

Acts 21: NO RETREAT

Acts 21:1-16

"When we had torn ourselves away from them and had set sail, we sailed a straight course and came to Cos; on the next day we reached Rhodes; and from there we came to Patara. There we found a ship which was sailing across to Phoenicia and we embarked on her and set sail. After we had sighted Cyprus and had left it behind on the left hand side we sailed on to Syria and came down to Tyre, for there the ship was to discharge her cargo. We sought out the disciples and we stayed there for seven days. They told Paul through the Holy Spirit to give up his journey to Jerusalem. When we had completed the days we left and proceeded on our journey, while they all, with their wives and children, escorted us outside the city. We knelt down on the shore and prayed and bade each other farewell. Then we embarked on the ship and they returned home. We continued our voyage and arrived at Ptolemais from Tyre, and when we had greeted the brethren we stayed among them for one day. On the next day we left and came to Caesarea. We went into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. He had four daughters who were virgins and who prophesied. While we stayed there longer a prophet called Agabus came down from Judaea. He visited us and he took Paul's girdle and he bound his own hands and feet and said, 'Thus speaks the Holy Spirit. The Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man to whom this girdle belongs like this and they will hand him over to the Gentiles.' When we heard this both we and the people of the place kept pleading with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but to die in Jerusalem for the sake of the name of the Lord Jesus.' Since he would not be persuaded, we held our peace and said, 'Let the Lord's will be done.' After these days, when we had packed up, we set out on the journey to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us. They were to bring us to Mnason, a man of Cyprus, an original disciple, with whom we were to lodge."

Two things stand out here.

(i) There is the sheer determination of Paul to go on no matter what lay ahead.

Nothing could have been more definite than the warning of the disciples at Tyre and of Agabus at Caesarea, but nothing could deter Paul from the course that he had chosen.

(ii) There is the wonderful fact that wherever Paul went he found a Christian community waiting to welcome him.

One of the great privileges of belonging to the Church is the fact that no matter where a man goes, he is sure to find a community of like-minded people into which he may enter.

The man who is in the family of the Church has friends all over the world.

Events on the way from Asia Minor to Jerusalem

Sailing to Syria, Paul is warned in Tyre

1) After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. 2) We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. 3) After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. 4) Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5) But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. 6) After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

Departed from them is more literally tore ourselves away from them; this was not an easy parting!

We are not told of how a church was planted in Tyre but there were disciples there;

Acts gives us only a partial picture of the early church's

activity.

Among the disciples at Tyre, some prophesied of the danger that awaited Paul in Jerusalem, something that he had been warned about before in several other places (Acts 20:22-23).

Acts 20:22-23 *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: [23] Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.*

Act 16:6 *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,*

Paul's big mistake? If he hadn't gone to Jerusalem, he would not have been imprisoned for two years!

It would seem that the specific warning not to go up to Jerusalem was a human interpretation of the Holy Spirit's prophecy of the danger that awaited Paul, otherwise it is difficult to see why Paul would have gone against the Holy Spirit's direction.

The practice of accompanying a traveler to the outskirts of the city was traditional;

The practice of kneeling down on the shore together for prayer was uniquely Christian.

Paul is warned again in Caesarea

7) We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. 8) Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. 9) He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10) After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11) Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' "

12) When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13) Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14) When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

15) After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. 16) Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

Paul and his companions to find Christians in virtually every city they stopped in;

Fellowship becomes all the more precious when one is traveling and is a stranger in a city.

Apparently, Philip, one of the seven chosen in **Acts 6** to serve tables, settled in Caesarea and had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy.

The daughters of Philip did not prophesy about Paul's trip to Jerusalem,

The Holy Spirit chooses whom He will for such manifestations of the Spirit.

According to ancient records, "The daughters, or at least some of them, lived to a great age, and were highly esteemed as sources regarding the persons and the events belonging to the early years of Judean Christianity."

Philip was one of the original seven deacons; evangelized in Samaria; baptized the Ethiopian treasurer.

Or possibly converts from Pentecost, 26 years earlier evangelized Caesarea...

Agabus is an interesting figure.

Acts 11:28 *And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass*

in the days of Claudius Caesar.

When words were inadequate, Jewish prophets dramatized their message.

