

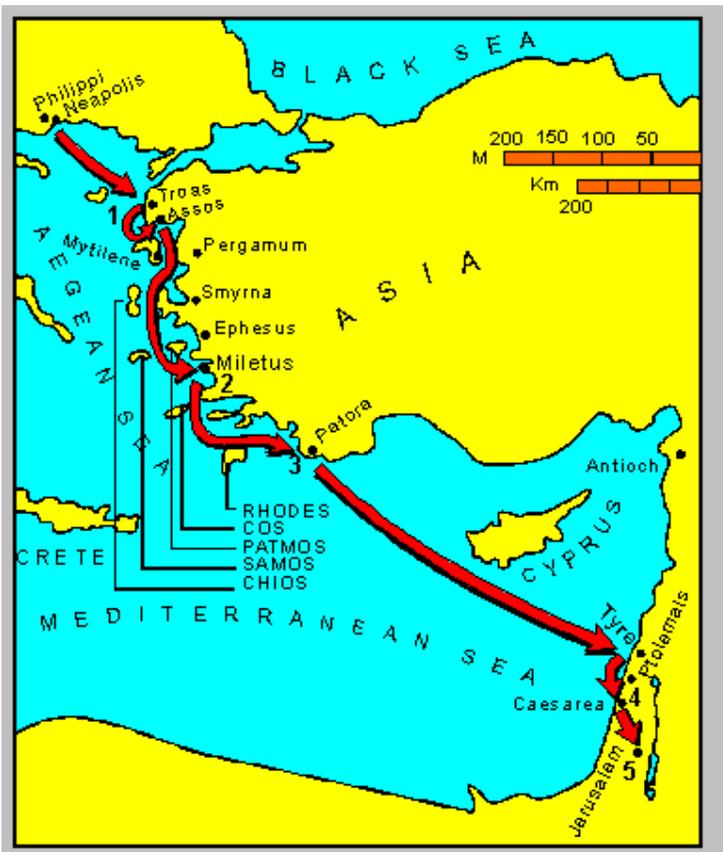
Study Five Acts 28.11-31

Paul at Rome

In coming to Rome Paul is greeted like a conquering hero and his time of awaiting trial is filled with proclaiming the kingdom of God; but why does Acts finish where it does?

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Group Questions

6. How would Paul have impressed the soldiers?

7. How can we like Paul attempt to be Christ-like?

To Jerusalem

Paul is anxious to be in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, 7 weeks away.

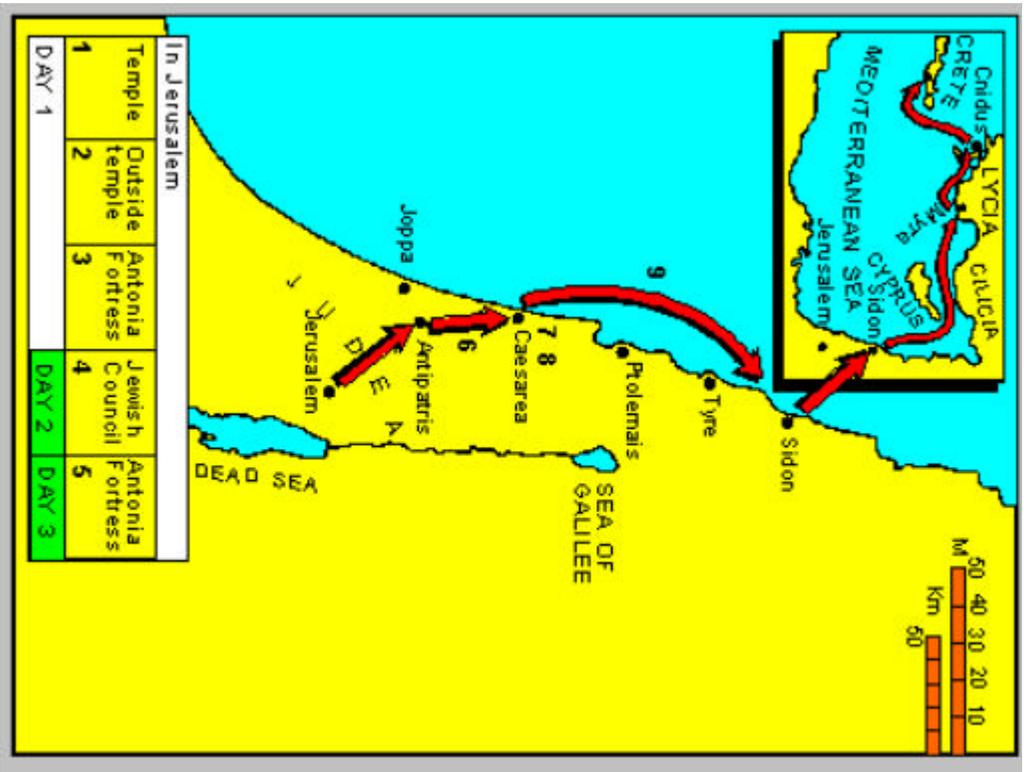
- 1 Paul arrives from Philippi. While he preaches on till midnight, Eutychus falls asleep and out of a 3 story window. But he is raised from death.
- 2 Elders from the church in Ephesus meet Paul, who gives a farewell speech. He says they will never see him again. Paul leaves with great emotion.
- 3 At Patara they change ships.
- 4 They stay at Philip the evangelist's house. Agabus the prophet tells Paul he will be bound by Jews in Jerusalem and handed over to Gentiles. Paul is determined to go on, despite warnings and pleas.
- 5 At Jerusalem Paul is welcomed by the church.

