

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 66 ACTS 20:33-21:14

ACTS 20:17-38 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIANS

- Verses 17-25 – *see session 64*
- Verses 26-32 – *see session 65*
- Verses 33-34 –
 - In closing words, Paul reminds the Ephesians that he was self-sufficient.
 - This is one of many examples to illustrate the truth that you should not make an historical example to be a doctrine. Paul teaches that Bible teachers should be paid (Gal. 6:4, 1 Cor. 9:14, etc.).
 - The support of a local pastor or Bible teacher is circumstantially determined.
- Verse 35 –
 - Paul's teaching style was to *convince and persuade* but also to *display*.
 - He has instructed us to **be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ** (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - It is important that believers today use Paul's teachings and examples, because they contain the full revelation, whereas the four Gospels do not have *the rest of the story* (see Col. 1:25).
 - Verse 35, in fact, gives testimony to the fact that we cannot sufficiently be a "Christ follower" without being a "Paul follower." The words of Christ, **It is more blessed to give than to receive**, are only included here. Without Paul, we would not even know that Christ spoke these words.
- Verses 36-38 –
 - Clearly Paul loved the Ephesians, and also knew that he was entering into danger as he approached Jerusalem.
 - For what would he be charged in Jerusalem? Was it for sharing a *non-Jewish Gospel*? Absolutely not. The Jews did not care if the Gentiles had a correct or an incorrect Gospel. He would be imprisoned for *the Kingdom Gospel*, as all the evidence of the book of Acts will bear. The Kingdom Gospel was an indictment on Israel, a "bad news" Gospel, and thus the Jewish authorities would take it very seriously.
 - Paul would be in prison and would have some freedom or release later, and desired to go see Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 3:14-15), but there is no indication the trip ever happened.

ACTS 21:1-14 | THE JOURNEY TO CAESAREA

- Verses 1-3 –
 - These verses simply give information for the historical record.
- Verses 4-5 –
 - The disciples warned Paul (and companions) **through the Spirit** not to **go up to Jerusalem**. They knew the danger of such a journey. These disciples are likely Jewish believers, but both Jews and Gentiles who loved Paul would see the same danger.
 - Is this the Holy Spirit? Is Paul disobedient to the Holy Spirit?

- In verse 11 there is a *similar* but not the *same* counsel, and it is clearly the **Holy Ghost**. This does not *require* that this instance also be the Holy Ghost. The two events are in the same chapter but in different towns. and events.
 - The Greek phrase *δια του πνευματος* [dia tou pneumatos], translated **through the Spirit** is used in Acts 11:28, where the KJV chooses a lower-case “spirit.” The phrase is used three other times in addition to Acts 21:4, but in each of those three the Spirit is further defined as being God’s Spirit.
 - If this is the Holy Spirit, then Paul is disobedient to the Spirit and (one might argue) even dismissive of God’s direction.
 - However, the word *δια* [dia] can be understood as “thoroughly.” The phrase could be literally translated “thoroughly of the spirit/Spirit” and be taken to mean that the disciples in Tyre were “thoroughly spiritual, not in one way having the wrong intent.”
 - Clearly those in Tyre were worried about Paul, and clearly Paul chose to ignore their worries. Because Paul is an apostle, he is surely not disobedient to a clear call from the Holy Ghost.
 - This incident, if I have interpreted it correctly, serves to remind us that we have to be very careful even of our spiritual intent and “thorough spirituality.”
 - In the end, Paul does what he, in his own conscience, desires to do.
- Verses 6-8 –
 - These three verses are also for the historical record. By the use of the pronoun **we** it appears that Luke is traveling with Paul.
 - The group stays with **Philip the evangelist** (from Acts 6, the selection of **the seven** who are often called the first Deacons).
 - This is the same Philip who met the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza.
- Verse 9 -
 - This is likely about 60AD, and before the times in which prophecy had ceased (1 Cor. 13:8). There were, in that day, Jewish prophets, even female.
- Verses 10-11 –
 - The message of this **certain prophet, named Agabus** (presumably the same Agabus of Acts 11:28) is different than that of the disciples of Tyre. In Tyre they told him **that he should not go up to Jerusalem** (v. 4). Here the message is that Paul would be arrested and handed **into the hands of the Gentiles**. This prophecy could obviously not be true if Paul was not going to Jerusalem.
 - It is interesting that we are never told whether God’s will was for Paul to go to Jerusalem or not. Why? Likely because Paul is the *type* of this current dispensation, in which believers are *free to decide* their course of action. Paul has heard the warnings, and chooses to step forward, nonetheless.
- Verses 12-14 –
 - In spite of the begging, Paul insists on going, showing a total willingness to die, if necessary.
 - Later, he is commended by the Lord (Acts 23:11).