There are many instances of this in the Old Testament, for example, ***Isa 20:3-4; Jer 13:1-11; 27:2; Ezek 4; 5:1-4; 1 Kings 11:29-31***

Agabus "play-acts" his message to Paul: certain danger awaits him at Jerusalem.

The prophecy of Agabus was true;

The human response, that they pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem, was not of the Lord, otherwise Paul would have been disobedient to go to Jerusalem.

They recognized it when they attributed Paul's insistence to go to Jerusalem despite the danger as the will of the Lord.

God's custom with such a remarkable prophecy was that there was a great deal of confirmation,

in Macedonia (Acts 20:22-23),
in Tyre (21:4) and
now in Caesarea.

60 miles from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Ac.21:15 says, ***"We took up our carriages and went up to Jerusalem."***

Paul and his friends do not travel by carriage.

In the 16th century, when used like this, carriage meant something which a man had to carry; it meant baggage.

Paul's insistence on going to Jerusalem despite the dangers predicted by the Holy Spirit was not a result of rebellion,

But an obedient response to the command of the Holy Spirit in his heart; he was bound in the spirit to go to Jerusalem.

Acts 19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through

Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

"Early" disciple: Old = "ancient"; original Cypriot won on day of Pentecost?

Acts 2:8-11 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? [9] Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, [10] Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, [11] Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

COMPROMISE IN JERUSALEM

Acts 21:17-26

"When we arrived in Jerusalem the brethren received us gladly. On the next day Paul along with us went to visit James; and all the elders were present. He greeted them and recounted one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard the story they glorified God. They said to him, `You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews who have accepted the faith. Now they are all devotees of the Law. They have heard rumours about you which allege that you teach all the Jews who live in Gentile territory to abandon the Law of Moses and to stop circumcising their children and to stop living according to their ancestral customs. What then is to be done? They will be bound to hear that you have arrived. So you must do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow upon themselves. Take these men and be purified along with them; and pay their expenses that they may shave their heads, and then everyone will know that the rumours they have heard about you have no truth in them but

that you yourself also walk in observance of the Law. As for the Gentiles who have accepted the faith, we wrote decreeing that they should abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from anything that has been strangled and from fornication.' Then on the next day Paul took the men and was purified along with them; he went into the Temple, and announced his intention of completing the days of purification until the offering was made for each one of them."

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, he presented the church with the gifts (a great famine had impoverished local believers) and he presented them with a problem...

The leaders accepted him and saw God's hand in his work; but rumours had been spread that he had encouraged Jews to forsake their ancestral faith.

Paul had insisted that the Jewish Law was irrelevant for the Gentile; but he had never sought to draw the Jew away from the customs of his fathers.

Paul in Jerusalem

Paul honors Jewish customs among Christian Jews in Jerusalem

17) When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. 18) The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. 19) Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20) When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. 21) They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. 22) What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, 23) so do what we tell you. There are four men with us

who have made a vow. 24) Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. 25) As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

26) The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

The Christian Jews in Jerusalem were thankful for what God was doing among the Gentiles

“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord”

Yet they still wanted to maintain many of their own Jewish customs and practices.

The leaders saw a way in which Paul could guarantee the orthodoxy of his own conduct.

Four men were in the middle of observing the Nazarite vow (***Num 6***).

This was a vow taken in gratitude for some special blessing from the hand of God.

The vow could be taken for a lifetime or for a short time, typically 1 month.

Samson was a Nazarite from his conception

It involved abstention from meat and wine for thirty days, during which the hair had to be allowed to grow.

Sometimes the last seven days had to be spent entirely in the Temple courts.

At the end, certain offerings had to be brought
a year old lamb for a sin-offering,

a ram for a peace offering,
a basket of unleavened bread,
cakes of fine flour mingled with oil and
a meat offering and
a drink offering.

Finally, the hair had to be shorn and burned on the altar with the sacrifice.

Num 6:1 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them,

'When a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to the LORD, 3 he shall

- **abstain from wine and strong drink;
- he shall drink no vinegar, whether made from wine or strong drink,
- nor shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh or dried grapes.
- 4 'All the days of his separation he shall not eat anything that is produced by the grape vine, from the seeds even to the skin.**
- **5 'All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head.
- He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD;
- he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long.**
- **6 'All the days of his separation to the LORD he shall not go near to a dead person.
- 7 'He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. 8 'All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.
- 9 'But if a man dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his dedicated head of hair, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean; he shall shave it on the seventh day.
10 'Then on the eighth day he shall bring two**

turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting.