1. Read the book of Jonah right through and outline the story below. On the other side outline Paul's story, noting the similarities and contrasts.
2. What do you think Luke is saying by this comparison?

3. What should we expect will happen in Rome?

4. How has Paul used the limited opportunities to share the gospel v42?

5. Has Paul's impressing the Centurion have a parallel in the last days of Jesus?



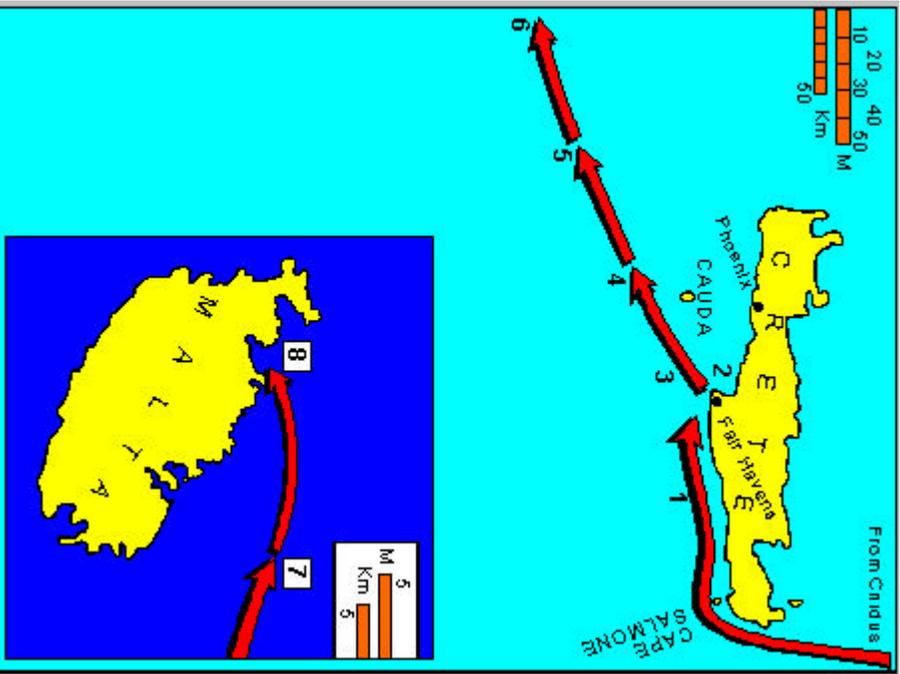
MAP 2

- 1 Paul recognized by Jews from Asia in the temple. A mob drags him outside and tries to kill him.
- 2 Roman troops arrest (and rescue) him. Paul is allowed to speak to the rioters. His words incite them to more violence.
- 3 He is taken into the Roman Fortress. Next day, Paul defends himself before the Jewish Council. Again the arguments turn to violence. Paul is taken back to the Fortress. Over forty men plot to kill Paul.
- 4 The Roman commander hears of the plot. That night he sends Paul under armed escort to the governor Felix in Caesarea.
- 5 Paul's case heard by Felix, but he defers a decision. Two years later Festus replaces Felix. Paul still imprisoned.
- 6 Festus hears Paul's case. He seems unfavorable, so Paul appeals to have his case heard by the emperor. He waits to go to Rome and presents his story to Agrippa II.
- 7 Paul and companions (including Luke) leave for Rome, Paul under armed guard.

