

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 21

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, that after we had gotten from them,* etc.]

Which was with great difficulty, with many tears, and much wringing of hands: the word signifies that they were “plucked from” them; they clung about them, as husband and wife, and parents and children do; so strong were their affections; and their parting was like the parting of such near relations, or like the plucking of the flesh from the bones, or the drawing and separating one member from another; such is the cement of true Christian love:

and had launched; the vessel into the sea, from the port at Miletus:

we came with a straight course unto Coos; an island in the Aegean sea. Pomponius Mela ^{f1045} calls it Cos in Carlo; and so Pausanias ^{f1046} reckons it a city of the Carians and Lycians, mentioning it along with Rhodes. It was famous for being the birth place of Apelles the painter, and Hippocrates the physician. Pliny ^{f1047} places it in Caria, and calls it most noble, and says that it was fifteen miles distant from Halicarnassus, was a hundred miles in circumference, as many think, and was called Merope: and who elsewhere observes ^{f1048}, that it is reported that the silk worms are bred in this island, and that a sort of raiment called “bombycine” was first made here by Pamphila, the daughter of Latoius. And so Solinus ^{f1049} from Varro, testifies, that this island first gave a fine sort of clothing for the ornament of women: hence because silks or bombycines, from the silk worms, were first wove here by women, some think the island had its name, for **hwqm**, which signifies something spun, in (~~1108~~1 Kings 10:28, ~~4016~~2 Chronicles 1:16) it is by us translated “linen yarn”; but the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “from Coa”. This island was taken by Hercules, and Eurypylus, the king of it, was slain by him ^{f1050}. It is now in the hands of the Turks, by whom it is called Stancora; but by others Lango. When, and by whom the Gospel was first preached here, is not certain; it does not appear that the Apostle Paul stayed to preach it now: however, in the beginning of the “fourth” century there was a church here, and a bishop of it was present at the council of

Nice; and in the “fifth” century, a bishop of the church here assisted in the council of Chalcedon; and in the “sixth” century, a bishop of the same place was in the fifth synod at Constantinople^{f1051}. Hither Paul and his company came with a good wind, a prosperous gale, and nothing to hinder them; which perhaps is rather meant than a straight or direct line, in which they ran from Miletus to this place:

and the day following unto Rhodes, this is an island in Lycia, according to Mela^{f1052}, and had in it these three cities, Lindos, Camitos, and Jalysos: it is said of it^{f1053}, that the heavens are never so cloudy, but the sun is seen here in one part of the day, or another. R. Benjamin^{f1054} makes this to be three days’ sail from Samos; and says, he found four hundred Jews in it, and almost three hundred at Samos. It is asserted by several writers^{f1055}, that this island was once covered with the sea, and in process of time appeared out of it, and became dry land. The account which Pliny^{f1056} gives of it is, that

“it is most beautiful and free, and was in circumference a hundred and thirty miles; or, if Isidorus is rather to be credited, a hundred and three: the cities in it were Lindus, Camirus, Jalysus, now Rhodes: it is distant from Alexandria in Egypt five hundred seventy eight miles, as Isidorus reports; but according to Eratosthenes, four hundred sixty nine; and according to Mutianus, five hundred; and from Cyprus it was a hundred and sixty six;”

a place after mentioned, which the apostle left on the left hand, having sailed from Petara to Phoenicia. The same writer proceeds and adds,

“it was before called Ophiusa, Atria, Aethrea, Trinacria, Cotymbia, Paessa, Atabyria, from the king of it, afterwards Macria and Oloessa.” Jerom^{f1057} says of it, that

“it is the most noble of the islands Cyclades, and the first from the east, formerly called Ophiussa; in which was a city of the same name, famous for the brazen colossus, which was seventy cubits high: it was distant from the port of Asia twenty miles.”

This statue, called the colossus of the sun, was one of the seven wonders of the world, according to Pliny^{f1058}, and was made by Chares, a disciple of Lysippus, at the expense of King Demetrius: it was twelve years in making, and cost three hundred talents: it was seventy cubits high (as Jerom before says): it fell by an earthquake, after it had stood fifty or sixty years (some

say 1360); and as it lay along it was a miracle, few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb, and the fingers were bigger than most statues: and from this statue the Rhodians have been sometimes called Colossians; and some have fancied, that these are the persons the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to under that name. This island, and the city in it, were called Rhodes, as some think, from roses, with which it might abound, or because of the beautifulness of the place; and others, that it had its name from *dwry* “Jarod”, which, in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, signifies a serpent; and so it was called Ophiusa from the multitude of serpents in it ^{f1059}; though others say it took its name from Rhodia, a fair and beautiful maid beloved by Apollo. This island, in the “seventh” century, about the year 653, was taken by Mauvia, king of the Saracens, who sold the colossus, which lay on the ground ever since the earthquake, to a merchant, who is said to load nine hundred camels with the brass of it: it afterwards came into the hands of the Christians, and in the year 1522 was taken by Solyman the Turk, after a siege of six months, being betrayed by Andreas Meralius, a Portuguese knight ^{f1060}. When the Gospel was first preached here, and a church state formed, cannot be said; but in the beginning of the “fourth” century there was a bishop of this place in the council of Nice; and in the “fifth” century there was a church here, and it was a metropolitan; and in the “sixth” century a bishop of this place was in the fifth Roman synod under Symmachus; and in the “seventh” century a bishop of Rhodes assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople; and in the same century it was taken by the Saracenes, as before observed, when the church here was the metropolitan of the Cyclades: and yet in the “eighth” century, Leo, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod; and even though in the ninth century it was grievously harassed by the Saracens, yet its church state was not quite destroyed ^{f1061}.

