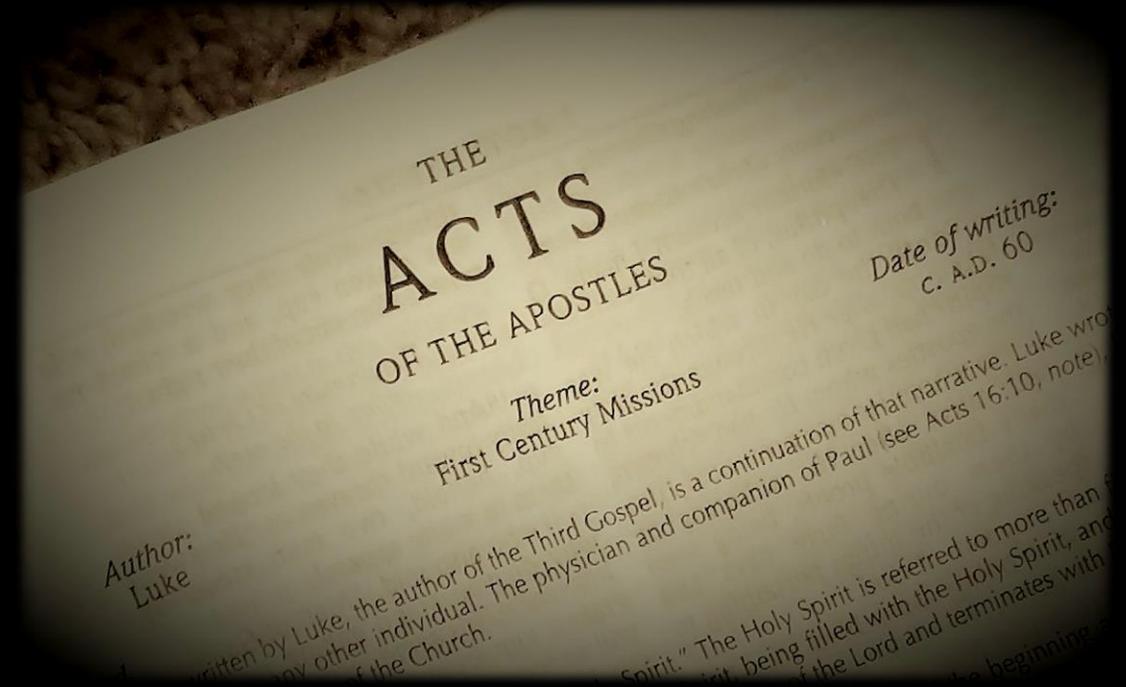


# Verse by Verse

## Acts 21



Previously in *Acts*

## Previously in Acts

- So far, we have followed Paul through three different missionary journeys.
- Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus were all churches that were planted through Paul's efforts.
- As we walk through the New Testament we will see letters he wrote to these churches as well.
- We last left Paul as he met with the Ephesian elders.

# Acts 21 Introduction

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- Paul will now make his way toward **Jerusalem**.
- Just as **Christ's trials** take up a significant portion of the four Gospels, **Paul's trials** take up much of Acts.
- In this chapter **Paul will be arrested**.
- He will remain in one form of custody or another right through the end of the book.

# Acts 21 Key Verse

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- Acts 21:17 (ESV)

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

# Acts 21 Outline

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1. Back to Jerusalem 21:1-16
2. A Visit with James 21:17-26
3. Arrested in the Temple 21:27-36
4. Paul Asks to Speak 21:37-40

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

# 1. Back to Jerusalem **Acts 21:1-16**



Map from  
JesusWalk.com

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

- 21:4, 12 ...they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem ...
- we ... urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.
- The best way to understand this would not be to say that Paul was making a mistake.
- The Holy Spirit was telling them of the trouble Paul would encounter, but also prodding him forward.

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

- **21:14**    And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”
- The lesson here is:
- Just because something causes us trouble does not mean it isn't God's will.

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

*We will frequently be unable to understand the reason God allows certain circumstances in our lives. Nevertheless, like Paul and the Lord Jesus himself (see Luke 22:42), we must have hearts that submit to our King's will for our lives.*

*– Tony Evans,  
Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship*



# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

- **21:8**    Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven
- We last saw Philip in **Acts 8**, speaking to the Ethiopian eunuch.
- At that time he ended his travels in **Caesarea**, which is where we see him now, many years later.

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

- 21:9-10    He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied ... a prophet names Agabus
- We last saw Agabus in Acts 11 foretelling a famine.
- Neither age nor gender seems to be a factor in receiving the gift of prophecy.
- What's more, it is a desirable gift to have.

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

- 1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (ESV)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. <sup>2</sup> For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. <sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

# 1. Back to Jerusalem    Acts 21:1-16

- (ESV) upbuilding, encouragement and consolation.
- (NKJV) edification, exhortation and comfort
- We might sum up the point of prophecy as
  1. Building up
  2. Stirring up, and
  3. Cheering up the body of Christ.

## 2. A Visit with James      Acts 21:17-26

## 2. A Visit with James     Acts 21:17-26

- Acts 21:17 (ESV)

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

- Here is our key verse.
- A bit more on this verse in a moment.

## 2. A Visit with James     Acts 21:17-26

- Acts 21:18 (ESV)     On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.
- This is the last “we” or “us” section we get from Luke until Acts 27:1 and their eventual trip to Rome.
- As in Acts 15, we see James the brother of Jesus as the most important leader of the church in Jerusalem.

