

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
I Am Ready
Acts 21:1-16

Last time...the conclusion of Paul's final words to the elders of the church at Ephesus

A very timely message for us!

- teach the full counsel of God – Genesis to Revelation
- shepherds be alert for wolves coming in and perverse people rising up
- watch and warn the flock of God in perilous times

This time...Paul's journey from the meeting with the Ephesian elders in Miletus to his assent to Jerusalem

Along the way, Paul faces push-back from the brethren about going to Jerusalem

But..."I am ready!"

v1-3 After saying farewell to the Ephesian elders, Paul, Luke, and Co get back on board their ship

The winds were good, enabling them to make a direct course to Coos

Then, hugging the coastline, from Coos to Rhodes to Patara

At Patara they find a ship headed to Phoenicia, over the open seas

Approaching Cyprus, they skirt around the southern coast of Cyprus;

left = "the lucky side" to the pagan Greeks

They landed at Tyre, the destination port for this commercial ship

Tyre of the Phoenicians (worshippers of Baal) was the marketplace of the kingdoms in ancient times

Is 23, the burden of the Lord for Tyre (and sister city Zidon, of Jezebel fame)

- thought themselves to be invulnerable to attack...prophesied to be laid waste by the Lord
 - to a degree by Neb and the Babylonians
 - completely by Greece and Alexander
- merchants and businessmen were the elites of Tyre
- traded with all the nations..."committed fornication with all the kingdoms of the world"

Ezk 26-28, were against Jerusalem so the Lord was against them (Gen 12:3)

- all the kingdoms of the ancient world traded with Tyre/the Phoenicians
- their prosperity and commercial influence over "the world" caused their heart to be lifted up against the living God, as heard in the words of their king: "I am a God, I sit in the seat of God."
- the king of Tyre (principalities and powers): Lucifer, the anointed cherub

The lifeblood of the nations and empires is...money

Jesus, the Living Word of God said, **No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon** (Matt 6:24)

Mammon, the “spirit of Tyre”, Satan’s commercial empire,

- that commits fornication with all the kingdoms of the world
- that oppresses the weak and the poor

is finally destroyed by God in Rev 18

Where is the seat of Mammon today?

USA

The world trades in USD

- backed by gold until 1971
USA possesses more gold than any other nation...\$474B, 8100 mt
- since 1971, USD has been backed by oil (Nixon/Kissinger) when USA abandoned the gold standard to curb inflation and prevent foreign nations from overburdening the financial system by redeeming their dollars for gold.

USA has the world’s biggest and strongest economy

What is happening to the seat of Mammon?

According to many economists, the “almighty” dollar is in a liquidity crisis

- inflation
- bank failures due cash withdrawals to investments vessels with better returns
- depending on the Fed’s response,
 - keep raising interest rates to “tame” inflation
 - collapse of stock market
 - bank runs
 - lower interest rates
 - could result in hyper inflation
 - foreign Gov’ts stop buying US Treasury bills (how USA finances its mind-boggling debt) because loss of faith in USD
 - demise of USD
 - ultimately, the collapse of USA Gov’t

Other economists pooh-pooh this scenario, citing vastness of the USA economy

Fact (what we can see now): the weakness and the insane, Godless, and “progressive” policies of the Biden Administration...national cancers... are driving nations to make stronger alliances elsewhere...predominately with China (Middle East in particular)

BRICS

- Brazil
- Russia
- Iran
- China
- South Africa

is no longer using USD as their reserve currency but instead have agreed to work together on a new global currency

French President Emmanuel Macron has declared that Europe must reduce its dependence on the USD to avoid becoming ‘vassals of USA’

The way is rapidly being prepared for a new global currency...digital

Rev 13:16-17 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Note: Is USA “Babylon the great” (Rev 18:2)?

In Revelation, is the power of Babylon on the rise?

Yes

Today, is the power of USA on the rise?