And from thence to Patara; Beza’s ancient copy adds, “and Myra”: (see ~~4275~~ Acts 27:5) a city of Lycia: hence it is called by Herodotus ^{f1062}, and Pliny ^{f1063}, Patara of Lycia, and mentioned with Rhodes: it was famous for the temple of Apollo, which was in it, in which answers were given six months in the year, and were on equal credit with the oracle at Delphos ^{f1064}; the Arabic version here calls it Sparta. According to Pliny ^{f1065} it was first called Sataros. Some say it had its name Patara from Paturus, the son of Apollo; Ptolomy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, having enlarged it, called it after his sister’s name, Arsinoe. How long the apostle stayed in this place is not known, nor whether he preached here, nor if he did, what success he

had: in the “second” century, the statues of Jupiter and Apollo were in this, place: in the “fourth” century, there was a church here, and a bishop of it: and in the “sixth” century, a bishop of the church at Patara was in the fifth synod at Rome and Constantinople: and in the “eighth” century, Anastasius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod ^{f1066}.

Ver. 2. *And finding a ship sailing over unto Phoenicia*, etc.] For it seems that the ship they went aboard at Assos, (~~403~~ Acts 20:13) went no further, at least in the way the apostle was going, than Patara; but lighting on another ship, which was bound for Phoenicia, for the city of Tyre, which bordered on the land of Israel, and indeed originally belonged to Canaan; (see ~~411B~~ Acts 11:19).

we went aboard; the said ship:

and set forth; on the voyage.

Ver. 3. *Now when we had discovered Cyprus*, etc.] An island, as the Syriac version here calls it, which lay between Syria and Cilicia; (see Gill on “~~406~~ Acts 4:36”); and was, according to R. Benjamin ^{f1067}, four days sail from Rhodes, before mentioned:

we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria; that part of it called Phoenicia:

and landed at Tyre; the chief city of Phoenicia, famous for navigation and commerce: it stood about four furlongs distant from the shore, and was joined ^{f1068} to the continent by Alexander the great. The account Jerom ^{f1069} gives of it is this,

“Tyre, the metropolis of Phoenicia, in the tribe of Nephthalim, is near twenty miles from Caesarea Philippi; this was formerly an island, but made continent land by Alexander: — its chief excellency lies in shell fish and purple.”

It was a very ancient city, though it seems not so ancient as Sidon, from whence it was distant about two hundred furlongs. Herodotus ^{f1070} says, that in his time it had been inhabited two thousand three hundred years; Hiram was king of it in Solomon’s time; yea, mention is made of it in Joshua’s time, if the text in (~~623~~ Joshua 19:29) is rightly translated: some say it was built seventy six years before the destruction of Troy. It is to be distinguished into old Tyre, which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and

the island of Tyre, which was conquered by Alexander, and new Tyre annexed, by him to the continent. In the Hebrew language it is called רִצְוֹ, “Tzur”, or “Tzor”, which signifies a “rock”, being built on one; though some think it has its name from רִצְוֹהָ, “Tzehor”, which signifies “brightness”; it is now called Sur or Suri, and is quite desolate, being only a receptacle of thieves and robbers: though R. Benjamin says, in his time, new Tyre was a very good city, and had a port within it, into which ships go between two towers; and that there were in it four hundred Jews, and some of them skilful in the Talmud; — who further observes, that if anyone ascended the walls of new Tyre, he might see Tyre the crowning city, (²²³⁸Isaiah 23:8) which was a stone’s cast from the new; but if a man would go in a boat on the sea, he might see towers, streets, and palaces in the bottom ^{f1071}:

for there the ship was to unlade her burden; which she had taken in, in the ports where she had been, but where is not certain; for that she had been at Ephesus, and took in her lading there, as Grotius thinks, does not appear; since this was not the ship the apostle and his company sailed in from Miletus, but which they went aboard at Patara, (⁴²⁰Acts 21:1,2).

Ver. 4. *And finding disciples*, etc.] At Tyre, for the Gospel had been preached in Phoenicia by the ministers of the word, who were scattered by the persecution raised at the death of Stephen; and here were brethren, such as had believed in Christ, embraced and professed his Gospel, and were baptized in his name; (see ⁴¹¹⁹Acts 11:19, 15:3) and who also had extraordinary gifts, as appears by what follows; and there was no doubt a Gospel church founded in this place, though who presided over it in the first century, we have no account; in the “second” century there was a church here, and Cassius was bishop of it ^{f1072}; in the “third” century there were some martyrs in this place, who suffered under Dioclesian, and bore innumerable stripes with great courage and constancy, and after that fought with beasts, as bears, leopards, boars, and bulls, and at the same time Tyrannio, bishop of this church, also suffered martyrdom ^{f1073}; in the “fourth” century there was a synod at Tyre under Constantine, to which he wrote a letter ^{f1074}. There was a bishop of this church present at the council of Nice, in the times of the said emperor; in this age Paulinus and Dorotheus were bishops of Tyre; in the “fifth” century Irenaeus was bishop of Tyre, and then it was the metropolitan of Phoenicia; and in the “sixth” century, there was a bishop of the same church present at the fifth council

