

## ***The Power of a Dead Man***

Paul Lives as if He's Already Gone with the Lord

### **The Empowered Church - Part 38**

Acts 21:1-26

December 2-3, 2023

#### **Introduction**

- The subject we are talking about, admittedly, I am still too immature to be considered an expert on it. It's the matter of living above this life, fully for Christ, with abandon willing to die to self and live only for Christ all the time.
- **Building & Preserving Self** - The amount of time we spend either A. Building our Kingdom or B. Self-Preservation, is incredible. It's the vast majority. But what we saw in both Jesus Christ and Paul the Apostle were examples of men who lived wholly for the sake of the Father and others. Their lives mattered in ways that our lives may not...yet.
- **The 2 Keys to living wholly committed to Christ are:**
  1. **The Proper Worldview** – our worldview is **how we imagine the universe works. It's our foundation for the WHY of our lives.** It's all the major and minor **beliefs that we think are TRUE that make up our existence.** For example someone with a worldview of evolution would have to accept an adjustment to the nobility of mankind and value of life. A worldview of humanism would have a similar impact. But a Christian or biblical worldview would say that God is the center of all things and not only were we created but we were created for a purpose: Relationship with God and glory to His name. I do not pretend to have a perfect biblical worldview personally, but I do my best to allow the Bible to dictate to me what's true and real as opposed to the shifting world around me.
  2. **Full Understanding of Our Identity in Christ** – On the cross Jesus used the phrase, 'it is **finished**'. He was speaking specifically of the atonement for sins as He died. However, the application of that phrase is that **Jesus Christ did everything to make us what we ought to be and what we were created to be. He restored the Adam & Eve intention for us.** He restored our value, our purpose, our preciousness. He set us on a freed up path to live for God in the way that God wants us to live and have the impact that we were intended to have. What this means is that despite how we feel about ourselves, if we are true believers, then things about us are TRUE FACTS regardless. We are God's chosen people, loved and cherished. We are connected to Christ in a fusion way and that means that we are empowered by authority and power in His name and by our new creation life. The rest of our human lives will be discovering all the things that are TRUE about us, despite how we feel.
- **Necessary Biblical Worldview** - Both of those important elements are contingent upon a Biblical worldview which you can **only have if you read the Bible or are taught directly from the Bible.** Even here at Bridgeway, there is a bias. As much as I try to teach the material as cleanly according to the author's intention, my **bias**, and the bias of modern-day, American Christianity bleeds in. Therefore, **my teaching must be the supplement** to direct intake of Scripture and not vice versa.

- **My Only Advancement** – my only advancement in this area of dying to self and living for Christ fully has come from **getting my head in Scripture**. I am in a completely different mindset after studying Scripture than when I began.
- **At the end of the day if we are living for ourselves, we will hold back from God’s best for us. On the other hand...**

### **A DEAD Person Fears NOTHING**

- **Recap – Last Week**
  - **Let’s Appreciate Pastor Judah!**
  - **Goodbye to Ephesus** - Paul was saying goodbye to churches that he had recently spent **3 years** investing in, predominantly Ephesus, which was always heavy on his heart.
  - **Gifts to Jerusalem by Pentecost** - He knew he was called to go to Jerusalem to deliver the gifts he had gathered along the way. He had to hurry to get there by Pentecost.
  - **HS Revelation of Rough Jerusalem** - The Holy Spirit had told him that Jerusalem was going to be rough, but he didn’t know what that meant.
    - **This says it all (mindset)** - Ac 20:22–25 – *“And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. <sup>24</sup> But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. <sup>25</sup> And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.”*
  - **Lots of tears on both sides** – he went off to the boat.

### **Lesson**

- **Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow**
  - **Paul Says Goodbye’s on the Way Back to Jerusalem**
    - **Ac 21:1–6** – *“And when we [the author, Luke included] had parted from them<sup>1</sup> and set sail, we came by a straight course to [the island of] Cos, and the next day to [the island of] Rhodes [150ft brass Colossus], and from there to [seaport town of] Patara. <sup>2</sup> And having found a ship crossing [the Mediterranean Sea Eastward] to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. <sup>3</sup> When we had come in sight of [the large island of] Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and [after a 5 day voyage<sup>2</sup>] landed at [the city of] Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. <sup>4</sup> And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days<sup>3</sup>. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we*

<sup>1</sup> “we tore ourselves away from them” (if we give the verb its full force)... The Greek verb here is the passive of ἀποσπάω (the verb is used in the active voice in 20:30 in the pejorative sense of enticing people to follow false teaching).” NICNT, FF. Bruce

<sup>2</sup> “This meant a cross-sea voyage instead of a coasting voyage; the journey was thus considerably shortened. (The ship was probably a large merchant vessel; smaller craft hugged the coast.) According to Chrysostom, the voyage from Patara to Tyre took five days.” NICNT

<sup>3</sup> “it was necessary to spend a week, as the ship’s cargo had to be discharged; but the time saved on the voyage meant that the party could afford to wait at Tyre until the ship was ready to sail on again.” NICNT

*prayed<sup>6</sup> and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.”*

- **“We” language again** – this means that Luke is definitely back in the crew.
- **Parted from them – Who?** – the Ephesian church members and leaders.
- **We set sail** – the only way back rapidly was by boat.
  - **To Cos<sup>4</sup>** – a small island in the Aegean sea.
  - **To Rhodes<sup>5</sup>** – a larger and historically important island. It once held what many considered the greatest of the 7 wonders of the world, the Colossus. It was a 105ft brass statue that stood on one side of the entrance into the bay (not astride like normally thought). It was toppled by an earthquake and by the time Paul was born it was only ruins.
  - **To Patara<sup>6</sup>** – a major seaport town, on the Southwest shore of Lycia (what we know as Turkey today).
  - **To Phoenicia<sup>7</sup>** – a narrow ribbon of coastline, the edge of Syria/Northern Israel. It’s a region, not a nation.
  - **Around Cyprus<sup>8</sup>** – the large island with 17 cities that Paul went with Barnabas on the first missionary journey and where Barnabas (his hometown) and John Mark spent a lot of their ministry time.
  - **To Tyre<sup>9</sup> in Syria** – This was an ancient city that was partnered with Sidon its sister city about 17 miles away. They were historically friendly with the Jews and even provided the timber for construction of Solomon’s Temple.

