

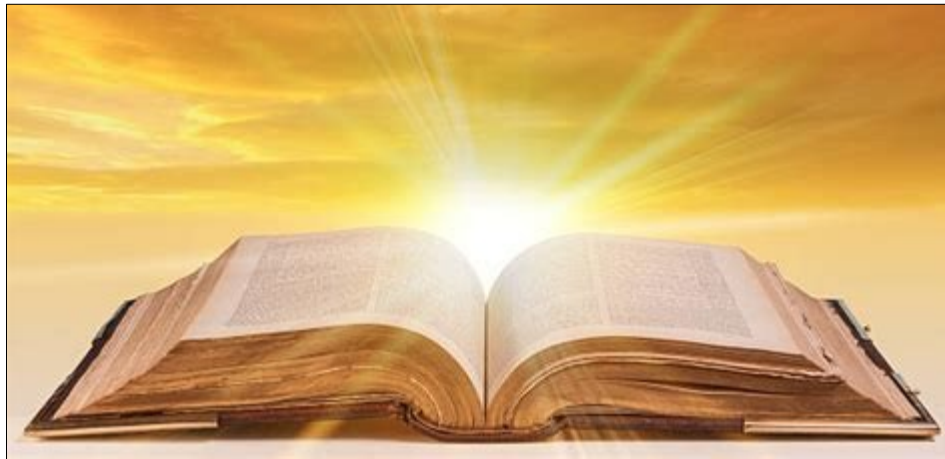
The Journey to Jerusalem

Acts 21:1-17



2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

In this account in Acts 21 there are what appear to be just 'fill-in' details of the journey, but it gives the clear impression that Luke kept eye-witness details, perhaps a diary, to accurately record the events. Whether Luke was aware that they would become part of scripture we don't know, but it is a wonderful example of the authenticity of these events that took place almost 2000 years ago!



A Mediterranean Cruise?

After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos.

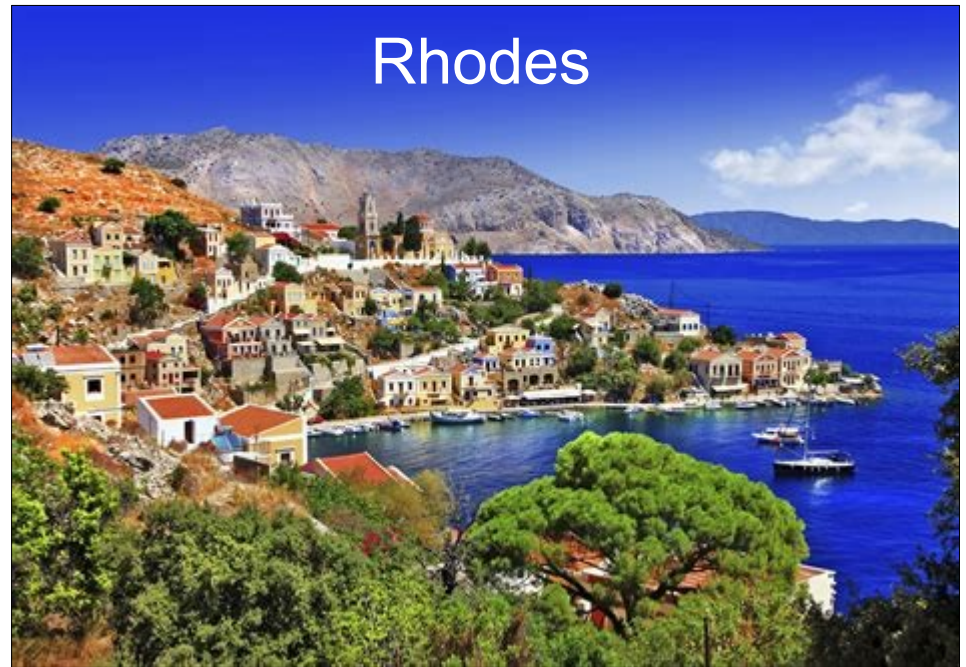


We will see that the journey was made by the ship keeping close to land.



This may have been for safety reasons. Also they were commercial craft, linking the different places together.

The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara.



Luke gives both the timing and the places visited.

