

the remotest part of the earth

#24, Jerusalem – Acts 21:1-39

At Miletus, having met with the elders of Ephesus, Paul's words caused many to wonder. From Acts 20:22-23, what did he mean when he said, And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. Now on top of that he told them that they should see his face no more!

1 When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; 2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.

4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. 6 Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.

7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. 8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.

[1.] Looking at the heading, it seems Paul had an inkling of what the future held for him. What might have been his thoughts?

[2.] v:1-3, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Tyre, **On your map, pg 2, draw in the journey from Miletus to landfall at Israel.**

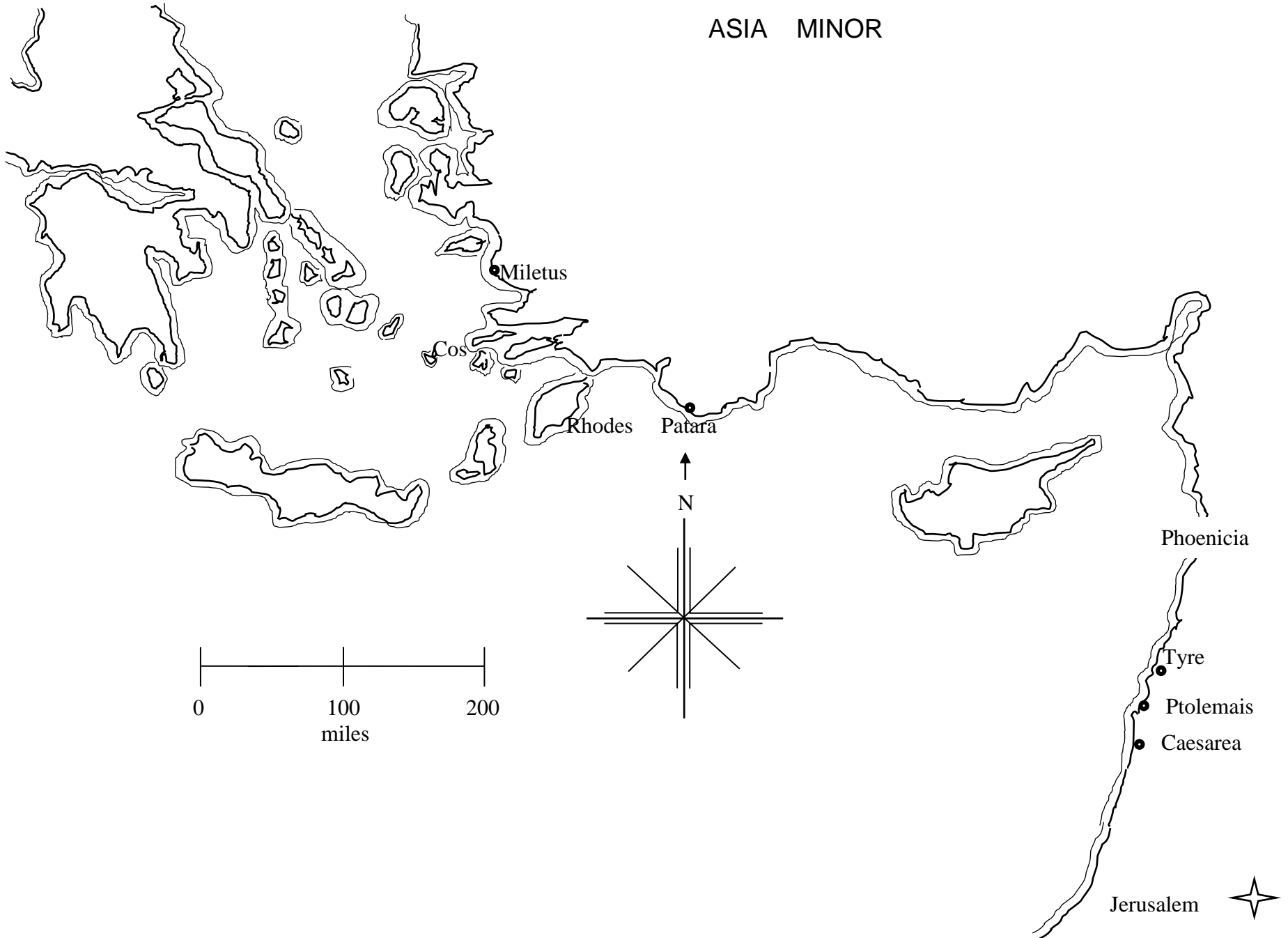
[3.] v:4, not to set foot, **This small group of travelers had just sailed half way across the Great Sea and the first thing that hits them was the same warning about the "holy land" that they heard in Asia. What was it?**

