



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH  
Jesus changes lives

## ACTS



### *Acts #34 – 21:1-16 The Lord's Will; Our Way*

*Acts 19:28* When they had heard this, they were filled with rage and began to cry out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

#### NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

#### HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **Compassion Month**
  - At EBC we are currently reminding the church of the great partnership we have with Compassion and the importance of child sponsorship
  - If you'd like to donate or sponsor a child, come talk to Matt, Mike or Joao.



## #34 ACTS 21:1-16

### REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

### DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

#### **Acts 21:1-16** Paul Goes to Jerusalem

And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. <sup>2</sup> And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. <sup>3</sup> When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at 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. 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 prayed <sup>6</sup> and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

<sup>7</sup> When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. <sup>8</sup> On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. <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 Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" <sup>12</sup> When we heard this, 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 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.**"

<sup>15</sup> After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

#### **Acts 20:22-25** Constrained by the Spirit to Go to Jerusalem



<sup>22</sup> 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.

**Luke 22:39-44** Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

<sup>39</sup> And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup> And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, **not my will, but yours, be done.**" <sup>43</sup> And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup> And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup> And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

**2 Corinthians 11:24-28** Paul's sufferings

<sup>24</sup> Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup> on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; <sup>27</sup> in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

**Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake

**Matthew 28:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God **all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to his purpose.



## APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **PROPHECY & CONFLICTING ADVICE:** Read Acts 21:1-16, as well as Acts 20:22-25.
  - a. *What was the prophecy of Agabus? How did the people respond to it? How did Paul respond? Where was the conflict?*
  - b. There was clearly a conflict of interpretation here. The prophecy said Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, and so his friends concluded that he must not go. This is a case of misinterpretation of a prophecy. Paul on the other hand, knew that God was calling him down this hard road. *What conclusion did the people come to in the end (v.14)?*
3. **THE BIG IDEA:** This passage teaches us that like Paul's friends, we can find it hard to embrace the fact that God would put before us a difficulty path, and for that path to be the *right* path to walk. There are four things to remember when God calls you to something difficult in this life:
4. **THE LORD HAS WALKED THIS PATH BEFORE:**
  - a. Read Luke 22:40-44.
  - b. Jesus has walked the hardest road any of us could ever imagine. He has not called us to anything he hasn't already done. *How does this bring us comfort?*
5. **THE LORD WILL PREPARE YOU:**
  - a. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.



- b. Paul could bear all this suffering because the Lord had prepared him for it. When he met Jesus for the first time, Jesus told him that his life would be one of suffering for God's glory. When it came into his life, he was ready for it and could not just survive it, but be joyful in it. *How does God prepare us for suffering? How is he preparing you? What things do you need to know about God, yourself and the world before walking through deep pain?*

**6. THE LORD WILL BE WITH YOU ALWAYS:**

- a. Read Matthew 28:19-20.
- b. Jesus is present by His Holy Spirit which lives in you. You are never alone. His presence is the most certain reality in your life! God is not just a comforting abstraction, but a real living person. When we are weak and sorrowful, he is right there. *How can we draw strength from God's presence with us? How can this make all the difference?*

**7. THE LORD'S PLANS ARE GOOD:**

- a. Read Romans 8:28.
- b. When all else fails, we can hold tight to the fact that God not only walked this path of suffering before us, has prepared us, and is with us, but that he is ultimately sovereign over it all. Nothing that happens is outside of his control, and because he is our loving father who loves us like his own children (because we are!), we can have confidence that one day we can look back on this moment of suffering with peace and joy, seeing how God has used it. *In the midst of suffering, it can be almost impossible to believe that God is using it for our good. How might we cling to that promise? What battle needs to occur in your heart for you to believe this?*

## PRAY

Pray for one another and the roads of suffering we have each been called down. Pray for strength, that we might know his presence and his purposes for our lives.

Pray that we would be a church filled with gospel shaped people who live out our faith by grace alone! Pray that we would grow in our missional living and discipling of one another.

Pray for boldness and graciousness in our witness to the truth. Ask God to move in power in our city and bring widescale revival.

## NOTES

**Acts 21:1–16** *On to Jerusalem.* Two key themes mark Paul's return journey to Jerusalem: (1) An extensive network of churches and believers is developing across the Roman Empire. Everywhere Paul and his associates go, believers meet them and supply hospitality (vv. 4, 7, 16). (2) Paul receives repeated warnings about the dangers awaiting him in Jerusalem (vv. 4, 10–14; cf. 20:22–23). Though Paul's life is in peril, he pushes forward unconcerned and is ready to die "for the name of the Lord Jesus" (v. 13). This motif parallels Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem in Luke 9–19, which is marked by



repeated predictions of his coming suffering (Luke 9:22, 44; 13:33–34; 18:31–33). On the collection for the poor that Paul is carrying to Jerusalem, see note on 19:21.

**21:1 Kos ... Rhodes.** Kos (about 40 miles [about 65 kilometers] south of Miletus) and Rhodes were both islands with main cities also called Kos and Rhodes. **Patara.** The main port of the province of Lycia, where Paul and his co-workers leave the small coastal ship and board a larger seagoing vessel for the 400-mile (650-kilometer) journey to Tyre (see note on v. 3).

**21:2 Phoenicia.** The coastal nation northwest of Israel (see note on 11:19). At this time Phoenicia was part of the Roman province of Syria (v. 3).

**21:3 Tyre.** The most important port of Phoenicia.

**21:4** The Spirit's message to these disciples *not* to go to Jerusalem appears to contradict the Spirit's message to Paul compelling him *to* go (20:22). The likely answer is that the Spirit reveals to them—as he does to Agabus (vv. 10–11)—what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem, and on their own initiative they urge Paul not to go.

**21:7 Ptolemais.** Also known as Akko (Judg 1:31), 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Tyre and 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of Caesarea (v. 8).

**21:9 daughters who prophesied.** Women in the early church had this spiritual gift, which Joel prophesied (Joel 2:28) and which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (2:17).

**21:10–11** Agabus also prophesied about the famine in Judea (11:28). Symbolic actions like Agabus's use of Paul's belt are common among the OT prophets (1 Kgs 11:29–31; Isa 8:1–4; 20:1–6; Jer 13:1–11; 19:1–13; 27:1–22; Hos 1:2). For a NT example, see Jesus' cursing of a fig tree and clearing of the temple, both symbolizing the coming destruction of Jerusalem (Mark 11:12–25). The parallels between Jesus and Paul continue as Agabus predicts that "the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will ... hand him over to the Gentiles" (v. 11; cf. Matt 20:18–19; Luke 18:32).

**21:14 The Lord's will be done.** This statement, which recalls Jesus' words in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42), could mean (1) that they finally conclude that God *does* want Paul to go to Jerusalem, or (2) that whatever happens to Paul, God will accomplish his divine will. The latter is a major theme of Acts: no matter what the challenges or setbacks, God is guiding events toward his saving purposes (2:23–24; 3:13–15; 4:10; 5:30–31).<sup>1</sup>

## REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, D. A. (2015). [The Gospels and Acts](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (pp. 2264–2265). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



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