



# THE HOLY BOOK OF ACTS

## CHAPTER 21

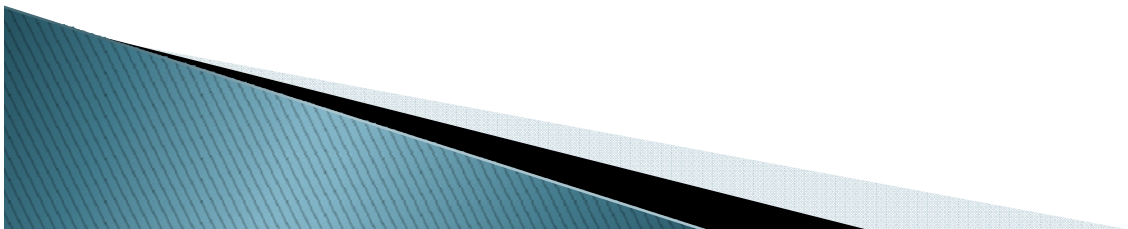
H.G. Bishop Youssef

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern US

# Introduction

## Chapter Outline:

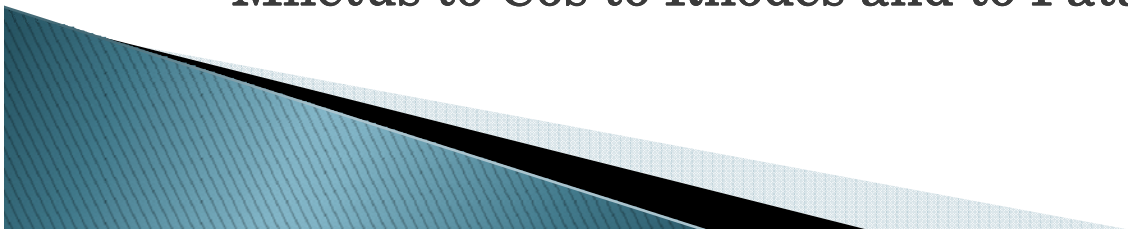
- Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (1-14)
- Arrived in Jerusalem & Urged to Make Peace (15-25)
- Arrested in the temple (26-36)
- Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (37-40)



# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

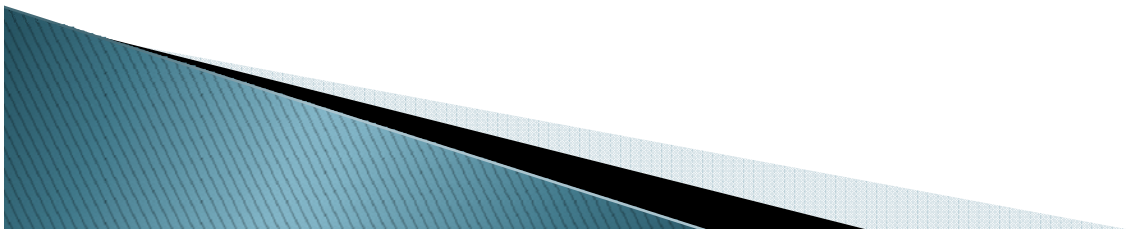
They Sailed from Miletus to Tyre (1-3)

- “Departed from them” expressing the difficulty and pain of the parting
- St. John Chrysostom says the Greek word “apospao” means had torn away
- St. Paul left the Ephesian elders at Miletus
- St. Paul, Luke, and the other traveling companions sailed from Miletus to Cos to Rhodes and to Patara



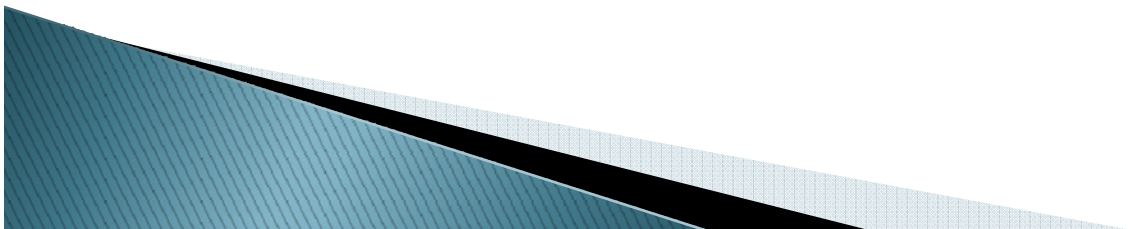
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- From Patara, they caught a ship to Tyre of Phoenicia
- As they sailed, they saw Cyprus on the "left" (passing south of the island)
- Cos is an island about 50 miles south of Miletus
- Rhodes is an island about 50 miles southeast of Cos
- Patara is a port on mainland Turkey about 50 miles east of Rhodes; it is one of the chief seaport towns of Syria



# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

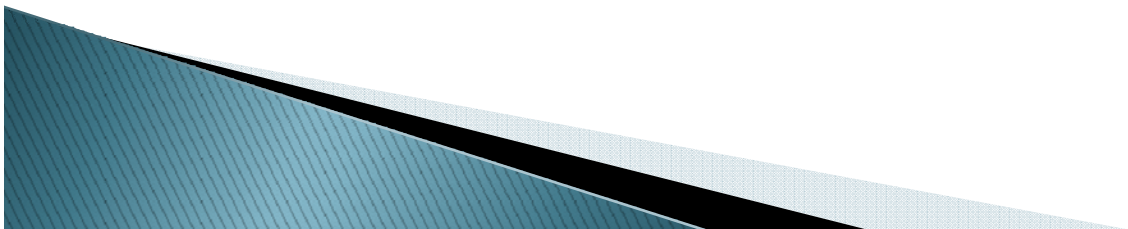
- It seems that the ship they went aboard at Assos, Acts 20:13 went no further, at least in the way the apostle was going, than Patara; but lighting on another ship
- Phoenicia, one of the most celebrated maritime towns in the world; it is Lebanon now
- Tyre is a port city in today's south Lebanon (north of Israel)



# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

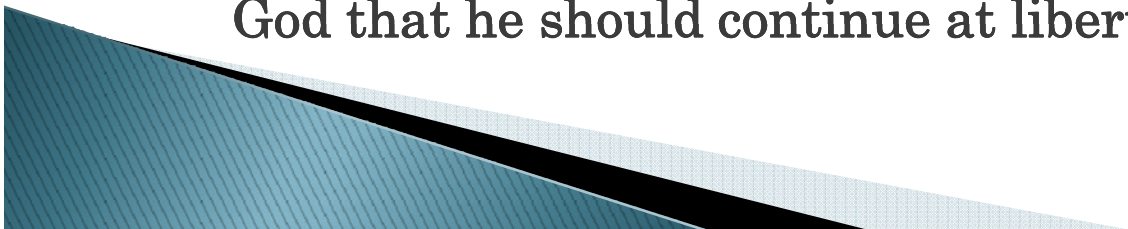
St. Paul and His Companions Arrived in Tyre (4-6)

- They found the disciples there and remained with them seven Days
- As was St. Paul's custom in most every city he went, he went down and saluted and encouraged the brethren in the city
- St. Paul's desire was to see the church grow and reach more for the cause of Christ



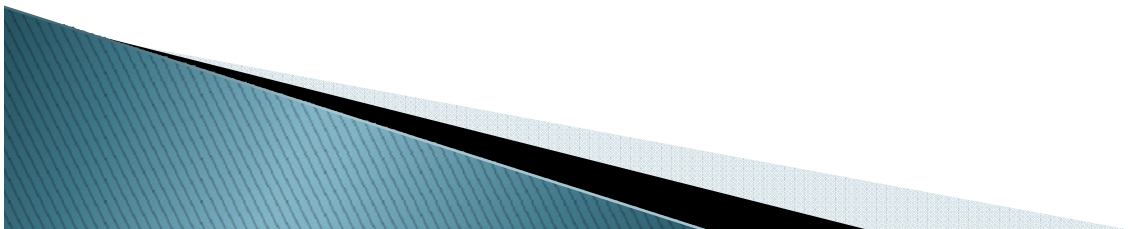
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- As this statement is made three times where St. Paul found brethren (Ac 20:6 21:04 28:14), it evidently implies that he tarried at each place to have one solemn meeting on the first day of the week and to celebrate the Eucharist
- The disciples understood through the Spirit what awaited Paul in Jerusalem; they told Paul not to go to Jerusalem
- Foreseeing his troubles, from love to him, and concern for the church, they wrongly thought it would be most for the glory of God that he should continue at liberty



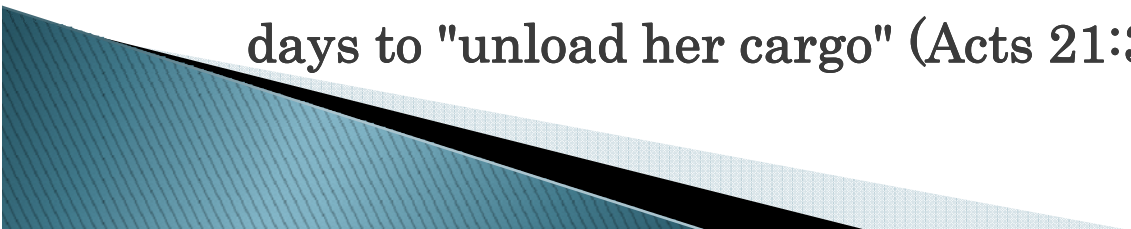
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- The disciples later acknowledged that it was the Lord's will for St. Paul to go to Jerusalem (Acts 20:14)
- The Lord Himself confirmed that it was His will when St. Paul was in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11)
- " The disciples accompanied St. Paul and his companions outside the city
- This was an affecting sight





