

Text: Ac 21.15-20

We are reversing the order for today's passage, dealing with part 2 this AM and part 1 this afternoon.

I've called this message

The Glorious Gentile Mission

The material is the conclusion of Luke's travelogue to Jerusalem, then the summation of Paul's report to the Jerusalem elders.

We have not much theology, no narrative description, just a relatively terse account of all Paul had to say telling of the work in the Roman Empire.

In this message, I don't have much exhortation.

The passage speaks to the glory of God.

Our objective is to join with Christians across the centuries and lift up our voices in praise to God for his gracious work among men.

I. Prelude: a host with Gentile connections**A. Travel from Caesarea to Jerusalem (about 62 miles)**

1. The word used in v. 15 suggests "saddling up" or "loading a pack horse"
2. If by horse, the journey might last two days

B. A group of Caesareans accompany them

1. Going to Passover also?
2. Or to lead them to their host?

C. Host: Mnason of Cyprus

1. "a disciple of long standing" – how long? Some suggest as far back as Pentecost
2. Mnason: a decidedly Greek name
3. From Cyprus, so at least a "Hellenized Jewish Christian"
4. Will host Paul and his cohort of mostly Gentiles – a logical choice

With these introductory words, we find Paul now in Jerusalem, with the trappings of his Gentile connections all around him (a sore spot for the Jews, including Jewish Christians as noted this morning)

II. Rehearsal: the mission related “one by one”

A. How long did this meeting last? Was it all three journeys, or just the last one?

B. The Pauline record of evangelism

1. First Journey (AD 49-50)

All dates approximate

- a. Cyprus (from one end to the other)
- b. Perga
- c. Pisidian Antioch
- d. Iconium
- e. Lystra
- f. Derbe

2. Second Journey (AD 51-54)

- a. Derbe
- b. Lystra
- c. Iconium
- d. Antioch
- e. Troas
- f. Philippi
- g. Thessalonica
- h. Berea
- i. Athens
- j. Corinth

3. Third Journey (AD 54-56/57)

- a. Derbe
- b. Lystra
- c. Iconium
- d. Antioch
- e. Ephesus
- f. Troas
- g. Philippi
- h. Thessalonica
- i. Berea
- j. Corinth

4. And back to Jerusalem

In a little under ten years, Paul travelled across Turkey three times and through Macedonia and Greece twice, evangelizing the major centers in the whole eastern Roman Empire.

C. The distance travelled, by foot and sea

This is based on calculations by a blogger at OpenBible.info¹

Journey	Miles	Time (days)
First Journey	1,581	53
Second Journey	3,050	100
Third Journey	3,307	92

1. First Journey lasted about two years (730 days)
2. Second Journey maybe three and a half years (1277 days)
3. Third Journey about three years (1095 days)
4. Likely there was preaching even on travel days.
5. How many events does Luke leave out of his record in Acts?
6. How many did Paul leave in as he rehearsed the story in Jerusalem?

Imagine now the contrast between the life before meeting Paul and after meeting Christ!

III. Reception: gladness and glory

- A. The glad reception of the “brethren” – the church at large (17)
- B. James and the elders “*began glorifying God*” (20)

What a story! What a gospel! What a God!

¹ Josh Chalmers, “[Calculating the Time and Cost of Paul’s Missionary Journeys](#),” Blog, *Open Bible* (blog), accessed October 30, 2021.

Conclusion:

Ep 2.1-8 ¶ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;