

Power to Witness in Word and Deed —Part 2



The Book of Acts

Acts 21:1–26


Read Acts 21:1–26.

1. Paul tears himself away from the Ephesian elders and continues on his journey to Jerusalem, accompanied by Luke and various other Gentile believers (20:4). Trace his travels on your map. (20:17; 21:1–3, 7–8, 15)
2. Why is Paul so determined to get to Jerusalem?
20:22

24:17; Rom. 15:25–26

3. What notable people does Paul meet in Caesarea? (vv. 8–9; compare 6:1–6)
4. The prophet Agabus, whom we have met before (11:27–28), comes to Caesarea from Judea.
 - a. What message does he deliver to Paul? (v. 11; * 9:15–16; 20:23)
 - b. How do Paul’s friends (including Luke) respond to this prophecy? (vv. 12–13a)
 - c. In contrast, how does Paul respond? (v. 13)
 - d. What perspective does Paul have that causes him to respond in this way? (20:24;  2 Cor. 4:16–18; Phil. 1:20–21)
 - e. How do you think the truth of the gospel enables Paul to face suffering and his own death?
5. Paul’s friends stop trying to persuade him, saying, “The Lord’s will be done” (v. 14). In what tone of voice do you think they say this? Why?

*The  symbol indicates verses or questions for further study.

6. Paul again sees James, “the recognized leader of the church in Jerusalem and indeed of the world–wide Jewish Christian community.”¹ How do James and the elders of the Jerusalem church react to the news regarding Paul’s ministry among the Gentiles? (v. 20a)
7. What rumor has spread in Jerusalem concerning Paul and his ministry? (v. 21)
8. What does Paul in fact teach? (1 Cor. 7:17–19; Gal. 3:23–25)
9. The leaders of the Jerusalem church give Paul some very specific instructions.²
 - a. What do they ask Paul to do? (v. 24a)
 - b. Why do they want him to do these things? (vv. 21, 24b)
 - c. How does Paul respond to these instructions? (v. 26)
10. Elsewhere, Paul makes it clear that he is no longer required to perform Jewish rituals. Why, then, is he willing to undergo these rituals now? (1 Cor. 9:19–23;  Rom. 14:1–8, 13–21)
11. More than once in this week’s passage, we see the potential for disagreement and disunity.
 - a. How do you think the believers in this passage maintain their unity in Christ? (You may want to look at Eph. 4:2–6; 5:21; Phil. 2:1–4.)
 - b. Consider a relationship in which you need to seek unity rather than holding on to being right. How does this passage challenge you?

¹ John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1990), 339.

² The four men James mentions have most likely taken a Nazirite vow: “By abstaining from products of the [grape] vine, not cutting their hair, and avoiding ritual impurity, they had been showing thankfulness for past blessings, earnestness in petition, or strong devotion to God” (William Larkin, *Acts* [Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2006], 586).