



ACTS: ENDS OF THE EARTH ACTS 21:1-14

STUDY GUIDE
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ACTS 21:1-14 ESV

1 And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. 4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. 7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. 8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. 10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

STRUCTURE

- I. Paul begins his divinely-ordered journey toward Jerusalem (1-3)
- II. Prophecy and fellowship in Tyre (4-6)
- III. Brief fellowship in Ptolemais (7)
- IV. Prophecy and fellowship in Caesarea (8-14)
 - a. Philip's daughters prophesy (8-9)
 - b. Agabus prophesies; Paul resolves; the church concedes (10-14)

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

The twin themes of this section are prophecy and community—and how they intertwine. Paul has already heard from the Spirit clearly and repeatedly: "You must testify in Jerusalem." His impassioned speech to the Ephesian elders in the prior section intensifies the gravity of it. Persecutions await. They will never see his face again. More prophecies in this section will carry the same weight. But the community must discern them together, even as they strengthen Paul on what appears to be a suicide mission.

It's not really a suicide mission, though. Paul isn't choosing death for glory or vengeance, like a radical martyr. Nor is he like the loveless self-sacrificer of 1 Corinthians 13:3. His aim is faithfulness. Therefore, Luke presents Paul like he's on a parallel track with Jesus: Both Jesus and Paul set their face toward Jerusalem under divine unction; both Jesus and Paul receive three predictions about imminent persecution in Jerusalem; both Jesus and Paul refuse to be deterred by well-meaning friends; both Jesus and Paul see Jerusalem as a place of divine fulfillment. Paul is not suicidal, but faithful at any cost.

One difference between Paul and Jesus, however, is that Paul has the support of his friends. When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He prayed alone. This is Paul's Gethsemane. But where Jesus concluded by Himself, "Your will be done," the prophetic community surrounding Paul says, "Let the will of the Lord be done." His friends were *with* him.

The community has supported Paul throughout—and he will need it—before the Jerusalem crowds shout, "Get rid of him!" In Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea, Paul is warmly received. Every disciple of Jesus needs a community for strengthening. It's how we endure the trials of life. But the community doesn't just strengthen Paul through encouragement and prayer. They strengthen him through prophecy—though not always by interpreting it correctly.

Let me unpack that. There is a series of three prophetic scenes in Acts 21:1-14. Two of the three directly warn of danger in Jerusalem, which implies a similar theme for the other prophecies. God intends for these warnings to strengthen Paul's resolve for the opposition he will face. Prophecy does that. We need it to endure.

Unfortunately, however, Paul's friends misinterpret the prophecy in both Tyre and Jerusalem. Where God said, "There's danger in Jerusalem," Paul's friends interpreted it to mean, "Therefore, don't go." But that's not what God said. They mixed human emotions with divine revelation. Therefore, when Paul protests, the disciples conclude that perhaps they were wrong. In other words, they display *prophetic humility*. If you think you can never misinterpret divine revelation, you are displaying the sort of pride that God resists. Because the church exhibits prophetic humility, divine revelation serves its purpose of strengthening Paul's resolve.

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

1 And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo.

—After an emotional meeting with the Ephesian elders, they head toward Jerusalem through the following locations: Cos, Rhodes, Patara, past Cyprus, Tyre (in Syria).

—Cos: An island in the southeastern Aegean Sea. Known in antiquity for its medical school (associated with Hippocrates). Part of the Roman province of Asia.

—Rhodes: A large island off the southwest coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Famous for the Colossus of Rhodes (one of the ancient wonders). Paul stops here briefly.

—Patara: A port city in Lycia, southwestern Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Here Paul changes ships for a longer voyage across the Mediterranean.

—Cyprus: A large island in the eastern Mediterranean. Paul and his companions pass to the south of it ("left" means north side) without stopping. Previously evangelized by Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13.

—Tyre (in 1st century Syria, but modern Lebanon): A major port city on the Mediterranean coast. Historically a powerful Phoenician city, and prophesied against in the OT (e.g., Ezek. 26). Paul stays here seven days with disciples (Acts 21:4).

4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

—"having sought out the disciples":

- This is Paul's pattern. He did it in Troas (20:1-16), Ephesus, (20:17-end), and now here. Paul wants to be with the people of God. And it's in this context that God speaks. God speaks when His people gather.
- Stott: "What strengthened Paul in his journey was the Christian fellowship which he and his travel companions experienced in every port."

