**Lesson 22 Feb 25 Acts 21:1-26 Tyre, Caesarea, Jerusalem**

In our last lesson, Paul traveled through Macedonia and on to Greece, and spent three months in Greece. On his way back to Syria, he altered his course when a plot against him was uncovered. Paul was driven by the Spirit to return to Jerusalem before the feast of Pentecost and continued on his journey. Paul was accompanied by several companions on this trip. They spent a week in Troas where Paul gave an extremely long sermon, talking on until past midnight. During that time a man named Eutychus, who was sitting on a window sill, fell asleep and then fell out the 3rd story window. Eutychus died in the fall, but Paul revived him and then continued to talk until day break. Paul continues his journey bypassing Ephesus to save time. He instead called the elders or presbyters of Ephesus to join him in Miletus. Paul delivers a farewell address and tells them that it was possible that they would not see him again. Deeply grieved, they escort him back to his ship.

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? Was there a particular verse or message in this week’s lesson from Acts 21 that you found inspiring?**
2. **Paul’s farewell address in Acts 20 suggests that he knows he is in imminent danger. How does Acts 21:1-6 suggest that others also believe this? Read Acts 21:1-6.**

**Acts 21:1-61**When we had taken leave of them, we set sail, made a straight run for Cos, and on the next day for Rhodes, and from there to Patara. **2**Finding a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went on board and put out to sea. **3**We caught sight of Cyprus but passed by it on our left and sailed on toward Syria and put in at Tyre where the ship was to unload cargo. **4**There we sought out the disciples and stayed for a week. They kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to embark for Jerusalem. **5**At the end of our stay we left and resumed our journey. All of them, women and children included, escorted us out of the city, and after kneeling on the beach to pray, **6**we bade farewell to one another. Then we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

1. **Reflection: Both Jesus and Paul were aware of their ultimate fate and tried to let others know ahead of time. How is it helpful to have such foreknowledge? Consider how foreknowledge could be either helpful or a burden for Paul and his disciples.**

**Read Acts 20:25-32 and John 16:1-5.**

**Acts 20:25-32 25**“But now I know that none of you to whom I preached the kingdom during my travels will ever see my face again. **26**And so I solemnly declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, **27**for I did not shrink from proclaiming to you the entire plan of God. **28**Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the holy Spirit has appointed you overseers,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-31974f)] in which you tend the church of God that he acquired with his own blood. **29**I know that after my departure savage wolves will come among you, and they will not spare the flock. **30**And from your own group, men will come forward perverting the truth to draw the disciples away after them. **31**So be vigilant and remember that for three years, night and day, I unceasingly admonished each of you with tears. **32**And now I commend you to God and to that gracious word of his that can build you up and give you the inheritance among all who are consecrated.

**John 16:1-5**“I have told you this so that you would not surrender to confusion or doubt. **2**For you will be excommunicated from the synagogues, and a time is coming when you will be put to death by misguided ones who will presume to be doing God a great service by putting you to death. **3**And they will do these things because they don’t know anything about the Father or me. **4**I’m telling you this now so that when their time comes you will remember that I foretold it. I didn’t tell you this in the beginning because I was still with you. **5**But now that I’m about to leave you and go back to join the One who sent me, you need to be told.

1. **Paul stayed a week with the faithful in Tyre. What did the people do before sending Paul and his companions on their way? See Acts 21:1-6.**
2. **Who is Philip? See Acts 21:7-14 and Acts 8:26-28, 8:34-39.**

**Acts 21:7-147**We continued the voyage and came from Tyre to Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed a day with them. **8**On the next day we resumed the trip and came to Caesarea, where we went to the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. **9**He had four virgin daughters gifted with prophecy. **10**We had been there several days when a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11**He came up to us, took Paul’s belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, “Thus says the holy Spirit: This is the way the Jews will bind the owner of this belt in Jerusalem, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles.” **12**When we heard this, we and the local residents begged him not to go up to Jerusalem. **13**Then Paul replied, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am prepared not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” **14**Since he would not be dissuaded, we let the matter rest, saying, “The Lord’s will be done.”

**Acts 8:26-2826**Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, “Get up and head south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, the desert route.” **27**So he got up and set out. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace,[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+8&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-31523h)] that is, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, **28**and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

**Acts 8:34-3934**Then the eunuch said to Philip in reply, “I beg you, about whom is the prophet saying this? About himself, or about someone else?” **35**Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning with this scripture passage, he proclaimed Jesus to him. **36**As they traveled along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?” [**37**] **38**Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him. **39**When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but continued on his way rejoicing.

