

Paul in Jerusalem

- ❖ Church Disaster (21:18–25)
 - ❖ James: leadership change
 - ❖ James and elders (conservative Jewish)
 - ❖ Apostles completely absent
 - ❖ Paul's gentile mission praised (21:20)
 - ❖ Paul's presence problematic (21:20–22)
 - ❖ Creates immediate crisis
 - ❖ Conservative believers react negatively

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“When they heard it, they praised God.”

Paul in Jerusalem

Paul's Disastrous Presence in Jerusalem

“You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law, They have been told about you, that you teach all the Jews . . . to forsake Moses, . . . What then is to be done? They will certainly hear **that you have come.**” (Acts 21:20–22)

Paul in Jerusalem

- ✦ Church Disaster (21:18–25)
 - ✦ Luke's silence deafening
 - ✦ Never says *why* Paul in Jerusalem (collection)
 - ✦ Buffers Paul ruining best idea with worst idea
 - ✦ "we section" ends with James (21:18)
 - ✦ James's ill-conceived plan (21:23–25)
 - ✦ Half-baked: join four Jews in Jewish vow
 - ✦ *No mention of Holy Spirit's guidance*
 - ✦ Paul's acceptance: confusion, spiraling down

Paul in Jerusalem

Luke no longer party to the Jerusalem disaster. After all, he had begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem (21:12).

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Paul in Jerusalem

- ✦ Church Disaster (21:26–30)
 - ✦ Trophimus from Asia (cf. 20:4)
 - ✦ Disturbance instigated by "Asian Jews"
 - ✦ Inference: Ephesian crisis still dogs Paul
 - ✦ Illegitimate charges (21:28)
 - ✦ "against our people, our law, this place"
 - ✦ "brought Greeks into the temple"
 - ✦ Life-threatening riot (21:30)

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Similar to charge against Stephen at beginning of Hellenist movement.

Paul in Jerusalem

❖ Mission Disaster (21:31 – 23:22)

❖ Tribune's intervention (21:31–34)

- ❖ Paul put in Roman chains
- ❖ Roman custody now sovereign
- ❖ Paul's movement no longer his own
- ❖ Fulfilling God's will now impossible
- ❖ Fulfills Agabus's prophecy
- ❖ Paul bound by Gentiles
- ❖ Paul's situation spiraling out of control

Paul never will be out of Roman custody for the rest of Acts, his movements never his own—a challenge to God's will (Rome).

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❖ Mission Disaster (21:31 – 23:22)

❖ Paul's request to speak (21:35–39)

- ❖ Tribune thinks of Egyptian insurrectionist
- ❖ Paul asks to address a murderous mob (!)
- ❖ Worse than James's half-baked vow idea
- ❖ Deliberate echoes of the Ephesian riot
- ❖ Paul's desire to speak against all advice
- ❖ In Jerusalem, no friends to restrain him
- ❖ Deeper into the downward spiral

Paul in Jerusalem

❖ Mission Disaster (21:31 – 23:22)

❖ Paul's defense (21:40 – 22:21)

- ❖ Luke's second Damascus Road opportunity
- ❖ Differences emphasize Jewish elements
- ❖ "God of our fathers" in call report
- ❖ "Nazarene" added to Jesus' name
- ❖ "Righteous One" title for Jesus
- ❖ Emphasizing Ananias's Jewishness
- ❖ Appropriate emphases for Jewish audience

Paul in Jerusalem

Paul's So-Called "Defense"

Paul's so-called "defense" before the Jerusalem crowds will be an absolute, unmitigated disaster and no defense at all, for the riotous mob simply moves from mad to murderous.