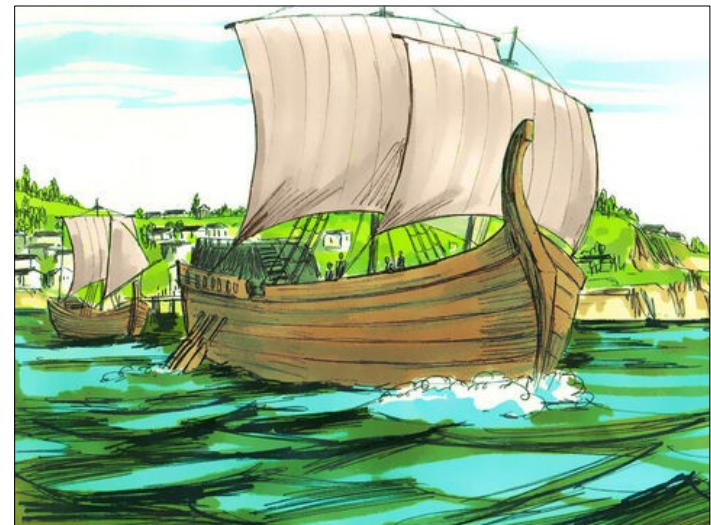


We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria.



The party boarded another commercial ship.

These weren't luxury liners!



We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days.



We are not told that Paul had a mission to Tyre. It shows that Christianity had continued to spread due to the disciples sharing their faith.

Having made the long part of the sea journey, they now had time to stay there and have a time of fellowship with these new friends.

Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.
But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way.



The congregation must have had a prophecy or a sense of foreboding that Paul's journey to Jerusalem would be dangerous.

However, Paul had decided to go there.

These were well-meaning believers that thought they had Paul's best interests at heart.

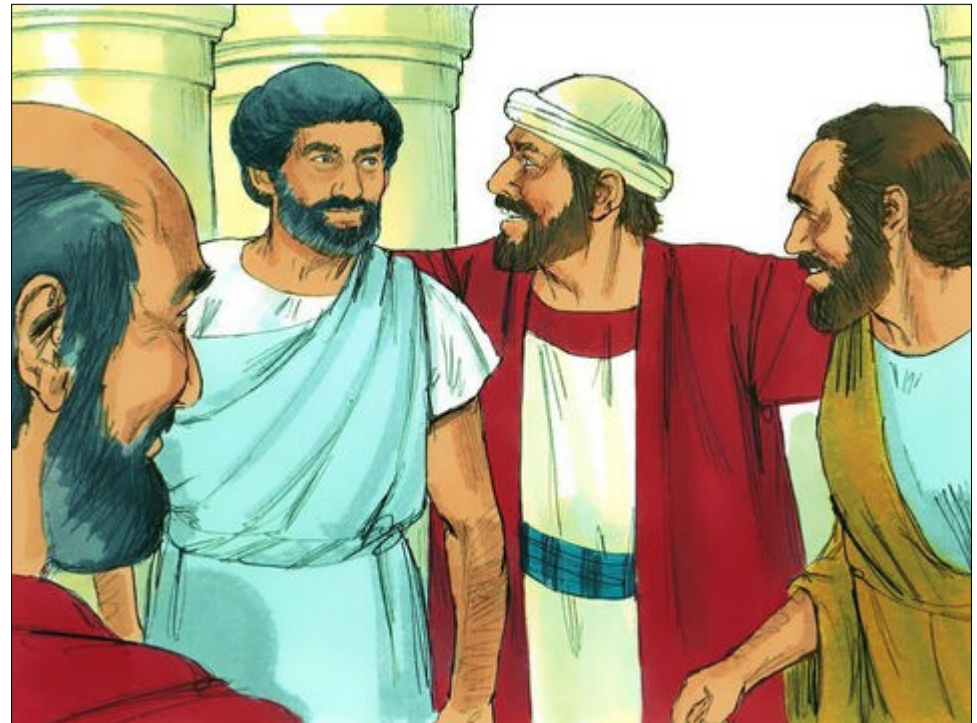
All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.



This is similar to the farewell from the believers at Miletus. They must have grown fond of the visitors during that week. With their sense of concern, it was good to pray and commit each other to the Lord.