of Rome and Constantinople^{f1075}. Of the bishops of Tyre in the several centuries, the learned Reland^{f1076} gives a more particular account; according to him, Cassius, bishop of this church, was in the synod held at Caesarea, about the year 198. Paulinus, another bishop of Tyre, was in another council held at the same place, in the year 318. Zeno subscribed in the council of Nice, in the year 325, the first among the bishops of Phoenicia; Vitalis was in the council at Sardica, in the year 347. Uranius subscribed in the council held at Seleucia by the Semiarians, in the year 359; another Zeno bishop of this church was present at the second council at Constantinople, in the year 381; and mention is made of Photius bishop of Tyre, in the acts of the Chalcedon council, held in the year 451, as is also Eusebius in the acts of the council at Constantinople, in the year 553:

we tarried there seven days; either waiting for a ship to proceed on further; or in choice, to enjoy the conversation of the disciples, which was very delightful, and to confirm them in the faith:

who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem; not that the Spirit of God in these persons contradicted his own impulse in the apostle, by which he was moved to go to Jerusalem, (see ~~Acts~~ Acts 20:22). The sense is, that these disciples, by the spirit of prophecy, knew that if the apostle went to Jerusalem, many evil things would befall him; wherefore of their own spirit, and out of love to him, they advise him not to go.

Ver. 5. *And when we had accomplished those days*, etc.] The seven days before mentioned:

we departed and went our way; from their quarters where they lodged, or from some one house of the disciples, where they met, and had conversed together:

and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; that is, the disciples, even all of them that dwelt in that city, with their whole families, their wives and children, accompanied the apostle and those that were with him, through the streets of the city of Tyre, till they came out of it to the shore, where lay the ship they were to go aboard; and which was a mark of their affection and respect to the apostle, as well as a token of their public spirit, that they were not ashamed of Christ and his ministers, nor of their profession of the Gospel:

and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed; which was agreeably to the custom of the Jews, who had, as Tertullian observes ^{f1077}, their “orationes litterales”, their prayers at the sea shore; (see Gill on “~~4463~~ Acts 16:13”).

Ver. 6. *And when we had taken our leave one of another*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy reads, “having prayed, we saluted one another”; with a kiss, as in (~~4467~~ Acts 20:37) and so parted:

we took ship; or went aboard the ship,

and they returned home again; to their own houses, as the Syriac version renders it; for by “their own”, as it is in the Greek text, cannot be meant their families, their wives, and children, for these were along with them, but their habitations; (see ~~4562~~ John 16:32, 19:27).

Ver. 7. *And when we had finished our course from Tyre*, etc.] Or sailed from thence,

we came to Ptolemais: the Syriac version calls it “Aco” or “Acu”: and the Arabic version, “Aco”; and Ptolemais, according to Pliny ^{f1078} and Harpocratian ^{f1079}, was called Ace. Frequent mention is made of Aco in the Jewish writings, and which according to them was a sea port, for they speak of **wk [d hl mn**, “the port of Aco” ^{f1080}, and of **wk [d ypyk**, “the banks of Aco” ^{f1081}, or its rocks: it was upon the borders of the land of Israel, and in the tribe of Asher to the north of it; part of it they say was without the land, and part of it within ^{f1082}: according to R. Benjamin, it was one day’s sail from Tyre, and who also says, it was upon the borders of Asher, and had a very spacious port ^{f1083}; it is said to be about two and thirty miles from Tyre; between that and Tyre, the shore was full of heaps of sand, from whence the sand that glass is made of was fetched; it is mentioned with Tyre, Sidon, and Galilee, in:

“And said, They of Ptolemais, and of Tyrus, and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles, are assembled together against us to consume us.” (1 Maccabees 5:15)

it had the mountainous part of Galilee on the east, the ladder of Tyre on the north, and Mount Carmel on the south, and thus it is described by Josephus ^{f1084}:

“Ptolemais is a city of Galilee on the sea coast, built in a large champaign country, but is surrounded with mountains, on the east

with the mountains of Galilee, sixty furlongs off; on the south with Carmel, distant a hundred and twenty furlongs; on the north with a very high mountain called the Climax, or ladder of the Tyrians, which is a hundred furlongs from it; two miles from the city runs a very small river called Beleus, near which is the sepulchre of Memnon, taking up the space of an hundred cubits, and is worthy of admiration; it is round and hollow (i.e. the river), casting up glassy sand, which ships in great numbers come and take up, and the place is filled up again.”

The account Jerom^{f1085} gives of it is,

“Ptolemais, a maritime city in Judea, near Mount Carmel, which was formerly called so from one Ptolomy;”

from Ptolomy king of Egypt: it was called Ace or Aco, from its being a city of merchandise; though some say it was so called from Hercules being healed of the bite of a serpent, by an herb which grew near the river Beleus. It is now called St. John de Acra or Acri:

and saluted the brethren; that were at Ptolemais or Aco; for the Gospel had been preached here with success; some had believed and professed it, and very likely were in a church state: for there was a church here in the “second” century, and Clarus was bishop of it; and in the beginning of the “fourth” century, there was a bishop present in the synod at Nice; and in the “fifth” century there was a church here; in the time of Arcadius, the Emperor Antiochus was bishop of Ptolemais, a very eloquent man, called therefore by some Chrysostom; in the “sixth” century there was a bishop of this church, who assisted at the synod held both at Rome and Constantinople^{f1086}. The bishops of this church are reckoned up, as Reland^{f1087} says, as he found them thus; Clarus, who was in the council at Caesarea, held in the year 198; Aeneas, who was in the council at Nice, in the year 325, and in another at Antioch, in the year 341; Nectabus, who subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, held in the year 381; Paulus, who was present in the Chalcedon council in the year 451: and Joannes, who was in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536: and perhaps these brethren might be Jews, since those who first preached the Gospel in Phoenicia preached only to Jews; and certain it is that there were many in this place; we often read of Jewish doctors here, as R. Tanchum the son of R. Chaja a man of Caphar Aco^{f1088}, and R. Simeon ben Judah a man of Caphar Aco^{f1089}, and R. Aba of Aco^{f1090}, and R. Judah ben Gamdah^{f1091};

and in R. Benjamin's time, there were about two hundred Jews in this place ^{f1092}: these brethren Paul and his company visited, and saluted them;

and abode with them one day; conferring together about spiritual things, and employing their time, no doubt, in religious exercises.