No

USA will not be a major player in the world during the 70th Week of Daniel, which is upon us!

v4 In the spiritual darkness of Tyre, Paul found...disciples of Jesus Christ

Matt 15:26-28 Jesus visited, a “founding” member of the fellowship?

Phil 1:12-14 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel (God has a plan!); So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*; (The Lord has His people everywhere) And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear (to preach the Gospel)

In a hurry to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost, Paul...stays in Tyre for a week
Doing what?

Teaching and preaching the entire counsel of God
Imparting a spiritual gift to the brethren, the Family of God in Tyre

In the face of time pressure, Paul was “interruptible”, just as was Jesus in His ministry

Thursday afternoon (my “normal flow”)...before big family gathering that night:
You can come pick me up now (about 2 hours earlier than normal)
We need to go to Target to get birthday cards.

Why was Paul interrupted?

Why was I?

Why are you?

Because God has a plan (this teaching moment about being interruptible)

We need to always yield our plan to God’s plan

Paul’s friends, speaking as they were led by the Holy Spirit, implored him to not go to
“the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord
was crucified.” (Rev 11:8 then too!)

Acts 20:22-23...in Tyre too!

v5-6 The reaction of Paul to the words of the Holy Spirit are not recorded;
they have been recorded already...Acts 20:24

But his actions are recorded – time to keep moving!
So the entire fellowship escorts him and his party out of town to the harbor
And there...a time of prayer – corporate worship in prayer, the bottom line of which is:
“Father, Your will be done, not ours.”

When Paul & Co are on board, the fellowship at Tyre returns home to resume their
ministries in the place where the Lord has planted them

v7 From Tyre Paul sails to Ptolemais, where he finds...another fellowship of followers of
Jesus Christ

Family at every stop!

About 30 years after Acts 2, Jesus has “upon this rock I will build my church; and
the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

A Body empowered by the Holy Spirit, whose movements are fueled by...
persecution

The hatred of the world has resulted in the “blossoming” of the Church

v8 After a brief stop in Ptolemais, Paul continues by ship down the coast to Caesarea

In this place the Phoenicians, the traders of the world, had a port
But then Herod the Great, in part of his service to Rome that earned him the title of
“King”, built a large man-made port here
All sorts of precious goods from the east flowed to Rome...via Caesarea
And every merchant paid taxes to Rome and to Herod with every shipload,
enriching the Empire and that wicked king

In Caesarea, Paul connects with Philip

- NOT the Apostle, of whom we know very little
- the Spirit-filled deacon (Acts 6:1-6)
- driven from Jerusalem by...Saul of Tarsus (Acts 8:1)
- witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
- was planted by the Lord to bear fruit in Caesarea (Acts 8:40)

Irony:

Philip fled Saul...to now host Paul in his home!
Saul hunted Philip...only to now be welcomed into Philip's home!

ONLY the grace of God can effect such change!

v9 Philip was also fruitful in his own home, the father of 4 unmarried daughters being used
by the Lord to speak forth the Word of God

Women are NOT to be spectators in the work of the Lord!

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit
upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see
visions

(the near term fulfillment being in Acts 2)

1 Cor 11:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth...

1 Cor 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and
exhortation, and comfort.

BUT (and this is not received by “socially progressive” churches today):

1 Tim 2:12-14 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the
man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was
in the transgression.

because God is the God of order and not the author of confusion

1 Cor 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is
Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head
of Christ *is* God.

Do social pressures or “progressive” agendas change the Word of God?
No!

But to repeat: Women are NOT to be spectators in the work of the Lord!

2 Chron 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* (men and women!) whose heart *is* perfect toward him.

The world is hostile to children and to women
The Lord loves and honors children and women

v10-11 Blessed by such sweet fellowship

- rooted in persecution and hate
- changed by grace
- nurtured in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ
- grounded in a mutual resolve to serve Him and His people

Paul stays in Philip’s house “many days”

During which time comes a prophet from Jerusalem – Agabus

Acts 11:27-28

And Agabus came with a message from the Holy Spirit

Using Paul’s belt as a prop, Agabus prophesies
(declaring the future, known only by God)

that Paul will be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles i.e the Romans!