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<sup>4</sup> “a small Greek island northwest of Rhodes (Acts 21:1) in the Aegean Sea.” WSNTDICT

“one of the islands of the Dodecanese, famed as the home of the medical school founded by Hippocrates in the fifth century B.C.” NICNT

<sup>5</sup> “Ῥόδος *Rhódos*; gen. *Rhódou*, masc. proper noun. Rhodes, meaning a rose. A beautiful island in the Mediterranean, thirteen miles from the coast of Asia Minor. It is forty–six miles long, eighteen miles wide and has an area of about 420 square miles. The city of Rhodes at the western end of the island was founded about 400 B.C. by the Dorians and was very prosperous in the reign of Alexander. Jews were among its inhabitants during the Maccabean period. Paul visited it on his return from his third missionary journey (Acts 21:1). He might have seen there the ruins of the Colossus of Rhodes, the greatest of the seven wonders of the world. This was made of brass and was 105 ft. high. It stood at the right of the port as vessels entered, and not astride the channel as is generally represented in pictures. It was erected 290 B.C. and toppled by an earthquake in 224 B.C. The city also had a beautiful temple of Apollo built by Herod the Great. In the Middle Ages the city was held by the Knights of Saint John. It was captured by the Turks in A.D. 1522 and is now part of Greece.” WSNTDICT

<sup>6</sup> “3959. Πάταρα *Pátara*; gen. *Patárōn*, neut. proper noun. Patara, a major seaport town on the southwest shore of Lycia, was located about seven miles southeast of the mouth of the Xanthus river (Acts 21:1). It had a good harbor and was a convenient stop for ships traveling east during the autumn winds. Paul stopped here on his way to Tyre during his third missionary journey.” WSNTDICT

<sup>7</sup> “5403. Φοινίκη *Phoinikē*; gen. *Phoinikēs*, fem. proper noun from *phoinix* (5404), palm tree. Phoenice or Phoenicia, the narrow coastland stretching along the northeast Mediterranean. It is bordered on the east by the Lebanon mountains and on the southeast by the hills of Galilee. Famous for its commerce, it was a part of OT Canaan. In NT times Phoenicia extended as far south as Dor, sixteen miles south of Tyre. It was thus a narrow ribbon of coastland, being some two hundred miles long at its greatest extent (Acts 11:19; 15:3; 21:2).” WSNTDICT

<sup>8</sup> “2954. Κύπρος *Kýpros*; gen. *Kýprou*, fem. proper noun. Cyprus, a large fertile island in the eastern Mediterranean about 150 miles long and from 50 to 60 miles broad. Venus (or Aphrodite) was its chief goddess, hence her name Cypria. In ancient times, it contained two prominent cities, Salamis and Paphos, and seventeen towns. Salamis was at the east and Paphos at the west end of the island (Acts 13:4). Barnabas was a native of Cyprus and its people are mentioned in biblical history (Acts 4:36; 13:4; 15:39). Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus, was converted through Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:7ff.) and thus became the first Christian ruler on record. Cyprus was colonized by the Phoenicians at a very early date. Known as Chittim or Kittim in the OT (Num. 24:24). Through Greek colonists it received the name of *Kýpros*, perhaps from the cypress tree. Thothmes III of Egypt conquered the island. In 294 B.C., the island was a dependency of Egypt. Cato took possession of it for the Romans. Cicero was proconsul there in 52 B.C.” WSNTDICT

<sup>9</sup> “5184. Τύρος *Túros*; gen. *Túrou*, fem. proper noun. Tyre. In Hebr. *Tsōr* (6865), rock. A celebrated city of Phoenicia on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, twenty–one miles south of Sidon. The first scriptural mention of Tyre is Josh. 19:29. At that time, about 1444 B.C., it was a strong city and was coupled with the Zidonians (Josh. 13:6; Is. 23:2, 4, 12; Jer. 47:4). The two cities Tyre and Sidon, being only 21 miles apart, were intimately associated. Tyre, under King Hiram, held friendly relations with Israel under David and Solomon. David’s census extended to Tyre to embrace the Jews (2 Sam. 24:7). The Tyrians furnished the timber for the temple and other great buildings of Jerusalem. The cedars of Lebanon were floated some eighty–five miles from Tyre to Joppa and thence taken to Jerusalem. In NT times, Tyre was a populous and thriving

- **Stayed in Tyre for a week (7 days)** – Although Paul’s in a hurry there are just necessary stops in ancient travel. This was one of them. Since they had time there, Paul reached out to the Christian Church that was there.
- **The church (disciples) of Tyre<sup>10</sup>** – what do we know about them? There is no indication that Paul or his team had anything to do with planting this particular church. The most likely history connected to the time when Stephen was martyred and the Christians fled Jerusalem. Some of those would have traveled north and settled here in the Jewish-friendly city of Tyre.
- **Through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem<sup>11</sup>** – this is a difficult phrase for me, not just on the surface but deeper. What it’s saying is that there were Tyre believers who were operating in the prophetic and they were giving messages to Paul NOT to go to the very location that the Holy Spirit had told him he MUST go. **Did the Holy Spirit contradict Himself? No.** What this likely means is that **there were many believers who operated in the prophetic and they all had confirmation from the Holy Spirit what was actually going to happen to Paul. It’s that revelation (from the Holy Spirit) that fueled their human interest to protect Paul.** The Holy Spirit wasn’t telling them to stop Paul. The Holy Spirit had already confirmed that Paul should go (19:21; 20:22). God doesn’t contradict Himself, although He does give confusing messages sometimes.
  - **What happens when two believers get contrasting revelations?** – as long as I have been a senior leader in ministry – 30 years so far – I have heard competing views come from the mouths of believers around the same issues. One Christian says that God said one thing and another Christian says another. **It has made me extraordinarily suspicious of the reliability of human beings.** Unfortunately with the name of God attached to statements it makes it more complicated and we will talk about that a little later in the message. But for now I want to highlight that it’s highly **confusing** when two Christians give opposing views of what God thinks or says. Someone is right and someone is wrong, or they are both wrong. **That is why we need to weigh carefully alleged words from God or opinions of Christians.**
- **Another Goodbye** – the whole church, kids, and everything, came down to the dock on the beach and they had a prayer time and said their goodbyes and they sailed away to Jerusalem.
  - **The burden of a Pioneer** – they are equipped and called to start things but always have to leave those they have bonded with. That’s tough.
  - **The burden of a Pastor** – you are the one that stays and everyone else leaves eventually.