Ver. 8. *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed*, etc.] From Ptolemais, as Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Timotheus, Tychicus, Trophimus, and Luke, the writer of this history; (see ~~480~~ Acts 20:4)

and came unto Caesarea; not Caesarea Philippi, mentioned in (~~463~~ Matthew 16:13) but that Caesarea which was formerly called Strato's tower, and was a very good sea port; (see ~~480~~ Acts 8:40, 9:30, 10:1, 18:22).

and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist; not a writer of a Gospel, but a preacher of the Gospel, and perhaps not an ordinary one, but was one of those spoken of in (~~481~~ Ephesians 4:11) which was an office inferior to an apostle, and yet above an ordinary pastor and teacher; this man, very likely, was the same that taught in Samaria, and baptized the eunuch, and who after that settled at Caesarea; (see ~~480~~ Acts 8:40).

which was one of the seven; of the seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, (~~465~~ Acts 6:5) and abode with him; so long as they continued at Caesarea.

Ver. 9. *And the same man had four daughters*, etc.] So that he was a married man, which may be observed against the Papists, who forbid marriage to ecclesiastics: and they were,

virgins: not under any vow of virginity, but they had not as yet changed their state of life, and were pure and incorrupt:

which did prophesy; not explain and interpret Scripture, or preach in public assemblies; for these were not allowed women, neither in the Jewish synagogues, nor in Christian assemblies; but they were endowed with a gift of foretelling future events, as was promised such should have in Gospel times, (~~402~~ Joel 2:28).

Ver. 10. *And as we tarried there many days*, etc.] How many days is not said, it could not be very many, if the apostle got to Jerusalem by Pentecost, as he desired, (~~406~~ Acts 20:6,15,16, 21:4,7)

there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus; of whom mention is made in (^{<41128>}Acts 11:28) who is there said to come from Jerusalem, to Antioch, and here from Judea to Caesarea; he had been many years going about from place to place prophesying, for between that and this account must be a space of about sixteen or seventeen years.

Ver. 11. *And when he was come unto us*, etc.] In Philip's house:

he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet; and so prophesied by types and symbols, and gestures, as the prophets of old did; as Isaiah in (^{<2311>}Isaiah 20:2,3) and Jeremiah in (^{<24111>}Jeremiah 13:1-9, 27:2,3), and Ezekiel in (^{<2111>}Ezekiel 4:1-13, 12:3,7) and Hosea in (^{<2111>}Hosea 1:2,3), some understand this of his binding Paul's hands and feet, but it seems rather to design his own:

and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost; who was in Agabus, and spoke by him, and foretold some things to come to pass; and which did come to pass, and is a proof of the foreknowledge, and so of the deity of the blessed Spirit:

so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle; meaning Paul, and who accordingly was bound in like manner, a very little time after this; (see ^{<42133>}Acts 21:33)

and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles; the Romans, as they afterwards did.

Ver. 12. *And when we heard these things*, etc.] These prophecies, concerning the binding of the apostle by the Jews, and the delivery of him to the Romans, and saw the symbolical representations of these things:

both we; the companions of the apostle, Luke and the rest:

and they of that place; of Caesarea, Philip and his daughters, and the disciples that lived there:

besought him not to go up to Jerusalem; which was an instance of weakness in them, though an expression of their affection to the apostle; in the disciples of Caesarea it might arise from pure love to him, and a concern for his safety, and the continuance of his useful life; and in his companions it might be owing partly to their sincere love to him, and partly to the fear of danger which they themselves might conclude they should be

exposed to; and this request was made with tears, as is evident from what follows.

Ver. 13. *Then Paul answered, what mean ye to weep*, etc.] For they were crying about him, both his companions and the disciples of Caesarea; which affected him, and gave him great uneasiness, even more than the prophecies of Agabus did:

and to break my heart? for though he was resolved to go to Jerusalem, and nothing could move him from it, his heart was firm as a rock; there was no shaking him, or making impressions upon him that way; yet their tears and importunity greatly afflicted him, and the more because he could by no means comply with their request:

for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus; for as yet, he knew not but he should die there; it was revealed to him that he should be bound there, but it was not yet suggested to him where he should suffer death, whether there or elsewhere; and since he knew not but it might be there, he was ready for it; bonds were so far from distressing his mind, and deterring him from his intended journey, that death itself could not do it; which showed great intrepidity, courage, and firmness of mind.