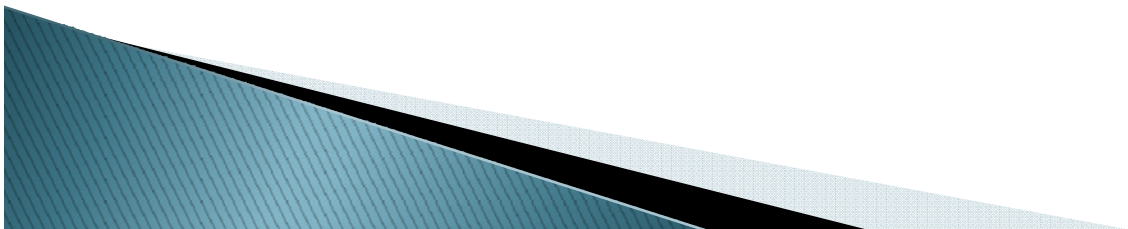
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- The whole church, men, women and children, gathered around the great apostle and his companions knelt down and prayed on the shore
  - Observe that the children of these Tyrian disciples not only were taken along with their parents, but must have joined in this act of solemn worship
  - St. Paul and his companions boarded the ship and departed
  - It was most likely the same ship, which may have needed 7 days to "unload her cargo" (Acts 21:3) and to load new cargo
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# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

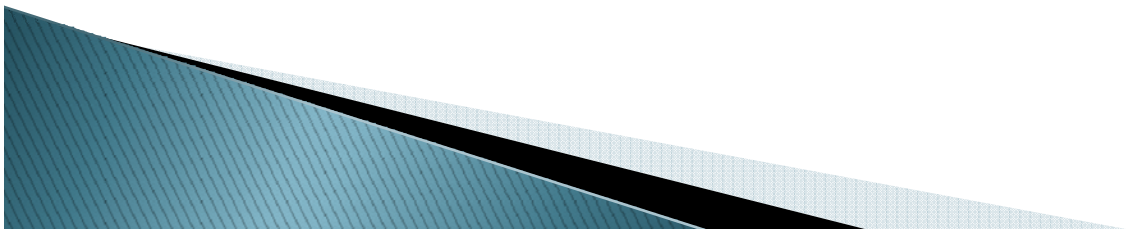
More Warnings Given to St. Paul before Arriving in Jerusalem  
(7-14)

- St. Paul and his companions sailed from Tyre to Ptolemais
- They greeted the brethren there and remained one day
- The next day, they went to Caesarea
- The capital of the Roman province of Judea, Caesarea is 30 miles south of Ptolemais



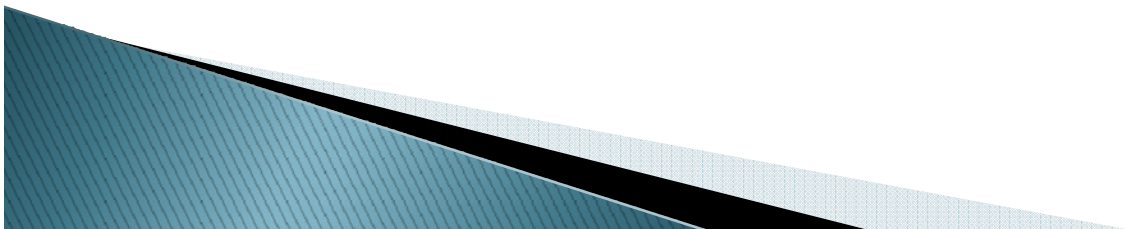
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- St. Paul and his companions went to Philip's house
- Philip was one of the seven that had been chosen to serve the church in Jerusalem before the great persecution (Acts 6)
- He evangelized to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5), as well as to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-35)



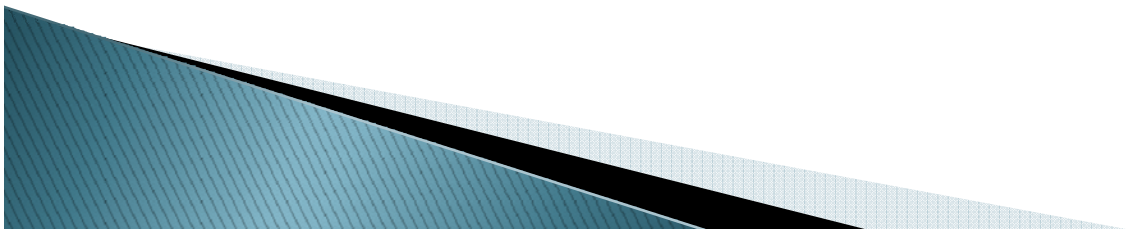
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- Philip had four virgin daughters; they prophesied
- They were devoted servants and probably teachers in the Church
- The prophet Agabus came down from Judea
- About what had "Agabus" previously prophesied?  
The previous famine (Acts 11:27-30)
- This was no doubt a prophet, in the commonly received sense of the term



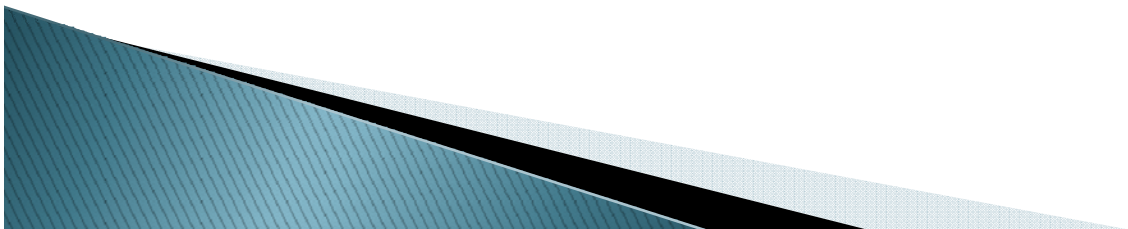
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- Agabus took St. Paul's belt and bound his own hands and feet
- This was to indicate what would happen to St. Paul, as revealed by the Holy Spirit; he would be delivered to the Gentiles
- Who are "the Gentiles"? The Romans
- Why does the Holy Spirit keep communicating the harm that awaits St. Paul in Jerusalem?