—"through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem":

- This is confusing because the prior narrative conveys strongly that the Holy Spirit wanted Paul to enter Jerusalem:
 - "Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, 'After I have been there, I must also see Rome'" (19:21).
 - "And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me" (20:22-23).
- We know that the Spirit cannot communicate conflicting messages.
- We know that this was a genuine prophecy because Luke has used the same language—"through the Spirit"—to describe prophecy before: "And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by [or through] the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius)" (11:26).
- Interestingly, Agabus appears later in this narrative (21:9-11), and the story there sheds light on this one. Agabus predicts Paul's arrest, but he does not mention whether Paul should seek to avoid it. Instead, his friends—concerned for his welfare—try to prevent him. In other words, the prophetic revelation was accurate, but the application ("don't go to Jerusalem") did not come from the Spirit. In light of this, the disciples in Tyre accurately predict "by the Spirit" that Paul will suffer in Jerusalem, but they mix their human emotions with their prophecy.

- We must likewise beware of mixing human emotions and desires with our prophecies. I have seen people do this when predicting political races, healings, marriages, and pregnancies. We want to see a certain outcome, so we mistake our human emotions for the voice of God. This is why I have heard some teachers warn against prophesying “dates, mates, and babies.” I would not place a total restriction on this, for several births and marriages were arranged by revelation in Scripture. But I would warn people to not do it unless the impression was very strong.
- Cessationist scholars—those who don’t believe prophecy still exists—concede that the revelation was from God and the application was not. But they won’t call it prophecy because this ruins their paradigm that prophets can’t make mistakes in prophesying (without being labeled a false prophet). For example, Dr. Tom Schreiner labels the incident in Acts 21:4 an “impression” rather than a “prophecy.” He says, “The difference between cessationists and continuationists is in some ways insignificant at the practical level when it comes to prophecy, for what continuationists call prophecy, cessationists call impressions. And there are occasions where impressions are startlingly accurate.”
- As we have seen, however, “through the Spirit” is Luke’s language for a “prophecy.” Acts 21:4 therefore proves that true prophets can err by mixing emotions with their prophecies. Sometimes the revelation is accurate, but the interpretation or application is not. To miss a prophecy in this way does not automatically relegate one to the category of “false prophet.” Throughout Scripture, “false prophet” is a term reserved for those who lead God’s people away from true worship. The disciples in Tyre do not fit that category. A single missed prophecy does not make one a false prophet.
- Some continuationist scholars (continuationists are those who believe all the gifts, such as prophecy, healing, and tongues, continue into our present era) argue that Old Testament prophets never missed a prophecy, but New Testament prophets can miss. They base this conclusion on the following observations:
 - In the Old Testament, the formula, “Thus says the Lord,” was common, and you were not allowed to disobey, for instance, Isaiah or Jeremiah, without transgressing against God and His Word.
 - In the New Testament, various offices seem to have changed. We no longer have a royal succession of kings or a priestly succession of Levites. In Christ, we are all priests and kings. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept a change in how prophets functioned after Christ came.
 - The New Testament commands us to “weigh” prophecy (1 Cor. 14:29) and to “test” it (1 Thess. 5:19-22; 1 John 4:1ff). This seems different than in the Old Testament, where prophetic words were to be received as God’s words.
 - There was a clear shift in how prophecy operated on Pentecost, since the Spirit was poured out on all flesh, enabling all to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18). Therefore, we should not be surprised by other changes in how prophecy functions.
 - Therefore, whereas true OT prophets were accurate 100% of the time, true NT prophets could be inaccurate, and their words must be tested. Their “misses” should not be judged in such a way that they are condemned automatically as false prophets, since we can now accept that true prophets—like these in Tyre—sometimes missed.
 - I have sometimes labeled this the “discontinuity” view, since it views prophecy as fundamentally changing from the OT to the NT. The strength of this view is that it upholds the supremacy of God’s written word, since every prophet’s prophecies must be submitted to the Word.
 - I do not hold this view about prophecy fundamentally changing (although I admit to some change). I also think there is a better way to uphold the supremacy of God’s Word that is more consistent with the Scripture.
- I hold what might be called the “continuity” view of prophecy.
 - I think it is an exaggeration to suggest that prophecies did not need to be tested in the Old Testament. False prophets existed back then, so all prophecy needed to be tested, just as they

do today. It is not as though we test prophecy in the New Testament era, but not the Old Testament era. See Deuteronomy 13 and 18.