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city. Christ referred to it and visited its borders (Matt. 11:21, 22; 15:21; Mark 3:8; 7:24, 31; Luke 6:17; 10:13, 14). Paul spent seven days at Tyre (Acts 21:3, 4) which early became the seat of a Christian bishopric.” WSNTDICT

<sup>10</sup> “They knew that there was a Christian church in Tyre; it had been founded, in all probability, as a result of the dispersal of Jerusalem Hellenists after Stephen’s death (cf. 11:19).” NICNT

<sup>11</sup> “It should not be concluded that his determination to go on was disobedience to the guidance of the Spirit of God; it was under the constraint of that Spirit that he was bound for Jerusalem with such determination (19:21; 20:22). It was natural that his friends who by the prophetic spirit were able to foresee his tribulation and imprisonment should try to dissuade him from going on, but with a complete lack of concern for his own safety, so long as he could fulfil his sacred stewardship, Paul like his Master “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51).” NICNT

- **Understanding Prophecy**

- **The Early Church Prophets**

- **Ac 21:7–11** – *“When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at [the beach port of] Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers [and sisters] and stayed with them for one day. <sup>8</sup> On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea [Philippi in the Galilee region], and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist [not the Apostle], who was one of the seven [original deacons], and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. <sup>12</sup> <sup>10</sup> While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup> And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the [radical group of] Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the <sup>13</sup> Gentiles.’”*

- **Sailed from Tyre to Ptolemais<sup>14</sup>** – where is that? A city south of Tyre named after one of the Ptolemies of Egypt.
- **Connected with the church in Ptolemais for a day** – Paul is always on mission. He didn’t want to waste a lot of time. He could have just taken the day off but honestly he probably needed the place to stay, and he always wanted to bless and encourage believers where he could.
- **Arrived in Caesarea<sup>15</sup>** – where is this? There are two major cities in Israel named Caesarea (Caesarea Philippi in the North & Caesarea Palestine/Maritime in the South). This is the northern one. Obviously with a name like Caesar, during Roman days it was going to be a popular name. This was in Upper Galilee, Israel.
- **Stayed at Philip the Evangelist’s<sup>16</sup> house** (for many days) – who is this guy? It says that he was ‘one of the seven.’ Those are the original (OG) deacons that

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<sup>12</sup> “Several years later Philip and his daughters, with other Palestinian Christians, migrated to the province of Asia, and spent their remaining days there. The tombs of Philip and of two at least of his daughters were pointed out at Hierapolis in the Lycus valley toward the end of the second century. The daughters, or at least some of them, lived to a great age, and were highly esteemed as informants on persons and events belonging to the early years of Judaeian Christianity. It has been surmised that even at the time with which we are dealing information such as Philip and his daughters could supply was highly prized by Luke, who made use of it in the composition of his twofold history<sup>10</sup>—not only during the few days which he spent at Caesarea now, but also during the two years of Paul’s imprisonment there (cf. 24:27). But nothing is said of any prophecies which they uttered during the present visit: a romancer could hardly have let slip the opportunity of putting some appropriate words into their mouths.” NICNT

<sup>13</sup> “Greek *loudaioi* probably refers here to Jewish religious leaders, and others under their influence, in that time.” ESV note.

<sup>14</sup> “4424. Πτολεμαίς *Ptolemaís*; gen. *Ptolemaídos*, fem. proper noun. Ptolemais, a city named after one of the Ptolemies of Egypt; called Accho in Jewish annals, and Ptolemais under the rule of the Romans and Macedonians. It is often mentioned in the Apocrypha. Paul, on returning from his third missionary journey, visited Ptolemais and stayed there one day (Acts 21:7). The place is now called Akka or Accho.” WSNTDICT  
“Ptolemais, the most southerly of the Phoenician ports. It appears in the Old Testament under the name Acco (Judg. 1:31), by which it is known today. Although it was known in Graeco-Roman times by the name Ptolemais (which it received apparently in honor of Ptolemy II, 285–246 B.C.), it later resumed its Semitic name, Gallicized in the age of the Crusaders to Acre. At this time it was a Roman colony. It had been evangelized probably about the same time as Tyre, and Paul and his friends spent the day in the company of the Christians of the city.” NICNT

<sup>15</sup> “Caesarea Philippi. A city built in upper Galilee near the sources of the Jordan River, at the foot of Mount Hermon, called Paneas because it was the center of the worship of the heathen god Pan. Augustus Caesar presented it, with the surrounding country, to Herod the Great who built a temple there in honor of the emperor. Herod’s son, Philip the Tetrarch, enlarged the town and named it Caesarea Philippi to distinguish it from the other Caesarea and in honor of himself and Tiberius. Thereafter, for a time, it bore the name of Neronias, in honor of Nero. It is generally believed to have occupied the site of the ancient city called Laisch or Leshen (Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:29) and Dan (Judg. 18:2). It was in this area that Peter made his confession in regard to Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13–17; Mark 8:27). Now the village is called Banias.”

