



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Paul Approaches his Arrest in Jerusalem

JUNE 12-14, 2019

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Acts 21:1-6 *After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. 2) We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. 3) After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. 4) We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5) When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. 6) After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. (NIV)*

Paul has proven over the years that he is the most effective and strategic witness for Jesus Christ. Within one generation of twenty to thirty years, he has personally proclaimed the Gospel in the most strategic capitals of the world and had thereby started churches in the heart of each province or nation and they were bringing the Gospel to their particular region. His leadership began on the mission team when he was in the capital of Cyprus where he won his first king or proconsul, Sergius Paulus, from whom he had acquired his own name, Paul (Acts 13:6-12). The proconsuls were delegated to fill these temporary roles of provincial leadership by the Senate in Rome, of which they had been elected members and had proven themselves as Senators over the years. So it was appropriate that Saul, a former member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel, would win his counterpart from Rome, while ruling temporarily in Cyprus. Paul alone knew how much the Jews of the dispersion hated the Gentiles, and he knew that even the Jews in the church at Jerusalem were not happy with his work among the Gentiles and that many false accusations were circulating about him by the Jews. Thus, he considered it absolutely essential that he prove the love of the Gentiles for the Jews by the offering from the Gentile churches for the poor Jews in the mother church in the capital of Israel, Jerusalem. This had been determined, not just by Paul, but also by the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:21, 20:22).

“THE READERS MAY WEIGH WITH THEMSELVES THE INVINCIBLE AND HEROIC FORTITUDE WHICH WAS IN PAUL, WHO WOULD RATHER BE TOSSED AND TROUBLED WITH SUCH LONG, WINDING, AND TROUBLESOME JOURNEYS, THAT HE MIGHT SERVE CHRIST, THAN PROVIDE FOR HIS OWN QUIETNESS.
JOHN CALVIN

“PAUL IS NOW ONLY TOO WELL KNOWN TO THEM [THE JEWS] AS A RESULT OF HIS THREE EVANGELISTIC EXPEDITIONS. THEY ARE NOW ABOUT TO UTTER THEIR FIERCE, FINAL REPUDIATION OF HIM AND HIS MESSAGE.”
J. SIDLOW BAXTER

Who was Paul and his team tearing themselves away from? Are even all the places where Paul travels strategic centers of influence? Would Paul have been reminded of his name change as he passed Cyprus? Is Paul known most for prayer?

FOCUS ON FUTURE EVENTS:

- > SEPTEMBER 13: LIFT-DELTAVILLE *THE LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT*
- > NOVEMBER 4: LIBRARY OF VA/CAPITOL SQUARE *THE CAPITOL COOKOUT AND PRAYER WALK*

I. A PAINFUL DEPARTURE

ACTS 21:1A

Paul had spent more time with the church at Ephesus than any other church. After he had preached there for the very first time, the Jews even begged him to stay and

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 8:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 12:00 NOON – OAKTON – BOB EVANS – 10443 WHITE GRANITE DR.

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 & 301 ALSO NOON- DIV. OF CAPITOL POLICE-TRAINING ROOM

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – SUFFOLK – VILLAGE INN, 6116 COLLEGE DRIVE, NEAR HAMPTON ROADS CROSSING

Virginia

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invited him back to their synagogue (Acts 18:19-21). When he returned at their request, he had first won twelve Jews who had only known “*John’s baptism*” (Acts 19:1-7). Remarkably, the Jews were so happy that Paul had returned that they allowed him three months to speak in their synagogue! (Acts 19:8) When the Jews rebelled against the truth, Paul moved to the School of Tyrannus and was so strategic in his witness and training others for ministry that within two years “*all who dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*” Such caused millions of dollars of demonic books to be burned in the streets and a riot involving the entire capital city by the silversmiths who had lost business due to the decline in idolatry. The elders of this church at Ephesus were so dear to Paul that, in his hurried trip to Jerusalem, he stopped in Miletus to encourage them one last time. Their tearful prayer meeting on the shore, their accompanying him “*into the ship,*” and the reality that they considered themselves “*torn*” from them spoke of the tremendous love generated in the three years with them.

“IT WAS A WRENCHING GOOD-BYE. ‘AFTER WE HAD TORN OURSELVES AWAY FROM THEM ...’ (21:1)—THIS WAS A TRAUMATIC, EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE. AND YET PAUL DID NOT PROCEED TOWARD HIS DIFFICULT DATE WITH DESTINY RELUCTANTLY—HE SPURTED TOWARD IT! KENT HUGHES

II. A PERSISTENT DETERMINATION ACTS 21:1B-3
Paul fulfills his commission on the way back to the first capital, Jerusalem. He had been commissioned to bear Christ’s name “*before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel*” (Acts 9:15). He would find all three only in capital cities, especially the “*kings.*” Thus, of the twenty cities that Paul evangelized, all are either capitals or more strategic than the capital! Eckhard Schnabel identifies all the cities on the islands (Mitylene, Chios, and Samos), before Paul arrived at Miletus, as capitals. John Polhill identifies the cities in our passage: “*Cos was also the name of the*

capital city of the island ... The next day they traveled to the island of Rhodes and put in at its main city, which was also named Rhodes ... The coasting vessel took them the next day to Patara on the Lycian mainland, which was the main port city and capital of the province.” Tyre is identified by Howard Marshall and Derek Thomas as the capital of Phoenicia. On the way to Tyre, as they passed South of Cyprus, they would have seen Paphos, the capital where Paul had led his first king to Christ. Paul never lost his determination to effectively fulfill his commission by including capitals and leaders!

“IF PAUL HAD NOT BEEN ARRESTED, HE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD MANY OF THE OPPORTUNITIES HE DID HAVE TO TESTIFY TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST. IN FACT, FROM THIS POINT ON WE FIND PAUL TESTIFYING IN ONE HIGH SETTING AFTER ANOTHER.” JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

III. A PERPETUAL DANGER ACTS 21:4-6
While the ship was unloading its cargo, Paul and his team had the opportunity to encourage the church (Gal. 6:10). They “*sought out the disciples*” and remained with them, likely ministering to them for a whole week. Just as “*the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me,*” (Acts 20:23), Paul was again warned by the disciples in Tyre. The commission of Paul presented great opportunity, and along with it great suffering: “*For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake*” (Acts 9:16). The disciples at Tyre love Paul and try to persuade him not to go to Jerusalem, but they knew he was already determined and the Holy Spirit had already led him to go. Thus, they treat him with the greatest honor and respect, corresponding to Christ’s Triumphal Entry, and “*all of them including the wives and children accompanied us out of the city and there on the beach we knelt to pray.*” Prayer was the hallmark of Paul’s ministry!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) As a leader, are you building deep and long-standing relationships of genuine love with others around you?
- 2) Do you take the opportunity to be a witness, not to just those below you but also those beside you and above you?
- 3) Are you characterized by prayer and are you willing to suffer for the cause of Jesus Christ in being a bold witness for Him?