✦ Appropriate emphases for Jewish audience

Paul in Jerusalem

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✦ Paul's defense (21:40 – 22:21)

- ✦ Paul references Gamaliel (22:3)
 - ✦ "at the feet of Gamaliel" = student, disciple
- ✦ Deliberate literary tie by Luke
 - ✦ "Gamaliel" name only twice in Acts
 - ✦ Sanhedrin: "fighting against God" (5:39)
 - ✦ Paul: Jerusalem debacle, fighting God
 - ✦ Paul fulfills Gamaliel's Sanhedrin warning
 - ✦ Paul fulfills all warnings (Tyre, Agabus)

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The student is *not* following his teacher!

Paul: Jerusalem

Stephen Speech Themes

Theme 1: God active

Theme 2: God resisted

Sanhedrin
Acts 4, 5, 7

Saul/Paul
Acts 7, 9, 16, 19

Church
Acts 11, 15

Gamaliel (Acts 5:39):

"lest you be found *fighting against God*"

Paul in Jerusalem

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 - ❖ Paul's recounts a temple vision
 - ❖ Luke's delayed report for dramatic effect
 - ❖ God's abiding word to Paul on Jerusalem
 - ❖ Made clear at *beginning* of Paul's ministry
 - ❖ Plans (19:21) = *direct rebellion against God*
 - ❖ Self-incrimination from Paul's own lips!
 - ❖ Paul as obstinate Saul comes home to roost

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Proximate in time to Damascus Road experience

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Announced in 19:21: "Paul resolved for himself in his spirit . . . to go on to Jerusalem."

Paul's Temple Vision (22:17–21)

God's original, permanent word about Jerusalem to Paul: "Make haste, and **get out quickly.**" God's reason never will change: "**they will not receive your testimony.**" Stubborn, Mr. "I know better than you" Saul argued against God (!) why he should stay, essentially, "I have such a great testimony." God's response? Not impressed. God's command: "Go!"

Paul in Jerusalem

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 - ❖ "Gentiles" – word reignites explosive crowd
 - ❖ Fulfills God's temple vision word to Paul
 - ❖ Paul's citizenship claim (22:22–29)
 - ❖ Test by flogging: military practice for truth
 - ❖ Paul seeks to avoid life-threatening *flagellum*
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"They will not accept your testimony about me" (22:18)

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Weird. This is what Jesus had to endure. Thought you said you were "ready to die in Jerusalem," Paul (21:13)!

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Even Pilate himself had difficulty understanding charges brought against Jesus.



Paul in Jerusalem

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- ❖ Sanhedrin appearance (22:30 – 23:10)
 - ❖ De-ja-vu to pre-Damascus Road (9:1–2)
 - ❖ Paul's high priest altercation (23:1–5)
 - ❖ Ananias high priest (47–66)
 - ❖ Paul's "did not know" = ?
 - ❖ Paul's Sanhedrin ploy (23:6–10)
 - ❖ Exploiting Pharisee/Sadducee debate
 - ❖ Creates council chaos, not witness
- ❖ Jerusalem: every time Paul speaks—a riot

"Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus"

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- ❖ Paul's "barracks vision" (23:10)
 - ❖ Once again, Paul off track on God's will
 - ❖ Once again, a vision to get Paul back on track
 - ❖ Damascus Road
 - ❖ Temple vision
 - ❖ Troas vision
 - ❖ Irony: "as you have testified in Jerusalem"
 - ❖ Reaffirms divine destiny of Rome

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 - ❖ Irony: "As" is ironic: "as" means, "in chains"!
 - ❖ Troas vision
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 - ❖ Once again, a vision to get Paul back on track
 - ❖ Irony: "You *must* bear witness in Rome."
 - ❖ Troas vision
 - ❖ Irony: "as you have testified in Jerusalem"
 - ❖ Reaffirms divine destiny of Rome

