to have looked like.” Here are a couple of artist's conceptions of what it looked like:



Acts 21:4-6 So we located some disciples and stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they kept telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem, (5) but when our time there came to an end, we left and proceeded on our journey. All of them with their wives and children accompanied us out of the city. We knelt on the beach, prayed, (6) and said goodbye to each other. Then we reboarded the ship, and they went back home.

“Through the Spirit” doesn’t mean that the Holy Spirit was urging these believers to talk Paul out of going, it just means that, through the Spirit, they knew that Paul was going to encounter persecution if he went to Jerusalem, so they tried to dissuade him from going. Paul didn’t disobey the Holy Spirit, as we’ll see in Acts 21:14. Again you can see the closeness of these believers. They were so loving and appreciative of Paul.

Acts 21:7-9 When we completed our voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, greeted the brothers there, and stayed with them for one day. (8) The next day we left and came to Caesarea. We went to the home of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and stayed with him. (9) He had four unmarried daughters who could prophesy.

Philip was one of the seven deacons appointed in the Jerusalem church in Acts 6:1-7. These daughters of Philip had the gift of prophecy, which apparently did not involve telling the future, as we’ll see in the next verses. They most likely taught other women and children. This is another fulfillment of the prophecy about sons and daughters prophesying (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).

Acts 21:10-12 After we had been there for a number of days, a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea. (11) He came to us, took Paul's belt, and tied his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt. Then they will hand him over to the gentiles.'" (12) When we heard this, we and the people who lived there begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

This is why we think that Philip's daughters were not able to give future prophecies, because Agabus came and did it. We've met Agabus before, back in Acts 11:28. He came to give Paul a future prophecy. He and the original apostles appear to be the only prophets in Acts that can actually tell the future. The belt was a band or sash used to keep money as well as to tie up your tunic around your waist.

Some mistakenly say this prophecy was not accurate, because it was actually the Romans who bound Paul. But the prophet knew that it was the Jews who were responsible for his arrest, as we'll see.

Acts 21:13-14 At this Paul replied, "What do you mean by crying and breaking my heart? I'm ready not only to be tied up in Jerusalem but even to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!" (14) When he could not be persuaded otherwise, we remained silent except to say, "May the Lord's will be done."

God would use the persecution of Paul to preach the gospel to people that he never would have had the chance to otherwise. It would open up new areas to Christianity. Although it understandable that Paul's friends would try to talk him out of going somewhere they knew that would mean imprisonment and possible death, It's somewhat surprising that they did not accept the prophecy given by the Holy Spirit to Agabus. This was God's will for Paul, but they were trying to talk him out of it.

This reminds me sometimes of the criticism those of us who hold to premillennial, pretribulational views. We're accused of actually praying for tribulation and the death of billions of people on this planet because we want the Rapture and the Millennium to happen soon. They say we only support Israel because we know the Bible says they have to be in the land and a new temple built. They're afraid that by wanting these events to occur, we are preventing peace in the Middle East, and may actually cause horrible events to happen.

This is all nonsense, of course, I don't know anyone in the premillennial community who are trying to bring end times events into the present by their actions. We just know that it's going to happen, because God has told us that it will. We do, however, pray that Jesus would come quickly, and that's entirely appropriate to do. **Praying in line with God's will is what Christians are supposed to do.**

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Bible that tell us about events that will happen in the future, and some of them involve horrible things. But it's all part of God's good plan, and while we should be spending the time we have left trying to rescue as many as possible from Satan's kingdom, we certainly should not fight against God's will. It is God's sovereign will for there to be a seven year Tribulation where He will judge the earth and bring the Jews back to Himself. We dare not try to stop God's will. He knows what He is doing. In our humanness, we may not like it or understand it, but must accept it. **We should say, like these men with Paul, "May the Lord's will be done."**

Acts 21:15-16 When our time there ended, we got ready to go up to Jerusalem. (16) Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us. They took us to the home of Mnason to be his guests. He was from Cyprus and had been an early disciple.

In local speech Jerusalem was always said to be "up" from any other location in Palestine. The group probably covered the 65 miles in two days using horses, and their arrival in Jerusalem marked the end of Paul's third missionary journey. This is the first we've heard of this man "Mnason", who Luke says was an earlier disciple, probably one of the 3,000 saved at Pentecost (Acts 2:41, or one of the 5,000 saved after Peter's sermon at the temple (Acts 4:4).