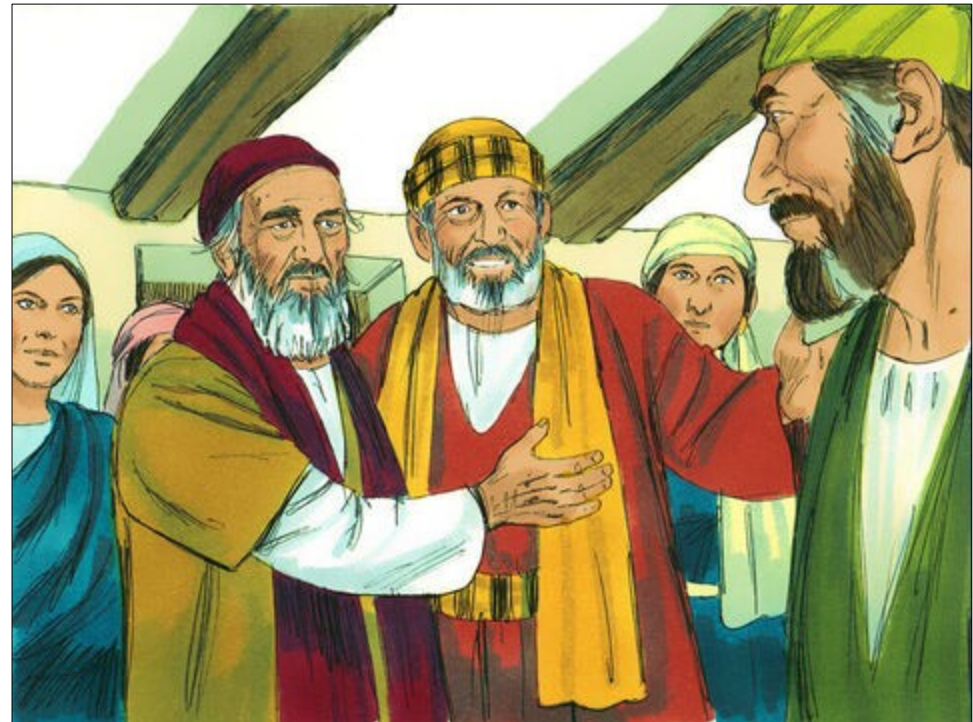
We have here a beautiful view into the family nature of the early church. The ship may have been another commercial vessel heading south.

We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day.



Ptolemais was an ancient port city – near present day Acre in Israel
This was a shorter visit to the ‘brothers’. This term is one that included the sisters also! In Hebrew thought a mix of both men and women used the common (masculine) plural.

Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.



They may have travelled by ship to Caesarea but could have continued on foot. It is a 20 mile journey by road. It was the Roman headquarters of the province and the home of Philip. It must have been a special time for Paul – they both knew Stephen who had died for his faith.

He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.



Why does Luke include a reference to Philip's daughters?
Is it just a family detail?

It may be for a similar reason that a father with 5 unmarried daughters are mentioned in Numbers 26:

Numbers 26:33 Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters. And the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

Noah is a ladies' name spelt and pronounced differently to the man – Noah.



Numbers 27:7 “The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers and transfer the inheritance of their father to them.

