

Journey Through Acts
“I Am Ready!”
Acts 21:1-40

Introduction:

1. December 7, 1941 - Is Known As:
 - A “Date Which Will Live In Infamy!”
 - Why? Because - It Was The Day:
 - When The Japanese Imperial Navy:
 - Caught The United States By Surprise - And Bombed The Naval Base:
 - At Pearl Harbor In Honolulu, Hawaii!
 - President Franklin Delano Roosevelt Called It This:
 - Because - Just Before 8am On That Sunday Morning:
 - Hundreds Of Japanese Fighter Planes:
 - Destroyed Nearly 20 US Naval Ships, Over 300 Planes:
 - And Killed More Than 2,400 Americans!
 - One Of The Main Reasons For This Devastation:
 - Was That The United States:
 - Was Not Ready!
 - We Were Not Ready For That Kind Of Attack!
 - And We Were Not Quite Ready:
 - To Go To War!
2. Well - As We Continue Our ***Journey Through Acts*** Tonight:
 - I Would Like To Head Over To Chapter 21:
 - Where - As The Third Missionary Journey Of The Apostle Paul Is Rapidly Coming To A Close:
 - Paul And His Companions Are Getting Closer & Closer To Their Final Destination:
 - Jerusalem!
 - **Here Is A Map That Shows All** The Miles He Covered On That Journey!
 - Yet - Paul Knew:
 - That In Jerusalem - Things Were Going To Change:
 - For Him!
 - Remember - In Chapter 20 - Paul Told The Ephesian Elders - In 20:22-23:
 - “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: / Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me!”
 - In Spite Of What The Holy Spirit Was Revealing To Paul:
 - By God’s Grace, He Was Ready!
 - In 21:13 - Paul Even Says This!
 - “For I Am Ready!”
 - “For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus!”
 - As A Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ:
 - Paul Was Ready!
3. And - I Think We Can See This Lesson:
 - Throughout This Chapter:
 - As God Unfolds His Plan To Paul:
 - In Real Time!
 - You See - The Bible Describes:
 - The Christian Life As A Spiritual War!
 - And As Christians:
 - We Too Need To Be Ready!
 - Because - We Don’t Want To Live Through Another “Day Which Will Live In Infamy” - Spiritually Speaking!
 - And Through The Example Of Paul:
 - We Can See - What It Takes:
 - To Be Ready!

* First - To Be Ready - You Need To:

1. ***Follow The Direction Of The Lord!***

- As Paul Does On The Final Leg Of His Third Missionary Journey:
 - In Chapter 21 - Where - In The First Six Verses:
 - Paul Experiences Some:
- Resistance To Following The Lord!
 - 21:1-6 - “And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: / 2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. / 3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. / 4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. / 5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. / 6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again!”
 - **Here’s A Closer Map:**
 - Of His Journey To Jerusalem:
 - As Paul & His Team Travel From Place To Place!
- But - In Tyre - There Were Some Disciples:
 - Used By The Holy Spirit To Reveal Once Again:
 - What He Would Face In Jerusalem!
 - In 21:4 - We Are Told That They:
 - “Said To Paul **Through The Spirit**, That He Should Not Go Up To Jerusalem!”
 - Now, What Does This Mean? And How Does It Correspond To What The Holy Spirit Told **Paul**
 - To **Go** To Jerusalem? (20:22-23)
 - Was The Holy Spirit Directing Paul Two Different Ways?
 - In 21:4 - Translate - “**According To The Spirit**” - Meaning That They Responded To What The Holy Spirit Was Telling Paul - Don’t Go!
 - The Direction Of The Holy Spirit To Paul:
 - Was The Same! Consistent!
 - But Even His Well-Meaning Brothers & Sisters Didn’t Want Him To Go!
 - But Paul Was Ready!
 - Also Experienced A:
- Reminder To Follow The Lord:
 - When He Reached The City Of Caesarea - In 21:7-11 - “And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. / 8 And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. / 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. / 10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. / 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles!”
 - Over & Over Again - Paul Was Reminded:
 - Of The Cost & Even Sacrifice It Might Take:
 - To Follow The Lord!
 - But He Was Ready!
 - And That’s Why - When Even Luke & His Other Friends:
 - Tell Him **Not** To Go - 21:12 - “And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem!”
 - We See Paul’s Strong:
- Resolution To Follow The Lord:
 - 21:13-13 - “Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. / 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done!”
- Paul Was Ready:
 - To Follow The Direction Of The Lord:
 - No Matter What!
 - And - Finally - The Others Agreed:
 - And Said - “The Will Of The Lord Be Done!”
 - This Is What It Takes:

- To Be A Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ!
- You Need To Be Ready:
 - To Follow The Direction Of The Lord!
 - No Matter What & No Turning Back! "The Will Of The Lord Be Done!"

* Second - To Be Ready - You Need To:

2. Fortify The Disciples Of The Lord! (21:15-16)

- Because - Like Any Soldier - You Are Part:
 - Of A Great "Band Of Brothers" And Sisters:
 - In Christ!
 - You Do Not Fight These Battles Alone!
 - And That's Why - When Paul Finally:
 - Arrived In Jerusalem:
 - There Are Reports Of Progress There:
 - As Well As Some Problems!
 - But - Paul Wanted To:
 - Encourage The Believers There:
- Through The Glory Of God!
 - When Paul Gave His Report:
 - To The Church In Jerusalem - 21:15-20a - "And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. / 16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. / 17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. / 18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. / 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. / 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord!" (Stop Here)
 - Paul & The Other Apostles & Leaders Of The Church In Jerusalem:
 - Gave God All The Credit & Glory For His Ministry! And The Disciples Were Encouraged & Fortified!
 - But Then - Paul Was Given The Opportunity:
 - To Encourage The Believers:
 - Through The Grace Of God!
 - When The Jerusalem Church Gave Their Report:
 - To Paul - In 21:20b-25 - "And said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: / 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. / 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. / 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them!" / Probably A Nazarite Vow - Following The Guidelines Found In Numbers 6 / "24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. / 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication!"
 - So - While Paul Was Away:
 - There Was Progress In Jerusalem:
 - For The Gospel!
 - 21:20 - Thousands / Myriads / Tens Of Thousands!
 - But - Along With This Progress:
 - There Was A Problem In Jerusalem:
 - 21:20 - "They [Were] All Zealous Of The Law!" - Not Just The Moral Law / But The Ceremonies & Rites That Were Still Taking Place At The Temple! But - In A Way - This Was Understandable! Because - Even Though The Gospel Did Away With The Necessity Of Those Laws:
 - Those New Jewish Believers Had A Newly-Found Understanding And Appreciation Of Those Old Mosaic Laws!
 - They Did Not Use Them For Salvation, But In Those Old Shadows They Were

Thrilled At The Sight Of Their Savior!