22. What can we learn about shaping the message of the gospel for who we are speaking to at the time?

Study Four Acts 27.1-28.10 Paul—A Good Jonah

The parallels between Paul and Jonah are striking, but with Paul we find one who willingly goes to preach the gospel to those who are a threat to his country.



MAP 3

- 1 In bad weather Paul's ship reaches Fair Havens.
- 2 They shelter there until early October—the end of the safe sailing season. They decide to winter in the better harbour at Phoenix.
- 3 On route to Phoenix they are blown out to sea.
- 4 South of Cauda they pull the boat on board, lower the sail, and let the ship run.
- 5 Next day they jettison ship's cargo.
- 6 Next day they jettison ship's equipment.
- 7 **Inset:** Night 14 of the storm, land is near. Sailors try to escape but fail. After eating, they lighten the ship.
- 8 Ship hits a sandbank in a bay and begins to break up. All hands are saved.

15. How did Festus understand the issues between Paul and the Jerusalem authorities 25.19?

16. Read 25.23-26.32. How is the speech before an informed Jew different to that before a Roman?

17. What are the relative responses to this long speech of Paul? How are they similar to his speech in Acts 17.32-34?

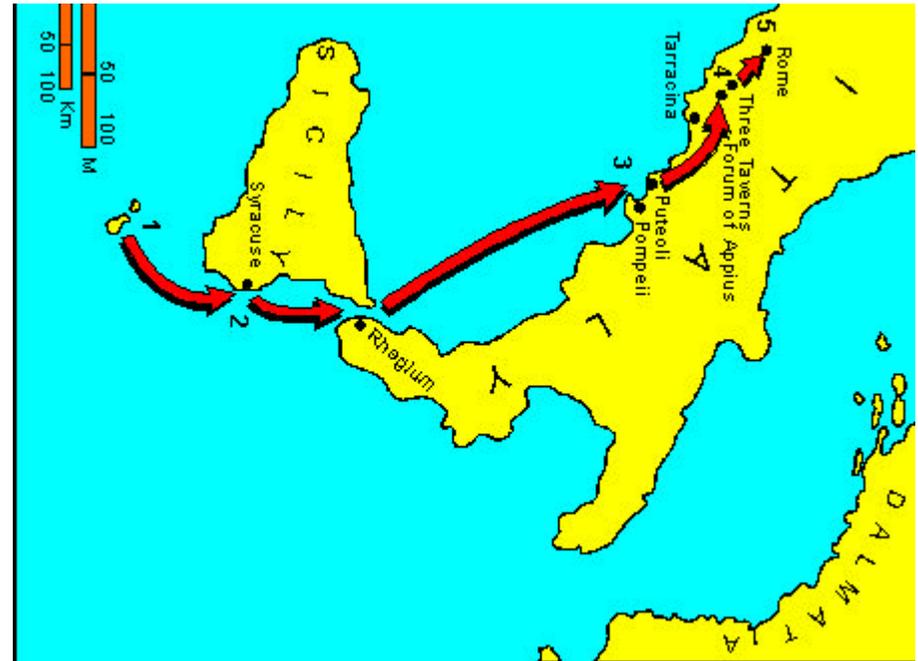
18. What is Paul doing besides just defending himself?

19. What is the great irony of verse 32?

20. What would be significant about this statement to a Roman reading Acts—a Roman like Theophilus?

Group Discussion

21. What can we learn about the way Paul negotiated the line between justice and trust in the sovereign purposes of God?



- 1 On Malta, Paul recovers from a snake bite and heals other sick people. They stay 3 months, until the bad weather has passed.
- 2 At Syracuse they stop for 3 days.
- 3 They reach Puteoli, one of the great ports of the empire. Paul and friends stay with the local believers for a week.
- 4 They now set out on the 100 mile journey to Rome. Paul is worried and apprehensive, but is encouraged when believers from Rome come out to welcome him.
- 5 Paul is kept under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his trial. For 2 years he rents a house and has considerable freedom to preach.

MAP 4

Study One Acts 20

Postscript from Ephesus

Aside from Paul being a little dead boring, we are invited to see the heart that drove him in ministry and the internal danger that churches must always be on their guard against.