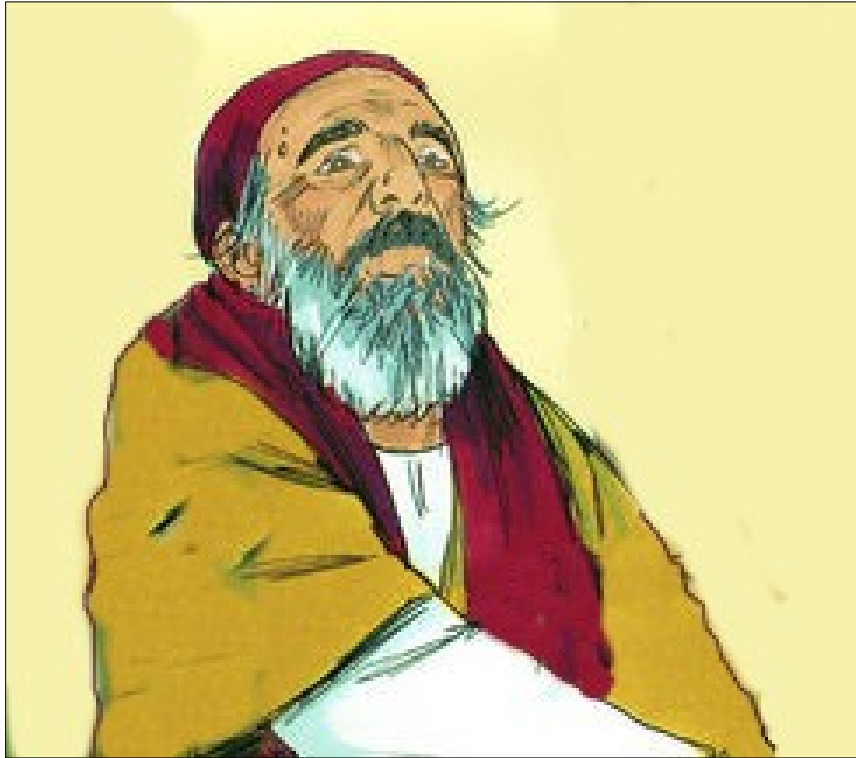


Acts 2:17 And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

Following in their father's footsteps

After we had been there a number of days,
a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

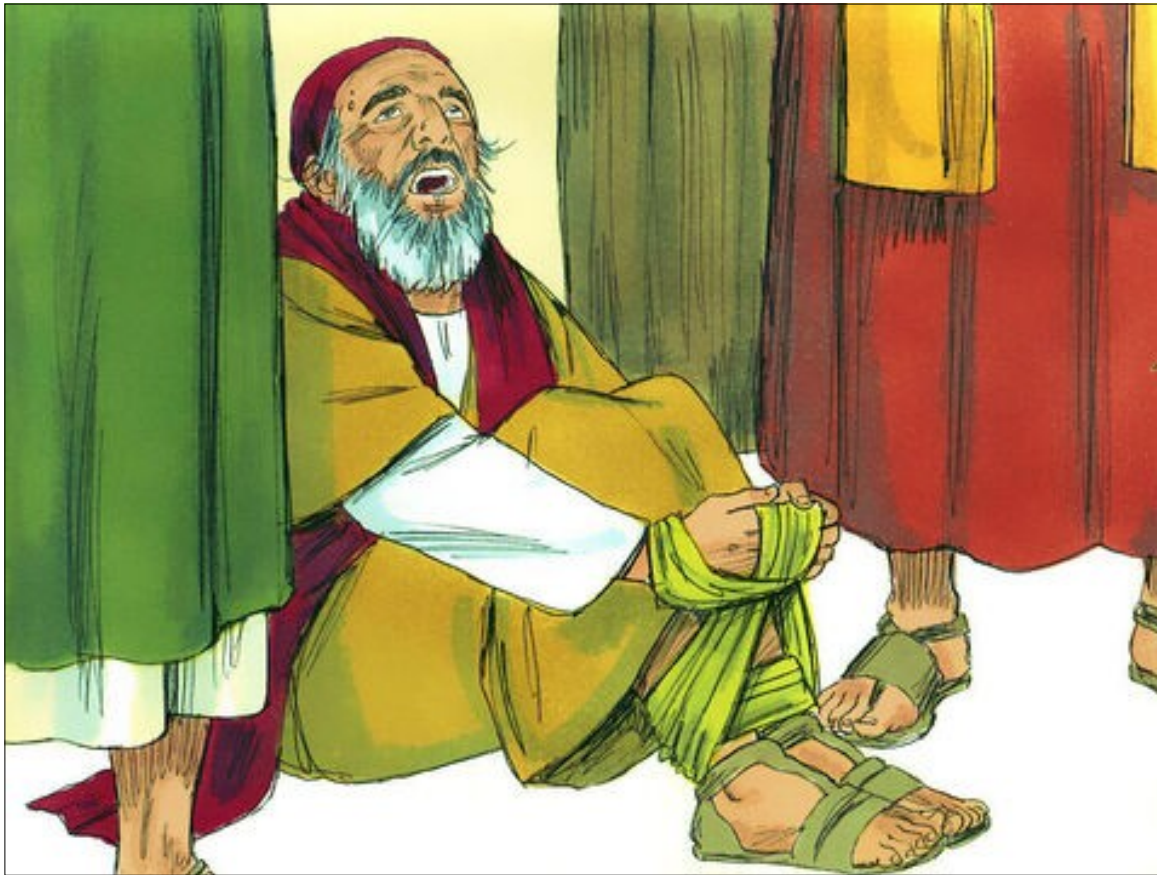


Agabus also had a prophetic gifting. He was last seen in Acts 11:28 – regarding the famine.

There was ongoing fellowship between the churches in the area.