- as was Jesus...and we know how that ended!
- of whom the Lord God previously prophesied

Dan 2:40 Neb’s dream

Dan 7:7-8 Daniel’s dream

Dan 7:15-27

Acts 20:22-23...same message in every city

So what is the Holy Spirit saying to Paul?

1. a command?

Don’t go to Jerusalem

2. information?

As My friend, I’m telling you what is going to happen in Jerusalem

Gen 18:17, 19 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do...For I know him...

Acts 9:16 **For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

3. a test?

In the face of a great trial, will you go or not?

v12 Paul's friends, again, as in Tyre, react to the prophesy by begging him to not go to Jerusalem
"Our will be done, not the Lord's."
Fear over Faith

v13 Paul's answer is from his heart
Why are you playing on my emotions (flesh) and dispiriting me rather than encouraging me?
I am ready

- to be bound...as Jesus was for me
- to die for the name of the Lord Jesus...as He did for me

Paul is ready to stand alone with the Lord in a hostile environment
His words are not bluster, they are not idle words as were Peter's (before born-again)
Matt 26:31-35

He knows

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Dan 2:34-35, 44-45

Dan 7:13-14, 27

He embraces Faith over Fear...as did Stephen while Saul held the coats

Matt 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

2 Tim 1:7

Rom 14:7-9 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

1 Cor 6:19-20 that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

2 Cor 12:9-10 **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

He will later be inspired to write while in a Roman prison

Phil 1:20-24, 29

Phil 3:7-11

So Paul is standing on Acts 20:24

Am I ready...to stand alone with the Lord in this hostile environment?

Are we ready?

My life, our lives, belong to Jesus Christ

Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Job 1:6-12 Have you considered My servant Job?...all that he has is in your power, only upon himself put not for your hand

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Job 2:1-6 Have you considered My servant Job?...he is in your hand, but save/spare his life

Job 2:9-10 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Job 38-42 After all the belly-aching by Job and bad doctrine by Job's "friends", the Lord established His sovereign might thru a long series of withering questions

My life, our lives, are in God's hands for His glory, for our eternal good, and for a witness to others (as was Stephen to Saul of Tarsus!)

I don't want it any other way; do you?

v14 Paul simply would not be dissuaded from following the Lord, “bound in the spirit”
He is focused, resolved and determined to do the Lord’s will and not the will of men,
even well-intentioned men/friends

1 Thes 2:4b so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.
Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?
for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

So his friends...surrender their will to the Lord’s will, as it should be

The Holy Spirit is

- telling His friend what is going to happen
- testing the heart of His servant
- not “putting the brakes on” Paul’s journey to Jerusalem (with the love gift of the Gentile churches to the persecuted church in Jerusalem)

Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, **Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**
encouragement for obeying, not a rebuke for disobedience

v15-16 Paul and Co now proceed to Jerusalem, overland, going up in elevation
One in the entourage is Mnason of Cyprus, a “seasoned” follower of Jesus Christ,
who will be Paul’s host in Jerusalem

Are any descendant of Mnason in fellowship with the Colemans?!

Application

Here we are, living in the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot before the return of Jesus Christ to earth

Before He returns to earth, Jesus returns to the clouds to snatch the remnant of His Bride off the earth and to take us to His Father’s house during the tribulation/great tribulation on earth
Can you see the Finish Line of our course?

On our journey to finish our course with joy, are we ready

- to stand firm in the face of hostility and withering persecution by Godless “progressives”, led by militant LGBTQ+-ers, drag queens, and mother earth worshippers?
- to hold very loosely the things of the world and to hold very tightly onto the Lord, the King of all the earth?
- to do the Lord’s will and not our own or our friends?

These are times of testing...and times of being the witnesses of Jesus Christ
Will we stand...or will we cave?

Let's be resolved to stand!

Expect trouble

Expect to be tested

Know what you know

Know that you know

Have eyes that are fixed focused