Ver. 14. *And when he would not be persuaded*, etc.] But was determined to go to Jerusalem at all events:

we ceased; both from tears and arguments:

saying, the will of the Lord be done; which was right, and to which they ought to have submitted, and acquiesced in at first, without using any arguments to have dissuaded the apostle from going to Jerusalem; since they might have concluded from Agabus's prophecy, that it was the will of the Lord he should go thither, and be bound; and the revelation was made to him, not to deter him from it, and to take methods for his own safety, which his friends would have put him upon, but to acquaint him with the will of God, and make him still more certain of it, and to prepare for it, and this effect it had upon him. This will of the Lord, is not the will of the Lord revealed in his word, either respecting the salvation, sanctification, and final perseverance of the saints, which is always accomplished; "for who hath resisted his will", or can resist it, so as to frustrate his designs, or hinder these things taking place? or the duty which is to be performed by them, the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God, which every gracious

soul desires may be perfectly done, even as it is done in heaven: but here the secret will of God relating to the events of providence is designed, and which is the rule of all the divine proceedings; and though it is unknown to men, until facts make it appear, it is ever fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to the revealed will of God; and should be continually thought of; and everything that is determined, or attempted to be done, should be resolved upon, and undertaken in submission to it; and whilst it is performing should be patiently bore, even in things not so agreeable to the minds and wills of men: it becomes saints to be still and acquiesce in it, when things are not so well with them in spiritual affairs as to be wished for; and when their worldly circumstances are not so thriving and flourishing; yea, though they may be attended with much poverty and meanness, and be reduced to so low a condition as Job was; as also when they part with their near and dear friends and relations by death, and with the ministers of the Gospel, who have been their spiritual fathers, instructors, and comforters; and even when they are called to suffer in the severest manner, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel: not that they are to be indolent, unconcerned, and unaffected, with things of this nature; nor should they neglect the means of having things otherwise with them; but it becomes them to exercise patience, faith, and courage, under every dispensation of providence; as knowing that what is done by the Lord is done well and wisely, and is for the good of them; and when the people of God are helped, to act such a part, they are the most comfortable in themselves, and to all that are about them; such a spirit and disposition is very commendable, and what makes men like to Christ, who in the most disagreeable circumstances submitted his will to his Father's. Beza's ancient copy reads, "the will of God"; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 15. *And after those days we took up our carriages*, etc.] Or prepared themselves, both for their journey, and for whatever trials and exercises they were to meet with; they took up their bundles, which hitherto were brought by sea, and now put them upon beasts, going by land from Caesarea:

and went up to Jerusalem; which stood on higher ground, and was, as Josephus^{f1093} says, six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles distant.

Ver. 16. *There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea*, etc.] Members of the church at Caesarea; of the church here, (see Gill on

“~~4108~~ Acts 10:48”). To which may be added the account of the pastors or bishops of this church, as given by Reland ^{f1094}; Theophilus, who was in the council held at Caesarea, in the year 198; Agricola, who subscribed in the council at Ancyra, in the year 314; though some, he says, do not acknowledge this Agricola, but give the order of them after Theophilus thus; Theoctistus, Domnus, Theotecnus, Agapius, Eusebius; which last was in the council at Palestine, in the year 318, and in the council at Nice, in the year 325. Acacius succeeded him, and was in a little council at Seleucia, in the year 359, and in another at Antioch, in the year 363. Thalassius subscribed in the council at Constantinople, in the year 381. Eulogius, or perhaps Euzoius, was in the council at Diospolis, in the year 415. Glyco, bishop of this church, subscribed by Zozimus in the Chalcedon council, held in the year 451. Mention is made of Irenaeus, who presided over it in the acts of the same council; and Elias, another bishop of it, subscribed in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536; and there is an account of John bishop of this church, in the acts of the council at Constantinople, in the year 553.

And brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus; the name of Mnason is Greek; there was one of this name among the disciples of Aristotle, who was of Phoecea, or Phocis, a place in Greece ^{f1095}; and another called Mnaseas, which seems to be the same whom Ammonius ^{f1096} makes mention of; and we frequently read of Mnaseas, the name of an author in Greek writers, and Menestheus, in:

“Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the coronation of king Ptolemeus Philometor, Antiochus, understanding him not to be well affected to his affairs, provided for his own safety: whereupon he came to Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem:” (2 Maccabees 4:21)

all which are so called from remembrance, and signify one that has a memory, is mindful of, and remembers things; so Zachariah with the Jews, is a name that is taken from remembrance, as this: some copies read Jasson, for Mnason. This Mnason was an

old disciple; not of Aristotle, or of his sect of philosophers, or any other, but of Jesus Christ; probably he might have seen Christ in the flesh, and he is by some thought to be one of the seventy disciples; or at least he might be one of those who became disciples and followers of Christ; through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in that island, (~~4110~~ Acts 13:4) though that

seems scarcely long enough ago, being but fifteen years before this time, to denominate him an old disciple:

with whom we should lodge; when come to Jerusalem; for though he was of the island of Cyprus, as Barnabas was, (~~4085~~ Acts 4:36), yet he dwelt at Jerusalem; and if he was one of the seventy disciples, it should seem that he had not sold his house at Jerusalem, when others did; nor did all that had houses and land, nor were they obliged to do it; or he might have bought or hired one since; however, he had one at Jerusalem, and here the apostle and his company were fixed to lodge, during their stay there; and there was the more reason to provide for a lodging at this time, because of the feast of Pentecost, when the city was full of people: unless this is to be understood of any place by the way, where they should lodge; since Beza's ancient copy adds, "and coming to a certain village, we were with one Mnason".

Ver. 17. *And when we were come to Jerusalem*, etc.] That is, Paul and his companions, attended with the disciples of Caesarea, and Mnason the old disciple with them:

the brethren received us gladly; readily, willingly, and cheerfully; they did not treat them with an air of coldness and indifference, or look shy on them, or show any resentment to them, notwithstanding the various reports which had been brought them, concerning the ministry of the apostle among the Gentiles.

