

Acts 21:1-16, The Journey to Jerusalem
March 6, 1993
H. Van Dyke Parunak

Overview

1. Two kinds of apostolic visits recorded in Acts
 - a) Church planting--the episodes in 13-20--*evangelism*
 - b) Here--*fellowship* with established believers.
 - c) Ephesus combines both of these, and is the pivot between the two.
 - 1) Evangelized through Aquila and Priscilla
 - 2) Apollos and the Twelve Disciples provide lessons in assessing those who profess to be believers.
2. We learned from the church planting visits a standard pattern of evangelism:
 - a) The eight cities: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth.
 - b) The repeated features:
 - 1) Aggressive; the Christians go from town to town; don't wait for the unbelievers to come to them.
 - 2) Always with companions. Never alone.
 - 3) The gospel is preached. Must be a verbal presentation.
 - 4) Some accept. (The fact that this is universal in these cities does not mean that it will always happen with us; Luke leaves many cities through which they must have passed undiscussed.)
 - 5) Some reject, with varying degrees of civil complicity.
 - 6) The team moves on. The evangelist does NOT become a long-term pastor.
3. So the stops along the way from Ephesus back to Jerusalem show some repeated elements, though not as much detail as the evangelistic visits.
 - a) The visits:
 - 1) Macedonia, 20:1
 - 2) Greece, 20:2
 - 3) Troas, 20:6-12
 - 4) Miletus, 20:17-38
 - 5) Tyre, 21:4
 - 6) Ptolemais, 21:7
 - 7) Caesarea, 21:8-14
 - b) The repeated features:
 - 1) Actively seek out the believers
 - 2) Tries to hit a Lord's Day
 - 3) Paul's teaching ministry among them
 - 4) Their warnings to Paul
 - 5) Loving separation
 - c) Shift in emphasis of the reports
 - 1) Early visits emphasize Paul's ministry (Greece, 20:2; Troas; Miletus). Knowing Paul, he must have done this throughout.
 - 2) Later ones emphasize the prophecies of doom, which we know

from 20:23 were also pervasive.

- 3) Thus the shift is a literary device of Luke to lead us to understand better the climax to which he is leading. Cf. the Lord Jesus, going up to Jerusalem to die.

4. Expound the lesson of each of the five points, to derive the pattern of believers visiting other believers.

A. Actively seek out the believers

1. Data

- a) 20:1-3, motive for his return to Macedonia and Greece.
- b) Miletus, 20:17, "sent for the elders of the church"
- c) Tyre, 21:4, "finding disciples"--*aneuriskw*, only other NT use of shepherds finding Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus. Not "stumble across," but deliberately search out and find.
- d) In general, this is what distinguishes these stops from others along the way (Assos, Rhodes, Cos, Patara).

2. Lesson: "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," Heb. 10:25. The unity of the body of Christ is not expressed through some large human organization, but by the witness of the Spirit shared among believers. To seek out God's people in every place brings blessing and encouragement both to us and to them.

B. Be with believers on the Lord's Day

1. Data

- a) Implicit when he was in a place for an extended period: Macedonia, Greece, Tyre, Caesarea.
- b) Rackham thinks the travel times work out to put the Miletus meeting on a Lord's Day.
- c) Troas is the parade example.

2. Lesson: Two important principles here:

- a) The principle of one day set apart in seven is part of the Ten Commandments. Our creator knows what we need, and he has given us this, not as a burden, but as a blessing. And we can do it, if we do it unto him: my experience in school. May take effort: consider negotiations with the captain of the boat.
- b) Commemorating the Lord's resurrection. This is the source of our spiritual strength, Eph. 1:19,20. Need to keep our attention on the Risen Lord, and the early church's way of doing this was through the Lord's Day.

C. Paul's teaching ministry among them

1. Data (other than Paul's general principle):

- a) Macedonia, 20:2, "much exhortation." Wrote 2 Cor.
- b) Greece (Corinth), wrote Romans; must have taught often in period of three months.
- c) Troas mentions his speech.

- d) Miletus preserves the message in detail.
- 2. Lesson: should be ready to hear what the Lord has for us from those whom he brings in our midst from outside.
 - a) Not novices or unknown individuals; Paul was known by name and reputation, and in many cases by face.
 - b) Recognition that those inside a meeting may be too close to the situation to see what most needs attention.
 - c) Contrast
 - 1) trad'l churches, where the pastor seldom if ever relinquishes the pulpit
 - 2) NT assemblies: my experiences in Nazareth and Rockville; our welcome to Don Erwin or Bob Lawton.

