

Having been away from the book of Acts for some weeks, I thought it best to begin with a very short review. If you remember, we are at present following Paul and his companions on his third missionary journey. This technically ends in v15 when Paul and the others reach Jerusalem. What we will find following this is Paul's trial before various rulers and his removal to Rome (where the book ends with him in house arrest).

- I. Their Travel to Caesarea (vv1-7)
- II. Their Lodging at Caesarea (vv8-9)
- III. Their Warning in Caesarea (vv10-14)
- IV. Observations

I. Their Travel (vv1-7)

1. From Miletus the disciples travelled south to Cos, then east to Patara, and then sailed southeast to Tyre (about a three days trip).
2. According to v4, they found additional disciples at Tyre, and so they stayed (remained) there seven days.
3. According to v4b, these disciples told Paul, "through the Spirit" not to go up to Jerusalem—that is, it was by the Spirit they warned him about what awaited him in Jerusalem.
4. Thus, I don't take this as an express command but merely as a warning—as if they were saying—"Don't go to Jerusalem unless you are willing to endure severe mistreatment."
5. Albert Barnes—"It is to be understood, therefore, simply as an inspired prophetic warning, that if he went, he went at the risk of his life."
6. When their visit came to an end, the brethren (with the wives and children) accompanied them to the ship (v6).
7. V7—"And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day."

II. Their Lodging (vv8-9)

1. VV8-9—"On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied."
2. While Caesarea was a coastal city of some size and importance, Luke only mentioned the place of their lodging ('the house of Philip the evangelist').
3. (1) His identity—"Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven"—that is, one of the original deacons (Acts 6:5).
4. If you remember, several of these men also functioned as evangelist, which of course was true of Philip.
5. In fact, the last time we heard of Philip, he was preaching the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8).
6. Acts 8:40—"But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea."
7. Thus, seemingly Philip remained in Caesarea all this time, and by now was married with at least four daughters.

8. (2) His daughters—"Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied"—that is, four unwed daughters with the gift of prophecy.
9. That men and women who given the gift of prophecy is event from Peter's quotation of Joel 2 on the Day of Pentecost.
10. Acts 2:17-18—"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.'"
11. If you recall, this was to indicate the superior nature of the New Covenant over the Old in that every member will have the Spirit.
12. Every person, regardless of age, gender, or social class will be endowed with the Holy Spirit of Christ.

III. Their Warning (vv10-14)

1. V10—"And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea (that is, Jerusalem)."
2. Now this is not the first time we've encountered Agabus, for if you recall we were introduced to him back in chapter 11.
3. Acts 11:27-28—"And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar."
4. Thus, Agabus was a true prophet, who resided in or near Jerusalem, whose previous prophecy came to pass (which is true of every true prophet).
5. (1) The prophecy of Agabus, v11—"When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"
6. Agabus acts similar to many OT prophets, in that, in addition to a verbal prophecy they give some object lesson.
7. Simon Kistemaker—"Agabus follows the OT example of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who used visual signs to warn the Israelites of their impending exile."
8. Thus, the prophet takes Paul's belt and binds his own hands and feet as a picture of what would happen to Paul.
9. He basically foretells two related events—first, the Jews would bind him, and second, they would deliver him to the Gentiles (Romans).
10. (a) The Jews would bind him—that is, they would seize him (which we find they did in v27 and 30).
11. From v32 we learn that the Jews were beating (or whipping) Paul which would have meant they bound him.
12. (b) The Jews would deliver him to the Romans—that is, the Romans would assume control over Paul.
13. Acts 21:31-33—"Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And then they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came near and took him and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done."

