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### Paul Begins that Fateful Journey to Jerusalem

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## PAUL BEGINS THAT FATEFUL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS  
ACTS 21:1-6  
NUMBER 98

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ACTS 21:1-6 "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: And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. 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. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. 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. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again."

This is more or less of a travelogue. So someone may say, why bother to spend any time with this? At first glance we would conclude that Paul is just moving from place to place and the sum total of this passage is what we call a travelogue. But remember it is my job to teach word by word and verse by verse. It is all given for our spiritual benefit and we know God placed this material in the scripture for a definite reason.

ACTS 21:1 "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" "And it came to pass" comes from the Greek word "ginomai" and it means that something came about that had never been before--so this means that we are now introduced to something entirely new in the Book of the Acts.

### Seven Points On The Change Of Pace and The Change Of Information

1. From this point on the Book of the Acts changes completely.
2. In the rest of this book, Paul is a prisoner. Paul is not a prisoner for the rest of his life, but for the part of his life covered by these last eight chapters he is a prisoner. His imprisonment will begin in Jerusalem, continue in Caesarea, and end in Rome.
3. We have here in these chapters a summary of his imprisonment.  
Chapters 21-23---A prisoner in Jerusalem.  
Chapters 24-26---A prisoner in Caesarea.  
Chapters 27-28---A prisoner in Rome. (Including the trip to Rome)
4. Though Paul is bound, the Word of God is never bound.  
The Word of God is a stabilizer of life when everything else is unstable.
5. The great issue of true guidance comes out clearly. Paul was clearly warned to stay away from Jerusalem. Paul got out of the geographical will of God. These chapters recount Paul's great mistake and failure and they also recount how God turns cursing into blessing. Paul is also going to ignore the warning of the Christians in Tyre. He is going to ignore the warning of Agabus, the prophet in verses 10 and 11 of this chapter. His companions warn him in verse 12. But Paul rejects all the warnings and I call it "Operation hard-head". Often the characteristics that make a man great also make him weak.
6. There is the principle of false guidance. Guidance through circumstances, emotionalism, rationalism, traditionalism, the advise of nice people, and sincerity. Circumstances can be true guidance but it has to be circumstances plus doctrine. The nice legalists of Jerusalem are going to tell Paul to go into the temple and take a legalistic vow which is a violation of grace. This was a terrible blunder.

7. Paul seems to have been misled by emotionalism and traditionalism. These false motives gave Paul his inspiration for going back to Jerusalem. When God's plan calls for you to go one way you can't go in the opposite direction. This procedure is going to come out quite clearly in these next chapters. The last part of the Book of the Acts records Paul's failure and the story of how God worked it out and turned cursing into blessing. What God does here is glorious beyond our comprehension. Out of Paul's failure came the prison Epistles, some of the greatest books on doctrine in all the Bible. But this is the work of God. Morality is not just for Christians. Morality is for the entire human race, for Christians as well as for non-Christians. The Christian way of life is the filling of the Holy Spirit. But we are so prone to fall for legalism and for some system devised by man. In other words, we want a man-made system instead of a God inspired solution.

This section of the Book of the Acts will remind us again and again that even though we are mature believers we never are self-sufficient and we never get to the place where we are adequate within ourselves. Please remember this, travelogue is a part of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit has placed these verses here for a purpose. "After we were gotten from there" is Old English and it simply means they had a hard time breaking Paul away from them. Evidently they just kept saying, "The boat has to sail, fellows, and we must go now!" So this is a perfect translation. It means a tender departure. "And had launched" means to set sail.

Miletus was the place where the conference has been held. They sailed south and they were traveling in one of the most beautiful areas of the world. They came with a straight course to Coos. Coos is a very beautiful little island and is forty miles south of Miletus. They had a fine medical school there and many beautiful vineyards. Coos is the birthplace of Hippocrates, the father of medicine. We know the Hippocratic Oath as the oath taken by those who enter the medical profession and is the ethical code on which the medical profession rests. This was a very beautiful place and the castles and fortifications afford some of the most beautiful scenery in the earth. It is a very relaxing atmosphere. So Paul is now getting a much needed vacation and a period of relaxation. It is almost like a fairyland, and dream area of the world and almost a glorified Disneyland. If Paul had been a camera bug and had had a good camera he could have supplied National Geographic with enough color film to run them for a hundred years. Paul traveled more than any man of his day and was probably in more beautiful places than anyone else who lived in that time. The Emperor Claudius had a doctor he trusted very much who came from Coos and because of this the emperor made Coos a tax free island. This gave them great economic advantage.