D. Their warnings to Paul

- 1. Data
 - a) 20:23 shows that these were pervasive.
 - b) Tyre, 21:4. A very brief reference: did the HS say "don't go up to Jerusalem," or did he warn of sufferings there and the brethren then urged him not to go? More detail in next example:
 - c) Caesarea, 21:8-16. Gives much more detail, and suggests that the second option is what happened. We draw our lessons mainly from here.
- 2. Lessons
 - a) The Spirit of God does not speak in only one direction within a group. Even such a mature believer as Paul can receive messages from others, as well as give them, and that "in every church."
 - b) In spite of the presence of Philip's daughters, who regularly prophesied, the Lord sends Agabus, a man, with the message for Paul. "Four prophesying daughters" (present ptc, probably gnostic), not "four daughters that on this particular occasion prophesied" (where other Lukan usage would suggest aorist ptc).
 - c) Distinguishes Prophecy from Personal Counsel, which appear to be collapsed in the brief report on Tyre.
 - 1) Prophecy, the message from the HS (11, the fact of coming persecution); requires a special gift from the Lord. Paul accepts this; he already acknowledges (20:23) the coming bondage.
 - 2) Counsel, arises from the desire of the believers (12, that Paul would not go up). Acc. to Proverbs, of great value, and to be esteemed. This Paul must weigh against his own conviction before the Lord.
 - 3) It's important that we distinguish these two in our dealings with one another.
 - d) Paul's individual responsibility to the Lord. Only he can know

what the Lord has laid on his heart, and having "purposed in the Spirit" (19:21) to go to Jerusalem, he must be faithful to the Lord.

Important OT illustration: 1 Kings 13:1-32. The word of the old prophet cannot invalidate the personal revelation of the Lord to the young prophet (and this case is all the more striking since the difference in age would incline the young prophet to prefer the elder man's counsel).

- e) v.14, their response: having made clear the prophecy and their own counsel, they cease. Don't keep on nagging, even when you're sure you have a word from the Lord! Ultimately, each of us must stand or fall before the Lord, and we must give one another liberty to do so. Rules for exhortation:
 - 1) The messenger must deliver the message clearly and compassionately, but then let the matter rest in the Lord's hands rather than keep on pushing.
 - 2) The recipient must pay attention to what is shared, and then weigh it against what the Lord has told him, and act accordingly.

E. Loving separation

- 1. Data
 - a) Troas, 20:11, long lingering talk until daybreak.
 - b) Miletus, 20:36-38, sorrowful parting
 - c) Tyre, 21:5, they go out of the city with him
 - d) Caesarea, 21:13 (weeping), 16 (accompanying him to Jerusalem)
- 2. Lesson: Our brethren in Christ are more than just acquaintances. We must cultivate the tender bonds of love and compassion that God has established among us. The Love of the Brethren must not be just a theological doctrine, but an emotional fact.

Summary

Just as chapters 13-19 give us a pattern for evangelism, so 20-21 give us a pattern for church fellowship:

- 1. Seek out God's people wherever you are.
- 2. Set the Lord's Day apart for fellowship.
- 3. Welcome counsel and instruction from known believers from outside of your own group.
- 4. Recognize the two-directional flow of exhortation, and the ultimate need for the individual to make the final decision.
- 5. Cultivate true love and affection for your brethren in Christ.

Psalm: 133, "Behold, How Pleasant and How Good"

Analysis

- A. 21:1-3, Miletus to Tyre
 - 1. h)/lqomen ei)s th\`n Kw^,
 - a) 1 (Ws de\` e)ge/neto a)naxqh^nai h(ma^s