1. **Is Paul afraid of dying in Jerusalem? What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church say about martyrdom? Read Acts 21:13-14 and Catechism # 2473- 2474.**

**Acts 21:13-14** 13Then Paul replied, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am prepared not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14Since he would not be dissuaded we let the matter rest, saying, “The Lord’s will be done.”[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+21&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-31998e)]

**2473** *Martyrdom*is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. "Let me become the food of the beasts, through whom it will be given me to reach God."271

**2474** The Church has painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to their faith. These are the acts of the Martyrs. They form the archives of truth written in letters of blood:

Neither the pleasures of the world nor the kingdoms of this age will be of any use to me. It is better for me to die [in order to unite myself] to Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. I seek him who died for us; I desire him who rose for us. My birth is approaching. . .272 (St. Ignatius of Antioch)

I bless you for having judged me worthy from this day and this hour to be counted among your martyrs. . . . You have kept your promise, God of faithfulness and truth. For this reason and for everything, I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. Through him, who is with you and the Holy Spirit, may glory be given to you, now and in the ages to come. Amen.273 *(Martyrium Polycarp)*

1. **Check footnotes for information on Agabus. What is his prophecy? What is the benefit of such prophetic *gestures*? Compare his actions to Isaiah 20:2-4 and Jeremiah 13:1-11.**

**Isaiah 20:2-4 2**[at that time the Lord had spoken through Isaiah, the son of Amoz: Go and take off the sackcloth from your waist, and remove the sandals from your feet. This he did, walking naked and barefoot. **3**Then the Lord said: Just as my servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, **4**so shall the king of Assyria lead away captives from Egypt, and exiles from Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, the shame of Egypt.

**Jeremiah 13:1-11 1**The Lord said to me: Go buy yourself a linen loincloth; wear it on your loins, but do not put it in water. **2**I bought the loincloth, as the Lord commanded, and put it on. **3**A second time the word of the Lord came to me thus: **4**Take the loincloth which you bought and are wearing, and go at once to the Perath; hide it there in a cleft of the rock. **5**Obedient to the Lord’s command, I went to the Perath and buried the loincloth. **6**After a long time, the Lord said to me: Go now to the Perath and fetch the loincloth which I told you to hide there. **7**So I went to the Perath, looked for the loincloth and took it from the place I had hidden it. But it was rotted, good for nothing! **8**Then the word came to me from the Lord: **9**Thus says the Lord: So also I will allow the pride of Judah to rot, the great pride of Jerusalem. **10**This wicked people who refuse to obey my words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and follow other gods, serving and worshiping them, will be like this loincloth, good for nothing. **11**For, as the loincloth clings to a man’s loins, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me—oracle of the Lord—to be my people, my fame, my praise, my glory. But they did not listen.

1. **How is Paul’s message being misrepresented or misunderstood by some in Jerusalem?**

**Read Acts 21:17-21, Acts 16:1-3 and Acts 18:18.**

**Acts 21:17-21 7**When we reached Jerusalem the brothers welcomed us warmly. **18**The next day, Paul accompanied us on a visit to James, and all the presbyters were present. **19**He greeted them, then proceeded to tell them in detail what God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry. **20**They praised God when they heard it but said to him, “Brother, you see how many thousands of believers there are from among the Jews, and they are all zealous observers of the law. **21**They have been informed that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to abandon Moses and that you are telling them not to circumcise their children or to observe their customary practices.

**Acts 16:1-3 1**He reached [also] Derbe and Lystra where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. **2**The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him, **3**and Paul wanted him to come along with him. On account of the Jews of that region, Paul had him circumcised, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

**Acts 18:1818**Paul remained for quite some time, and after saying farewell to the brothers he sailed for Syria, together with Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut because he had taken a vow.

1. **What do James and the other Jerusalem leaders suggest that Paul do to calm the tension? Why would these actions be helpful? Check footnotes for more information on Acts 21:22-26.**

**Acts 21:22-2622**What is to be done? They will surely hear that you have arrived. **23**So do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. **24**Take these men and purify yourself with them, and pay their expenses that they may have their heads shaved. In this way everyone will know that there is nothing to the reports they have been given about you but that you yourself live in observance of the law. **25**As for the Gentiles who have come to believe, we sent them our decision that they abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage.” **26**So Paul took the men, and on the next day after purifying himself together with them entered the temple to give notice of the day when the purification would be completed and the offering made for each of them.