The next day they came to the large island named Rhodes which is northeast of Crete. During the days just before the Roman Empire came into her own, the Island of Rhodes was famous for her navy. Rhodes is located in such a spot that it is the dividing point between the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas. One movie star says it is the most beautiful spot in the world and many wealthy people have estates on the Island of Rhodes. It had one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Colossus Of Rhodes, which was a giant statue of Apollo which stood astride the entrance to the harbour of Rhodes. In addition there was the great temple of Apollo. The Romans didn't have a very good navy at that time and they relied on the great navy of Rhodes. This is as beautiful as any place in the world and the blue sea, the white sandy beach, the blue and purple mountains in the background afford the traveler with a display of natural beauty unsurpassed anywhere else in the world. So Paul had his color TV all around him.

From Rhodes they sailed on to Patara and then on to Phenicia. Tyre and Sidon were cities of Phenicia. It was about 340 miles in all. It was either in April or May and they made the trip in great speed because of the monsoon. Without any motors, ships have been known to make this 340 miles in about 48 hours because of the monsoon.

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." When they saw Cyprus, they left it on their left side and sailed to Phenicia and landed at Tyre. It was a free city of Syria. Tyre had been destroyed by Alexander the Great in 325 B.C. but it had been partially reconstructed by Herod the Great. Many believers lived in Tyre. It took seven days to unload the ship so Paul had some time on his hands to visit with the believers of Tyre. Here he received his warning that he was moving out of the geographical will of God.

ACTS 21:4 "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." The word for "finding disciples" is "Aneurisko" and it means he kept on searching until he found them. They prolonged their stay for seven days. It gave Paul a chance to minister to them and gave them an opportunity to warn Paul. "Who said" means they said it once, then again and then again. They just kept on telling Paul "Don't go to Jerusalem". Please notice that they said these things under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now I do not ask you to agree with me, but you cannot get around the plain Word of God at this point. As Paul moved among them, ate with them and talked with them time and time again many different people said, "Paul, the Holy Spirit has warned us that you should not go to Jerusalem". Many people told him the same thing.

Look at five points on the phrase "Through The Spirit"

1. Paul should have been headed West, but instead he is moving East to Jerusalem. Later on Paul will go to the West, but now he is going East.
2. Paul is both emotionally and traditionally tied to Jerusalem. This is where his genius first emerged and came into focus. He had fantastic success in Jerusalem as a young student. Everything in his youth that he remembered in connection with Jerusalem was pleasant to him. So he was emotionally involved with Jerusalem. This is what tripped Paul up and took him to Jerusalem contrary to the will of God.
3. Paul is moving out of the geographical will of God. When Paul walked through the gates of Jerusalem on that trip, he was out of God's will. He is not out of that will yet, but he is moving in that direction.
4. Paul is Jonah in reverse. Jonah should have gone East and he went West. Paul went East and he should have gone West. God's geographical will is not the same for all people. Some people have a trend toward Asceticism and invariably they think if something hurts real bad and you suffer a great deal this just has to be the will of God for you. But such need not be the case.
5. Guidance is a matter of doctrine. These people didn't try to interfere with Paul's private business they were just trying to get him to reexamine his position.

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." "Accomplished" here is the word "ezartizo". It means to completely, effectively and fully equip people within an allotted period of time. Paul only had seven days but he gave them all the doctrine they needed so they would be fully equipped for the days and years ahead.

The word "Brought" comes from "propempo" and it means to accompany one with high respect. So this is a very important principle here. It shows us that even though Paul was not perfect they had high respect for him. Their seven days together ended with a very impressive prayer meeting.

ACTS 21:6 "And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again." "When we had taken our leave" means to leave someone with a lump in your throat. It was an emotional parting. Paul came as a stranger, but he so taught them that in seven days they were emotionally attached to him and when he left they had moist eyes and a lump in their throats.

They returned to their own homes. The translation here has omitted that little Greek word "Idios". But it is very important to bring out the clear meaning. It means they went back to their own homes equipped with doctrine so they became self-sustaining. They were combat ready for their task.