

Miletus to Caesarea

ACTS 21:1 *And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:...*

The first thing we need to note in this verse is still concerns the Ephesian elders. Reading the last part of ACTS 20:38 along with the first part of ACTS 21:1 we find the difficulty the Apostle Paul and the Ephesian elders had in saying good-bye to one another: *And they accompanied him unto the ship. And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched,...* . Paul had spoken his parting words to them, prayed with them all, said his fare well's, but the Ephesian elders couldn't bare to see him go away, so they accompanied him unto the ship. Then Luke writes as if a great deal of time elapsed, for he states: *And it came to pass...* . And then he adds more words, using a strong Greek verb showing the force of being reft away, or tearing themselves away from them *...that after we were gotten from them, and had launched,...* . What we should see here is the strong love that these brethren had for the Apostle Paul, and visa versa, all because of Jesus Christ. They each saw qualities of Jesus in each other, and were reluctant to let this moment in time go. {What qualities of Christ do people see in you?} And this moment in time was long and drawn out, as it does take some time to launch a ship.

But after all of the fare well proceedings were done Luke notes: *...we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:...* . The distance from Miletus to Coos is about forty nautical miles. One translation reads "we ran with the wind to Coos," which means they had a fair tail wind once they got on course. It would take about six hours to travel from Miletus to Coos under these conditions. Coos is an island straight South of Miletus, that is twenty-three miles in length, running from Southwest, to Northeast. There is a narrow channel to the North of Coos which separates it from the mainland, and on the east side of the island would have been the town of Coos, a beautiful and well built city. Obviously for ACTS 20:1 we see that the Apostle Paul's ship spent the night there. Back tracking then it becomes obvious that the Apostle Paul got to meet with the Ephesian elders earlier that day.

The next day they travelled unto Rhodes, leaving twenty two days until Pentecost. The distance for Coos to Rhodes was about fifty miles, and the winds are almost always blowing from the Northwest in this area of the sea that they were passing through. Our text doesn't really tell us if they spent the night at Rhodes or not, but they probably did. The town of Rhodes was famous for ship building, and also was the subject of an old proverb that stated that the sun shown everyday in Rhodes. Assuming like we have that they anchored in Rhodes, the next day would leave twenty-one day until Pentecost.

From Rhodes Paul's ship sailed unto Patara, a distance of sixty-five miles. This put them back on the mainland. The port of Patara lied just to the east of the Xanthus River, where it dumped into the Mediterranean Sea. No harbor exists there today as the river has since filled it up with sand. From noticing the journeying that Paul's ship has taken since he first got on it, we find that it must have been some kind of freighter, for it didn't seem to miss many sea ports.

While at Patara, Paul and his company find another ship taking a more direct route toward Jerusalem, which ACTS 21:2 tells us Paul and his group got on. ACTS 21:2 *And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.* Phenicia is a region, a territory of the province of Syria, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean between the river Eleutherus and the promontory of Carmel, some 30 miles long and, 3 miles wide, in which the city of Tyre was located. ACTS 21:2 indicates that this new ship probably set sail the same day, or evening that Paul and his company had arrived at Patara. Since this ship was headed for the open sea, there was no reason why this ship could not raise it's anchor in the evening, and sail through the night without the fear of encountering any rocky obstacles in the open sea.

ACTS 21:3 *Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.* The distance between Patara and Tyre was approximately 340 miles, which could have taken

no more than two days to cover with favorable winds, and probably no more than thirty hours. (If that sounds impossible to you, consider that the speed we are talking about is only 10 knots per hour!) The terminology used by Luke here in verse 3 didn't translate that well into English, for Paul's ship didn't not discover Cyprus like Columbus discovered America. Recall from ACTS 4:36 and 13:4 that the island of Cyprus was Barnabas' home country, and that he and Paul had first visited Cyprus on their first missionary journey. The original Greek of discovering Cyprus and leaving it on the left hand was a nautical expression implying that the land appeared to rise quickly as they sailed past it to the southward, and that it was seen at a distance by daylight. All of this indicates the rapid speed at which they were able to travel on this particular vessel, and further shows the favorable tail wind that they had.

According to our time table, Paul arrives at Tyre eighteen days before Pentecost, which means he had eighteen days to get to Jerusalem before the feast of Pentecost. Tyre is located approximately one hundred miles north of Jerusalem. We find here in verse 3 that the ship Paul was now traveling on planned on stopping at Tyre, and there unloading her cargo. ACTS 21:4 tells us that the Apostle Paul and his company would be spending seven days at Tyre.

