

ACTS 21:1-8

A. Last week, we left off with two questions:

1. What did Paul preach to the Jews when he would go into the synagogues?

- a. Answer: By going to the synagogues, they were going to the Jews **first** (Rom. 1:16). This was Paul's practice until the **close** of Acts. Even though the nation as a whole had failed to believe in Christ as their suffering and risen Messiah (Isa. 53), there were **in**dividuals who could be saved.

I Peter 1:11 - Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

- b. Upon their rejection of Jesus being their prophesied Messiah and their stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, Israel as a nation was temporarily set aside. Their prophetic program was put on **hold** until the Body Church is raptured up. God will **then** work with Israel to believe Christ is the Messiah.

I John 4:2-3 - Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 1John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

- c. It was Paul's love and **desire** to see some individual Jews saved.

Romans 11:5, 14 - Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom. 11:14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

God says in Romans 11 that He always has a Jewish remnant. No doubt, the Little Flock were Christ's-Messiah's remnant and here in Acts, God uses Paul to help win another Jewish remnant of **grace.

- d. **Paul went to individual Jews outside of Jerusalem-Israel, who had **not** participated in their nation's sin of rejecting Christ as Messiah. Paul would share Israel's crime of killing their Messiah and blaspheming of the Holy Spirit - but would conclude with the light of Christ. This gave individuals the opportunity to be **saved**.

(1) Acts 17:1-4 - Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Acts 17:3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. Acts 17:4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

(2) Acts 13:14-41 gives a long history of Israel's crucifying of Jesus Christ, their Messiah. Then Paul concludes with Acts 13:37-39, 42-43 - [But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Acts 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Acts 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Acts 13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.]

- e. Israel, as a nation, had their chance. So, there is no reason or excuse for them to complain when salvation goes to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46 - Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 18:6 - And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Acts 28:27-28 - For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

2.

If no man has seen God, will we see Him in Heaven?

seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the clared *him*.]

- a. Answer: John 1:18 - [No man hath bosom of the Father, he hath de-

- b. Yet:

Genesis 17:1 - And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Genesis 32:30 - And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Genesis 35:9 - And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.

I Samuel 3:21 - And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

I Kings 3:5 - In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

II Chronicles 3:1 - Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

- c. As these verses demonstrate, believers did see God in the O.T. time. He literally appeared to them face-to-face, so how can John 1:18 say "No man hath seen God at anytime"? Is the Bible wrong or mistaken?

- (1) Answer: Usually when God the Son is implied, the Bible uses terms like: the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus, Jesus Christ, the Lord, and Christ Jesus. John 1:18 describes God for us, [No man hath seen God () at anytime; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him].

(2) **The only logical answer is that the Son is talking about God the **Father**. In the N.T., when it just speaks of God, it implies the Father (John 3:16). So John 1:18 means that no **mortal man** has ever seen God the Father.

d. That begs the question then, **who** did the O.T. believers see when it says the Lord appeared unto them?

Answer:

(1) They would have seen God the Son, Jesus Christ, in a **theophany** - a **pre**-incarnate appearance.

(2) When no one can see the Father (He is a spirit being), they can see Jesus Christ - His Son. The Son is such a perfect **re**flexion of God the Father that when you see Him, you see the Father (John 14:7-9).

Hebrews 1:3 - Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Colossians 2:9 - For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

So, whenever God appeared to people in the O.T., it was God the **Son, Jesus Christ. This was before He took upon Himself human flesh and became the God-man. John 1:18 is saying that no **mortal** human has seen God the Father.

e. So the true question is, will we **ever** see God the Father?

Answer: It is impossible by mortal man, but possible by **im**mortal believers one day.

(1) Matthew 5:8 - Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

David - Psalms 17:15 - As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

(2) As believers, our highest satisfaction will come when we will be able to **see** our God in His highest deserved **glory**.