Ver. 18. *And the day following*, etc.] After they were come into Jerusalem:

Paul went in with us to James; not the son of Zebedee and brother of John, for he was killed by Herod some years ago; but James the son of Alphaeus, and brother of our Lord, who presided over this church; it seems there were no other apostles now at Jerusalem, but they were all dispersed abroad that were living, preaching the Gospel in the several parts of the world: Paul took the first opportunity Of paying a visit to James, very likely at his own house, to give him an account of his success among the Gentiles, and to know the state of the church at Jerusalem, and confer with him about what might be most proper and serviceable to promote the interest of Christ; and he took with him those who had been companions with him in his travels, partly to show respect to James, and partly to be witnesses of what he should relate unto him:

and all the elders were present: by whom are meant, not the ancient private members of the church, but the ministers of the word in this church: who hearing of the coming of the apostle, and of his visit to James, assembled together to see him, and converse with him.

Ver. 19. *And when he had saluted them,* etc.] James and the elders with him; which was either done by a kiss, as the Arabic version adds; or by asking of their health, and wishing a continuance of it, and all prosperity to attend them: the Ethiopic version reads,

they saluted him; and no doubt the salutations were reciprocal:

he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry; it is very likely that this account begins where that ends, which he had delivered in the presence of James, and others, some years ago, (⁴¹⁵¹²Acts 15:12) and takes in all his travels and ministry, and the success of it; not only in Syria, Cilicia, and Lycaonia, after he had set out from Antioch again, but in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia; as at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and elsewhere: he declared, what multitudes of souls were converted, and what numbers of churches were planted; and this he ascribes not to himself, but to the power and grace of God, which had attended his ministry; he was only an instrument, God was the efficient, and ought to have the glory.

Ver. 20. *And when they heard it,* etc.] The narrative of the wonderful spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the numerous conversions of them:

they glorified the Lord; or “God”, as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read; as Paul ascribed all to God, so they give the glory of it to him, and in this they were both agreed:

and said unto him; perhaps James in the name of them all, and as their mouth:

thou seest, brother; for so he was to James, both as a believer, and a minister of the word, and as an apostle:

how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; there were many thousands converted at Jerusalem upon the first preaching of the Gospel, after Christ’s ascension; (see ⁴⁴¹¹¹Acts 2:41,47, 4:4,14, 6:7) and the number might be much increased since; though it may be, that reference is had not

only to the number of the members of the church at Jerusalem, but to all the believing Jews in Judea, who were now come up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of Pentecost; since it is in the Greek, “how many myriads there are”, and one myriad contains ten thousand:

and they are all zealous of the law; of the law of Moses, of the ceremonial law, as Paul might see by their being at Jerusalem, to keep this feast; for though they believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, yet they had not light enough to see, that he was the sum and substance of all the ceremonies of the law, and that they all ended in him; and therefore were zealous in the observance of them, and could not bear to hear of their abrogation.

Ver. 21. *And they are informed of thee*, etc.] By persons that came from the several parts of the Gentile world, where the apostle had been preaching; and by letters which came from the Jews in those parts, who were no friends to the apostle’s ministry:

that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses: or “apostatize from Moses”; that is, the law of Moses; that he taught the Gentiles not to regard the rituals of the law of Moses gave them no uneasiness; but that he should teach the Jews that were scattered among the Gentiles, and as many of them that believed in Christ, to disregard and drop the observance of them, who had been always brought up in them, this they could not bear; and that the apostle so taught, they had credible information: particularly,

saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children; though this does not appear; it is true the apostle taught that circumcision was abolished, and that it was nothing; yea, that to submit to it as necessary to salvation, was hurtful and pernicious; but as a thing indifferent, he allowed of it among weak brethren; and in condescension to their weakness, did administer it himself; in which he became a Jew to the Jew, that he might gain some:

neither to walk after the customs; either of the law of Moses, meaning other rites there enjoined, besides circumcision; or of their fathers, and their country, the traditions of the elders, which as yet they had not got clear of; the disuse of old customs is not easily brought about, or it is not easy to bring persons off of them.

Ver. 22. *What is it therefore?* etc.] Is it true or not? or what must be done in this case? what method must be taken to remove these objections, and reconcile the minds of the people? the multitude must needs come together; either the whole church at Jerusalem, or the great confluence of people, even of believing Jews, that were come from all parts thither; there is no hindering of their coming together, to see the apostle, and to hear what he has to say to the objections against him, and complaints of him;

for they will hear that thou art come: this can never be kept a secret, and as soon as they hear it, they will flock in great numbers; they will come open mouthed, and be loud in their complaints, and it will be difficult to pacify them; there is danger in the case, the consequence may be bad; and therefore something must be done, to remove the opinion they had formed of the apostle, and the prejudice they had entertained against him; and therefore what follows is advised to.

Ver. 23. *Do therefore this that we say to thee,* etc.] This is said not as commanding, but as advising; and not to what was a duty, and necessary to be done as such, but as a point of prudence:

we have four men which have a vow on them; that is, there were four men who were of the church at Jerusalem, believers in Christ, but weak ones, who were zealous of the law, and bigots to it, and who had voluntarily vowed a vow of the Nazarites; (see ^{<0406>}Numbers 6:2).