The city of Tyre has quiet a history, and a lot of it's past is recorded in scripture. History records that there really are two Trye's; Old Tyre, and the former island city of Tyre where it's port was located. The name "Tyre" means "a rock," which is attributed to the former rocky island that became it's harbor. The rocky island no longer exists separate from the main land, but has become over time joined by a peninsula. One author notes that during the time of Christ, and the Apostle Paul, Tyre may have had a population greater than Jerusalem. There would have been a different make up in the population of Tyre also, in that Jerusalem was populated mainly with Jews, and the scripture indicates that the population of Tyre was mainly Gentile.

MATTHEW 15:21-28, and MARK 7:24-30 both tell how Jesus came to the borders of Tyre, and it's sister city just to the north of Sidon. By the time Jesus came to Tyre, He was already famous to those of Tyre, and Sidon, for LUKE 6:17-19 tells how the people of Tyre and Sidon came to hear Jesus speak, and be healed of their diseases. LUKE 6:17 *And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; 18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. 19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.* No doubt this fame of Jesus healing people was known unto the Greek Syrophenician woman of Caanan, whose story is told in the scriptures found in MATTHEW 15 and MARK 7 noted above. In MATTHEW 15:22 we find this Greek Syrophenician woman of Caanan appealing unto Jesus, crying out: *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.* Jesus doesn't answer her, for she has no claim to Him as the Son of David, thus Jesus can not bless her under these false pretenses, thus He notes unto His disciples that *"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* Jesus however did have mercy on her, for she next came and worshipped Him, and cried out: *"Lord, help me."* Jesus had already noted to her, and to His disciples that He was sent *...the lost sheep of the house of Israel,...* and since she was not an Israelite, she was considered a dog. So Jesus states in MATTHEW 15:26 *...It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* Unfazed, and acknowledging the truth that Jesus spoke unto her, the Greek Syrophenician woman states in verse 27 *Truth, Lord: yet the dogs (the little puppies) eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.* After acknowledging the fact that she really did not have any claim to Jesus, other than by grace, and that by grace are ye saved through faith, (EPHESIANS 2:8), Jesus then answers her in verse 28: *...O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

If you read on in MATTHEW 15, or MARK 7, you will find that Jesus then departed from Tyre and Sidon. In the process of time some disciples of Jesus were found in Tyre, and were still there when Paul and his company arrived. Obviously the gospel of Jesus Christ had continued to spread, as was also noted back in ACTS 8:4 and 11:19. ACTS 8:4 *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.* ACTS 11:19 *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about*

Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. The next time that we read of disciples visiting Tyre is in our text.

ACTS 21:3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. 4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. 5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. 6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. 7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

Another translation of the first part of verse 4 reads: "Having searched for the disciples and found them, we remained there seven days." This brings up a couple of points. First, who were these disciples? Second, where did they find them? Study the above text and note that these disciples of Tyre were not named by Luke. Perhaps the Greek Syrophenician woman of Caanan whose daughter was healed by Jesus was one of them, however we are not told this in scripture. Luke indicates that some of these disciples were full of the Holy Ghost, for he writes in verse 4 that they *...said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.* (More on this statement later.) Were these disciples Jews or Gentiles? This we are not told, however from what we have already noted above, it seems most likely that these were Gentile disciples. We could probably better answer this question of who these disciples were if we knew where it was Paul found them. We know from past lessons on the life of Paul that he usually visited the Jewish synagogue first in every city he went unto. Recall this statement from ACTS 17:1 & 2 when Paul *...came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them,...* Is this what he did at Tyre? Or was there even a synagogue of the Jews at Tyre? We are not given this information in scripture.

It seems from our expounded translation here that the Apostle Paul and his group spent a little effort in finding the disciples, but when they did find them they were welcomed with open arms, and open homes, for they stayed a week with them, as one translator puts it. Remember what a contingent Paul had with him, for ACTS 20:4 notes the Apostle Paul had seven men traveling with him! So these disciples of Tyre, though not known to us by name, showed their love of the Saints through their hospitality. Perhaps they were taught by the Kingdom Apostles these words of Jesus found in JOHN 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* Perhaps maybe they had even heard this message from the Apostle Paul himself, who had previously written the Thessalonians in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9 *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.* (In total there are twelve scriptures that state this same message: "love one another.") These disciples of Tyre showed their love for these Saints by their hospitality.

Obviously we learn from verse 4 that the Apostle Paul made it clear to these disciples that his intentions were to go up to Jerusalem. No doubt he also preached his gospel message unto them. Had they heard Paul's gospel before? We are not told. If they had heard Paul's gospel message before, who preached it unto them? Barnabas? Or perhaps some disciple from Antioch, Syria. Again we are not told.

