

# INPOWERED DISCIPLESHIP

*An Inductive Study of the Book of Acts*

## Faithful Discipleship

**Acts 21:18-23:35**

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### Focal Passages

#### ➤ Scripture Reading Volunteers:

- ✓ Acts 21:1-9
- ✓ Acts 21:10-16
- ✓ Acts 21:17-25

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**Acts 1:8**

*“But you will receive **POWER**  
when the Holy Spirit has come on you,  
and you will be My witnesses in  
Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth.”*

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## JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Acts 21:1-16

<sup>1</sup>After we tore ourselves away from them, we set sail straight for Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. <sup>2</sup>Finding a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we boarded and set sail. <sup>3</sup>After we sighted Cyprus, passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria and arrived at Tyre, since the ship was to unload its cargo there. <sup>4</sup>We sought out the disciples and stayed there seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>When our time had come to an end, we left to continue our journey, while all of them, with their wives and children, accompanied us out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach to pray, <sup>6</sup>we said farewell to one another and boarded the ship, and they returned home.

<sup>7</sup>When we completed our voyage from Tyre, we reached Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. <sup>8</sup>The next day we left and came to Caesarea, where we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup>This man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

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## JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Acts 21:1-16

<sup>10</sup>After we had been there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him over to the Gentiles.'" <sup>12</sup>When we heard this, both we and the local people pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup>Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

<sup>14</sup>Since he would not be persuaded, we said no more except, "The Lord's will be done."

Conflict over the Gentile Mission

<sup>15</sup>After this we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup>Some of the disciples from Caesarea also went with us and brought us to Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to stay.

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### WARNING

#### ABOUT JERUSALEM

Acts 21:3-12

What were they concerned about?

Did they have cause for concern?

How did Paul respond?

#### ➤ Paul had been warned not to go to Jerusalem; many times, by lots of people, in multiple locations.

❖ <sup>3</sup>...we sailed on to Syria and arrived at Tyre, since the ship was to unload its cargo there. <sup>4</sup>We sought out the disciples and stayed there seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go to Jerusalem." (vv. 3-4)

❖ <sup>8</sup>The next day we left and came to Caesarea, where we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup>This man had four virgin daughters who prophesied." (vv. 8-9)

❖ <sup>10</sup>After we had been there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way **the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him over to the Gentiles.**'" (vv. 10-11)

❖ <sup>12</sup>When we heard this, both we and the local people pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem." (v. 12)

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## FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP

Acts 21:13-14

How did Luke and the  
Caesarean disciples  
respond?

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<sup>13</sup>Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For **I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.**"

<sup>14</sup>Since he would not be persuaded, we said no more except, "The Lord's will be done."

Was this just bluster, or was Paul sincere?

### 2 Corinthians 11:24-29

<sup>24</sup>**Five times** I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. <sup>25</sup>**Three times** I was beaten with rods. **Once** I received a stoning. **Three times** I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. <sup>26</sup>On **frequent journeys**, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; <sup>27</sup>toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing. <sup>28</sup>Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup>Who is weak, and I am not weak?

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## FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP

Acts 21:13-14



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<sup>13</sup>Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For **I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.**"

<sup>14</sup>Since he would not be persuaded, **we** said no more except, "The Lord's will be done."

After traveling for weeks, Paul and his traveling companions were on the doorstep of Jerusalem.

Why was Paul so insistent upon visiting Jerusalem, why didn't he just go back to his home base in Antioch?

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## FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP

Acts 21:13-14

Because he carried  
offerings and  
testimony with him!

So, just imagine how  
Paul must have felt  
by the time he  
reached Jerusalem?

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➤ Paul's main reason for going to Jerusalem was to deliver offerings from the Gentile churches.

- ❖ *"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings."*  
(Acts 24:17)
- ❖ *"<sup>1</sup>Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. <sup>2</sup>On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. <sup>3</sup>Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me."*  
(1 Corinthians 16:1-4)
- ❖ *"<sup>25</sup>Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. <sup>26</sup>For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings."*  
(Romans 15:25-27)

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## ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM

Acts 21:17-25

<sup>17</sup>When we reached Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters welcomed us warmly. <sup>18</sup>The following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup>After greeting them, he reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

<sup>20</sup>When they heard it, they glorified God and said, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law. <sup>21</sup>But they have been informed about you—that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or to live according to our customs. <sup>22</sup>So what is to be done? They will certainly hear that you've come. <sup>23</sup>Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have made a vow. <sup>24</sup>Take these men, purify yourself along with them, and pay for them to get their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that what they were told about you amounts to nothing, but that you yourself are also careful about observing the law. <sup>25</sup>With regard to the Gentiles who have believed, we have written a letter containing our decision that they should keep themselves from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality."

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## RECEPTION IN JERUSALEM

Acts 21:17-19

The elders told Paul that false reports were circulating through Jerusalem about him.

## GOOD NEWS

- Warm reception – bear hugs for all
- Detailed report elicited praise to God
- Shared offering meet needs in Jerusalem
- Thousands of Jews coming to Christ

## BAD NEWS

- Judaizers stirring up trouble
- Jerusalem rumors mill building steam

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## FALSE ACCUSATION

Acts 21:20-21

What accusations were being made about Paul in his absence?

So, what is to be done, they asked?

***20**When they heard it, they glorified God and said, “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law. **21**But they have been informed about you — **that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or to live according to our customs.***

- Indeed, Paul did teach Gentiles that it was religiously inconsequential whether they circumcised their sons or not.
- And it is true that Paul did not teach Gentiles to abide by Jewish customs.
- But Paul never taught Jews ... not to circumcise their sons or to disregard Jewish customs.

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## WISE COUNCIL

Acts 21:22-24

**1 Corinthians 9:19-22**

*<sup>19</sup>Although I am free from all and not anyone's slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law — though I myself am not under the law — to win those under the law...*

***<sup>22</sup>...I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some.***

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*<sup>22</sup>So what is to be done? They will certainly hear that you've come. <sup>23</sup>Therefore **do what we tell you**: We have four men who have made a vow. <sup>24</sup>Take these men, purify yourself along with them, and pay for them to get their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that what they were told about you amounts to nothing, but that you yourself are also careful about observing the law.*

**To placate Jewish believers, James and the elders suggested that Paul join in and pay for the purification rites of four men who had taken a vow.**

**Did Paul, do it? If so, why?**

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# INPOWERED DISCIPLESHIP

## Faithful Discipleship

- ➔ **If you, like Paul, have decided to be "all things to all people" then that commitment may lead you to unusual places, surely to be criticized by some and heralded by others.**
- ➔ **Guard your hearts and check your motives, don't let a cavalier attitude lead you astray.**
- ➔ **Salt must contact its target to have a positive affect on it. Light must fight darkness for dawn to break.**
- ➔ **Paul's motive was pure; "that I may by every possible means save some."**
- ➔ **So, as with Paul, let us be in the world, not of it.**

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**IN** POWERED DISCIPLESHIP  
*An Inductive Study of the Book of Acts*

**Enduring Discipleship**  
**Acts 21:25 - 23:35**

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