

Study of Acts 21
by Marc Gravelle
marc@bondservantsofYeshua.ca

Acts 21:1-40

After reading *Acts 21* I saw a theme throughout this chapter and I wonder **IF** you see it too. I will tell you what I saw at the end of this teaching and compare it to what you came up with after reading the beautiful words of this story.

Once Paul and his disciples left Miletus and said goodbye to the elders they sailed to *Coos*, and then to *Rhodes* and then to *Patara* and from there they sailed to *Phenecia* and from there they sailed to *Cypress* and into *Syria* and landed at *Tyre*. Once there, Scripture tells us that they stayed for seven days. It says that the disciples of Tyre warned Paul through the spirit **NOT** to go to Jerusalem. This is a very important bit of information; for we know that it was Elohim's will that Paul **GO** to Jerusalem, and yet, here we are told that these disciples said through the Spirit, that Paul should **NOT GO** to Jerusalem. Does that mean that the Holy Spirit was giving conflicting instructions to people, or that these disciples were listening to the wrong Spirit? The answer **IS NO**, of course **NOT**, these disciples were indeed told by the Holy Spirit of Elohim what was going to happen to Paul, **BUT** they judged the News from their own fleshly desires of **NOT** wanting to see Paul get arrested and more than likely maybe even be killed by the Jews and or the Romans. They **ASSUMED** that this warning from the Holy Spirit meant that Paul should **NOT** go to Jerusalem because they all loved Paul and did **NOT** want to lose him, therefore they warned him of the impending danger and tried to convince him **NOT TO GO** to Jerusalem.

Paul on the other hand was determined **TO DO** the Will of the Father and knowing that it was YHVH's Will for him **TO GO** to Jerusalem and suffer whatever he had to suffer for the Gospel of **TRUTH**, Paul was very willing to do so. What we have to learn from this **IS** that we are to have greater **DISCERNMENT** for our own life path. When we are made privy to something by the Holy Spirit of YHVH, we are to seek YHVH's Will as to what **TO DO** with that information, and **NOT RELY ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING**. Paul and these disciples received the very same message from the Holy Spirit of YHVH, **BUT** they interpreted **IT** differently. The disciples interpreted it from the flesh, from their own understanding and since going to Jerusalem would put Paul at great risk and danger, **THEY DID NOT** want anything to happen to him therefore they pleaded with Paul to stay with them and **NOT GO** to Jerusalem. Had Paul listened to the disciples he would have gone against Elohim's will and suffer the consequences of that act.

This reminds me of the story of the man of Elohim in *1Kings 13* where he prophesied against Jeroboam, against his man made altars and how they **WOULD BE** destroyed. That man was given very specific instructions by YHVH **NOT TO** eat or drink water, nor to return by the same way that he came. Once he prophesied what YHVH had told him to prophecy, he did indeed leave by a different route than the route that he came in on, however an old prophet from the area went after him and convinced or persuaded him through **LIES** that YHVH had told him that he was to come to old prophet's home and sit with him and have something to eat and drink, and the man of Elohim believed this old man's lies and went with the old prophet to his home to have something to eat. The end result **IS** that the man of Elohim believed what the old Prophet had told him and therefore he actually **DISOBEYED** the Commandments of Elohim. When he was at the old man's house the man

of Elohim heard the voice of Elohim rebuking him for his disobedience and when he went on his way from the old prophet's home he was killed by a lion.

This man of Elohim, received very specific instructions from Elohim of what he was to do, and instead of following YHVH's exact instructions he allowed the ways of the world to interfere with YHVH's instructions by believing **A LIE FROM A MAN** rather than obey the very specific instructions that YHVH had given him; in essence, he chose man's ways rather than the Word of Elohim. He believed **A LIE** that was told him by a man, and he paid the ultimate price for his **LACK OF DISCERNMENT** which led to his disobeying Elohim's specific instructions. The reason I brought that story up **IS** because it would have been just as easy for Paul to do the same thing as the man of Elohim did, to believe man's report rather than Elohim's instructions, and decide to follow men's advice rather than the very specific instructions that Paul received from the Holy Spirit; however, Paul chose to follow and obey the Father's Voice, the Father's instructions, and he was determined to go to Jerusalem and nothing, not even the pleading of his disciples were going to stop him.