<sup>16</sup> “Philip the Evangelist who was appointed a deacon to serve at tables (Acts 6:5; 21:8). After the death of Stephen he preached the gospel at Samaria (Acts 8:5, 6, 12, 13 [cf. 8:14]) and baptized the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:38 [cf. 8:5ff.])” WSNTDICT

“Later he engaged in missionary activity in Samaria and in the coastal plain of Judaea,... It is from this missionary activity that he is called “Philip the evangelist,” perhaps to distinguish him from Philip the apostle. Even so, they are confused by later writers. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, writing to Victor of Rome c. A.D. 190, includes among the “great luminaries” whose tombs could be pointed out in the province of Asia “Philip,

were called by the Apostles to start the next ring of ministry. He is a big deal. He was called 'Philip the Evangelist' because of his **missionary activity** during and predominantly after his deacon responsibilities. He is the one that was prompted by the Holy Spirit to go over by the chariot of the **Ethiopian Eunuch** that we studied in Acts **chapter 8**.

- **He had 4 unmarried daughters who prophesied** – let's pause for a second. This is a weird description. First of all how is it that all 4 received the gift of prophecy and secondly why mention that they were all 'unmarried?' Clearly **their father raised them up in the Lord**. The mention of 'unmarried' usually means that they **dedicated their lives to ministry and didn't bother getting married**. That is a HUGE dedication and exhibits their passion for the Lord. It's rare that all four of them were like that. As far as their prophetic gifting, **sometimes the Holy Spirit does that and sometimes it means that all four operated in prophecy but maybe not all of them were specifically 'gifted' with prophecy. All believers can prophecy but gifted or called/assigned prophets (office) will do more so.**
- **Agabus the prophet<sup>17</sup> from Judea showed up** – who's this guy? We've **met this guy before when he predicted a coming famine<sup>18</sup>** (Acts 11 - that came true in history btw). He is a Christian who was living in Jerusalem, so he would have to come up to make this visit.
  - **Why did he come?** - Was he already coming or only came when he heard that Paul was coming (more likely the second).
- **He bound himself (hands & feet) with Paul's belt** – this is quite the **dramatic display**. It makes me laugh a bit at the awkwardness of it, but it's not really a laughing matter. This is the Holy Spirit revealing things here and it's supernatural. **Although we shouldn't always assume that all 'words from the Lord' are legit, we should take them seriously and thoughtfully**. So, what's the display about? Perhaps he saw this in a vision and was reenacting it. Perhaps he heard from the Lord to do this. **Perhaps the Lord spoke through an idea he had**

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one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps at Hierapolis, with his two daughters who grew old as virgins, and another daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests in Ephesus." But Eusebius, to whom we are indebted for this quotation (*HE* 3.31.3), plainly understood the reference to be to Philip the evangelist, for immediately afterward he reproduces from Proclus the Montanist's *Dialogue* with the Roman presbyter Gaius (c. A.D. 200) the claim that "the four daughters of Philip, who were prophetesses, were in Hierapolis in Asia; their tomb is there, and their father's also"—and quotes Acts 21:8 as the biblical reference to this family. That it was Philip the evangelist who migrated to Asia with his daughters was maintained by T. Zahn, *Apostel und Apostelschüler in der Provinz Asien*, FGNTK 6 (Leipzig, 1900), pp. 158–75; A Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, E.T. (London, 1907), p. 153; that it was Philip the apostle was maintained by J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London, 1879), pp. 45–47; J. Chapman, *John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel* (London, 1911), pp. 64–71. But others have urged us not to overlook the possibility that the same person is meant, that "Philip was originally one of the 'Twelve' and ... went over to the 'Seven' " (so, most recently, M. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, E.T. [London, 1983], p. 14; he refers further to E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums I* [Stuttgart/Berlin, 1924], pp. 296, 338; J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, E.T. [New York, 1959], p. 167, n. 4)." NICNT

<sup>17</sup> "Ἄγαβος *Ágabos*; gen. *Agábou*, masc. proper noun. Agabus, a Christian prophet living at Jerusalem (Acts 11:27–30; 21:10–11). Though the prophets were not essentially predictors of the future, the case of Agabus shows that their functions sometimes did include the actual prediction of coming events. At Antioch, Agabus foretold a famine over all the world in the days of Claudius. Both Suetonius and Eusebius date a famine in the fourth year of Claudius, A.D. 45; and since Judea as well as Greece suffered, it is probably this famine to which Agabus referred. The other prophecy of Agabus followed the OT method of symbolism and has a close parallel in John 21:18. He foretold to Paul his imprisonment in Jerusalem, but did not thereby divert him from the journey (Acts 21:10, 11)." WSNTDICT

<sup>18</sup> "In 11:27–28 it was told that Agabus came down from Jerusalem to Antioch with some other prophets and foretold the famine of Claudius's day." NICNT

to demonstrate it.<sup>19</sup> We don't know. We do know that it was accurate because we know the rest of the story.

- **The message from the Holy Spirit**
  - **“Thus Sayeth the Lord” – I’m not a fan of Bridgeway folks using this phrase. It’s an entirely legit phrase but** I have too much honor for it and I don’t think that most modern-day Christians know enough about their prophetic gift to use it. When you say, ‘thus says the Lord’ there is no room for argument. It’s a dangerous phrase. God is never wrong. You better be sure that what God wanted to say is exactly coming through you, as a fallible human, in the exact way, with the exact demeanor, at the exact time, with the exact words and message. Therefore I prefer, ‘I think the Lord is telling me...’ or ‘I feel like God may be saying...’ It allows people to process it, filter it, and gives them a reminder that human agency is tricky and they will need to discern what’s from the Lord or not.
  - **This is how the Jews of Jerusalem** – who are they? The group of radical Orthodox Jews that hated Paul’s ministry and stood against Christianity. Remember, Paul is a Jew and a lot of the key followers of the Jerusalem Church were ‘Jews of Jerusalem’. So, it’s not a broad brush statement. It’s very tailored. People knew what he meant.
  - **Will bind the owner of this belt** – Paul.
  - **And hand him over to the Gentiles** – who are they? The Roman authorities.
    - **Sounds right (prior revelation) and like Jesus** - This not only sounds accurate to Paul’s revelation from the Lord, but it sounds like a repeat of what’s been happening and certainly what happened to Jesus Christ Himself! The Jews didn’t have the legal right to kill people in judgment during the Roman occupation, so they had to go through the proper channels. That means if they had something that needed to be done that serious, they would have to hand their prisoner over to the Roman authorities for their action.
- **Panic at the Disco**
  - **The Church Panics at the Prophecy**
    - **Ac 21:12–14** – *“When we heard this [prophetic revelation], we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking<sup>20</sup> my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” <sup>14</sup> And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”*