Paul is often caricatured as a fairly impersonal pastor whose main concern is theology and the gospel but that he demonstrates little concern for the people he is dealing with. Such an assessment is at best ill informed and at worst propaganda. Paul's concern is evident on every page of his correspondence – our problem is that we are so often attuned to the theology we miss the heart of the theologian which is the heart of the pastor. Few passages of the New Testament demonstrate this as much as the passage we are looking at. While the whole of the last section of Acts portrays a Christ-like Paul, the Christ-like heart is especially evident.

In the picture: The time in Ephesus has been one of high impact. Hearts have been stirred, extraordinary things have happened and Ephesus has been stirred up. Chapter 19 ended with a riot in the theatre of Ephesus.

9. Given what we begin to see of Felix' nature, why would he have been disturbed by Paul's preaching?

10. Why might Paul have preached this? How does it fit the gospel he proclaims in other places?

11. Read 25.1-22. Verse 8 gives us some idea of the charges. Compare them to what Jesus was ultimately charged with and what Stephen (Acts 6.13) was charged with. Does the similarity continue?

12. How does the frustration of Paul at getting a decision advance the movement toward Rome (Acts 23.11)?

13. What does this tell us about how God works?

14. How long has Paul been in prison? How do you think you would have handled yourself in these circumstances?

3. Is Paul's statement that 'he was standing there because of his hope in the resurrection' a clever ploy or just a way of confusing the opposition? Justify your answer.

4. How does the Lord assess what Paul has done?

5. Read 23.12-35. What is ironic about how Paul is being treated and how he treated Christians as a persecutor?

6. The plot to kill Paul has been foiled by his nephew. How is the assessment of Paul's situation by the Roman commander similar to Pilate's at the trial of Jesus (v29)?

7. Read chapter 24. What are the charges the Jews bring against Paul via Tertullus?

8. How does Paul's answer meet the charges?

1. Read v1-6 Look at the map on page 2 noting what Paul did where.

2. What do you think Paul was doing in Greece and why was he accompanied by representatives of his missionary journeys c.f. 2 Cor 8?

3. Look up the passages connected with the collection—1 Cor.16.1f; Acts 20.4,6; 12.7; Rom.15.26; 2 Cor.8,9— and put a tick next to that place on the map of Paul's Missionary Journeys. What does this tell you about the importance and scope of this collection?

~~4. Can you think of any possible connection between the collection and Paul wanting it to be given at the feast of Pentecost v16?~~

pentēkosté [Pentecost]

A. Secular Use. We find *pentēkostós* from the time of Plato, and the LXX uses it in Lev. 25:10-11 for the Year of Jubilee and in 2 Kgs. 15:23 chronologically. *pentēkosté* occurs from the fourth century B.C. as a technical term in taxation signifying a 2 percent duty on the value of goods, e.g., exports and imports.

B. The OT and Judaism.

1. The OT Feast of Weeks. According to Ex. 34:22 the Feast of Weeks is a harvest festival to mark the gathering of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. Dt. 16:9 says that it is to begin seven weeks after putting the sickle to the grain. The gifts are to be joyfully offered to God in the designated place. Lev. 23:15 provides further details about the dating and the sacrifices. On the day of the feast all work stops and there is a glad celebration. The only reference elsewhere in the

OT is in 2 Chr. 8:13, so this is obviously not a major feast.

II. The Jewish Pentecost.

1. *The Date.* Judaism fixes the date as the fiftieth day after the Passover, although there is still debate about when to begin the reckoning. Prior to A.D. 70 the Pharisaic view that it should be 50 days after the 16th of Nisan seems to have prevailed. It might thus fall on any day of the week. It is only a one-day feast, although in the dispersion a second day is added because of difficulties in getting the calendar right.

2. *As a Harvest Festival.* In Judaism Pentecost is still a harvest festival. The Book of Ruth is read and pilgrims take offerings to Jerusalem, where they are met by the priests, and go up to the temple with songs. Two loaves are offered as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. The numbers attending, however, are far fewer than for the Passover, of which it tends to become an appendage.