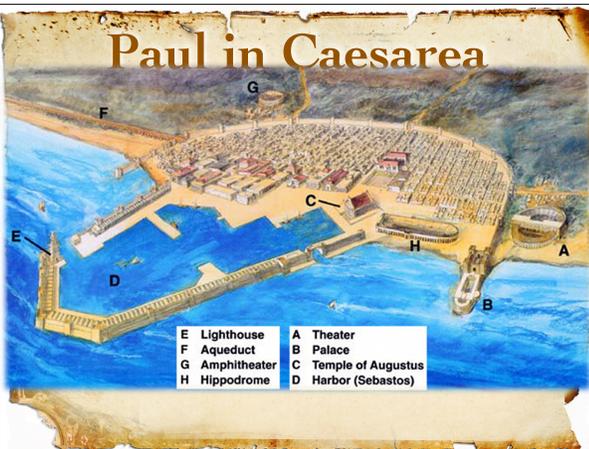
Paul in Jerusalem

- ❖ Mission Disaster (21:31 – 23:22)
- ❖ Plot on Paul's life (23:12–22)
 - ❖ Jews' murderous plot with Sanhedrin
 - ❖ Becomes known to Paul's nephew
 - ❖ Nephew's news forces tribune's hands
 - ❖ Tribune must secure safety of Roman citizen
 - ❖ Clandestine nighttime change of venue
 - ❖ Procurator's jurisdiction in Caesarea

Acts 21–23: Crowds

- Paul in Jerusalem
- Paul in Caesarea
- Paul's Plans

Paul in Caesarea



Paul in Caesarea

✦ Roman Custody (23:23–35)

✦ Transfer to Caesarea (23:23–35)

- ✦ Heavy guard (23:23–24)
 - ✦ Secret evening departure (9:00 pm)
 - ✦ Paul given mounts for speed
 - ✦ Indicates *αἰμίω* nature of city uproar
- ✦ Tribune Lysias's self-serving letter (23:25–30)
 - ✦ Exonerates himself in prisoner extradition
 - ✦ "nothing deserving death or imprisonment"
 - ✦ Lukan apologetic: innocence of Christianity

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2 centurions, 200 soldiers, 70 horses, 200 spearmen!

Paul in Caesarea

❖ Roman Custody (23:23–35)

❖ Transfer to Caesarea (23:23–35)

“When I had learned he was a Roman citizen, I came with the guard and rescued him” (23:27). Yeah. Right.

- ❖ Indicates chaotic nature of city uproar
- ❖ Tribune Lysias’s self-serving letter (23:25–30)
- ❖ Exonerates himself in prisoner extradition
- ❖ “nothing deserving death or imprisonment”
- ❖ Lukan apologetic: innocence of Christianity

Lysias’s Judgment (23:29)

“Charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment” serves Lukan apologetic. At the same time, the “nothing deserving death or imprisonment” also serves as an indictment of Felix’s malfeasance of office for detaining Paul for two years in Caesarea. We later learn Felix was looking for a bribe from Paul (24:26). Had Felix gotten wind of the collection money Paul had brought to Jerusalem?

Paul in Caesarea

❖ Roman Custody (23:23–35)

❖ Transfer to Caesarea (23:23–35)

- ❖ Antipatris: return point for soldiers (23:31–32)
- ❖ Caesarea: letter, prisoner delivery (23:33–35)
- ❖ Province question: determining jurisdiction
 - ❖ Governor agrees to hear the case
 - ❖ Must await accusers from Jerusalem
- ❖ Paul detained in “Herod’s quarters”

Paul in Caesarea

Political protocol. If client king involved, diplomatic courtesy would require involvement. Cilicia united with Syria, whose governor was Felix’s supervisor, so Felix free to proceed straightway.

- ❖ Province question: determining jurisdiction
 - ❖ Governor agrees to hear the case
 - ❖ Must await accusers from Jerusalem
- ❖ Paul detained in “Herod’s quarters”

Paul Back in Caesarea

Agabus *de-ja-vu*. Paul's extradition to Caesarea under Roman guard moves the story full circle back to the point of origination—Agabus's prophecy. Agabus had predicted that Paul in insisting on going to Jerusalem would wind up being bound by Gentiles. Now, Paul is back exactly where that prophecy was spoken bound by Romans. Prophecy fulfilled.