We are told in verse 4 that there were some Spirit filled believers here in Tyre, for during the course of the week these disciples, *...through the Spirit,...* (either by a prophecy, or by tongues and interpretation) made it known unto Paul *...that he should not go up to Jerusalem.* Brother Copley writes: "Paul would have been in God's will if he had yielded to the pulling back of the Spirit thru the disciples in Tyre. He would have reached Rome, no doubt, without the two years of imprisonment in Caesarea. But who dare arise and condemn Paul?" (We will comment further on this topic when we get to verses 10-14.)

Verse 5 gives further insight as to the quality of these disciples of Tyre, for when Paul and the faithful seven left Tyre, they all were accompanied unto the ship by the disciples of Tyre, which included the men, women and children with whom they had

been staying for a week! This brings up a point. Who can be trusted with Paul's gospel? Obviously the disciples of Paul who were traveling with him. But also the disciples of Tyre, which included men, women, wives, and children. Perhaps this thought can best be summed up in Paul's own words of 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* There is no age limit in this statement. There is no discrimination whatsoever in *...the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* Obviously these Saints of Tyre embraced the gospel of the Apostle Paul, and were given a week with him that none of them ever forgot, including the Apostle Paul, and those traveling with him.

ACTS 21:5 *And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.* If Paul and his faithful seven did have a hard time finding disciples when they first got to Tyre, they sure didn't upon their departure, for note above that *...they all brought us on our way,...* as they departed. To our knowledge, up to this point in time, the Apostle Paul had not spent any time in Tyre like he had at Troas, and Ephesus, and Corinth, and many other places. However after only a one week stay, those disciples of Tyre were as reluctant to see Paul, and his company leave as those Saints he had visited years with. Certainly these Saints of Tyre must have enjoyed hearing the glorious gospel of Christ preached unto them by the Apostle Paul, which gospel was given to him by Christ to fill up the word of God. {COLOSSIANS 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.*} The Saints of Tyre enjoyed Paul's gospel message so much, that they hated to see him leave. But when it was time to go, the Saints of Tyre gave Paul, and his company a send-off equal to any he had had before, *...and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.*

There really is quiet a bit of information conveyed in this part of verse 5. Think about eight men staying with disciples they didn't seem to know a week ago, and then ponder how it was these disciples of Tyre sent them off. The men of Tyre, along with their wives, and children accompanied them unto the ship. Truly they showed their love for these men. And consider Paul's faithful seven. These were men whom even the children loved to be around. No doubt Paul's faithful seven were kind, gentle and gracious men that displayed the nature of Jesus to everyone. And isn't that what a Christian is to do? EPHESIANS 4:32 tells us: *And be ye kind (gracious, good, mild, pleasant) one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* Do you think these seven faithful travel companions of the Apostle Paul had heard this statement before? 1 PETER 3:8 & 9 makes a similar statement: *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, (same word translated "tenderhearted" in EPHESIANS 4:32) be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

Note that these disciples of Tyre accompanied them out of the city limits, unto the ship, where they kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. Praying for one another is the best thing we can do for each other. I can't stop you praying for me, nor can you stop me praying for you. Praying one for another is something we can do at any place, at any time. Since I can't love you as much as you love you, and since you can't love you as much as Jesus loves you, for He purchased you with his own precious shed blood, let's do what it is that we can do, and pray for one another in Jesus name, remembering that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, (JAMES 5:16).

Remember the name "Tyre" means "a rock," and we know from scripture that Jesus Christ is the solid Rock, the foundation upon which all Christian churches are to be founded upon, and certainly these disciples of Tyre had such a firm foundation, *...For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ....* 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11. 2 TIMOTHY 2:19 further tells us: *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* As Paul and his faithful seven now leave Tyre, I am sure they all had a greater appreciation for the wonderful working of Jesus the Rock of our salvation, and the solid foundation and chief

corner stone of our faith. Into His mighty hands each committed the other by prayer as they departed ways. ACTS 21:6 *And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.*

ACTS 21:7 *And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.* The distance from Tyre to Ptolemais is about 28 miles, which with a fair wind would have been an easy days sail. Of the three sea-ports mentioned in ACTS 21, Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea, Ptolemais is the oldest, and has lasted the longest, which is why it is still in existence today.

Our text reads: *...we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.* Here again we are not told who the brethren were that Paul and his company found in Ptolemais. Yet it seems the brethren they greeted were familiar to them, or at least unto the Apostle Paul. No doubt Paul had met Christians from Ptolemais early in his Christian career when he had visited Jerusalem previously, or perhaps even knew some of them from his days at Antioch, Syria. Once again we are not given any specific information about who these Saints of Ptolemais were, or where Paul knew them from, but Paul and his faithful seven did pay their respects to the brethren of Ptolemais, and abode with them one day. Forty days have passed since Passover, leaving Paul ten days to finish traveling to Jerusalem, which was now less than a hundred miles away.