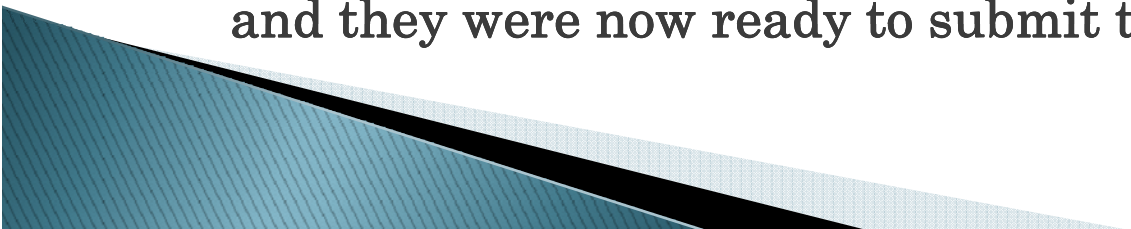


# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- Most likely to prepare him as well as the disciples so that when St. Paul is bound and later martyred in Rome, they will know that his suffering and death wasn't in error but in obedience to God's will
- To those who truly believe in Christ, death on earth is a promotion to heaven
- Was St. Paul ready for his promotion? Absolutely (Acts 21:13)



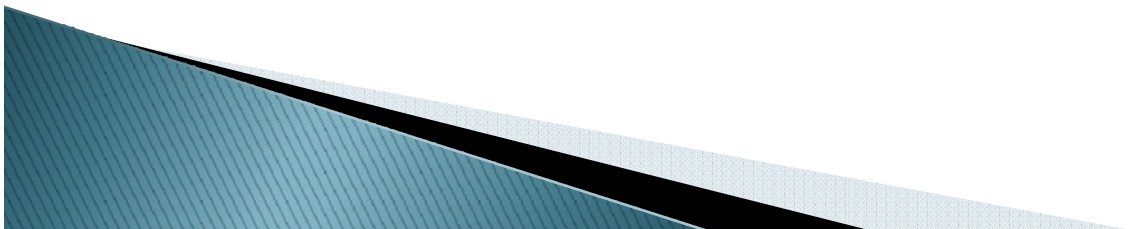
# Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

- Both his traveling companions and those in Caesarea pleaded with St. Paul not to go to Jerusalem
  - St. Paul is persuaded in his mind that he will go even if it meant his death
  - He was resolute and determined
  - They ceased pleading with St. Paul and asked that the will of the Lord be done
  - They were assured that it was the will of God that he should go, and they were now ready to submit to that will
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# St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

St. Paul and His Companions Proceeded to Jerusalem (15-16)

- “went up to Jerusalem” thus concluding his third missionary tour
- They were accompanied by some of the disciples of Caesarea
- They were to lodge with Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple
- The rites of hospitality were shown in a distinguished manner by the early Christians

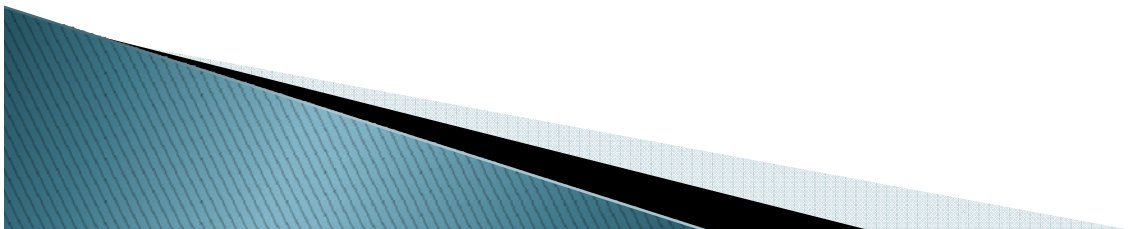




# St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

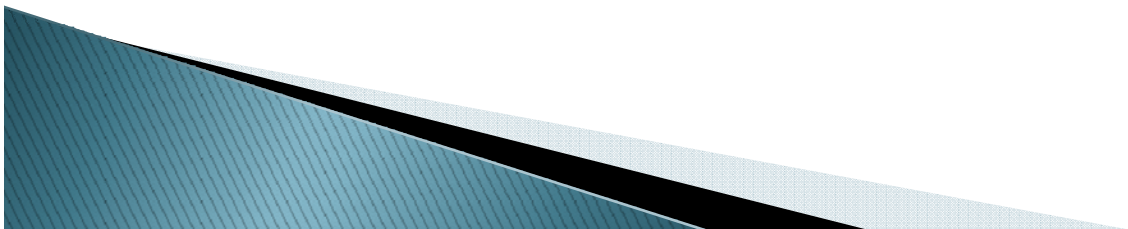
## They Met with the Jerusalem Brethern (17-25)