14. This is precisely why the other disciples urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem—he was bound and beaten.
15. (2) The appeal of the disciples, v12—"Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem."
16. Having heard what would happen to him in Jerusalem, the disciples begged him not to go to Jerusalem.
17. (3) The determination of Paul, v13—"Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'"
18. Paul had long since resolved that he would fulfill his calling, regardless of the cost—he was ready to die "for the name of the Lord Jesus."
19. That means, he was willing to die for Christ Himself out of love and gratitude for what He did for him.
20. Now, we know that while he was beaten and bound in Jerusalem he would not die in Jerusalem but be sent to Rome.
21. But nevertheless, Paul was ready to die if necessary—he had to go to Jerusalem to preach the gospel, regardless of what it may cost.
22. (4) The response of the disciples, v14—"So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.'"
23. That is, they resolved to trust in God's sovereign will—whatever God has willed to happen will happen.
24. If you remember, the Scriptures speak of God's will (or desire) in two ways—His secret and revealed will.
25. The secret will of God is unknown to us whereas the revealed will of God is made known in Scripture.
26. Thus, the disciples were willing to leave things with God, whose secret will is wise, good, and perfect.

IV. Observations

1. Here I want to return to the topic (or subject) of prophecy, and in particular the nature of NC prophecy.
2. About 25 or 30 years ago, there arose a new view of prophecy by various conservative Christians (Wayne Grudem, John Piper, Sam Storms).
3. Simply put—they believe the gift of prophecy is still given in the church today but in a different form.
4. They've basically redefined the nature and purpose of Biblical prophecy in order to believe it continues.
5. Wayne Grudem—"NT prophecy was not equal to Scripture in authority but was simply a very human—and sometimes partially mistaken—report of something the Holy Spirit brought to someone's mind."
6. Now let me remind you that historical Protestant theology maintains prophecy (along with the validating gift of miracle-working) has ceased.
7. This came about with the completion of the NT canon—the church now has all that she needs in Scripture.

8. The NT apostles and prophets form the foundation upon which the church is built (and foundations are laid only once).
9. Eph.2:20—"Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."
10. The prophets, both in the Old and New Testaments, were instruments through which Christ spoke to His people.
11. It's for this reason, everything that a true prophet said was from God and came with Divine authority.
12. And so, for the first two thousand years of the church, Christians have never made any distinction between Old and New Testament prophets.
13. They spoke on behalf of God and thus all that they said was to be received as the holy and infallible word of God.
14. Furthermore, both Old and New Testament prophets not only spoke the word of God but also foretold future events.
15. This was in part to validate their office as prophet, as no mere man is able to predict (foretell) future events.
16. Thus, all true prophets (OT/NT) were truth-tellers of the word of God as well as foretellers of future events.
17. This was true of every OT and NT prophet without exception—they always told the truth and foretold future events.
18. True prophets were always one-hundred percent accurate—they never got one prophecy wrong (period).
19. But according to men such as Wayne Grudem, John Piper, and Sam Storms, NT prophecy is different from OT prophecy.
20. Because NT prophets are hit-n-miss—that means, the best of them are only right about half of the time.
21. Keep in mind, I'm not here referring to false teachers like Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland who prophesy lies every week (these people are obviously not Christian).
22. But the problem with people like Grudem, Piper, and Storms, they are Christian and even claim to be Reformed (which they are not).
23. (a) Acts 21:11—here of course I refer to the prophecy of Agabus, a prophecy as we've seen came to pass.
24. And yet, we are told by these men, that Agabus' prophecy was partial wrong as most NT prophets were.
25. But is this the truth? As we've seen, the very things Agabus foretold came to pass (as he was a true prophet).
26. Further, notice how Agabus prefaces his prophecy, v11—"Thus says the Holy Spirit"—these were the words of the Spirit.
27. Do you really want to assert that the Holy Spirit misspoke? That He got the prophecy only fifty-percent correct?
28. Well, this is exactly what Wayne Grudem believes—he believed that Agabus was an example of NT prophecy.
29. NT prophecy is very different from OT prophecy in that it fails to bring with it the authority of OT prophecy.