Acts 21:17-19 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers there welcomed us warmly. **(18) The next day Paul went with us to visit James, and all the elders were present. (19) After greeting them, Paul related one by one the things that God had done among the gentiles through his ministry.**

5-7 years had passed since the Jerusalem council meeting of chapter 15, but James, the half-brother of Jesus, is still the head of the church in Jerusalem. None of the other apostles are mentioned here, so they could have been off preaching the gospel in other parts of the Roman Empire. We assume that at this point Paul and his companions presented James with the offerings from the churches in Europe and Asia, and this is another reason why the brothers praise God in the next verse.

Acts 21:20-21 When they heard about it, they praised God and told him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and all of them are zealous for the law. **(21) But they have been told about you — that you teach all the Jews living among the gentiles to forsake the Law of Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs.**

Acts 2:41 and 4:4 tell us of the thousands of Jews who had come to believe in Jesus. The Greek word here actually means "tens of thousands", so you can see how the church in Jerusalem had grown. These Jews, though Christian believers, continued their Jewish practices, including obeying the Law of Moses ("zealous for the law", or Torah). They didn't do these things out of obligation any more, but because it was so much a part of their Jewish identity.

This is a different issue than in Acts 15, where the question was whether Gentiles needed to become like Jews first in order to become Christians. These zealous Jews were not trying to make Gentiles into Jews, but wanted to keep Jews from becoming Gentiles. The issue here is that Paul was accused of telling Jews that they should reject the Law and Jewish practices. This is not what Paul was saying, but it's how it was being reported.

Paul didn't have any problem with continuing to observe Jewish customs, as long as you didn't do it for salvation, or to gain favor with God. Paul thought the Law was good, he never said that Jews are to forsake the Law. But **keeping the Law doesn't make us any more saved than we already are.**

Acts 21:22-24 What is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. **(23) So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. (24) Take these men, go through the purification ceremony with them, and pay their expenses to shave their heads. Then everyone will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you are carefully observing and keeping the law.**

The purification ceremony is the Jewish tradition of ritual cleansing. A typical Jew traveling through "unclean" Gentile territory would always undergo ritual cleansing after returning. Paul no longer needed to do this, not being under the Law any more, but they wanted him to do it as a gesture of respect for the Jews that still observed the Law (1 Corinthians 9:15-22). This is perfectly in line with Paul's policy of being all things to all people in order to win some. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Acts 21:25-26 As for the gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our decision that they should keep away from food that has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from anything strangled, and from sexual immorality." **(26) Then Paul took those men and the next day purified himself with them. Then he went into the temple to announce the time when their days of purification would end and when the**

sacrifice would be offered for each of them.

Verse 26 mentions the letter that was sent back in chapter 15. You know, these verses remind us that Christians can have different practices and still be Christians. A Messianic believer may observe Jewish rituals that may seem strange to me as a Gentile, but he is a member of the body of Christ no less than I am, and I need to be sensitive to things like that.

Paul went along with the wishes of the Jerusalem elders and went through the ritual of purification, which lasted seven days. At the end of the week, he would have had his head shaved, and the hair clippings would have been offered in the Temple along with one male lamb for a burnt offering, one female lamb for a sin offering, a ram for a peace offering, one basket of matzah for a grain offering, and a container of wine for a drink offering. So, since Paul was paying for not only himself but the other four men, it would have been pretty costly to go through with this, but he considered it worthwhile to appease the zealous Jews. His generosity would have been considered a *mitzvah*, a good deed.

Do you find it strange that Paul would continue to offer sacrifices, even though it was not required any more as a Christian? It is not strange at all. Paul continued to follow Jewish practices because they were beneficial to him, but he knew they were not required for salvation.

There will be animal sacrifices again, in the millennial kingdom. Remember the description of the millennial temple in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 43:18-46:24; Malachi 1:11; 3:3-4)? We as Gentiles have a hard time dealing with that, but they will apparently serve a purpose for the Jews, even in the kingdom.

