

Acts 21:1-16



An atmosphere of an approaching storm as Paul comes nearer to Jerusalem.

What do I mean...atmosphere of an approaching storm?

- ***Have we been in situations in life that there is an atmosphere of an approaching storm?***
- ***What keeps us on course when we know that a storm is approaching?***

What does this passage tell us?

⇒ ***There is the sheer determination to go to Jerusalem no matter what lay in store for him***

Probably because Paul knew that he would meet death somewhere and that he was convinced that God was not finished with him yet.

⇒ ***Wherever Paul went he found a Christian community waiting to welcome him.***

Like minded people who love the Lord are willing to take chances and will protect, pray and provide for a brother.

⇒ ***Agabus (a Jewish prophet) could not convince Paul to not go to Jerusalem with words...He acted out (dramatized) his message.***

He wanted Paul to understand the sincerity of his heart. Many instances of dramatizing a message instead of just telling it. (Isaiah 20:3,4; Jeremiah 13:1-11; Jeremiah 27:2; Ezekiel 4; Ezekiel 5:1-4; I Kings 11:29-31)

Acts 21:17-26

Paul arrives in Jerusalem...

- ***The leaders of the Church welcomed and accepted him.***
- ***The leaders saw that God was at work in this man (Paul)***

But....

- ***Rumors were spread that Paul had encouraged Jews to forsake their ancestral faith***
- ***Paul had not done that....but Paul did say that the Jewish Law was irrelevant for the Gentile.***
- ***Paul had never sought to draw the Jew away from the customs of his fathers.***

The only way Paul could win the hearts of the Jews was to compromise on some issues if it did not water down or change the plan of salvation...or the equation for salvation.

$\begin{array}{r} 1 \text{ cross} \\ \text{plus } 3 \text{ nails} \\ \hline 4 \text{ given} \end{array}$	<i>The most amazing equation</i>
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(Read from Barclay...Acts of the Apostles, page 155...vow that was taken)

Sometimes...there are times when compromise is not a sign of weakness but of strength.

- ***When is it that compromise is strength instead of witness?***
- ***Would we be willing to do something that is out of character for us in order to present the gospel?***
- ***Paul had a mission...his mission could very well be cut short....and was in many Christian's eyes.***

Why is this not true?

Acts 21:27-36
Compromises Can Sometimes Lead to Disaster!



- ***Paul's compromise with the Church at Jerusalem leaders did not end like Paul and the leaders thought it would....Paul's compromise drove the Jews further from him...thinking that Paul had committed the "unpardonable" (as far as the Jews were concerned). The "unpardonable" to the Jew was:***

⇒ Gentiles must not enter the temple

⇒ Trophimus was a gentile. They assumed Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple area.

- ***The Asian Jews accused Paul of:***

- 1. Destroying the Law***
- 2. Insulting the Chosen People***
- 3. Defiling the Temple***

- ***They were ready to Lynch Paul...but the Roman commander***



with his assigned soldiers seized Paul and placed him in chains.

- ***The crowd was so violent, the commander led him toward the barracks.***
- ***God's promises...and the Word of God is always true...and relevant for Paul's day and today! (Romans 8:28)***

Acts 21:37-40

- ***Paul caught the attention of the Commander when he found out that Paul could speak Greek.***

What does this say to us?

That God's plans are going to be carried out ...When you are in God's will...then God will come through.

- ***Does it keep us from being tried, tested, and persecuted?***
- ***How do we know that God made a way for Paul to speak the word of truth?***

- ⇒ *Received the Commander's permission to speak to the crowd*
- ⇒ *The crowd went from an angry lynch mob...to one that was silent.*
- ⇒ *"Faith comes by hearing...and hearing by the word of God."*

Acts 22:1-10

The Defense of Experience

Paul's message was simple...he told who he was and what he is now!

Paul's defense was not to argue...but to relate a personal experience.

Paul's defense stressed two (2) things:

1. Paul's identity with the People to Whom We was Speaking

- ⇒ *He was a Jew and that he never forgot...2 Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:4,5*
- ⇒ *He was a man of Tarsus and Tarsus was a great city*
 - ◆ *Great ports of the Mediterranean*
 - ◆ *Highway means in which Asia Minor was connected...to the Euphrates*
 - ◆ *A great University city of the ancient world*
- ⇒ *He was a rabbi*
- ⇒ *He was trained by the great teacher Gamaliel...who had been the "glory of the law"*
- ⇒ *He had been a persecutor in his zeal for the ancestral ways*

2. Stresses the difference between Paul and his audience.

The difference:

- ⇒ *He saw Christ as the Savior of all men and God as the lover of all men.*
- ⇒ *They saw God as the lover only of the Jews. They sought to hug the privileges of God to themselves. They regarded the man who would spread them abroad as a blasphemer.*

The big difference is that Paul had met Christ Face to Face.

In one sense, Paul was identified with the men to whom he spoke....

In another he was separated from them.

It is like that with the Christian.....

He lives in the world...but God has separated him and consecrated him to a special task.

We are to be a peculiar people...in this world, but not of this world!