- While it's true that some prophets displayed incredible accuracy in the Old Testament, we should not make the mistake of saying every prophet in the Old Testament was identical to the great ones like Samuel. Of Samuel, we read, "none of his words fell to the ground." The author notes this because it was exceptional. Implicitly, the words of some prophets did fall to the ground. Therefore, prophecy always required testing.
- A true prophet named Nathan missed a prophecy in 2 Samuel 7. Therefore, we should not interpret this as a change from the OT and NT that true prophets sometimes miscommunicate God's revelation.
- The discontinuity argument requires us to conclude that prophecy suffered a downgrade from the OT to NT in terms of accuracy. This makes no logical sense, considering that the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost. If anything, shouldn't we have experienced an upgrade?
- I concede that prophecy did change from the OT to NT: not in terms of accuracy, but in terms of its democratization. Now, prophecy is not reserved for a select few. By the outpouring of the Spirit on "all flesh", all God's people can prophesy (Acts 2; cf. Num. 11).
- The continuity view upholds the supremacy of God's written word because every prophecy—whether in the OT or NT—has required submission to God's written word. In Deuteronomy 13, even accurate prophecies were condemned if they led people away from Yahweh. In the NT, Paul commands prophets to submit their revelations to his apostolic decrees—Scripture (1 Cor. 14:37).
- In conclusion, prophecy did not become less accurate from the OT to the NT. It became more widespread. That is the only fundamental difference.
- This story also highlights the confusing nature of hearing God. Paul heard the Holy Spirit clearly one way. Prophets in Tyre heard Him another way—because they muddled the message. Paul had to sift and test the word delivered. It's obvious to us now which prophecy was right, but it wasn't obvious then. Hearing God is confusing.
- One important way of testing a prophetic word is whether God provides increasing conviction over time. In Acts 19:21, Paul "resolved in the Spirit" to go to Jerusalem. In 20:22-23, Paul is "constrained by the Spirit"—essentially forced to go. In fact, the Spirit testifies "in every city" about his coming persecution. He has a growing conviction about entering Jerusalem, despite heavy backlash. Therefore, when a few disciples prophesy, "don't go," he tests it against the messages he already received.

—The church in Tyre escorts Paul to the beach, kneels, and prays with him. The same happens in 20:36 with the Ephesian elders. Church life is deeply communal. These are two very emotional departures. They are also prayerful departures. Churches living in true community will feel weighty emotions together, and they will pray together.

7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day.

—After visiting Tyre for seven days and receiving prophecies, they stay in Ptolemais for a day.

—We do not hear of any prophecies here. This suggests that the theme of this section is not just about how prophecy operates but about church community. Everywhere Paul goes, he goes to church. He greets, stays, prays, and weeps. We have less detail in this verse, but it still emphasizes Paul's priority of community.

8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

—"Caesarea":

- This is where Peter had the vision about reaching Gentiles. Now Paul visits Caesarea. Symbolically, this speaks of the warmth of Gentile reception to the gospel, contrasted with the Jews' hostility. Caesarea is God's final outpost before the hotbed of extremism in Jerusalem.

- Stott: "his warm reception strengthened him to bear the crowd's shouts a few days later: 'Get rid of him!'"

—"Philip the evangelist... one of the seven" used to be Philip the table server (Acts 6:1-7). Interestingly, Paul murdered his co-laborer Stephen before meeting Christ on the road to Damascus. Now, Philip warmly welcomes the former friend-murderer into his home. This is grace.

—"He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied":

- Once again, prophecy comes into view – a theme of this section. We don't know what was said, but we can only imagine that it resembled the other two stories of prophecy in this passage. The point is that God is speaking constantly through His people.
- It wasn't Philip the evangelist who prophesied, but his four daughters. Each member of the body of Christ is gifted differently. Some are evangelists; some are prophets.
- Why is it significant that they are unmarried? I think of Luke's description of Anna in the temple, that she never remarried. For Luke, the state of singleness speaks of one's total devotion to the Lord. As a disciple of Paul, it makes sense why he felt this way. Paul was single, and he says that singleness enables us to be single-minded for God (1 Cor. 7). These daughters of Philip were wholly devoted to the Lord and had his ear. The description adds weight to their prophecies.
- Why is it significant that they are daughters? It embodies the fulfillment of Pentecost that "your sons and your daughters will prophesy." Prophecy is not reserved for a select few; everyone gets to play. Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Isaiah's wife were the only female Old Testament prophets. This verse alone mentions four.

10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

—"A prophet named Agabus": We last met Agabus in Acts 11, when he predicted a famine to come on the entire Roman world. The effect of mentioning Agabus here in Acts 21 is to show his prophetic credibility. Even in Acts 11, he already had enough clout to inspire God's global church to send an offering to Judea for a famine that hadn't yet happened. Thus, in the case of Paul, we have a strong sense of the persecution that awaits him in Jerusalem.