ACTS 21:8 *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. 10 And as we tarried there many days,...*

To the Bible student this should be one of the highlight portions of scripture found in the book of ACTS, for in these few verses are contained some marvelous facts concerning the love of God, and what it takes to be a full overcomer. Here we find what it truly means to be "knit together in love" as expounded by the Apostle Paul in his epistle unto the Colossian Saints. COLOSSIANS 2:1 *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* In the flesh there probably was not two more unlikely candidates to be "knit together in love" than the Apostle Paul, and Philip the evangelist, as we will see as we study these verses.

Before we get to that part of this study, let's first note that the traveling distance from Ptolemais to Caesarea was about thirty one miles. We are not told in scripture if this was traveled by sea, or by land, but either way this distance could have easily have been traveled in one day, and in fact Luke tells us that they came unto Caesarea the next day. Those of Paul's company were the faithful seven of ACTS 20:4 fame, which have been traveling to Jerusalem with Paul ever since that time, as we have many time previously noted in this study.

We don't know who the disciples of Tyre were, nor do we know who the brethren of Ptolemais were, but here at Caesarea we find the Apostle Paul, and his company deliberately staying with Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven from ACTS 6 fame, and staying with him several days! Obviously the Apostle Paul knew Philip by this point in time of his life, but how did the Apostle Paul get to know Philip? Here again the scripture doesn't tell us these facts, but there are hints left for us in the previous chapters of ACTS that fill in some gaps. Recall these facts from ACTS 9. ACTS 9:26 *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, (this was his first trip back to Jerusalem after being saved) he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. (GALATIANS 1:18 declares that Paul stayed with Peter fifteen days at this time.) 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.* It is possible that when the brethren of Jerusalem, (most likely Barnabas, and maybe Peter), brought Saul of Tarsus to Caesarea in ACTS 9:30 that they may have at that

time introduced Saul of Tarsus to Philip. Of course the scripture doesn't specifically give us this information, but this seems quiet possible. Perhaps maybe even Philip at that time helped old Saul of Tarsus get a ship from Caesarea unto Tarsus. We also find the Apostle Paul between his second and third missionary journeys briefly passing through Caesarea in ACTS 18:22, during which time he may have once again visited with Philip the evangelist.

Philip the Evangelist

Philip was one of the outstanding seven men chosen and blessed by the twelve kingdom Apostles to serve tables and daily minister unto those who otherwise were neglected in the daily ministrations. {See ACTS 6:1-5}. ACTS 6:3 tells us that the seven men chosen for this business were *...men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom...*. Of the seven men mentioned in ACTS 6:5, only two are mentioned more than once in scripture. Stephen is mentioned seven times, and Philip is mentioned sixteen times. Sixteen is the number of LOVE, and when we are done studying Philip I think you will have a greater appreciation of why the Holy Ghost inspired Luke to use Philip's name sixteen times.

Philip was not a novice, but rather a man *...of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom...*. We are not told if he was a disciple of Jesus when He was on earth, or if he was one of the hundred and twenty noted in ACTS 1:15 who were filled with the Holy Ghost in ACTS 2. We do know that he was willing to serve tables, or whatever menial task needed done to be of service to the Lord. Thus we note his deep love for the Lord, and his willingness to do whatever he was asked to in his service to the Lord.

Luke calls Philip the evangelist in ACTS 21:8. An evangelist is one who is a preacher of the gospel, which is to say a messenger of the good news of the gospel proclaiming salvation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In EPHESIANS 4:11 we read that Jesus *...gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.* Philip was an evangelist, and his progress as an evangelist is tracked for us in ACTS 8. We find Philip's name fourteen times in ACTS 8. Fourteen is the number that has to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION, and in studying Philip the evangelist in ACTS 8 we see that he preached a message of SALVATION, and that many were DELIVERED from various diseases.

In ACTS 8:1 we find *....that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.* Philip was one of the ones scattered abroad, and he went from serving tables to preaching the word. ACTS 8:4 *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.* In verse 5 we find Philip doing the work of an evangelist, which was to preach Christ unto them. Notice in verse 6 that all the people really "gave heed" to what Philip had to say, that is they really gave an effort to pay close attention to the Holy Ghost inspired words of Philip. And the reason they paid so close attention was because they were hearing and seeing things which proved that Philip was a man truly sent by God. In verse 12 we read: *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.* Here again we see that Philip was doing the work of an evangelist, and we find that many believers were added to the church because of the evangelistic preaching of Philip. In ACTS 8:35 we find Philip continuing to do the work of an evangelist, for we see that once again *...Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* In ACTS 8:40 we find that as Philip traveled, *...he preached in all the cities,...* continuing his work as an evangelist.

In doing his evangelistic work Philip became famous, for ACTS 8:14 tells how word of his preaching reached back to the apostles at Jerusalem. What we are going to see