[4.] v:5-6, farewell to one another, **It doesn't say but, had you accompanied the travelers, what would you have heard in farewell comments?**

[5.] v:7-8, Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea, **Again on your map, pg 2, draw in the final ports of call on the last leg of the journey.**

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9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. 10 As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

12 When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

15 After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.

17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

[6.] v:9-11, a prophet named Agabus, What visual aid did Agabus employ and what did he prophesy?

[7.] v:12-14, How did the residents as well as Paul's companions respond to the prophecy?

[8.] v:12-14 again, Why was there such a pall of evil over Jerusalem?

[9.] v:15-16, our way up to Jerusalem. It hasn't been mentioned since last lesson but what was the group from Macedonia probably carrying with them?

[10.] v:17, we arrived in Jerusalem, What did Paul and his companions probably present to the brethren and how was the group received?

There have been many interesting interpretations of the next few verses (v:18-26) written in commentaries and preached to Christians. We will attempt to arrive at our own conclusions about what the Holy Spirit wanted us to see. In doing this, there is one overriding truth we always need to consider. Do the statements that are made describe people of the "old covenant" or the "new covenant"? V:19-21, OK, let's carefully walk through this and see what is happening.

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18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

19 After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

[11.] v:19, done among the Gentiles through his ministry. We have read that Paul didn't ignore the Jews but, according to Gal. 2:9, to whom did James, Cephas and John send him?

[12.] v:20, they are all zealous for the Law; Yes, there were many Jews saved during Paul's three journeys. However it is believed that Paul wrote Romans as well as II Corinthians from Corinth or Macedonia (refer to lesson #23 (pg 1). In his 2nd letter to Corinth he wrote, II Cor 3:4-6, Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

From the above, which covenant was Paul ministering and is it the covenant of the law or the covenant of grace through faith in Christ Jesus?

[13.] v:21, telling them not to circumcise their children, Romans and Galatians are some of the letters in which Paul documented what he taught. Re. "old covenant" people, what did Paul teach from Romans 2:25?

Re. "new covenant" people, what did Paul teach from Galatians 5:1-4?

22 "What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. 23 "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

[14.] v:22-24, you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. What was the plan that James and the elders had for Paul?

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[15.] **Thinking on** Galatians 2:2, It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them (**James Cephas & John**) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, **Why or why wouldn't you think James would be OK with Paul joining in on the vow?**

vow, OT:5088 (*neh'-der*); or **neder** (*nay'-der*); from OT:5087; a promise (to God); also (concretely) a thing promised: KJV - vow ([-ed]).

NT:2171 (*yoo-khay'*); from NT:2172; properly, a wish, expressed as a petition to God, or in votive obligation: KJV - prayer, vow.

New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance

25 "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

27 When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, "Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

[16.] v:25-26, V:25 please see Acts 15:19-20. V:26, In order to determine Paul's motive for this act, first study I Cor 9:19-23. Write down your interpretation of v:20 and state which covenant Paul was under.

[17.] v:27-29, defiled this holy place. Describe the sad logic the Jews from Asia used to control the crowd.

[18.] v:30, all the city was provoked, Why or why don't you feel this included "the brethren" mentioned back in Acts 21:17?

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31 While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 At once he took along some soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he began asking who he was and what he had done. 34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing and some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. 35 When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob; 36 for the multitude of the people kept following them, shouting, "Away with him!" 37 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek? 38 "Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?" 39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.

[19.] v:31-34, shouting one thing and some another, Here is an example of persuasive persons able to whip up a large group. Without knowing why, the large group was ready to even commit murder. List some ways we as Christians can guard ourselves against the wrong "emotional" causes?

[20.] v:35-39, "May I say something to you?" Paul's demeanor toward the commander allowed the commander to let Paul speak to him. Why is it important for us as Christians to respect those in authority?

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NOTES