We have to understand that **THIS**, my friends, **IS** a warning for all of us, a warning that we are to have good godly **DISCERNMENT** in **ALL** that we do. We are to ask YHVH to direct our paths and then **LISTEN** and **OBEY** what He tells us to do. *You might ask, **HOW** do we get this discernment?* I am glad you asked that question for YHVH has answered that very question in a multitude of places throughout Scripture. I have given you but a few *verses* out of many that are contained in YHVH's Scriptures, verses that establish how YHVH instructs us on **HOW** we are to hone and improve and or strengthen our **DISCERNMENT SKILLS**.

*Deuteronomy 5:29 O that there were such a heart in Israel, that they would fear Me, and **KEEP ALL My Commandments ALWAYS**, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

*Deuteronomy 6:25 And **IT SHALL BE OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, IF** we observe **TO DO ALL** these Commandments (Torah) before YHVH our Elohim, as **HE HAS COMMANDED US**.*

*Deuteronomy 10:12-13 And now, Israel, what does YHVH your Elohim **REQUIRE** of YOU, **BUT** to fear YHVH your Elohim, **TO WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS**, His Torah of Life, and to **LOVE** Him, and to serve YHVH your Elohim with **ALL YOUR HEART** and with **ALL YOUR SOUL**, To **KEEP** the Commandments of YHVH your Elohim, and His statutes, His Torah, which I command you this day for your good?*

*Isaiah 2:1-3 The Word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass **IN THE LAST DAYS**, (the days we are now living in) that the mountain of YHVH's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and **SHALL BE EXALTED** above the hills; and **ALL** nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come **ALL** of you, and let us go up to the mountain of YHVH, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob; and **HE WILL TEACH US OF HIS WAYS**, and **WE WILL WALK IN HIS PATHS**: for out of Zion **SHALL GO FORTH THE TORAH** (Law), which **IS THE WORD OF YHVH** from Jerusalem.*

*Isaiah 5:24 Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so **THEIR ROOT** (their foundation, what they rely on for Life) shall be **AS ROTTENNESS**, and their blossom*

SHALL GO UP AS DUST: WHY? *B*ecause they have cast away the Law, the Torah of YHVH of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel

Isaiah 42:21 YHVH is well pleased for His righteousness' sake (Deuteronomy 6:25); He will **MAGNIFY THE TORAH, THE LAW, and MAKE IT HONOURABLE**. That certainly doesn't sound like YHVH wants us to throw **ANY PART** of His marvellous Torah on the Junk heap.

Isaiah 45:5-7 I am YHVH, and there **IS** none else, there **IS NO** Elohim beside Me: I girded you, though you have **NOT** known Me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there **IS NONE BESIDE ME**. I am YHVH, and **THERE IS NONE ELSE. I FORM THE LIGHT, AND CREATE DARKNESS: I MAKE PEACE, AND I CREATE EVIL: I YHVH DO ALL THESE THINGS**.

Isaiah 48:18-19 O that you had hearkened to (shemah, heard, listened, understood, believed, followed, obeyed and **DID**) My Commandments! **THEN** your peace **WOULD HAVE BEEN** as a river, and your **RIGHTEOUSNESS** (Torah Deuteronomy 6:25) as the waves of the sea: Your seed also would have been as the sand, and the offspring of your bowels like the gravel thereof; his name, Israel, should **NOT** have been **CUT OFF NOR DESTROYED FROM BEFORE ME**.

Isaiah 51:1-7 Harken to Me, you that follow after **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, you that seek YHVH: look unto the **ROCK** from where you are hewed, and to the hole of the pit from where you were dug out of. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you: for I called Abraham alone, and I blessed him, and increased him. For YHVH **SHALL** comfort Tzion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He **WILL** make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of YHVH; joy and gladness **SHALL** be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. Harken, shemah unto Me, My people; and give ear unto Me, O My nation Israel: for the Torah, the Law **SHALL** proceed **FROM ME**, and I will make My judgment to rest for a Light of the people. My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth, and My arms **SHALL** judge the people; the isles **SHALL** wait upon Me, and on My arm **SHALL** they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens **SHALL VANISH** away like smoke, and the earth **SHALL WAX OLD** like a garment, and they that dwell therein **SHALL DIE** in like manner: **BUT MY SALVATION SHALL** be for ever, and My righteousness **SHALL NOT** be abolished. Harken, shemah unto Me, you that know **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, the people in whose heart **IS MY TORAH, MY LAW**; fear you **NOT** the reproach of men, neither be you afraid of their hatred for you.