Ver. 24. *Them take, and purify, thyself with them,* etc.] That is, join thyself to them, make one of their number, and attend to the rules prescribed to a Nazarite, who is to be holy to the Lord; and in case of any ceremonial uncleanness, is to be cleansed, or purified in the manner directed, (^{<0405>}Numbers 6:5,8,9).

And be at charges with them; join with them in the expense, for the offerings to be made at the end of the vows, or when the days of separation are fulfilled, (^{<0403>}Numbers 6:13-15).

That they may shave their heads; according to the law in (^{<0408>}Numbers 6:18). This was done in **պրշնհ տկլ**, the chamber of the Nazarites ^{f1097}; for there the Nazarites boiled their peace offerings, and shaved their hair, and put it under the pot, in the fire that was under it: Maimonides says ^{f1098},

“if he shaved in the city it was excusable; but whether he shaved in the city or in the sanctuary, under the pot his hair must be cast; and he did not shave until the door of the court was opened, as it is said, “at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation”, (⁴⁰¹⁶⁸Numbers 6:18) not that he shaved over against the door, for that would be a contempt of the sanctuary.”

Moreover, it may be observed, that a person who had not made a vow, or fulfilled a Nazariteship himself, which was the apostle’s case, yet he might join in bearing the expenses of others, at the time of their shaving and cleansing: for so run the Jewish canons ^{f1099};

“he that says, upon me be the shaving of a Nazarite, he is bound to bring the offerings of shaving for purification, and he may offer them by the hand of what Nazarite he pleases; he that says, upon me be half the offerings of a Nazarite, or if he says, upon me be half the shaving of a Nazarite, he brings half the offerings by what Nazarite he will, and that Nazarite perfects his offerings out of that which is his.”

That all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing; that there is no truth in them; that they are mere lies and calumnies; as they will easily judge by this single instance, in complying with the law concerning a Nazarite’s vow:

but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the law; and therefore can never be thought to teach others to walk disorderly, or to neglect the law, the rites and customs of it.

Ver. 25. *As touching the Gentiles which believe*, etc.] This is said, to show that the Jews were not offended with Paul, for not insisting upon the circumcision of the believing Gentiles, and their conformity to the ceremonial law; and to remove an objection that Paul might make, that should he comply with this advice, and the believing Gentiles should hear of it, it might be a stumblingblock and a snare to them; who by his example, might think themselves obliged to regard the law: Beza’s ancient copy adds, “they have nothing to say to thee”; for as it follows,

we have written and concluded; some years ago, at a meeting of the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, when Paul was present; and of which he reminds him, to prevent any objection of this kind; where it was unanimously agreed on and determined,

that they observe no such things; as circumcision, and other rites and customs of the law, and particularly the vow of the Nazarite, which Gentiles are free from: hence it is said ^{f1100}, “Gentiles have no Nazariteship;”

upon which one of the commentators says ^{f1101}, if a Gentile vows Nazariteship, the law of the Nazarite does not fall upon him, he is not obliged to it:

save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, etc. (see ~~<4459>~~ Acts 15:19,20,28,29).

Ver. 26. *Then Paul took the men*, etc.] The four men that had the vow on them; he joined himself to them, and put himself in the same condition, and under a like vow: this he did, not as what he thought himself bound to do in obedience to the law, and much less as necessary to salvation; but to satisfy weak minds, and remove their prejudices, that he might gain them, and be useful to them; and in such a case he would very easily and readily condescend; but when such like things were insisted upon as points of duty, and especially when urged as necessary to salvation, no one more stiffly opposed them:

and the next day purifying himself with them; that is, not separating himself along with them, from what they were obliged by the vow of the Nazarite, as from drinking of wine and shaving, and from everything that was unclean by the law; for this was now done, but cleansing himself afterwards with them: he

entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of the purification: the sense is, that when the days of separation were fulfilled, which the four men had vowed, as everyone might vow what time he pleased, he went to the priests in the temple, to signify it to them, that the time of their purification was expiring:

until that an offering should be offered for everyone of them; as the law directs in (⁰⁴⁶³Numbers 6:13-20) when he proposed to pay the charges of it, or at least part of it.

Ver. 27. *And when the seven days were almost ended*, etc.] The Syriac version renders it, “when the seventh day was come”; from the time that Paul came to Jerusalem: some understand this of the seven weeks from the passover to Pentecost, and that it was when they were almost ended, and

the day of Pentecost was at hand, for which Paul came up to Jerusalem; but rather, the seven days of purification of the Nazarites are meant:

the Jews which were of Asia; and it may be chiefly of Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia; who knew Paul there, and were his implacable enemies; for this is to be understood of the unbelieving Jews, who were come up to the feast of Pentecost:

when they saw him in the temple; where he was come to bring his offering, on account of his vow:

stirred up all the people; against the apostle; incensed them with stories about him, how that he was an opposer of Moses and his laws, and was now defiling the temple, by bringing in Heathens into it:

and laid hands on him; in a violent manner, and dragged him out of the temple.