- The Jerusalem brethren met them gladly
- They had been into distant regions, and had encountered many dangers. It was a matter of joy that they had now returned in safety
- St. Paul and his companions met with James and the elders to reports the Events of His Third Missionary Journey



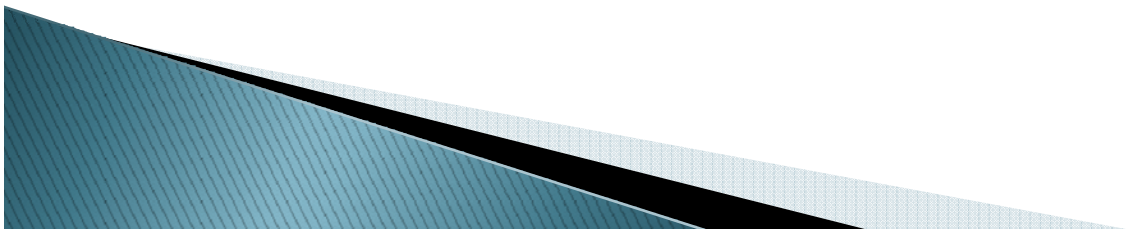
# St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

- St. Paul with no doubt had heard that they were prejudiced against him; and, by declaring what God had done by him among the Gentiles, showed how groundless this prejudice was
- St. James is the only apostle who continued in Jerusalem
- We have already seen what a very important character he sustained in the council. See Acts 15:13
- God had honored St. Paul more than any of the apostles, yet they did not envy him; but on the contrary, glorified the Lord




# St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

- There were not only many thousands of Christians in the Jerusalem church, but many thousands of Jewish Christians who had come up to the feast of Pentecost
- Twenty-seven years before there were five thousand men who believed in Jerusalem (Ac 4:4)
- “zealous for the law” They believed upon Christ as the Messiah, but did not understand that the Old Covenant had passed away to give place to the New (Heb 8:13)

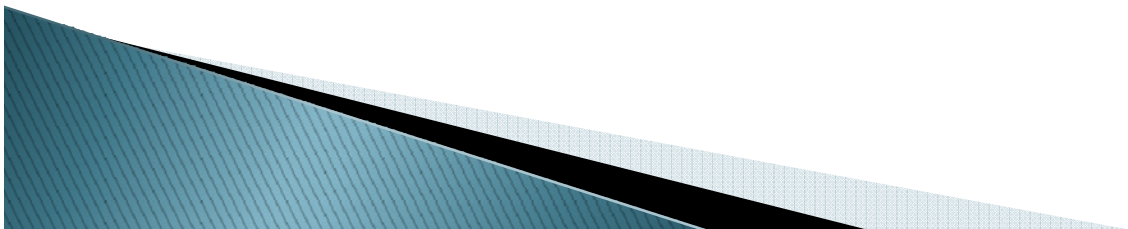


# St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

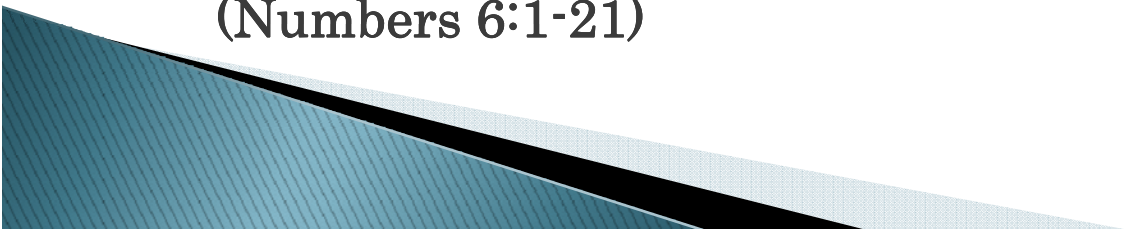
- These Jewish believers would learn that St. Paul was in Jerusalem
  - They had been told that St. Paul was telling Jews abroad to disrespect Jewish customs, including circumcision
  - St. Paul never told Jews to stop circumcising their children or to do away with Jewish customs
  - In fact, he had personally circumcised one of the 8 who were accompanying him, and he - Timothy - wasn't even 100% Jewish by blood(Acts 16:1-3)
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## St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

- What method must be taken to remove these objections, and reconcile the minds of the people?
- The multitude needs to come together; either the whole church at Jerusalem, or the great confluence of people, even of believing Jews to see the apostle and to hear what he has to say to the objections against him and complaints of him
- St. Paul needed to personally dispel the false rumors