30. Wayne Grudem—"The prophesying of the NT bears no resemblance to the messenger speeches in the Old Testament which were thought to possess absolute divine authority in the actual words spoken."
31. Wayne Grudem—"It seems, therefore, that the best solution is to say that Agabus had a 'revelation' from the Holy Spirit concerning what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem and gave a prophecy which included his own interpretation of this revelation and was therefore mistaken in the exact details."
32. (b) 1Cor.14:29—"Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge"—that is, judge whether or not what they said was true.
33. According to Grudem, this suggests that the prophets in Corinth spoke a mixture of truth and falsehood.
34. He asks the question—"If the prophets infallibly spoke the word of God, why was there a need to judge?"
35. But what he fails to realize is, the OT prophets were also judged to ensure they spoke in harmony to previous revelation.
36. Thus, Paul doesn't mean they were to judge between good and bad words, but between true and false prophets.
37. Remember brethren, the early churches were filled with false prophets who prophesied and foretold lies.
38. In fact, the Greek word rendered "judged" by the KJV and NKJV, literally means "to discriminate between people).
39. O.P. Robinson—"In the context of 1 Corinthians 14, Paul is not concerned with a new kind of prophecy in contrast with the old covenant variety. He is concerned instead about a new abundance of prophecy, which is exactly what Joel's words as cited at Pentecost anticipated. With all this abundance of words from the Lord, the church must be careful to see that all is done decently and in order, for God is not a God of disorder but of peace."
40. (c) 1Thess.5:19-22—"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good."
41. It's generally agreed that 1Thessalonians and 1Corinthians are likely the first two letters that Paul wrote (thus, this passage is to be understood in a similar way as 1Corinthians 14:29).
42. Remember, there had been prophets for the past 400 years, and now the early church is filled with them.
43. Thus, Paul exhorts the church at Thessalonica do to two things with respect to NT prophecy—don't quench the Spirit by despising prophecy but be sure to test the prophets to ensure they are true prophets.
44. Thus, Paul is not suggesting they were to expect good and bad from each prophet, but they were to expect good and bad prophets.
45. Turn back briefly to Deuteronomy 18—in vv15-19 we have a promise of Christ (the great prophet), and in vv20-22 we have mention of other prophets.
46. There is a sense in which Christ was the final Prophet, who completed the canon with His apostles and prophets (and they hear you they will hear Me).
47. But notice what God says about these future prophets—they must be tested by two things: first, they must speak the word of God accurately (v20), and second, they must foretell future events (vv21-22).

48. In other words, NT apostles and prophets, who will be an extension of the last and final Prophet, will speak without error.
49. And so, in the time we have remaining, I want to suggest three simple dangers of this new and novel view.
50. Danger 1—This view creates confusion in the church—you have prophets whose prophecies are partially false.
51. Hey brother—I believe I have the gift of prophecy, and by the Spirit I am giving you a word from God.
52. But—at least part of what I tell you could be false, so you may want to take what I say with a grain of salt.
53. Can you imagine having well-intended brothers and sisters prophesying over you with fallible prophecies.
54. To be fair, Wayne Grudem suggests that these supposed NT prophets refrain from prefacing their prophecies with "Thus saith the Lord."
55. But instead they are to say—"I believe that the Lord has given me a word for you or a prophecy about you."
56. Can you imagine any Biblical prophet speaking in that way? "I'm not sure, but I think God says this to you."
57. Since when has God ever spoken with uncertainty and confusion—when has He ever spoken in half-truths.
58. Now, brethren, I understand it's possible for a Christian to be impressed by a Scripture they want to share (for example, you know someone is going through something and you come upon a particular text that speaks into their situation).
59. Danger 2—This view casts doubt on previous revelation—if a true prophet can err than who are we to believe?
60. Dear brethren, God is a God of truth and thus, everything He ever says is always to be received as truth.
61. It makes little difference if God speaks Himself heaven or if He speaks through apostles and prophets (everything He says is truth).
62. Dear brethren, make no mistake about—this view that I'm addressing believes Agabus told a false prophecy.
63. Yes, they believe he was a true prophet but he was fallible, and thus, what he foretold in Acts 21 was untrue.
64. Well, let me ask you, if what Agabus said was not true, what other prophets in our NT spoke falsehoods.
65. If we can not trust what Agabus foretold, which prophets can we trust and how would anybody know.
66. Danger 3—This view slights the sufficiency of Scripture—this will always be an inevitable consequence of this view.
67. Yes, we have the sacred Scriptures, but if God is still speaking to us through new and fresh revelation, the tendency for most people is to extol the latter and slight the former.
68. And this is exactly what's happened in Charismatic circles—everyone wants a new and fresh word from God.
69. Brethren, let me make this as clear as I can—we don't need such fallible and uncertain prophecies when we have the sure word of God.