Paul in Caesarea

✦ Roman Custody (23:23–35)

✦ Paul's dilemma: Jerusalem or Caesarea?

- ✦ Jerusalem spells chaos
 - ✦ Disturbance, riot, and death threats
 - ✦ Means no return or presence feasible
- ✦ Caesarea spells corruption
 - ✦ Felix is infamously corrupt procurator
 - ✦ Roman jurisdiction is a roll of the dice
- ✦ Paul on the horns of a dilemma

Paul in Caesarea

✦ Roman Custody (23:23–35)

✦ Paul's disaster: loss of Gentile mission

- ✦ Gentile mission dead in its tracks
 - ✦ No journeys, no one gets saved, no miracles
 - ✦ Caesarea almost as long as Paul in Ephesus
- ✦ Paul responsible: rebellion against God (19:21)
 - ✦ Divine itinerary: Ephesus to Rome
 - ✦ Pauline itinerary: Jerusalem detour
- ✦ Costly, two-year delay getting to Rome

Acts 21–23: Crowds

- ✦ Paul in Jerusalem
- ✦ Paul in Caesarea
- ✦ Paul's Plans

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Summary

- ❖ 1. Luke is blunt that Jerusalem was *not* God's will for Paul. The evidence of 21:4 is unimpeachable.
- ❖ 2. Any explicit statement that Jerusalem is God's will is only from the mouth of Paul himself—and he continually is contradicted all the way to Jerusalem, even by Luke himself (21:12).

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Summary

- ❖ 3. The divine necessity verb (*dei*, "must") Luke never uses with Jerusalem, only Rome (19:21; 23:11).
- ❖ 4. Luke carefully balances Paul's insistence (*etbeto*, imperfect, 19:21) with the determined objection of the Holy Spirit (*elegon*, imperfect, 21:4).

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Summary

- ❖ 5. What the Spirit does say to Paul about Jerusalem always is negative, including prophetic judgment, with no promise of protection, rather, only bonds, affliction.
- ❖ 6. In a brilliant literary move, Luke tells the reader of an undisclosed vision Paul had *in the temple* just after the Damascus Road that was clear that *Paul always was going to be a problem for God in Jerusalem*.

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Summary

- ❖ 7. Paul's troubles at the start of the 2M.J are Luke's premonition for the reader of the Jerusalem disaster caused by Paul's stubbornness, just like the Barnabas fight.
- ❖ 8. The themes of the Stephen Speech find their most stunning and tragic illustration in all of Acts in the life of Paul himself in this trip to Jerusalem.

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Summary

- ❖ 9. Luke never indicates *why* Paul is going to Jerusalem. Paul's own letters make clear this trip is to deliver the collection from Paul's Gentile churches for the church in Jerusalem. Luke intentionally, however, is suppressing any connection of this trip with the collection. Why?

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Luke's View

- ❖ 1. *Unintended detour*: Luke viewed Paul's trip to Jerusalem as an unintended detour in the divine itinerary west to Rome after Ephesus.
- ❖ 2. *Unfortunate decision*: Luke viewed Paul's trip to Jerusalem as an unfortunate decision by Paul in the matter of the collection that destroyed its impact.

Paul's Plans

❖ Paul's Plans: Conclusion

- ❖ Luke shields Paul's most brilliant idea, the collection, from the shame of his most baneful idea, that is, that Paul thought he personally should deliver the collection to Jerusalem, *against God's known will about his presence in Jerusalem*. The result was an unmitigated disaster for James and the Jerusalem church and for Paul and the Gentile mission.

Paul's Mission: Grave Peril

The catastrophic collapse of the Ephesian base and the uncontrolled chaos of the Jerusalem disaster means Paul's entire mission program is in grave peril due to sudden storm. His mission is foundering like a storm-battered ship. The peril only increases for all on board as the captain insists on pushing on rather than take his passengers' advice to put into safe harbor.