Revelation 4:2-3 - And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. Rev. 4:3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Revelation 5:7 - And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

Revelation 22:3-4 - And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: Rev. 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

B. Acts 21:1-3 - And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: Acts 21:2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. Acts 21:3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

1. These verses show the route that Paul and his companions took so Paul could continue on to Jerusalem. They sailed from Miletus to Coos, the capital city of the island. Then they went to Rhodes, where the famed Colossus was built. This was a bronze statue over one hundred feet tall. Then they came to Patara. They would sail during the **day**, then anchor in port at night (no **wind**).
2. Instead of hugging the seacoast, Paul decided to **risk** crossing the Mediterranean Sea (weather on the open sea was unpredictable). Finding a ship going to Phoenicia, Paul and his companions (his ministry team and church representatives helping with their collections) board to set sail. The ship evidently was **large** in that it carried 276 people (27:37).
3. As they left Patara, they sailed past Cyprus onto Syria and landed at Tyre. This was a **5**-day trip and Tyre was the main city of Phoenicia (today's **Lebanon**).

C. Acts 21:4-6 - And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. Acts 21:5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. Acts 21:6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

1. Evidently, the ship made good time with **favorable** winds. This allowed Paul to spend some time with some believers, while still making it possible to make it to Jerusalem by Pentecost.

These believers at Tyre quickly became **attached to Paul. They even feared for Paul's safety in Jerusalem (religious Jews hated him and wanted him dead) and, being led by the Spirit, told Paul **not** to go to Jerusalem.
2. Note: Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem, in spite of the Spirit's warning that persecution awaited him at Jerusalem, was **not** hard-headedness nor sin. We will see a little later why Paul was so insistent to go there.

These Tyre believers, through the Spirit, could **see the suffering Paul would face when he reached Jerusalem. Naturally, they did not want Paul to be **harmed**.
3. After fellowshiping for a week, the ship being loaded, they were ready to set sail. Paul and whole families have a moment's prayer on the **beach** before Paul sailed.

Neither the threat of persecution nor the pleading of well-meaning believers could **stop Paul from going to Jerusalem.

Remember:

- a. Much of the time on this third and **final** missionary journey was devoted to gathering offerings for the saints (Little Flock) at Jerusalem. Doing this was a practical way the Body church (Gentiles) could show their **love** and appreciation of Israel (Messiah-Word-Message-Savior).
- b. Paul believed this would be big at stopping the division among the Jewish extremists and Body believers, who had followed and backed Paul's **new** message of grace.

Though Paul's Christ-given new message was different than that of the 12 disciples, this new message could **help the Jews' decision made at the Acts 15 conference.

D.

Acts 21:7-8 - And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. Acts 21:8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

1. As Paul continues his journey, he stops at Ptolemais for one day. There he encourages some brethren. Can we see Paul's heart? Even with such a heavy burden of his coming persecution...he still has **time** for people.
2. Next, after traveling **40** miles, Paul stops at Caesarea. This is the port for Jerusalem, where he visits Philip the evangelist.
 - a. Caesarea was the seat of the Roman government in Judea and the official residence of its governor (**Pilate**).
 - b. Philip was one of the seven men (faithful men) chosen in Acts 6:5-6 to **over**see the distribution of **food** to the widows. After that, God honored Philip by having him to be an evangelist.
 - c. Philip helped the **tran**sition to take place. It was Philip who preached in Samaria (8:5). Also, it was Philip who talked to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.
 - d. Paul's being in Philip's house is amazing grace at work. Remember, it was Saul-Paul who was Philip's and other Jewish believers' **worst** enemy! Paul, the once chief prosecutor so feared, is now welcomed as a **friend** (Gal. 1:22-24).
 - (1) Note: Philip was a friend of Stephen, of whom Saul-Paul consented to his death by stoning. *This must have been an **in**teresting meeting!
 - (2) It is also possible that this is where they left the collected offerings for the saints in Jerusalem. Philip, one of the **dis**tributors to the widows in the Jerusalem church of Jews, still may have had enough organizational knowledge of the **fin**ances of the church in order to pass out the collections where needed. Also, Philip may have gone with Paul to the leaders of the Jerusalem's Little Flock church.