- John Gill - "Though They Believed In Jesus Of Nazareth As The True Messiah, Yet They Had Not Enough Light To See, That He Was The Sum And Substance Of All The Ceremonies Of The Law, And That They All Ended In Him!"
- And So - In This Period Of Transition:
 - Even Though The Old Testament Law - "Was Dead, [It Was] Not Yet Buried! Dead, But Not Yet Deadly!" (Matthew Henry)
 - But - Because Of This:
- There Was A Plight In Jerusalem!
 - Many Of The New Members Of The Mostly Jewish Jerusalem Church:
 - Heard That Paul Was Telling People To Forsake **ALL** The Law Of Moses!
 - So - The Apostles & Elders:
 - Thought About & Likely Prayed About:
 - How Best To Minister To Those Young Christians Who Were Still Weak In Their Faith!
- Now - Was The Proposition:
 - Made By The Jerusalem Church:
 - A Compromise With The Truths Of The Gospel?
 - Some Think So! Some Think Everyone Involved Was In The Wrong!
- But - It Seems As If:
 - They Were Trying To Handle:
 - Another Delicate Issue:
 - With A Measure Of Grace!
 - The Church's Leaders Knew That There Was Nothing More To Those Old Ceremonial Laws & Sacrifices:
 - But Not All Of The New Jewish Members Of The Church Understood This Truth!
 - They Needed Further Instruction, Further Time, And Further Grace!
- And Paul Was Ready - To Encourage & To Fortify:
 - His Fellow Christian Soldiers!
 - Even Those Who Were Younger & Weaker In The Faith!
 - And So - 21:26 - He Went - **Back To The Temple!**
 - "Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them!"
 - Was This Wrong? I Don't Think So!
 - Was It A Mistake? Perhaps!
 - But It Would Still Be Used By God, In His Providence, To Move Both Paul & The Church Further Along In His Plan!
- And This Too Is What It Takes:
 - To Be A Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ!
 - You Need To Be Ready:
 - To Encourage & To Fortify Your Fellow-Soldiers!
 - Often With Much Patience And Grace!

* Third - To Be Ready - You Need To:

3. **Face The Dangers In The Lord!**

- As Paul Would Soon Face In Jerusalem!
 - Like The Dangers Of:
 - False Charges!
 - 21:27-29 - "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, [There For The Feast Of Pentecost] when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, / 28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. / 29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)"
 - It Was A Capitol Offense For A Gentile To Go Past The Court Of The Gentiles Within The Temple!
 - So - **There Was A 3 Cubit High Barrier** Between The Gentile & The Jewish Courts!

- **Seen In These Two Slides!**
- **Along With Posted Signs Like** This To Warn Them!
- “Thanatos Inscription” - Death - Greek - “No Foreigner Is Allowed To Enter The Courtyard And Enclosure Surrounding The Temple. Whoever Is Caught Will Be Responsible To Himself For His Death, Which Will Ensnare!”
- But - Even Though This Was A False Accusation:
 - It Was The Straw That Broke The Camel’s Back!
 - And This Led To The Danger Of:
- Fierce Conflict!
 - 21:30-32 - “And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. / 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. / 32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul!”
 - **The Headquarters Of The Roman Garrison In** Jerusalem Was The Antonia Fortress - Built By Herod The Great - Which Was Connected To The Temple On The North-West Side!
 - It Was From Here The Soldiers Came! It Was To Here Paul Would Go!
 - But - In 21:30 - It Was The Jews Who Shut The Doors Of The Temple To Paul & To The Christians!
 - And In Just A Few More Years:
 - The Temple Would Be Destroyed And Closed To The Jews Themselves Entirely! Even Until This Very Day!
 - God Did This To Prove:
 - Once And For All That:
 - “Christ Is The End Of The Law For Righteousness To Every One That Believeth!” (Romans 10:4)
 - But Then Paul Faced A:
 - Foreign Custody!
 - 21:33-36 - “Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. / 34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. / 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. / 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him!”
 - Paul Heard The Same Words:
 - Hurling At His Savior In John 19:15:
 - “But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar!”
 - But Even Through All Of This:
 - And Being Battered & Bruised:
 - Paul Was Ready!
 - Ready To Wield The Sword Of The Spirit, The Word Of God, To Wage Spiritual Battle For The Souls Of His People!
 - And That Is Why - In 21:37-40 - “And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? / 38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? / 39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. / 40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying!”

Conclusion:

1. Paul Was Ready To Once Again:
 - Proclaim The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - And From This Point On:
 - The Movement Of Paul’s Life:
 - Is In The Hands Of A Foreign Power!
 - Yet - Even Though The Jews:
 - “Thought Evil Against” Paul:

- "God Meant It Unto Good!"

2. And - Through It All:

- Paul Was Ready - As A Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ!

- Now - The Question Is - How Ready Are You?

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