Zechariah 3:7 Thus says YHVH of hosts; **IF** you will walk in My Ways, My Torah, and **IF** you will **KEEP** My Charge, My Torah, **THEN** you shall also judge My house, and you shall also **KEEP** My courts, and I YHVH will give you places to walk among these that stand by

Zechariah 7:8-14 And the Word of YHVH came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaks YHVH of hosts, saying, Execute **TRUE** judgment, and **SHOW MERCY** and **COMPASSION** every man to his brother: And do **NOT** oppress the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine **EVIL** against his brother in your heart. But Israel refused to hearken, to shemah, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should **NOT** hear, **NOT** shemah. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear, shemah the Torah (Law), and the Words which YHVH of hosts has **SENT** in His Spirit by the former prophets: therefore there

came great wrath from YHVH of hosts. Therefore **IT IS** come to pass, that as YHVH cried, and Israel **WOULD NOT HEAR; WOULD NOT SHEMAH**, so Israel cried, and I YHVH, would **NOT** hear, I would **NOT** shemah, says YHVH of hosts: But I, YHVH **SCATTERED** Israel with a whirlwind among **ALL** the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for **THEY** laid the pleasant land desolate.

*Malachi 4:4 Remember, Zachar, speak and act on behalf of the Torah, the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for **ALL** Israel, with the statutes and judgments contained therein.*

These are nowhere near the amount of verses that are in the Scriptures that contain the teachings that teach us how we are to improve and increase our own **DISCERNMENT SKILLS**, and as you can see, **ALL** of them refer us back to the inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions of YHVH, His Torah of Life, and the Torah of Life, the Word of Elohim made flesh **IS** our Messiah

Now let's go back to *Acts 21*. After the seven days or when Paul's work was complete, for the number seven speaks of completion, they went on their way, but before leaving, I want you to see that they knelt down and prayed. That is a habit that we should **ALL** cultivate.

It says that they went from Tyre to Ptolemais and stayed there one day and ministered to the disciples of the area. Now the next day those that were with Paul departed and went to Caesaria and entered the house of Philip. Philip was one of the seven that were appointed to take care of the widows along with Steven who was stoned to death later.

It says that Philip had four daughters who were virgins and who prophesied. Why do you think that fact is mentioned here in these verses? I believe that Philip **IS** a picture of Messiah, for the number four in Scripture speaks of the advent of Messiah for He came to us in the fourth millennium to teach the Gospel of our heavenly Father, His **TRUTH**, His Torah, and it also speaks of the world for the four Gospels are taught throughout the four corners of the world. In this story I believe that Philip's four virgin daughters are a picture of the spotless bride, a bride that is pure and chaste, a sinless Bride. Therefore I believe that this is telling me that when Messiah returns, He will go to the four corners of the earth to retrieve His Spotless pure bride, as **IS** prophesied throughout all of Scripture.

Now it says that they were in Caesarea many days and there came from Judea a prophet named Agabus. He too prophesied that Paul would be bound up and turned over to the Gentiles and again Paul's response was the same. He was going to do YHVH's will regardless of what happened or what was prophesied by Agabus to happen to him.

Unlike Balaam that kept coming back to YHVH to ask the same question over and over again hoping for a different answer that suited him better, Paul knew YHVH's will and he was absolutely determined to carry YHVH's Will out, because to Paul, obedience to YHVH's Commandments was of paramount importance to him. It says that Paul would **NOT** be persuaded by their warnings of impending danger, but he told them what was on his heart. *Verse 14 Let the will of YHVH be done.*

From Caesarea, they rode to Jerusalem. Those that were with Paul and the other disciples from Caesarea came to Jerusalem with them and they brought an old disciple from Cypress named Mnasson with whom they were to lodge with. The believers at Jerusalem were very glad to see them.

The next day Paul went to see James the leader of the believers and all the elders were present. Now please understand that this setting **IS IN** Jerusalem and that Paul was speaking to the leaders of **ALL** the believers. It is important for us to understand all these circumstances because of what **IS** about to happen.