11 'The priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him concerning his sin because of the dead person.

And that same day he shall consecrate his head, 12 and shall dedicate to the LORD his days as a Nazirite, and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering;

but the former days will be void because his separation was defiled.

13 'Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are fulfilled,

he shall bring the offering to the doorway of the tent of meeting. 14 'He shall present his offering to the LORD:

- **one male lamb a year old without defect for a burnt offering and**
- **one ewe-lamb a year old without defect for a sin offering and**
- **one ram without defect for a peace offering,**
- **15 and a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and**
- **unleavened wafers spread with oil,**
- **along with their grain offering and**
- **their drink offering.**

16 'Then the priest shall present them before the LORD

- and shall offer his sin offering and his burnt offering.

- 17 'He shall also offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, together with the basket of unleavened cakes;

- the priest shall likewise offer its grain offering and its drink offering.

18 'The Nazirite shall then shave his dedicated head of hair at the doorway of the tent of meeting,

- and take the dedicated hair of his head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings.

19 'The priest shall

- **take the ram's shoulder when it has been boiled, and**
- **one unleavened cake out of the basket and**

**- one unleavened wafer,
and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite after he
has shaved his dedicated hair.**

**20 'Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering
before the LORD. It is holy for the priest, together with
- the breast offered by waving and
- the thigh offered by lifting up; and**

afterward the Nazirite may drink wine.'

**21 "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to
the LORD according to his separation, in addition to what
else he can afford; according to his vow which he takes, so
he shall do according to the law of his separation."**

The particular vow of consecration was probably similar to Paul's Nazirite vow mentioned in Acts 18:18.

**Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good
while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed
thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila;
having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.**

This was a costly business.

Work had to be given up and all the elements of the sacrifice had to be bought.

It was beyond the resources of many who would have wished to undertake it.

It was considered an act of piety for some wealthier person to defray the expenses of someone taking the vow.

Elders among these Christian Jews advise Paul to "sponsor" (pay the sacrificial expenses) four Christian Jews who are fulfilling a vow of consecration,

This way Paul could show the community of Christian Jews in Jerusalem that he was not opposed to their continued observance of certain Jewish customs, even though he does

not require such observance of Gentiles who come to Christ.

There was never a hint that such things would be required of Gentiles as a test of righteousness.

Even though the Jews are free from the law if they are Christians, that doesn't mean that they can't observe it even though they are no longer under the law (Cf. Galatians).

Paul's sponsorship of these Christian Jews who were completing their Nazirite vow is an example of what Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 9:20: And to the Jews I became as a Jew,
that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as
under the law, that I might win those who are under the
law..**

A SLANDEROUS CHARGE

Acts 21:27-36

**"When the seven days were nearly completed and when the
Jews from Asia had seen Paul in the temple, they stirred up
the whole mob and they attacked him shouting, 'Help, men of
Israel! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere
against the people, against the Law and against this place.
Furthermore he has brought Greeks into the Temple and
defiled this holy place.' For they had seen Trophimus the
Ephesian with him in the city and they thought that Paul had
taken him into the Temple. The whole city was disturbed and
the people rushed together. They laid hands on Paul and
dragged him outside the Temple and immediately the doors
were shut. While they were trying to kill him, the report
reached the commander of the battalion that all Jerusalem
was in an uproar. He at once took soldiers and centurions
and ran down to them. When they saw the commander and
the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the
commander came up to him and arrested him and ordered
him to be bound with two chains. He asked who he was and
what he had done. In the crowd some shouted one thing and
some another. When the commander was unable to discover**

the truth of the matter because of the disturbance, he ordered him to be taken into the barracks. When Paul came to the steps he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the mass of the people were following, shouting, "Kill him!"

Paul's good intentions in this led to a seeming disaster.

It was the time of Pentecost.

Jews were present in Jerusalem from all over the world.