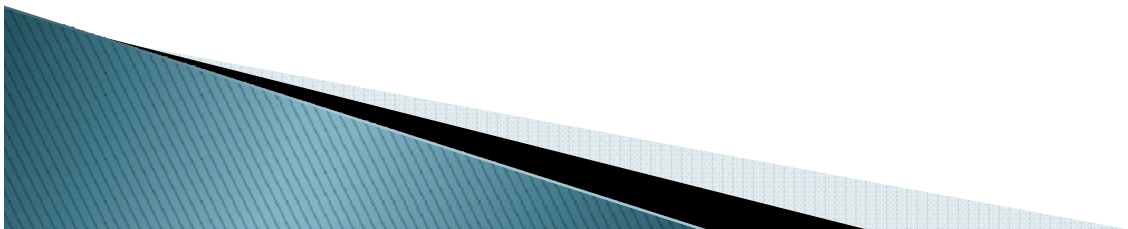


## St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

- In an effort to show that St. Paul kept the law as a Jew St. James and the elders gave him a plan
  - He was to accompany the four men who had taken a vow; purify himself; and pay their expenses
  - From the mention of shaving the head, it is evident that the vow which they had taken was that of the Nazarite
  - Nazarite is an Old Testament vow that God gave to Moses for the Jews who were especially consecrating themselves to God (Numbers 6:1-21)
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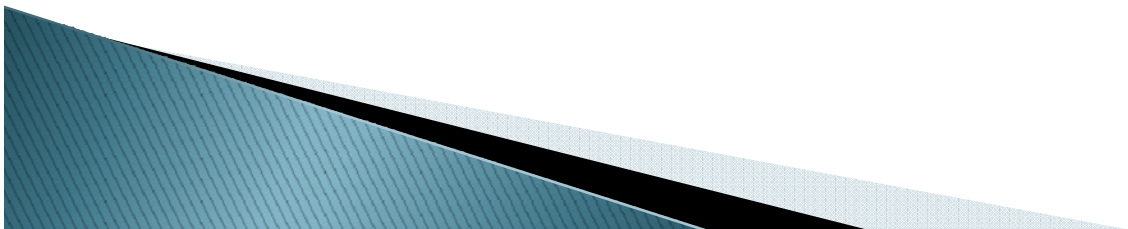
## St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

- They reiterated (Acts 15) that the believing Gentiles were not subject to the law
- This shows that with all their conciliation to Jewish prejudice, the Church of Jerusalem was taught to adhere to the decision of the famous council held there (Ac 15:19-29)
- The advice of St. James was no doubt given from the best of motives
- St. Paul generously complied for the sake of peace and unity



# St. Paul Urged to Make Peace (21:15-25)

- We cannot be certain that the advice was just right, or that St. Paul did just right to comply, but these grand men acted according to their knowledge
- He acted in conformity with the law of Christian benevolence which requires us to respect even the weaknesses and prejudices of our brethren, so far as this can be done without in any way neglecting the requirements of the Gospel

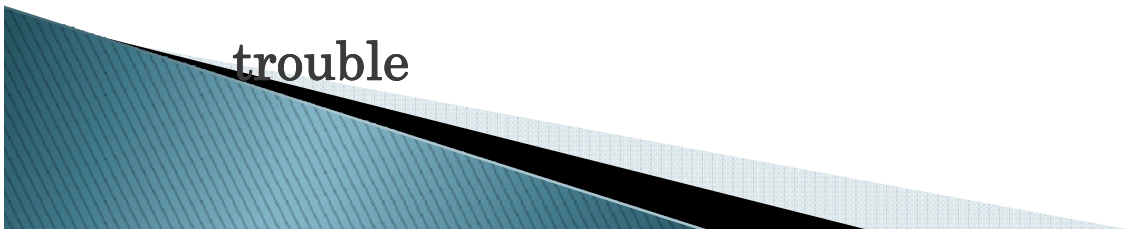




# Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

St. Paul Followed the Plan from St. James and the Elders(26)

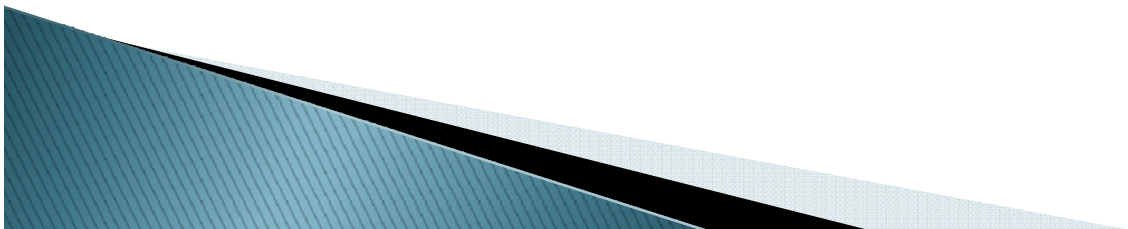
- St. Paul took the men and was purified with them; they entered the temple and gave notice that the sacrifices would be offered at a definite time, and the period of the vows be closed
- In the temple, where St. Paul should have been protected as in a place of safety, he was violently set upon
- His compliance did not answer, for the very thing by which he hoped to pacify the Jews, provoked them, and brought him into trouble



# Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

Jews from Asia saw St. Paul in the Temple (27-29)

- From the Roman province called Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital
- St. Paul had spent three years in that city
- They knew him well
- These Jews were watching St. Paul
- And had seen him in company with Trophimus, an Ephesian Greek



## Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

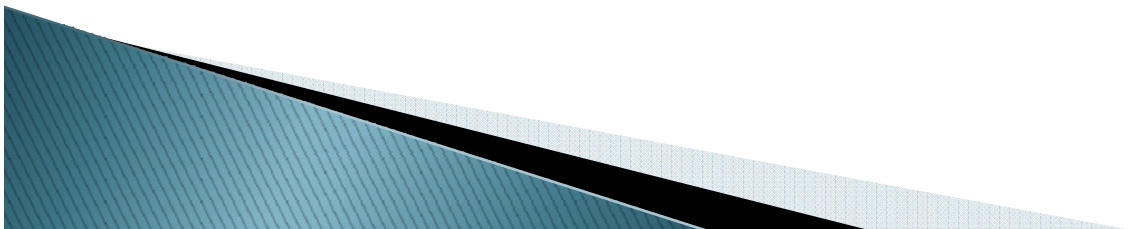
- When they saw St. Paul in the temple keeping the Nazarite vow, seized him and raised an outcry
- They stirred up the crowd and seized Paul
- They cried out charges as St. James and the elders had expected
- Additionally, they charged that St. Paul had brought Greeks into the temple and had defiled the place.
- They falsely charged him with ill doctrine and ill practice against the Mosaic ceremonies



## Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

St. Paul was Seized and the Jews Sought to kill him (30-36)

- The people seized St. Paul and dragged him out of the temple
- He was, no doubt, within the inner courts, and was hurried without, and the gates shut, to prevent the pollution of the sacred courts by the shedding of blood
- They proposed to slay him when they had dragged him where it could be done without profanation
- They were willing to murder, but not to profane the temple

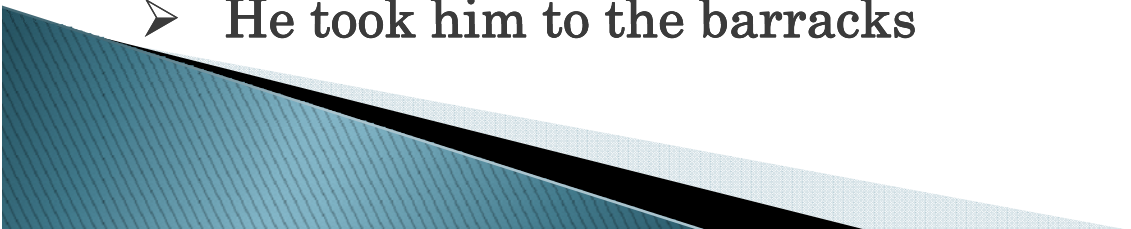


## Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

- As they sought to kill him, word came to the Roman commander of the uproar
- The Roman garrison in Jerusalem was stationed at the Antonia's fortress, located at the northwest corner of and looking down on the temple area
- It would have been easy for the sentries on duty to see and report the commotion in the temple courtyard below
- When the Jews saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating St. Paul

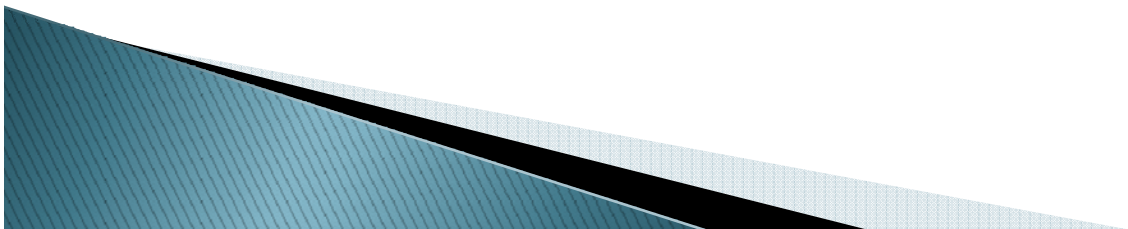


## Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

- The commander took St. Paul and bound him with chains
  - The first thought of the commander was that the man seized was some great criminal
  - From Ac 21:38 we learned that he supposed St. Paul was an Egyptian rebel
  - Hence he ordered him bound
  - He asked what St. Paul had done
  - When he could not get an answer
  - He took him to the barracks
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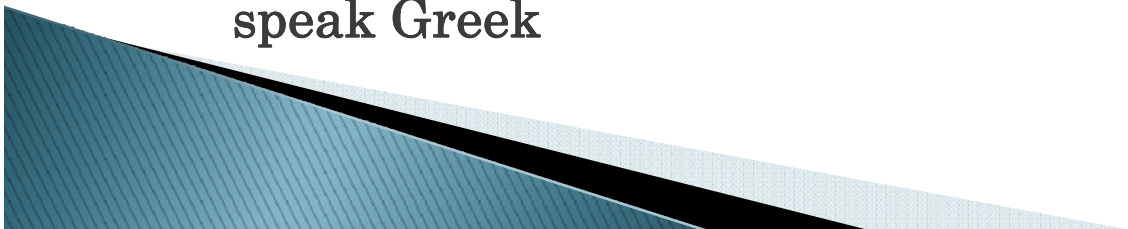
# Arrested in the Temple (21:26-36)

- When they reached the stairs, St. Paul had to be carried due to the violence of the mob
- “crying, away with him” that is, by death; or "lift him up", upon the cross, crucify him, crucify him, as they said concerning Christ.



## Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (21:37-40)

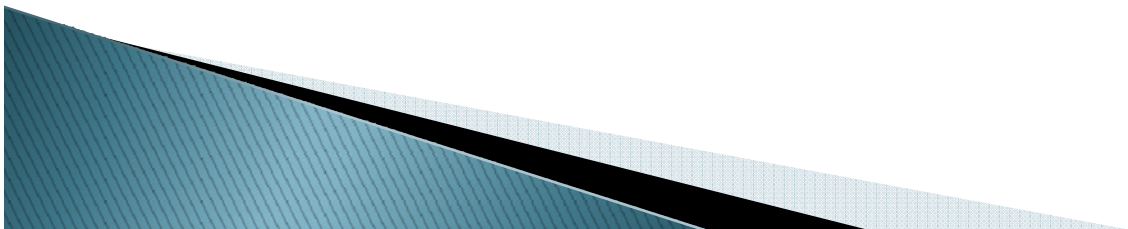
- St. Paul asked to speak to the commander
- The commander asked if he could speak Greek
- The commander also asked if he was the Egyptian leader of the assassins
- The form of the question implies that the answer is to be in the negative, and is matter of some surprise: "Thou art not then?"  
pretended prophet, and leader of the Sicarii, or Assassins
- This Egyptian brigand was probably illiterate and did not speak Greek





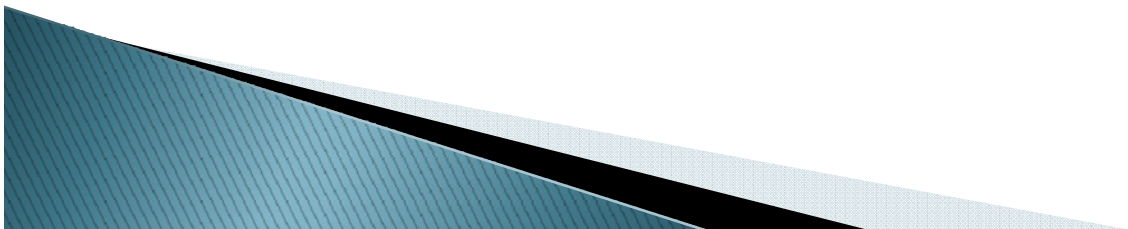
## Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (21:37-40)

- St. Paul replied that he was a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, "a citizen of no mean city"
- St. Paul requested to speak to the people after having "reached the stairs ... and carried by the soldier" (Acts 21:35) up into Antonia Fortress, he was at the top of the stairs, protected by many soldiers, and in front of a massive, captive audience

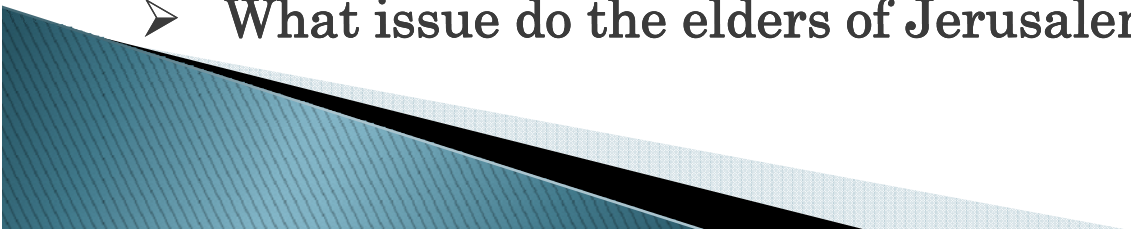


## Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (21:37-40)

- "What nobler spectacle than that of St. Paul at this moment! There he stood, bound with two chains, ready to make his defense to the people. The Roman commander sits by, to enforce order by his presence. An enraged populace look up to him from below. Yet in the midst of so many dangers, how self-possessed is he, how tranquil!" (John Chrysostom)



# Conclusion

- Why did they wait "seven days" (Acts 21:4) to board the ship in Tyre?
  - Since the disciples in Tyre "told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem" (Acts 21:4), was the Holy Spirit against St. Paul going to Jerusalem?
  - Who was Philip?
  - What gifts did Philip's daughter have?
  - What do we know about Agabus?
  - What issue do the elders of Jerusalem put before St. Paul?
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# Conclusion

- What was the response of the other disciples to the successful ministry of Paul?
- Now St. Paul has done nothing to violate Jewish custom or law. Yet, he agrees to these conditions without question or complaint. What does this tell us about Paul?
- What led to the accusation that Paul had brought Gentiles into the temple?
- What was the uproar intention?