3. *As a Festival of the Giving of the Law at Sinai.* After A.D. 70, when firstfruits can no longer be brought to the temple, Pentecost is linked more closely with the age of Moses and celebrated as a festival of the giving of the law. Jubilees anchors the feast in the story of the patriarchs and thus gives it enhanced significance. The association with the law rests on Ex. 19:1, which puts Israel at Sinai in the third month after the exodus. The account of the giving of the law becomes the reading on the Day of Pentecost, and by the third century A.D. Pentecost is plainly stated to be the day when the law was given. Since there is no evidence that this equation is made in NT days, the idea that the Christian Pentecost is a festival of the new revelation of God has no foundation.

C. The NT.

1. In 1 Cor. 16:8 Paul says that he will stay at Ephesus until Pentecost. He probably has the Jewish feast in mind, as in Acts 20:16, where he wants to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost, possibly to take part, with Jewish Christians, in the Jewish celebration.

2. Luke introduces the story of the Christian Pentecost by linking it to salvation history in the phrase in Acts 2:1: "When the [promised] day of Pentecost had come" (cf. Lk. 9:51). The promise of Jesus in Acts 1:8 is now fulfilled. The account that follows stresses a. the gift of the Spirit, whose outpouring brings with it the ability to praise (v. 11) and to proclaim (vv. 14ff.), and b. the public birth of the church as a vital community (cf. 2:42ff.). The speaking in tongues (vv. 1 ff., 13) offers plain evidence of the Spirit's descent and also serves as a prototype of world mission. The occurrence on the Day of Pentecost means that the Jewish calendar can be worked into the nexus of promise and fulfillment in salvation history.

D. The Early Church. In the early church *pentēkostē* is used for the 50 days of rejoicing that begin with Easter. Since Easter is always kept on Sunday, the seven weeks end on a Sunday too. During this period there are no fasts, prayer is offered standing, catechumens are baptized, and thoughts are directed to the last

The amount of material devoted to trial scenes in this section has led some to suppose that at least part of Luke's brief was to demonstrate how Christianity was not against Rome and a matter of Jewish interpretation with broader application.

1. Read Acts 22:30-23:11. Paul's defence did not start at all well. What does Paul's response to being hit highlight about the motives of the High Priest?

2. What does Paul demonstrate about his 'lawfulness' when he is told that he is speaking to the High Priest?

Jonah	Paul

things, so that *pentēkostḗ* can be regarded as a sign of the heavenly kingdom, to which Christ has already ascended as the firstfruits of the harvest. Later the last day of the period takes on independent significance and *pentēkostē* comes to be used for it as a day that commemorates the outpouring of the Spirit.

5. Read 1 Corinthians 16.1-9; 2 Corinthians 9.1-5 How does this fit in and explain something of our Acts passage? I.e. Where did Paul probably stay for three months in Greece?

6. What is the role of the collection and what does it symbolise—
a) Eph.2.11-22?

b) Rom.15.23f

c) Rom.11.11-24 (Is.2.2-4;60.6-7,11)

7. Read 7-12. Now read it as a 'cautionary tale' – that is a story with a lesson. Where does Eutychus fall asleep? What happens when you fall asleep in that environment? What does a pastor (Paul) do in that situation? What elements are common with the resurrection of Jesus?

8. Read 13-36. Why would Paul avoid stopping off at Ephesus beside being 'in a hurry' to reach Jerusalem if possible before Pentecost'?

Discussion Questions

21. It is easy to see people holding onto things as counterproductive but can people who throw traditions away be just as counterproductive?

22. How are you God's chosen instrument—include gifts and background etc?

Study Three Acts 22.30-26.32 Trials Aplenty

Paul's four trials give us an opportunity to have an understanding of what the Jews found objectionable in his ministry of the gospel. Ultimately he will go to trial in Rome before Caesar.

20. Paul saw himself as a chosen instrument. What in this section of Acts demonstrates the truth of that?

9. Paul sends for the Ephesian elders (50kms as the crow flies)— he has unfinished business. What is it?

10. Summarise the sections of Paul's Speech.

18-19

20-21

22-24

25-27

28-33

34-35

11. What would be the overall effect of Paul's Speech on the elders of Ephesus?

12. What characteristics do leaders in our church need to demonstrate?

13. How can you encourage the leaders of our church to the task they have been given by the Holy Spirit?

14. What strikes you as similar in this passage to the Last Supper scene in the gospels?

Questions for discussion.