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<sup>19</sup> “The mode of his prophecy is reminiscent of much Old Testament prophecy: it is conveyed in action as well as in word. As Ahijah the Shilonite tore his new cloak to show how Solomon’s kingdom would be disrupted (1 Kings 11:29–39), as Isaiah went about naked and barefoot to show how the Egyptians would be led into captivity by the Assyrians (Isa. 20:2–4), as Ezekiel mimicked the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem by laying siege himself to a replica of the city (Ezek. 4:1–3), so Agabus foretold the binding of Paul by tying himself up with Paul’s girdle. The action was as much part of the prophecy as the spoken word: both together communicated the effective and self-fulfilling word of God (cf. Isa. 55:11).” NICNT

<sup>20</sup> “Gk. συνθρύπτοντές μου τὴν καρδίαν, “pounding” my heart (i.e., my resolution) “like a washerwoman” (J. A. Findlay). Luke does not explain why Paul regarded his visit to Jerusalem as so solemnly imperative; his determination can be better understood in the light of Rom. 15:25–32, where Paul sets forth the importance of his going there with the evidence of ministry among the Gentiles thus far.” NICNT

- **When we heard this** – notice how one message, one revelation, one bit of information can turn a whole room around.
- **Everyone tried to stop him** – interestingly **Luke** puts himself in this camp. He says, ‘we and the people there urged him not to go to Jerusalem.’ Luke must have heard Paul a number of times talk about **WHY he HAD to Go**. He also saw how prior people trying to stop Paul **broke Paul’s heart**. So, why would he join in on the band wagon? Likely because they believed the prophecy so strongly they were in a sense believing that Paul would die in Jerusalem and wanted it to be another way. It’s the same reason **why the disciples kept trying to stop Jesus from being arrested**. It may be the right thing but that doesn’t mean it needs to happen on my watch.
- **Paul’s Response**
  - **What are you doing?** – this shouldn’t be your response. This shouldn’t be how you are acting. **You know better than this**.
  - **Weeping and breaking my heart** – I know I have to go but **now I have to disappoint all of you too?** C’mon guys, I need you with me. It’s too hard to see your faces like this and begging me. I don’t want to tell you no. I don’t want to make the hard call. I will but **you are making this so much harder**.
  - **I am ready not only to be imprisoned but to die in Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus** – Wow! What a response. He is not placating them at all. He is **doubling down on what he’s ready to do**. He’s explaining that this is not a matter of making a decision or being swayed by people he loves. **It has nothing to do with them**. This is about God and what Paul knows he has to do. Paul says, ‘I may be imprisoned there, and I’m good with that. I get it. I was told that already, but hey if God pushes that envelope and wants me to die as well, then die I will. Heck, I’m a dead man walking anyway. I haven’t lived for myself since the Road to Damascus, so it’s all up to my Lord (master) anyway.’
    - **Living with a ‘ready to die for the Lord’ mindset today** – It’s this mindset that all believers should live with. **We are far too tied to this world. We are too busy building our kingdoms so that when God tells us to risk something, the cost is too high and we deny Him**. Consider why we say no to God. How did we get there? Why is it such a risk? What have we built?
  - **Since he would not be persuaded, we stopped** – Paul had put his foot down and they knew there was no changing his mind. It was clear. So everyone backed off and had to accept his coming fate.
  - **“Let the will of the Lord be done.”** – This was kind of an emotional resignation but also an acceptance that **God IS TRULY in charge, and we need to live like He is**. That means that **after we have done what’s in our power to do (and it’s healthy, appropriate, and good), we hand ourselves and situations over to the Lord and await His response and call**.

- **I Have Some Good News**

- **The Jerusalem Church Celebrates Paul's Ministry Wins**

- **Ac 21:15–20a** – *“After these days we got ready<sup>21</sup> and [traveled the final 65 miles on land to go] ~~went~~ up<sup>22</sup> to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us<sup>23</sup> to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early<sup>24</sup> disciple<sup>25</sup>, with whom we should lodge. <sup>17</sup> When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. <sup>18</sup> On the following day Paul went in with us to James [the Just, the younger brother of Jesus], and all the elders were present. <sup>26</sup> <sup>19</sup> After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. <sup>20</sup> And when they heard it, they glorified God.”*

- **We went up to Jerusalem** – it was a 65 mile journey that they rode (likely on animals, not walking). When they got near the city they had to climb elevation since Jerusalem is on a low mountain.
- **The group grew (some Caesarean believers came along)** – Paul seems to gather people as he is going. Why are they coming? They are likely the folks who organized lodging ahead of time and they were going along to make sure it all worked out for Paul & Co. It's a big team to get housing for.
- **They stayed in Jerusalem with Mnason of Cyprus – who is this guy?** The passage says that he was, ‘an early disciple.’ What does that mean? It means that he's been one of the OG's. He's likely Greek by birth and a convert.
  - **A certain disciple<sup>27</sup>** – it's worth noting that in the Jerusalem area it's rare to find a believer that would be comfortable bringing a bunch of Gentiles into their house (Paul's crew). Since Mnason was originally from Cyprus he would be more Hellenistic (Greek) and be open to it. The fact that he had moved to Jerusalem to attend the Jerusalem church was a bonus.
- **The Jerusalem brothers (Church) welcomed them gladly** – they were excited to see Paul and the team. It was a joyous event.

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<sup>21</sup> “It has been inferred from Luke's language that animals were provided for them so that they might ride rather than go on foot.” NICNT

<sup>22</sup> Not geographically but in elevation.