Jews from Asia were there, who no doubt knew how effective Paul's work in Asia had been. They may have boarded ship with him during his journey back.

They had seen Paul in the city with Trophimus, whom they very likely knew.

The business of the vow would have taken Paul into the Temple courts frequently.

These Asian Jews assumed that Paul had taken Trophimus into the Temple along with him.

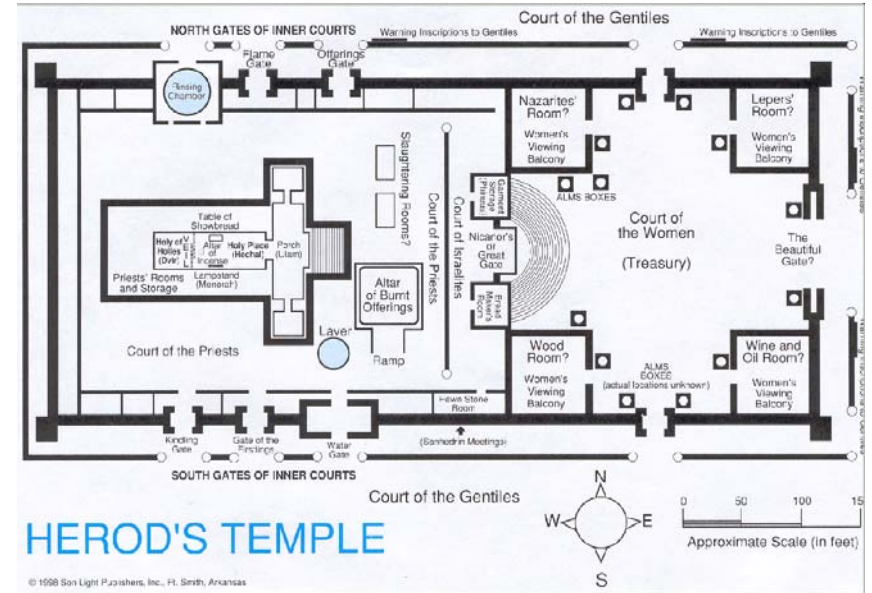
Jews from Asia stir a mob against Paul

27) When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, 28) shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." 29) (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)

30) The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.

Their claim that Paul is against the people [Israel], the law, and this place [the temple] is unfounded;

Paul simply rejected trust in any of these as a basis for righteousness before God, which comes only through Jesus Christ.



Trophimus was a Gentile and for a Gentile to enter the Temple was a terrible thing.

Gentiles could enter the Court of the Gentiles

But between that court and the Court of the Women there was a barrier and into that barrier there were inset tablets with this inscription

"No man of alien race is to enter within the balustrade and fence that goes round the Temple, and if anyone is taken in the act, let him know that he has himself to blame for the penalty of death that follows."

Even the Romans took this so seriously that they allowed the Jews to carry out the death penalty for this crime.

The Asian Jews then accused Paul of destroying the Law, insulting the chosen people and defiling the Temple.

The charges against Paul in verse 28 are an echo of the charges Stephen was executed for (Acts 6:13).

Acts 6:13 *And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:*

The crowd (enlarged because it was feast-time, Acts 20:16) becomes enraged because they believe that Paul has not only preached against the people, the law, and the temple, but has also profaned the temple by bringing a Gentile into its inner courts.

They initiated a movement to lynch him.

Paul must have been reminded of when he was part of such a mob, agreeing with the martyrdom of Stephen (**Acts 7:54-8:1**).

Act 7:54 *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.*

55 *But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

57 *But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. 58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"*

60 *Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.*

8:1 *Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

And of the trial of Jesus: "***The shout Away with him!***

Jesus' death had been demanded not far from that spot some twenty-seven years before (Luke 23:18; John 19:15)."

Luke 23:18 *And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:*

John 19:15 *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers

31) *While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32) He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.*

33) *The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. 34) Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. 35) When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. 36) The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!"*

37) *As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"*

38) *"Do you speak Greek?" he replied. "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"*

39) *Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."*

In the north-west corner of the Temple area stood the Castle of

Antonia, built by Herod the Great.

At the great festivals, when the atmosphere was electric, it was garrisoned by a cohort of one thousand men.