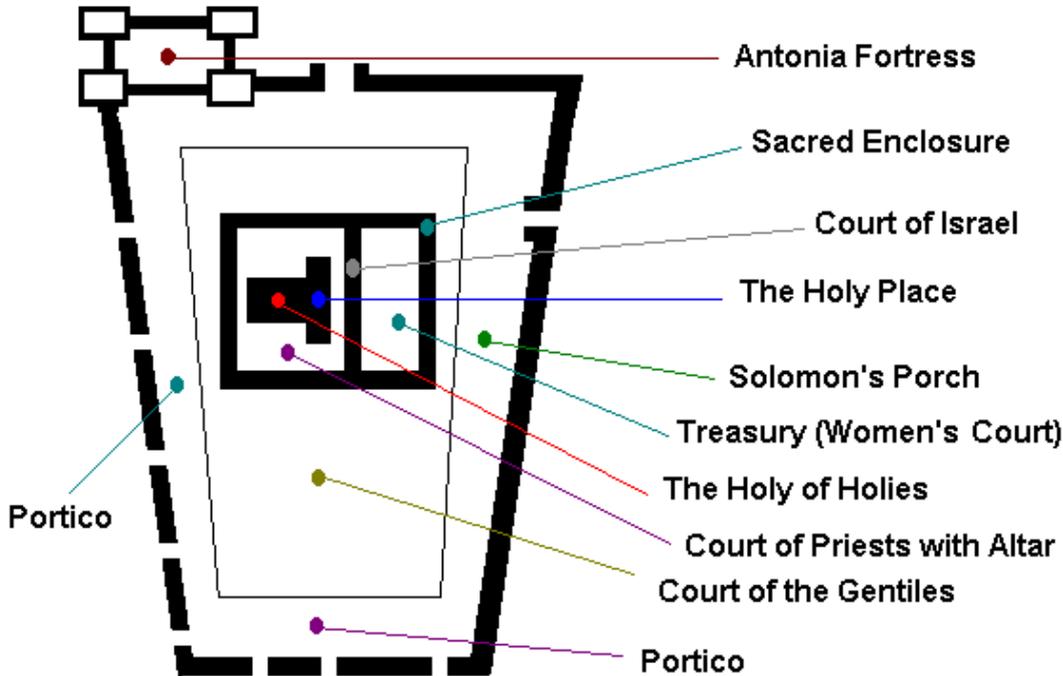
Acts 21:27-29 When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, seeing Paul in the temple, stirred up a large crowd. They grabbed Paul, (28) yelling, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere to turn against our people, the law, and this place. More than that, he has even brought Greeks into the temple and desecrated this holy place." (29) For they had earlier seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him and assumed that Paul had taken him into the temple.

It sure looks like Paul is being followed – these are unbelieving Jews, possibly from Ephesus, since they recognized Trophimus. A Gentile was not permitted to enter the inner temple areas. And it was a serious offense. Notices in both Greek and Latin (two of which have been discovered) warned that any Gentiles who entered into the inner courts would be responsible for their own deaths. All three of these accusations were untrue. Paul never would have broken the law barring Gentiles from the inner courts, and he had never spoken against the Temple. But these guys stirred up the huge crowds. Remember, it was Pentecost, and there could have been over a million Jews in Jerusalem that day.

Acts 21:30-32 The whole city was in chaos. The people rushed together, grabbed Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and at once the doors were sealed shut. (31) The crowd was trying to kill Paul when a report reached the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. (32) Immediately the tribune took some soldiers and officers and ran down to the crowd. When the people saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

The mob stopped beating Paul because they were afraid the Romans would arrest them for disturbing the peace and for mob violence. They would let the Roman officials take care of it from this point on. The Romans had a tower, called the Antonia Fortress, built in the corner of the temple area where the soldiers could keep an eye on things. They would have seen this riot going on and quickly mustered

soldiers out to shut it down.



The Temple Area

Acts 21:33-36 Then the tribune came up, grabbed Paul, and ordered him to be tied up with two chains. He then asked who Paul was and what he had done. (34) Some of the crowd shouted this and some that. Since the tribune couldn't learn the facts due to the confusion, he ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. (35) When Paul got to the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because the mob had become so violent. (36) The crowd of people kept following him and shouting, "Kill him!"

The two chains they tied Paul up with would be like handcuffs. The Roman soldiers ended up protecting Paul, because they stopped the beatings that may have killed him eventually.

Acts 21:37-39 Just as Paul was about to be taken into the barracks, he asked the tribune, "May I say something to you?" The tribune asked, "Oh, do you speak Greek? (38) You're not the Egyptian who started a revolt some time ago and led 4,000 assassins into the desert, are you?" (39) Paul replied, "I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. Please let me speak to the people."

The tribune thought he was a terrorist, that's why he immediately clapped him in chains. The "assassins", according to Josephus, was the name of the most fanatical group of Jews. They were very hostile to Rome, and did not hesitate to assassinate their political opponents. They were named Sicarii in Latin, which was the name of their favorite weapon, a short dagger that could easily be hidden under clothing.

Acts 21:40 The tribune gave him permission, and Paul, standing on the steps, motioned for the people to be silent. When everyone had quieted down, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language:

Sorry for this weird break in chapters, but we'll have to see what Paul says in the next lesson!

Paul's Third Journey and His Journey to Rome