We do not know if this was meant to be a casual visit, but it turned out quite differently as the Lord gave him a message when he arrived there.

Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"



Agabus appears very much in the 'style' of the former OT prophets acting out the prophecy as well as giving it in words. Taking Paul's belt which may have been laid aside, the Holy Spirit reveals through him that Paul is going to be arrested and handed over to the Gentile authorities.

How would Paul have heard this message?

It says that trouble lies ahead but he isn't going to die at the hands of the hostile people in Jerusalem.

The previous messages and also this would have prepared and strengthened Paul to face what lay a head.



When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.



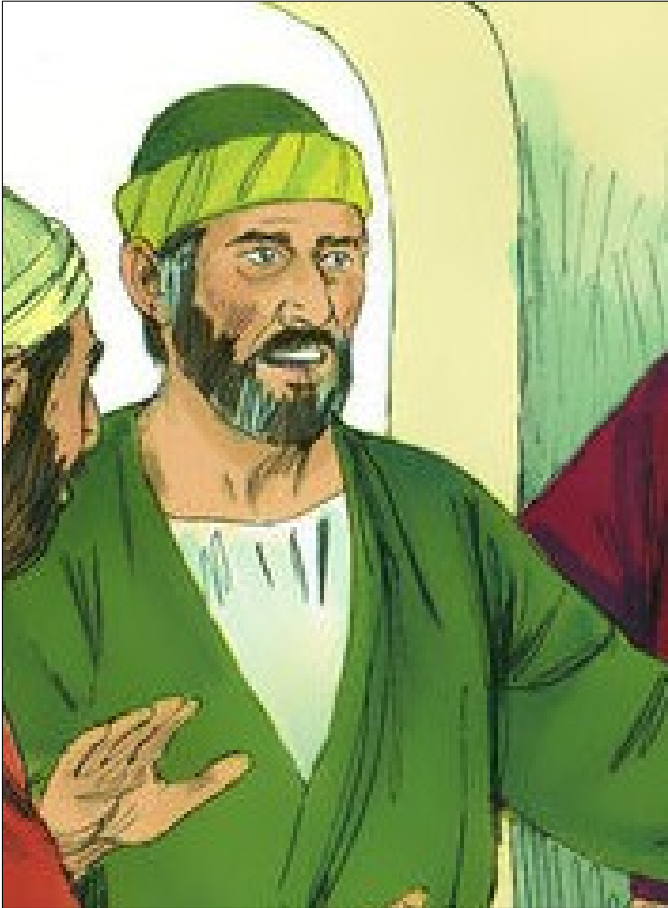
Luke, his friends and all the people there did not want Paul to go, and so they pleaded with him to take their advice.

They really cared about him.

They heard the message and thought that it was a warning for Paul not to go.

We need discernment in order to handle prophecy aright.

Then Paul answered,
"Why are you weeping and breaking my heart?"



Paul was not being stubborn!
He knew what God wanted him to do.
Up to this point he must have prayed
about it quite a lot, so as to be sure.

He is being asked to disobey God in
order to please his friends, although
they did not understand it that way at
the time.

If we are called to, would we do what
God says rather than please those we
love.

"I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."



Paul had 'been crucified with Christ' (Galatians 2:20). The life of self, self-interest, and self-preservation had died.

What mattered to him was doing what his Lord wanted for him.

It is a choice we also have to make.

When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said,
"The Lord's will be done."



Paul's friends see his firm faith and resolve and so accept his decision, committing the whole outcome into the place where it belongs – the Lord's will.

When we pray 'Your will be done' do we understand the implication of that prayer?

After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.



This time, the journey continues on foot. It won't be long before Paul is coming back along this road under an armed guard!

The disciples may have felt anxious as they set off.

1Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay.



The local disciples came to give fellowship, support and perhaps directions to Mnason's home. It was nearing the feast of Pentecost so the city would be full of visitors looking for lodgings.

It must have had extra room to put up Paul and his travelling companions, so perhaps Mnason was a wealthy man.

Here is another example of early church hospitality.

He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.



About 20 years had passed from the early days of Pentecost etc. He would have some first hand stories to tell Paul and Luke.

He had remained faithful to his faith in Jesus all that time even through the persecution.

When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly.



It is a real blessing to be made to feel welcome.

They had arrived in Jerusalem safely.
This concludes Paul's 3rd Mission



Isaiah 35:8 And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it.