Rome insisted on civil order and a riot was unforgivable sin both for the populace who staged it and the commander who allowed it.

The commander heard what was going on and came down with his troops.

For Paul's own safety he was arrested and chained by each arm to two soldiers.

In the confusion the commander was able to extract no coherent charge from the excited mob and Paul was actually carried through the seething mob into the barracks.

There was never a time when Paul was nearer death than this and it was the impartial justice of Rome which saved his life.

When Paul identified himself to the Roman commander, Claudis Lysias, the Chief Captain, it put Paul into an entirely different standing:

Paul was a citizen of Tarsus, not a suspected terrorist.

Josephus mentions the brief career of the Egyptian mentioned by the commander in mistaken association with Paul.

FACING THE FURY OF THE MOB

Acts 21:37-40

"When Paul was about to be brought into the barracks he said to the commander, 'May I say something to you?' He said, 'Can you speak Greek? Are you not then the Egyptian who some time ago started a revolution and led four thousand men of the Dagger-bearers out into the desert?' Paul said, 'I am a man who is a Jew, a native of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city. I ask you, let me speak to the people.' When he had given his permission to do so, Paul stood on the steps and made a gesture with his hand to the people. When a great silence had fallen, he spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue."

The Castle of Antonia was connected to the outer courts of the Temple by two flights of stairs on the northern and the western sides.

As the soldiers were struggling towards the steps to reach the sanctuary of their own barracks, Paul made an amazing request of the Captain of the Guard.

The captain was amazed to hear the accents of cultured Greek coming from this man whom the crowd were there to lynch so he suspected that Paul was another fugitive from Roman law.

Somewhere about A.D. 54, a 'dangerous Egyptian' (per Josephus) came out of Egypt,

claimed to be a prophet,

advised a multitude of followers to go with him to the Mount of Olives, and at his command the walls would fall down.

His followers had been Dagger-bearers, violent nationalists who were deliberate assassins.

They concealed daggers in their cloaks, mixed with the mob and struck as they could.

Felix informed; Roman soldiers with weapons attacked; the Egyptian escaped.

The captain had thought that Paul was this revolutionary Egyptian come back.

But when Paul stated his credentials, the captain knew that, whatever else he was, he was no revolutionary thug; and so he allowed him to speak.

Paul asked the captain to be allowed to address the furious mob.

Here is Paul exercising his consistent policy of looking danger in the face.

Why did the commander permit him to speak to the crowd?

Because he had recognized that he had done wrong to Paul, a

Roman citizen, when he bound him with chains (21:33), and because he hoped that Paul's speech might satisfy the mob.

This was an opportunity Paul had waited a lifetime for; he had an incredible passion for the salvation of his fellow Jews,

Romans 9:1-5 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, [2] That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. [3] For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: [4] Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; [5] Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul is permitted to address the mob that wanted to kill him

40) Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:

When Paul turned to speak he made a gesture for silence, and, almost miraculously, complete silence fell on that roaring mob.

At that moment the very power of God flowed through him.

Similarities between Jesus and Paul as shown in Acts 20 and 21:

- Like Jesus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem with a group of his disciples.
- Like Jesus, Paul was opposed by hostile Jews who plotted against his life.
- Like Jesus, Paul made or received three successive predictions of his coming sufferings in Jerusalem, including being handed over to the Gentiles.
- Like Jesus, Paul had followers who tried to discourage him from going to Jerusalem and the fate that awaited him there.

- Like Jesus, Paul declared his readiness to lay down his life.
- Like Jesus, he was determined to complete his ministry and not be deflected from it.
- Like Jesus, Paul expressed his abandonment to the will of God.
- Like Jesus, Paul came to Jerusalem to give something.
- Like Jesus, Paul was unjustly arrested on the basis of a false accusation.
- Like Jesus, Paul alone is arrested, none of the other followers of Jesus.
- Like Jesus, Paul heard the mob crying out, Away with him!
- Like Jesus, the Roman officer handling Paul's case did not know his true identity.
- Like Jesus, Paul was associated with terrorists by Roman officials.

Paul really did know the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

Philip. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Paul's experience was obviously different in many ways; not the least of which was the manner in which he will make his defense in the next chapter, while Jesus refused to defend Himself before His accusers.