<sup>23</sup> “The Western text expands: “and these brought us to those with whom we were to find hospitality. And when we arrived at a certain village, we put up with one Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing.” See 19 below.” NICNT

<sup>24</sup> “Luke's special mention of Mnason's being a disciple of long standing has suggested to some readers that he acquired some valuable information from him about the early days; Ramsay, for example, thought that Mnason was Luke's authority for the episodes of Aeneas and Dorcas.” NICNT

<sup>25</sup> “The expression ἀρχαῖω μαθητῆι (“a disciple of long standing”) probably means that he had been a disciple from the beginning (ἀρχή).” NICNT

<sup>26</sup> “Of those “pillars” only one was now resident in Jerusalem. Peter and John had undertaken more extended missionary responsibilities. But James the Lord's brother remained, exercising wise and judicious leadership over the mother-church, greatly respected not only by its members but by the ordinary Jews of Jerusalem also. In his administrative duties he was helped by a band of colleagues—the elders of the Jerusalem church. How many they were is not said, but in view of the large number of believers in Jerusalem<sup>28</sup> they may well have numbered seventy—the traditional figure for elders in Israel. However many they were, all of them were present to receive Paul and his associates the day after their arrival in the city.” NICNT

<sup>27</sup> “Not every member of the church of Jerusalem would be prepared to have a party of Gentile Christians in his home; but they might be sure of a hospitable reception from Mnason, one of the small minority of Hellenists still remaining in the mother-church.” NICNT

- **Next day Paul goes to see James<sup>28</sup> & the Elders<sup>29</sup>** – these are the big dogs, so lets talk about why and how big of a dog they are. Galatians 2:9 refers to James as a **Pillar of the Church**. James is **Jesus’ brother**. Clearly he **converted** after the death of his brother. Both the Bible and history confirms that he became the head of the church in Jerusalem and was beloved by all. He is the **author of the book of James in the NT**. He lasted longer than most of the apostles (he was not an apostle himself) because he leaned **very Jewish, formal, and orthodox**. He didn’t draw the same ire from the Jews that Paul or Peter did. He was not only conservative, but he was diplomatic. He led for a long time (depending on his historical death which is given 2 dates 10 years apart).
  - Ga 2:7–10 – *“On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised<sup>8</sup> (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),<sup>9</sup> and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.<sup>10</sup> Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.”*
- **He greeted them** – this would have been a bit more formal since they hadn’t spent a lot of time together if any.
- **He told them all the things God had done among the Gentiles on his journeys** – Paul was telling testimony of all the incredible things that God had been doing over the last number of years on this third missionary journey. It was surely stories of miracles, difficulties, changed lives, salvations, church plants, problems, etc. It’s stuff that Christians talk about and stuff that Christian leaders talk about.
- **When they heard it, they glorified God** – this is the whole reason for this type of ministry: Glory to God. We think so often too low, and only about the people involved (someone got saved). We forget the bigger picture of God’s glory which is paramount. When the Elders heard what God had done they gave Him the

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<sup>28</sup> “James the Lord’s brother (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), distinguished from the Twelve and particularly from James the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3; John 2:12; Acts 1:14 [cf. Matt. 12:47–50]). Other references to the Lord’s brothers are Matt. 12:46–50; Mark 3:31–35; Luke 8:19–21. During Christ’s ministry His brothers did not believe on Him (John 7:3–5), but later they were present with Mary and the apostles in an upper room (Acts 1:14). The following references outside the gospels have to do with James: Acts 1:13, 14; 12:17; 21:18–25; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:18, 19; 2:1–10. From these passages we learn that he was converted to a full acknowledgement of Christ (probably by the Resurrection), that the Lord appeared to him specially, that he became head of the Church of Jerusalem, and that he was put to death by the Jews either just before the siege (Hegesippus) or some 10 years earlier (Josephus). He was surnamed the Just by his fellow countrymen, and was greatly respected by all classes in Jerusalem. The Epistle of James is almost universally attributed to the brother of the Lord. This book is of greatest interest to students of the gospels. There is no epistle which contains in a small compass so many allusions to Christ’s teachings. Note the following striking parallels: Matt. 5:3 with James 2:5; Matt. 5:7 with James 2:13; Matt. 5:9 with James 3:18; Matt. 5:11, 12 with James 1:2, 9; Matt. 5:34–37 with James 5:12; Matt. 6:19 with James 5:2; Matt. 6:24 with James 4:4; Matt. 7:1 with James 4:11, 12; Matt. 7:7, 8 with James 1:5; Matt. 7:12 with James 2:8; Matt. 7:16 with James 3:11, 12; Matt. 7:24 with James 1:22; Matt. 12:36 with James 3:1, 2; Matt. 18:4 with James 4:6; Luke 6:24 with James 5:1; Luke 8:15; 21:19 (*hupomonē* [5281], patience, used by Luke only in his gospel) with James 1:3, 4; 5:11; Luke 12:16–21 with James 4:14; John 8:31 with James 1:25; John 13:17 with James 4:17. The Epistle of James is clearly the work of one trained in the strict observance of the Law, yet divorced from blind Pharisaic formalism denounced by our Lord (James 1:22–27; 2:8–12; 4:5–7; 5:10, 11).” WSNTDICT

<sup>29</sup> “James’s house must have been a building of some size, if it could accommodate the whole elderhood as well as the present visitors.” NICNT

glory and their faith was built up. It's why we need to tell each other what God's been doing.

- **This is a UNITY time** – most of these leaders had never been anywhere near where Paul had gone. They were hearing about stuff for the first time. A lot of them probably hadn't done much ministry at all with Gentiles, so it was all new. But they were getting their hearts knit together with Gentiles and Gentile churches. The family was growing, and they were connecting.
- **Well We Have Some Bad News**
  - **The Jerusalem Church Warns Paul About Disturbances Due to Ministry**
    - **Ac 21:20b–24** – *“And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.<sup>30</sup> They are all zealous<sup>31</sup> for the law [and traditions],<sup>21</sup> and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.<sup>22</sup> What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.<sup>23</sup> Do therefore what we tell you.<sup>32</sup> We have four men who are under a [30-day Nazirite] vow;<sup>33</sup> <sup>24</sup> take these men and purify yourself<sup>34</sup> along with them<sup>35</sup> [at the Temple] and pay their expenses<sup>36</sup>, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.”*
      - **They said to him** – now it was their turn to talk, and they had some things on their heart, and it wasn't all good news.