- b) a)pospasqe/ntas a)p' au)tw^n,
 - c) eu)qudromh/santes
 - 2. th^| de\ e(ch^s [hlqomen] ei)s th\n (Ro/don,
 - 3. ka)kei^qen [hlqomen] ei)s Pa/tara:
 - 4. a)nh/xghmen.
 - a) 2 kai\ eu(ro/ntes ploi^on diaperw^n ei)s Foini/khn
 - b) e)piba/ntes
 - 5. e)ple/omen ei)s Suri/an,
 - a) 3 a)nafa/nantes de\ th\n Ku/pron
 - b) kai\ katalipo/ntes au)th\n eu)w/numon
 - 6. kai\ kath/lqomen ei)s Tu/ron,
 - a) e)kei^se ga\r to\ ploi^on h)^n a)pofortizo/menon to\n go/mon.
- B. 21:4-6, Tyre
- 1. 4 a)neuro/ntes de\ tou\s maghta\s
 - 2. e)pemei/namen au)tou^ h(me/ras e(pta/,
 - 3. quote p
 - a) quote f: oi(/tines tw^| Pau/lw| e)/legon dia\ tou^ pneu/matos
 - b) quote: mh\ e)pibai/nein ei)s (Ieroso/luma.
 - 4. e)poreuo/meqa
 - a) 5 o(/te de\ e)ge/neto h(ma^s e)carti/sai ta\s h(me/ras,
 - b) e)celqo/ntes
 - c) propempo/ntwn h(ma^s pa/ntwn su\n gunaici\ kai\ te/knois e(/ws e)/cw th^s po/lews,
 - d) kai\ qe/ntes ta\ go/nata e)pi\ to\n ai)gialo\n proseuca/menoi
 - 5. 6 kai aspasamenoi a)llh/lous a)ne/bhmen ei)s to\ ploi^on,
 - 6. e)kei^noi de\ u(pe/streya ei)s ta\ i)/dia.
- C. 21:7, Ptolemais
- 1. 7 (Hmei^s de\ to\n plou^n dianu/santes a)po\ Tu/rou kathnth/samen ei)s Ptolemai/+da,
 - 2. kai\ a)spasa/menoi tou\s a)delfou\s e)mei/namen h(me/ran mi/an par' au)toi^s.
- D. 21:8-14, Caesarea
- 1. 8 th^| de\ e)pau/rion e)celqo/ntes h)/lqomen ei)s Kaisa/reian,
 - 2. kai\ ei)selqo/ntes ei)s to\n oi)^kon Fili/ppou tou^ eu)aggelistou^ o)/ntos e)k tw^n e(pta\ e)mei/namen par' au)tw^|.
 - 3. 9 tou/tw| de\ h)^san qugate/res te/ssares parqe/noi profhteu/ousai.
 - 4. 10 e)pimeno/ntwn de\ h(me/ras plei/ous kath^lqe/n tis a)po\ th^s)Ioudai/as profh/ths o)no/mati (/Agabos,
 - 5. 11 kai\ e)lqw\n pro\s h(ma^s kai\ a)/ras th\n zw/nhn tou^ Pau/lou dh/sas e(autou^ tou\s po/das kai\ ta\s xei^ras ei)^pen,
 - a) Ta/de le/gei to\ pneu^ma to\ a(/gion,
 - b) To\n a)/ndra ou(^ e)stin h(zw/nh au(/th ou(/tw\s dh/sousin e)n)Ierousalh\m oi()Ioudai^oi kai\ paradw/sousin ei)s xei^ras e)qnw^n.
 - 6. temporal quote p
 - a) time: 12 w(s de\ h)kou/samen tau^ta,
 - b) quote f: parekalou^men h(mei^s te kai\ oi(e)nto/pioi
 - c) quote: tou^ mh\ a)nabai/nein au)to\n ei)s)Ierousalh/m.
 - 7. quote p
 - a) quote f: 13 to/te a)pekri/qh o(Pau^los,

b) quote:

- 1) Ti/ poiei^te klai/ontes kai\ sungru/ptonte/s mou th\n kardi/an;
 - 2) e)gw\ ga\r ou) mo/non deqh^nai a)lla\ kai\ a)poqanei^n ei)s)Ierousalh\m e(toi/mws e)/xw u(pe\r tou^ o)no/matos tou^ kuri/ou)Ihsou^.
8. 14 mh\ peiqome/nou de\ au)tou^ h(suxa/samen ei)po/ntes, Tou^ kuri/ou to\ qe/lhma gine/sqw.

E. 21:15-16, Caesarea to Jerusalem

1. 15 Meta\ de\ ta\s h(me/ras tau/tas e)piskeuasa/menoi a)nebai/nomen ei)s (Ieroso/luma:
2. 16 sunh^lqon de\ kai\ tw^n maqhtw^n a)po\ Kaisarei/as su\n h(mi^n, a)/gontes par' w(^| cenisqw^men Mna/swni/ tini Kupri/w|, a)rxai/w| maqhth^|.