15. Should we still be trying to support the Jews in some way? How?

16. How can we encourage one another to not fall asleep and keep in the light?

17. How do recognise a wolf in shepherd's clothing?

18. How do you recognise a wolf in sheep's clothing?

16. Read 21.37-22.29. How does Paul's background work to his advantage?

17. Outline Paul's defence 22.3-21, using verse sections & titles.

18. What did Paul think would convince the Jews as to his sincerity (v19)?

19. What was the flash point for the crowd?

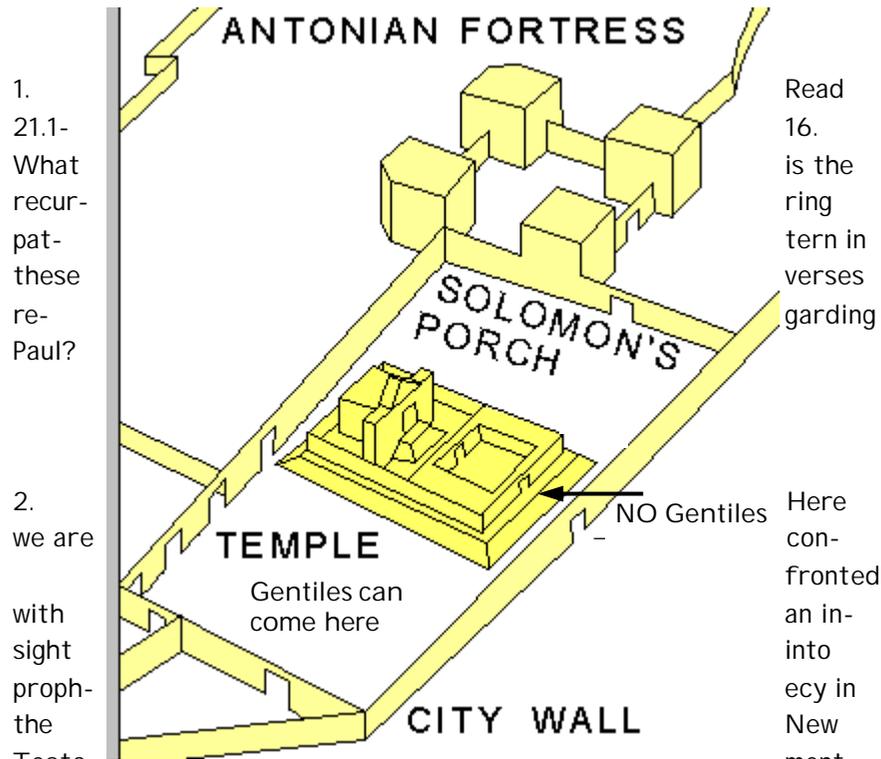
Study Two Acts 21.1-22.29

Trouble in Jerusalem

Paul's movement towards Jerusalem is modelled on Jesus' own journey to Jerusalem. In the same way, Paul is rejected in Jerusalem for violations against the temple and is only saved by the skin of his teeth.

14. Look at the drawing of the Temple. Gentiles were allowed to visit the Temple area but they were not allowed to go into the actual Temple on pain of death. How important was the Temple to the Jews? Why?

15. Next to the Temple was the Antonian Fortress. This could be where the Roman troops appeared from so quickly. How is this like what happened in Ephesus in Acts 19? Is this a good comparison for Jerusalem?



1. 21.1- What recur- pat- these re- Paul?

2. we are with sight proph- the Testa-

and how it worked. Is prophecy in the NT as the authoritative prophecy in the Old Testament? Explain.

3. Paul is not disputing the truth of the prophecy (Acts 20.23) — what is he disputing?

4. How does 1 Cor. 14.29 fit this profile of prophecy?

5. If the prophet is not the authoritative figure in the NT who is?

Read 16. is the ring tern in verses garding

Here confronted an in- into ecy in New ment

6. What role did Paul exercise as an apostle?

7. What is Paul determined to do despite the prophecy?

8. In our last study we considered how Paul was like Christ at the Last Supper. How is Paul like Jesus going to Jerusalem?

9. Read 21.17-26. If one of Paul's concerns is to maintain unity with Jerusalem, what indications are there that he has been successful?

10. What indications are there of dangers and where might the threats to unity and Paul come from?

11. What was Paul prepared to do to maintain unity? Was this a compromise of the gospel?

12. How is Paul's vow like that of Timothy in Acts 16.1-5?

13. Read 21.27-36. Why did the plan to placate the Jews fail?