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<sup>30</sup> “The element of hyperbole in πόσαι μυριάδες (“how many myriads”) can be appreciated when it is remembered that, according to the calculations of Joachim Jeremias (“Die Einwohnerzahl Jerusalems zur Zeit Jesu” [1943], in *Abba* [Göttingen, 1966], pp. 335–41; *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, E.T. [London, 1969], pp. 77–84), the normal population of Jerusalem at this time was probably between 25,000 and 55,000. Several scholars, with no basis in the textual tradition, have argued for the deletion of τῶν πεπιστευκότων (“of those who have believed”) from v. 20, so that the “myriads” would be the Jerusalem Jews in general; so, among others, F. C. Baur, *Paul* E.T., I (London, 1876), pp. 201–4; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, E.T. (London, 1959), pp. 240–42; cf. A. D. Nock: “We may well be somewhat sceptical about this reference to the multitude (literally, ‘myriads’) of Jewish Christians: the danger was from ordinary Jews” (*St. Paul* [London, 1938], p. 136).” NICNT

<sup>31</sup> “When James and the elders describe the rank and file of the Jerusalem church as “zealots for the law,” the term “zealot” is not used in its party sense (for which see on 1:13) but in the sense in which Paul applies it to himself in Gal. 1:14, where he claims to have been “a zealot for the ancestral traditions.” Even so, it is unlikely that the church membership remained completely unaffected by the insurgent spirit which was abroad in the land during Felix’s governorship.” NICNT

<sup>32</sup> “Therefore, in their *naïveté*, they put a proposal to him.” NICNT

<sup>33</sup> “Four of their number had undertaken a Nazirite vow: if no time limit was specified, their vow would last for thirty days. During that period they would abstain from wine and strong drink, would avoid any defiling contact (e.g., with a corpse), and would leave their hair uncut. At the end of the period they would present an offering in the temple, and their hair, which they had now cut, would be consumed in the sacrificial fire.<sup>33</sup> Another Israelite might associate himself with Nazirites by defraying the cost of their offering; this was regarded as a pious and charitable action. The elders’ proposal, then, was that Paul should associate himself with the four Nazirites when they discharged their vow in the temple and pay their expenses.” NICNT

<sup>34</sup> The expectation was that Paul had been traveling among Gentiles and his purification was about that. He was not doing a Nazirite vow at this point, but we know that he had done it prior (he shaved off his hair in Cenchrea).

<sup>35</sup> “To do this Paul himself would have to be purified: he had just returned from a long residence in Gentile lands, and the ritual defilement which inevitably attached to him on that account had to be removed before he could take part in such a solemn ceremony. But his purification should be distinguished from the Nazirites’ purification. In the LXX the same Greek term does duty both for general purification from ritual defilement (as in Num. 19:12) and for the various forms of abstention which Nazirites had to practise throughout the period of their vow (as in Num. 6:3); and Luke here uses that term in both senses. If the two kinds of purification be distinguished, it will not be necessary to suppose either that Paul had a Nazirite vow of his own to discharge on this occasion or that the four Nazirites had inadvertently contracted some defilement during the period of their vow and had now to be purified from it.” NICNT

<sup>36</sup> “The offering comprised one he-lamb, one ewe-lamb, one ram, and accompanying food and drink offerings (Num. 6:14–15). Together with the “hair of consecration” the whole was called a “hair offering” (Mishnah, *Nāzīr* 6.5–6).” NICNT

- **You see, brother – we are notifying you of something you don't know and wouldn't possibly be aware of.**
- **How many thousands of Jewish Christians/believers there are – this is a beautiful testimony of the power of God and the impression/impact that Jesus made in the capital city of Jerusalem.** It was the place where He was murdered yet His glory lived on in MANY people. Although they were a poor and persecuted church, they were rich with salvations and testimonies.
- **They are all zealous for the law –** hmmm, okay, go on... This doesn't sound like it's going in a good direction. When a believer talks about the law usually it's with a different vibe than the Orthodox Jews talking about the law. So, is this a good thing or a bad thing? In this case it's a bit of a negative thing. It means that they are passionate about the Jewish traditions that Paul has been lax about. Therefore the implication is that they aren't going to like Paul and they will think that he's a bad guy.
- **They have been told about you –** there have been stories and rumors going on since you've been gone and some of it is good and some of it is bad.
- **They have been told that you teach all Jews outside of our area (among the Gentiles) to forsake Moses –** the rumor is that Paul is no longer advancing Judaism in his Gentile work. He is telling the new Gentile believers that it doesn't matter if they keep the festivals or go to temple, or any of that. Mentioning the name Moses means all that Moses set up in the Old Testament about rules and regulations.
- **You tell them not to circumcise their children –** which is the outward sign of the Jewish men that they are legit Jewish. Even a full converted Gentile needed to get circumcised to become a Jew. It was a HUGE deal to the Jewish people.
- **You tell them not to walk according to Jewish custom –** now James put the word 'our' in it, so it's getting personal and you can tell that James himself is one of those who is struggling with all of this stuff. Jewish customs have to do with clean/unclean issues, festivals, Passover/Sabbath, etc.
- **What do you think is going to happen now that you are here<sup>37</sup> –** they've all heard that you've come, and they aren't going to know what to do. Some will just wonder, and some will freak out. We can't control what the non-believing Jewish population will think, they are not of us, but we do need to be sensitive to the Messianic Jews around here in our crew. We don't need more drama, we've had plenty around here.
- **Follow our advice to make this better –** Interestingly **they are assuming leadership** (and maybe rightfully so since they are big dogs and in the core church at Jerusalem) to tell Paul what to do. That's tough. But then again

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<sup>37</sup> "As for the elders themselves, the impression made by Luke's account is that they were well-meaning but deeply worried men. They knew that, if they appeared to countenance Paul by accepting the Gentile churches' gifts, it could prejudice their mission to Israel and their influence with their own flock. But if Paul took some public action which would give the lie to the disturbing rumors that circulated about him, this would ease the situation for them. But attempts have been made to read between the lines of Luke's account." NICNT

they know their people and what's going to help and what's going to hurt. A wise Paul would listen to them on this.