## 2. A Visit with James     Acts 21:17-26

- Notice the **unity between Paul and James**.
- This shows us unity between the wider **Jewish and Gentile mission** in the early church.
- There were those in Jerusalem who were trying to stir up conflict over Paul's ministry.
- There are still those who try to frame James and Paul as being at odds.

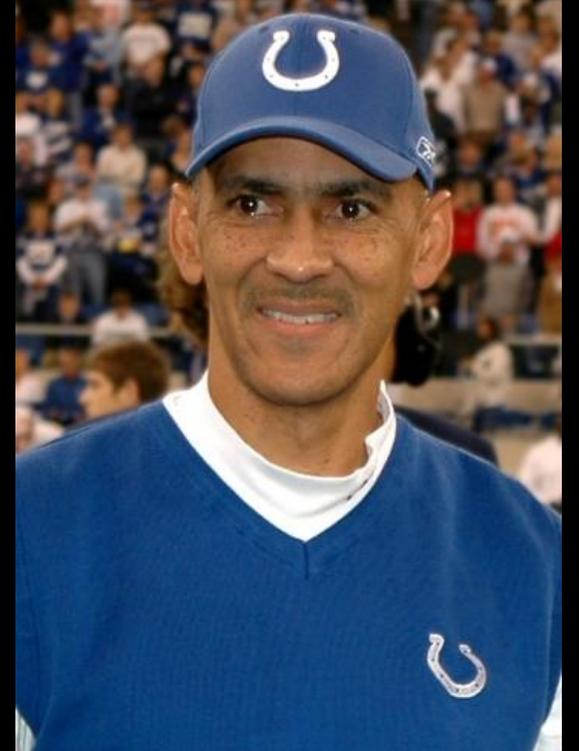
## 2. A Visit with James     Acts 21:17-26

- James and Paul were committed to unity.
- James was happy to acknowledge here as in Acts 15 that Gentiles were not forced to keep the law.
- Paul was willing to go out of his way to conform to Jewish customs while in Jerusalem.

## 2. A Visit with James      Acts 21:17-26

*Without compromising what you believe, the next time you face a conflict, instead of heading into combat and throwing “rocks,” find a way to build bridges with them. That gesture of civility will change you and possibly the entire direction of the discussion.*

*– Tony Dungy, in The One Year Uncommon Life Daily Challenge (p. 136).*



## 2. A Visit with James     Acts 21:17-26

- Most things in life will not compromise our beliefs.
- Within the church, as long as doctrine is not being compromised there is a lot of room for flexibility.
- Outside the church, we constantly need to be flexible in order to deal with people and situations well.

## 2. A Visit with James

Acts 21:17-26

- My friend Kurt uses *Rubberband Man* by the Spinners as his ringtone.
- He is a veteran missionary who may visit us in June.



## 2. A Visit with James      Acts 21:17-26

- Back to our key verse.
- Acts 21:17 (ESV)

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

- Keep making it a point to be very welcoming to missionaries when they come to visit.
- Remember them when they are gone too!

### 3. Arrested in the Temple Acts 21:27-36

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- Everything they are saying about Paul is untrue.
- Mob scenes were fairly normal in Paul's ministry.
- So were arrests.

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- Everything they are saying about Paul is untrue.
- Mob scenes were fairly normal in Paul's ministry.
- So were arrests.
- In **2 Corinthians 11**, Paul gives us a catalog of the sufferings and troubles he endured for Christ.

### 3. Arrested in the Temple Acts 21:27-36

- 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (ESV)

... with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup> on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, ...

### 3. Arrested in the Temple Acts 21:27-36

- 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (ESV)

... danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; <sup>27</sup> in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

### 3. Arrested in the Temple Acts 21:27-36

- 1 Peter 4:14-16 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

## 4. Paul Asks to Speak    Acts 21:37-40

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- To be continued ...

# Acts 21    What We Just Read

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# Acts 21    Key Verse

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When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

# Acts 21    Key Points

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1. Just because something causes us trouble doesn't mean it is not God's will.
2. Neither age nor gender is a factor in receiving the gift of prophecy.
3. Further, it is a very desirable gift.
4. It is helpful for building up, stirring up and cheering up the body of Christ.

## Acts 21 Key Points

5. As long as doctrine is not being compromised there is a lot of room for flexibility.
6. Be firm on the Bible and doctrinal truth but flexible on personal preferences (Rubberband Man).
7. When missionaries come to town, be welcoming toward them.
8. Then remember them when they are gone.

# Acts 21    A Prayer

# Acts 21    A Prayer

- Dear Father in heaven,
- You truly have blessed us by giving us these examples from Paul and the early church. When we think of the trials they endured for their faith, our own lives seem so very simple.
- Help us to remain faithful to you even in the most trying of circumstances.

# Acts 21    A Prayer

- Teach us, as Paul said, to desire spiritual gifts and especially that we might prophecy. Please allow each of us to be used by you in building up, stirring up and cheering up your church.
- Show us how to be firm on the authority of the Bible while at the same time being flexible when it comes to our own personal views or preferences.
- Help us work toward unity within the body of Christ.

# Acts 21 A Prayer

- Finally, give us a deep appreciation for mission and outreach efforts both locally and around the world.
- Remind us to be welcoming to missionaries when they come to visit and help us to remember them when they are gone – that they might be on our minds even when they are out of sight.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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