Paul tells the elders of the Church, the Qahal about what YHVH has done through him among the gentiles and the elders glorified Elohim because of it. That indicates to me that they loved what Paul said.

Then they said to Paul *do you see Paul how many thousands of **JEWS** there are that **BELIEVE** the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah and who are **ZEALOUS FOR THE TORAH**. What Torah do you think they were zealous for? It is quite clear that they were zealous for the Torah of Moses. The Living Word of our heavenly Father. It is therefore very evident by the text that they **DID NOT THROW OUT** the Torah, because it says that they **WERE ZEALOUS FOR THE TORAH**. We can't even say that they believed only part of the Torah and tossed out the rest, for again it says that they were zealous for **ALL** of the Torah and **NOT** just part of it. Anyone that reads these verses and still insists that the Torah **IS** somehow partially or totally done away with **IS** sadly mistaken and forcing their own opinion into the text. The text quite clearly states that they were **ZEALOUS FOR THE TORAH, ALL OF THE TORAH**. Now based on this verse alone we can see that the Church fathers teaching that states that all or even part of the Torah has been done away with **IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE**, for a person **CANNOT PROFESS TO BE ZEALOUS** for something one minute and then toss it out the next.*

The leaders at Jerusalem go on to tell Paul that these Jews who believe and are zealous for the Torah, believe that you Paul *teach all the Jews that are among the gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they **OUGHT NOT** to be circumcised, nor circumcise their children and that you teach that they should **NOT** walk after the customs or instructions found in the Torah.*

It is very obvious by the text that the Jewish believers in Jerusalem thought that Paul taught **AGAINST**:

- 1) the Law or Torah of Moses,
- 2) taught against circumcision,
- 3) against the custom of obeying Moses.

Now what transpires next **IS** Paul's complete denial of **ALL** of these erroneous and false charges. First of all the elders instruct Paul to do what they say. They tell Paul, *we have four men here that have taken a vow, a Nazarite vow to separate themselves and dedicate themselves unto Elohim for a period of time and they have just completed their commitment.* The elders then tell Paul to purify himself with these men that have taken the Nazarite vow and pay their expenses that they may shave their heads and therefore **ALL** people **WILL KNOW** Paul, that those things, that **IS** the three things mentioned above are nothing and that you Paul actually **WALK ORDERLY** and that you **FOLLOW, KEEP, OBEY AND DO** the Torah of Moses.

Now let me ask you a question. **IF** these instructions given to Paul **WILL PROVE** that Paul does indeed **OBEY AND KEEP** the Torah of Moses, then **IF IT were true that Paul DID NOT KEEP** the Torah as our Christian brothers believe and teach, **THEN**, do you think that Paul **WOULD HAVE**

followed through with the elders' instructions of purifying himself with these four men that have just finished their Nazarite vows?

Well, unless Paul **IS** a complete fraud, we can rest assured that he would **NOT** have followed through with the elders' instructions **IF HE DID NOT AGREE WITH WHAT THEY WERE SAYING**. However we see as we read on, that Paul **DID INDEED WILLINGLY FOLLOW** the instructions of the Jerusalem leaders and elders and he was purified with those that had the vow upon them, **THUS PROVING BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT HE, PAUL, WAS INDEED BELIEVED, FOLLOWED AND OBEYED THE TORAH OF MOSES, PAUL WAS TORAH OBSERVANT**.

Let's read *Acts 24:14* for **MORE PROOF** of Paul's total dedication to obeying the Father's **TRUTH**, His Torah of Life, *But this I Paul CONFESS (affirm) unto you, that after the way which Judaism calls heresy, so I worship the Elohim of my fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW, THE TORAH OF MOSES AND IN THE PROPHETS*. There is no getting away from it, **ALL** of the Apostolic Scriptures **CONFIRM** that Paul was indeed Torah observant, He believed, followed, and obeyed the Torah of Moses.

Now for those who still are **NOT SURE** as to whether Paul was indeed Torah obedient, there are only two possible scenarios here:

- 1 – Paul is indeed telling the Truth and he does *Believe, Keep, Follow, Obey and Do* the Torah of Moses; **OR**
- 2 – Paul is a liar and a hypocrite and deceived all these people into believing that he was Torah obedient. **IF** that **IS** the case, **IF** Paul is a Liar and a fraud, **THEN** do you really want to follow a leader that will do anything to deceive people just so he can go on and preach his own message?