- **We already have 4 men who are under a vow** – what vow and what does this mean? This is a Nazirite vow which Jews took to honor the Lord usually during a 30 day period. They wouldn't abstain from wine, not cut their hair and do special things. It was a way of making a religious commitment to honor God.
- **Take these men with you to the Temple** – all of this process needed to be watched over by the priests who work in the temple.
- **Purify yourself along with them publicly** – the point was to be seen and not done behind closed doors. They weren't so much questioning Paul's heart as they were trying to placate nervous Jews/Christians.
- **Pay their expenses to shave their heads** – The **expenses were steep!** Each man was supposed to offer 2 lambs (male, female), 1 ram, food & drink offerings. That's times 4! Goodness gracious! The cutting of the hair was because of the Nazirite vow letting their hair grow for the duration (usually 30 days) and then shaving it off in the temple and burning it up in the fire of the altar to the Lord.
- **This will shut down the rumors, or at least help** – they seem to be driven by nervousness here. They should have had the confidence to tell the believers what to do and that things were okay but they didn't. Not sure why. Maybe it's the location and the intensity of the culture.
  - **“they will know there is nothing in what they have been told about you”** – but is that true?<sup>38</sup> Isn't James hoping a bit too much here? A lot of the allegations are indeed true (depends on what you mean by that). Yes, Paul saw most of those issues as not critical and depending on circumstances. That is really different than orthodox Messianic Jews.
  - **They will know that you too live in observance of the law** – again, is this correct? Does Paul live in observance of the law? Depends. Paul is honoring but Paul was not bound as if it brought righteousness. He later would talk about needing more freedom than religion.

- **Minding P's & Q's**

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<sup>38</sup> “Paul’s position in such matters is fairly clear from his letters. The circumcising of Gentile converts as a kind of insurance policy, lest faith in Christ should be insufficient in itself, he denounced as a departure from the purity of the gospel (Gal. 5:2–4). But in itself circumcision was a matter of indifference; it made no difference to one’s status in God’s sight (Gal. 5:6; 6:15). If a Jewish father, after he became a follower of Jesus, wished to have his son circumcised in accordance with ancestral custom, Paul had no objection. He adopted the same flexible attitude to such customs as observance of special days or abstention from certain kinds of food: “let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind” (Rom. 14:2–6). He himself was happy to conform to Jewish customs when he found himself in Jewish society. Such conformity came easily to him, in view of his upbringing, but he had learned to be equally happy to conform to Gentile ways in Gentile company. If it is asked what his practice was when he found himself in mixed Jewish and Gentile society, the answer probably is that he acted as he thought each situation required: any Jews who were content to participate in such mixed society had doubtless learned some measure of adaptation already. For anyone who stayed by the letter and spirit of the law, Paul’s regarding some of its requirements as matters of indifference, his treating as optional things that the law laid down as obligatory, must in itself have constituted “apostasy against Moses”; but in practice he avoided giving offense to those in whose company he was from time to time.” NICNT

- **The Jerusalem Gives Instructions for the Gentiles**
  - **Ac 21:25** – *“But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled,<sup>39</sup> and from sexual immorality.”*
    - **More advice** – they aren’t done telling Paul what needs to be done.
    - **As for the believing/Christian Gentiles** – now they are talking about how the Church as a whole needs to be conducted and since Gentiles are coming on board there are things they need to be aware of.
      - **We have sent a letter with our judgment** – wait, what? You already sent the letter? Where? Why do you need to give a judgment about them? Is this a healthy response or not? It’s semi-healthy. They are giving instruction to keep everyone on the same page (positive) but they are pushing religiosity (negative).
        - **They should abstain from food sacrificed to idols** – later Paul challenges this view as unnecessary and only for weaker brothers/sisters. It’s referring to the pagan process of buying and preparing a meal to offer before a pagan idol. The remainder of the leftovers would be sold in the marketplace and bought by regular folks. Jews didn’t want ‘demon meat’, and steered clear.
        - **They should abstain from blood in their meat** – God gave Moses clear directions in the Old Testament about draining all the blood out of meat (because the ‘life is in the blood’).
        - **They should abstain from eating meat that has been strangled** – this only matters due to the blood in the meat issue, not the method of killing the animal.
        - **They should abstain from sexual immorality** – this is a matter of purity sexually before the Lord and was a common view in the early church.
- **A Voyage Complete**
  - **Paul Brings Offerings to the Temple**
    - **Ac 21:26** – *“Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.”*
      - **So, Paul did it** – there is no debate. There is no arguing. There is **no disunity**. I don’t know if Paul agreed with half of what they said, but he was there to bless them. He knew that **the Lord’s heart was more important than the details of being right on every matter**. What a boss!
        - **Is Paul compromising his beliefs?**<sup>40</sup> – Paul was very clear that he would adjust based on cultural context. He was doing that here. Is that compromise? Not in ways that are bad.

<sup>39</sup> “Some manuscripts omit *and from what has been strangled.*” ESV notes

<sup>40</sup> “The wisdom of Paul’s complying with the elders’ plan may well be doubted. Probably he himself was not too sanguine about its outcome; but if his falling in with their proposal would relieve them of embarrassment, he was prepared to bend over backward in applying his stated policy:

- **He took the guys and did the purification in the temple and paid the fees – let's do this.**

### **Conclusion**

- **Praying to live for the Lord with passion and abandon**