—"And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said...":

- The Jewish people often acted out their prophecies as a visual demonstration meant to reinforce God's Words for maximum mental and emotional impression. Examples:
 - Isaiah 20:2-4 – Isaiah walked barefoot and naked for three years as a sign of how Egypt and Cush would be led away in exile.
 - Jeremiah 13:1-11 – Jeremiah buried a linen loincloth by the Euphrates until it was ruined, symbolizing Judah's pride being spoiled.
 - Jeremiah 27:1-15 – Jeremiah wore yokes and straps to symbolize the nations' coming submission to Babylon.
 - Ezekiel 4:1-5:4 – Ezekiel lay on his side for 390 days, then 40 days, and ate food cooked over dung to portray the siege and defilement of Jerusalem.
 - Ezekiel 12:1-7 – Ezekiel packed his bags and dug through a wall to demonstrate Israel's coming exile.
 - Hosea 1:2-9 – Hosea married a prostitute as a living parable of Israel's unfaithfulness to God.
- The belt symbolizes binding. In the same way, the Apostle Paul will be bound in the place where, above all other places, he should've been free to serve God—in the Holy City.
- Stott (quoting Haenchen): "This was not a short leather belt: 'to bind himself hand and foot with such a girdle would have been an acrobatic performance.'"

—"Thus says the Holy Spirit":

- This formula shows a progression from the Old Testament, where we see, "Thus says the LORD". Interestingly, the word "LORD" throughout the OT is Yahweh. This suggests that the Holy Spirit is Yahweh.

- Not just the Spirit, but the Father is also Yahweh (Isa 1:9 / Rom. 9:29). And the Son is Yahweh too (Joel 2:32 / Rom. 10:13). Yet, there is only one Yahweh (Deut. 6:4).
- The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God. Yet we believe in one God. Trinitarianism is not tri-theism.
- It is fair game to say “Thus says the Holy Spirit” or “Thus says the Lord” in the New Testament era. However, I do not train people to say this—until—they exhibit the track record of Agabus, who accurately predicted a global famine. Or Isaiah, Jeremiah, *etc.*
- This introductory phrase helps the reader discern the difference between what God said (21:11) and what the people urged (21:12). God never said, “Don’t go to Jerusalem,” like the disciples of Tyre thought in 21:4. God only said, “There’s trouble in Jerusalem.”

—“This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind...”: Some have argued the Agabus missed the prophecy because the Jews only handed Paul over to the Gentiles, who in turn bound Paul. But this is an overly wooden reading. Paul himself will say in Acts 26:21 that “For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.” This agrees with Agabus’s prophecy. Agabus was right. That’s the point of 21:11.

13 Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”

—Sometimes God speaks to us, not in order to change our course of action, but in order to prepare our hearts for what’s to come. Paul is going to Jerusalem—but he knows what to expect. Prophecy does not just warn to redirect; it warns to prepare hearts.

—I remember being on a 21 day fast, and then an angel appeared over my head (an incredibly rare experience). It was crying. Then I thought, “Oh, no. Why are you crying?” Suddenly, I saw what looked like hundreds of angels over my head, all crying. Within a few weeks, a dear friend stabbed me in the back. This experience was preparing me for what was to come, even though it wasn’t accompanied by any action steps on my part.

—This tells us something about the heart of God. He doesn’t just care about our actions; He cares about our hearts. God knows that if He keeps our hearts well-watered with grace, our actions will be the right actions. As much as this passage emphasizes Paul’s unwavering obedience, even before that, it emphasizes God’s unwavering love that inspires his obedience.

—“What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?”

- There was a deep relational connection here. Paul’s point is that their emotional appeals are making it harder for him to stay true to the course God called him to.
- Paul would not be persuaded here to take any other course. Earlier, he was persuaded not to go on the ship to Jerusalem where a plot was made on his life (Acts 20:3). He was also persuaded not to speak before the rioting crowd in Ephesus (19:31). Thus, this was not a foolhardy Paul, seeking the glory of martyrdom against all wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 13:3).