I **HOPE** that you can see that item 2 **IS ABSURD** in the same manner that the Christian Church's teaching about Paul changing even one **JOT OR TITTLE** of the inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions of YHVH, His inerrant Torah **IS ALSO ABSURD**.

Paul purified himself with these other men and he **SWORE** before YHVH, the leaders of the Way, and all the believers that were in Jerusalem, that he, Paul **WAS TORAH OBSERVANT**, he **SWORE** that he was totally Torah obedient and that he believed that **ALL** of the Law, the Torah of Moses was relevant for **EVERY** generation, until Messiah returns, and Paul did this **IN** the Temple, **IN** the house of YHVH. What an absolute **INSULT** to Paul's memory and his **LEGACY** when the church fathers teach that Paul has somehow done away with the Torah, the Law of Moses, **BECAUSE** they are either calling him a **LIAR** or a **HYPOCRITE**, and Scripture emphatically states that Paul **IS** neither of those things..

I want you to notice also that Paul did not teach against circumcision; what Paul taught against was the teaching or the belief, the man made doctrine of some of the Jews that believed in Messiah, those who were called Judaisers and who stated that a person **HAD TO BE CIRCUMCISED TO BE SAVED**. Paul never ever spoke against circumcision, for **IT IS** an everlasting Commandment of YHVH, and I have to remind you again what Paul said in *Acts 24:14* *But this, I Paul, confess unto you, that after the way which Judaism calls heresy, so I worship the Elohim of my fathers, the*

Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, **BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE TORAH, LAW AND IN THE PROPHETS**, and in the Torah, in Deuteronomy 4:2 YHVH has Commanded us **NOT** to add anything to **NOR** take anything away from His Commandments, and since Paul said that he was Torah obedient, **IT MEANS** that Paul believes that the Commandment of circumcision **IS** eternal also.

Paul cannot say that he believes **ALL THINGS** that are written in the Torah and the Prophets and then turn around and say that any part of the everlasting teaching and instructions of YHVH, His Torah of Life **IS** somehow done away with, **OR ELSE** it would make him **A LIAR and a FRAUD**. As I said above there **IS** just **NO** getting around it, after Paul's encounter with Messiah on the Road to Damascus, **PAUL WAS TORAH** obedient for the rest of His life here on earth.

Now we jump to *verse 27* where Paul **IS** arrested or taken into custody. It says that it was the Jews that were in Asia that had him arrested. I don't want you to be confused here, these Jews are **NOT** the same Jews that were spoken of above, where it was said of them, that they believed the testimony of Yeshua and were zealous for the Torah. This was a different group that believed followed and obeyed the man made oral Torah of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the man made religion of the day called Judaism.

It is ironic that these people, these religious zealots that believed, followed kept and obeyed their man made oral law, the traditions of men, the traditions of their fathers instead of the Pure Torah of Moses, are **ACCUSING** Paul of teaching against the Law of Moses, and that Paul had brought an uncircumcised person into the Temple, which was also a false accusation. These Jews wanted to discredit Paul in the eyes of the Jewish community and hopefully kill him in the process, and they beat him very badly before he was rescued by the quick action of the chief captain of the guard who had sent men to control the outburst of anger fueled by the hatred of these religious leaders for Paul and the people of the Way, the real Torah observant People. In *verse 55* it gives us a hint as to how badly Paul was beaten. It says that the soldiers had to hold him up while he climbed the stairs because of the violence that the crowd had done to him.

From here to the end of this chapter we see that Paul has asked the Captain for the opportunity to talk to his accusers and when we study *Acts 22* we will discover what Paul said. One thing that **IS** very significant **IS** that Paul spoke to them in the **HEBREW** tongue. There are many people that believe that the people of Apostle Paul's day, spoke Greek, while others believe that the language of the day was Aramaic. **IF THAT WERE THE CASE THEN** why would Paul address the crowd, the multitude, in the Hebrew language? I can tell you why, **IT IS BECAUSE** Hebrew was their every day language. Amen

Studying and keeping Torah together as a community.

Have a great Elohim blessed week and may Yahweh bless your every thought, and your every deed. Until we meet again, שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, Shalom Aleykem. Amen