

## VV STUDY NOTES: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Andrew Gebbie

### Acts 21:37 to 22:30, Paul's first defence.

This section of Acts pulls together a lot of strands in the teaching and behaviors of Paul. By the time Paul makes this final journey to Jerusalem certain events have already happened.

#### Acts 20: 1-6

1. **He has arranged with the predominantly Gentile churches to collect money to help the believers in Judea**, who are under extreme pressure, because of famines and opposition from the more radical Jews. The representatives of these churches are travelling with him. This is an act of solidarity and unity towards their Judean brothers and sisters.
2. **He has already written book of Romans probably in the 3 months he spent in Greece after leaving Ephesus for the last time.** Phoebe, a woman DEACON at Cenchrea, carries the book to Rome as his personal representative, and in **Rom 16** he recognizes all the people who have played an important role in his mission, including many women. He even acknowledges a husband-and-wife team (Andronicus and **Junia**), relatives of his, who were believers before himself and recognized as an Apostles.
3. **Paul originally planned to sail direct to Syria.** As a safety precaution he decided to divert from Corinth up to the Macedonian churches but primarily Phillipi strengthening those churches on the way, as he also did at Troas. The precaution signifies that in Paul's mind this journey to Jerusalem is incredibly important. It also tells us that for Paul (like Jesus) the management of itineraries could be important in the attainment of goals.

**## In your own experience have you ever found that the TIMING of what you did OR how you did it, is a significant factor in the ultimate outcome? TIMED DISCUSSION**

It was always God's intention to reach out to the whole world.

The gospel that Paul preached was that God had provided Salvation for the whole of humanity in Jesus (God's Son and the worlds Messiah). That necessitate the preaching of the gospel to the Gentile world.

**Dealing with change has always been a challenge:** a source of confusion, distrust, pain, and conflict. Luke is recording the reality of this in the life of the early church, and its relationship with traditional Judaism.

It was decided last week that these points should be discussed today.

- **What did Paul believe about the Mosaic Laws in relationship to Jewish Christians?**
- **Did Paul believe that Jewish believers in the Gentile world should abandon their devotion to the Laws of Moses?**

#### Acts 21:17-26

Paul's relationship to the Mosaic Law was the crux of this whole story.

- V.20-21 What accusations were made against Paul?
- Did James and the other leaders think he was guilty?
- Was Paul reluctant to participate in the sponsoring of the four men who were taking a vow that involved a process including paying Temple taxes, and sacrifices in the Temple?
- Is it significant that Paul never spoke publicly until after his arrest?

**## Timed Discussion**

### **Acts 21: 27-36** (Riot and Arrest)

- Is it significant that the accusers were from the province of Asia (Ephesus was the capital)?
- Luke describes the accusation of bringing a gentile into the Temple as based on an assumption. What's the difference between an assumption and a lie? Note: the Gentile identified was from Ephesus – one of the representatives carrying the money.
- Did Luke deliberately use that expression as a way of calming down the reaction?
- Is it possible these men thought they had a greater chance to 'get rid of him', in Jerusalem than when they had tried in Ephesus?
- Could they have been part of the PLOT mentioned earlier?

## Timed Discussion

### **Acts 21: 37-40** (Roman Commander ... you wonder how many riots he had already had to deal with. I wonder if they got any form of hazard pay.)

- Paul speaks in public for the first time since arriving in the city.
- The Roman Commander probably didn't speak Aramaic.

### **Acts 22:1-22** (Paul's Defense)

- Would it be true to say that PAUL simply told him how he had changed from believing as they did to become what he was now?
- Would you classify this as a Sermon, or a story of his life journey?
- What significance does **v 12-14 about Ananias** have in terms of today's study?
- Why were they so antagonistic towards his assertion that God commanded him to go to the Gentiles?
- Was Paul asserting that he had a revelation directly from God, which made him a Prophet as well as an Apostle?

## Timed Discussion

### **Acts 22:23-29** (Paul the Roman Citizen)

- This poor commander at best was having a 'bad hair day' at worst a 'nightmare'.
- Did Paul display any anger when he brought this issue to the fore?

## Timed Discussion (Very Short)

### **Acts 22:30** (The Sanhedrin is now involved)

Remember the Sanhedrin were the official rulers of Judea in a contract with Rome that made them responsible for maintaining Law and Order.

- Is it possible that Luke mentioning them for the first time in the story, he is implying that they did not know these Asian Jews were going to start a riot.
- The whole story starts with the LEADERS OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH having a major dilemma and finishes with the JEWISH SANHEDRIN with a major trauma.

## Timed Discussion

### **Point to Ponder**

**Would it be true to say:** (Whenever we lock ourselves into a mindset that says: "my beliefs are the only way of salvation" we automatically tell everyone else that they cannot be saved until they believe as we do. "I'm right, you are wrong")?

## **Have you seen the outcomes of this dilemma?** TIMED DISCUSSION