—“Let the will of the Lord be done”:

- The passage is meant to show, with an increasing momentum of prophetic pressure, that Paul will not be persuaded from his original call to testify in Jerusalem despite the dangers that await him. It’s not meant to show that Paul was disobedient. If the story intended to show that, the people wouldn’t have concluded, “The Lord’s will be done.” Clearly, even in their own mind, the application of the prophecy was not certain.
- The posture of these disciples shows how prophecy should be interpreted and applied—cautiously. They felt strongly at first, but Paul’s pushback caused them to reconsider. While they initially assumed the prophecy meant Paul should not go, Paul helped them see that the prophecy may have simply revealed what would happen—not what must be avoided. Instead of doubling down, they humbly yielded to the mystery of God’s will and responded with spiritual surrender: “Let the will of the Lord be done.”
- We might label the posture of these disciples as “prophetic humility.” Prophetic humility can say, sometimes with tears, “Maybe I’m hearing God inaccurately.” People who insist they are right no matter what are typically not the sorts of people who hear accurately. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

- But was Paul being proud by not opening his heart to being re-routed? No—Paul was not being stubborn; he was being obedient to a prior call. In Acts 20:22, Paul had already testified that he was "constrained by the Spirit" to go to Jerusalem, not knowing what would happen there—only that imprisonment and affliction awaited him. His refusal to be deterred was not a rejection of prophetic input but a courageous resolve to obey what God had already made clear. Prophecy can confirm, warn, or reveal new direction—but it should never be used to override what the Spirit has deeply and clearly impressed.
- This moment between Paul and the disciples is a model of mutual submission in discernment. The disciples speak with sincerity and love, offering prophetic insight. Paul listens respectfully but holds fast to what he has already received from God. And in the end, rather than accusing or insisting, the disciples relinquish control, affirming the sovereignty of God: "Let the will of the Lord be done." This is not defeat—it is trust.
- In prophetic community, there must be room both for firm conviction and spiritual restraint. Prophets are not infallible, and mature believers must weigh even accurate revelation carefully in the light of God's broader purposes. Paul wasn't ignoring prophecy—he was absorbing it into a larger framework of obedience already shaped by the Spirit. The result wasn't division, but a deeper shared surrender.
- Stott: "So Luke surely intends us to admire Paul for his courage and perseverance. Like Jesus before him, he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, and (like Jesus again) the divine predictions of suffering did not deter him."
- **Both Jesus and Paul set their face toward Jerusalem under divine unction.**
 - *Jesus*: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).
 - *Paul*: "Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem..." (Acts 19:21).
- **Both Jesus and Paul received three predictions about imminent persecution in Jerusalem**
 - *Jesus*:
 - *Luke 9:22* – "The Son of Man must suffer many things..."
 - *Luke 9:44* – "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."
 - *Luke 18:31–34* – "Everything that is written... will be accomplished... they will flog him and kill him..."
 - *Paul*:
 - *Acts 21:4* – "Through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem."
 - *Acts 21:9* – The four daughters of Philip prophesy (implied prophetic warning).
 - *Acts 21:11* – Agabus says, "This is how the Jews will bind the man who owns this belt..."
- **Both Jesus and Paul were not deterred by well-meaning friend**
 - *Jesus*: "But Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan!'" (Matthew 16:22–23; cf. Luke 9:22)
 - *Paul*: "Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem...'" (Acts 21:13). "Let the will of the Lord be done." (Acts 21:14)
- This is a story about Paul's "passion." His life conforms to that of Christ Jesus. The closest friends of Jesus get crucified. Their courage is misunderstood as foolishness. Their righteousness is labeled as wickedness—Jesus was crucified, and Paul was arrested, yet both were righteous. Do you want to be a friend of Jesus? Expect to be misunderstood and wrongly labeled.
- **Both Jesus and Paul see Jerusalem not as a place of defeat but of divine fulfillment.** Jerusalem is a city of kings and prophets—the former are exalted; the latter are persecuted. For Jesus, Jerusalem is where the Lamb will be slain; for Paul, it is where the servant of the Lamb will be bound. Neither are victims of circumstance. Both are agents of redemption, knowingly embracing the cruciform path.

- This comparison reminds us that prophetic clarity does not always equal circumstantial ease. Sometimes, following the Spirit means walking into trouble with eyes wide open. And sometimes, the people around us—full of love and prophetic gifting—will misread the danger as a detour, when it's actually the path.
- The church's final words echo the same surrender Jesus modeled in Gethsemane: "Let the will of the Lord be done." Unlike Christ's disciples, who slept while Jesus prayed, and who mostly opposed God's will until the resurrection, the disciples in this story (ultimately) get it: sometimes God's will is bloody, not rosy.
- Schreiner: "This is Paul's Gethsemane." Fortunately for Paul, he has more support than Jesus had.