Ver. 28. *Crying out, men of Israel, help*, etc.] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “help us”; to hold Paul, on whom they had laid their hands, and to assist in beating him: but why such an outcry for help against a single man, and he but little of stature, and weak in body, and so easily held and overpowered? it may be they chose to engage others with them, to give the greater countenance to their actions, and for their own security and protection, should they be opposed or called to an account;

this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people; the people of the Jews, saying that they were not the only people of God; that God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; that God had chosen, and called, and saved some of the one, as well as of the other; that the Gentiles shared in the favour of God, and the blessings of the Messiah; that the Gospel was to be preached to them, and a people taken out of them for his glory; and that the people of the Jews would be rejected for their unbelief and impenitence, and in a little time utterly destroyed as a nation; which, and the like, these Asiatic Jews interpreted as speaking against them; whereas no man had a stronger natural affection for his countrymen, or a more eager and importunate desire for their spiritual and eternal welfare, than the apostle had;

and the law; the law of Moses, both moral and ceremonial; for they not only were displeased with him for asserting the abrogation of the latter, but traduced him as an enemy to the former; representing him as an

Antinomian, because he denied justification to be by the works of the law, and asserted Christ to be the end of the law for righteousness; whereas he was so far from making void the law hereby, that he established it, and secured the rights and honours of it; yea, they went further, and represented him as a libertine, saying, let us do evil that good may come; but this was all calumny:

and this place: meaning the temple, in which they then were; the Alexandrian copy reads, “this holy place”; as it is expressed in a following clause; the reason of this charge was, because that he had taught, that the sacrifices of God were the sacrifices of prayer and of praise, and that these were to be offered up in every place; and that divine service and religious worship were not tied to the temple at Jerusalem, but that, agreeably to the doctrine of Christ, men might worship the Father anywhere, and lift up holy hands in every place; and perhaps he might have asserted, that the temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed in a short time, as Christ had predicted:

and further, brought Greeks also unto the temple, and hath polluted this holy place; that part of the temple, which they supposed Paul had brought Greeks or Gentiles into, could not be the most holy place, for into that only the high priest went, once a year; nor that part of the holy place called the court of the priests, for into that only priests went, and other Israelites were not admitted, unless on some particular occasions; as to lay hands on the sacrifice, for the slaying of it, or waving some part of it^{f1102}; but it must be either the court of the Israelites, or the court of the women, into which Paul, with the four men that had the vow, entered; and as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, it was the latter; for in, the south east of this court was the Nazarite’s chamber, in which they boiled their peace offerings, shaved their heads, and put the hair under the pot^{f1103}: now though Gentiles might come into the mountain of the house, which was all the outmost circumambient space within the wall, which encompassed the whole area, yet they might not come into any of these courts, no, nor even into what they call the “Chel”; for they say, that the Chel is more holy than the mountain of the house, because no Gentile, or one defiled with the dead, enters there^{f1104}; now the Chel was an enclosure before these courts, and at the entrance into it pillars were erected, and upon them were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, signifying that no strangers should enter into the holy place^{f1105}.

Ver. 29. *For they had seen before with him in the city,* etc.] Not of Ephesus, but of Jerusalem:

Trophimus an Ephesian; the same that is mentioned in (~~400~~ Acts 20:4) whom these Jews of Asia, and who very probably were inhabitants of Ephesus, knew very well to be a Gentile:

whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple; for seeing him walk with the apostle very familiarly through the streets of Jerusalem, they concluded from thence, that he took him with him into the temple, which was a very rash and ill grounded conclusion; and which shows the malignity and virulence of their minds, and how ready they were to make use of any opportunity, and take up any occasion against him, even a bare surmise, and which had no show of probability in it; for it can never be thought, that while Paul was using methods to remove the prejudices of the Jews against him, he should take such a step as this, to introduce a Gentile into the holy place, which he knew was unlawful, and would greatly irritate and provoke them.

Ver. 30. *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together,* etc.] The outcry in the temple reached the ears of some that were without, and these alarmed others; so that the report of a disturbance in the temple soon went through the whole city; and brought people out of their houses, who ran together in great numbers, to see what was the matter:

and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple; as unworthy to be in that holy place; and that it might not be defiled with his blood; for their intention was nothing less than to take away his life:

and forthwith the doors were shut; not of themselves, as if there was something miraculous in it, as some have thought, but by the door keepers, the Levites; and which might be done, partly to prevent Paul's returning into it for refuge at the horns of the altar, and partly to keep out the Gentiles from coming in, they were alarmed with.

Ver. 31. *And as they went about to kill him,* etc.] In the manner as zealots did, without bringing him before any court of judicature, without any charge, trial, and condemnation:

tidings came unto the chief captain of the band; the Roman band of soldiers, who were placed near the temple, to keep the peace of the city, and persons in order; and who were more especially needful, at such a time

as the feast of Pentecost, when there was such a great concourse of people in the city, and indeed always were in arms at such times^{f1106}; this chief captain was Claudius Lysias, as appears from (~~4236~~ Acts 23:26) to him the report of the disturbance was brought; or as it is in the Greek text, the “fame ascended” to him; who very likely might be in the tower of Antonia, which joined to the temple:

that all Jerusalem was in an uproar; or in confusion, and therefore it became him, as a Roman officer, to take care to quell it, lest it should issue in sedition and rebellion.

Ver. 32. *Who immediately took soldiers and centurions*, etc.] A very large number of soldiers, for they are called an army, in (~~4237~~ Acts 23:27) with a sufficient number of officers called centurions, who were each of them over an hundred men, to command them, and put them in order:

and ran down unto them: from the tower to the temple, the outer part of it; perhaps the mountain of the house, where they had dragged Paul, and were beating him; hither the captain, with his officers and soldiers, came in great haste; all which shows his vigilance, prudence, and quick dispatch; and in which there was a remarkable appearance of divine providence in favour of the apostle, who otherwise in all likelihood would have quickly lost his life:

and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers; coming down upon them in great haste, with sword in hand:

they left beating of Paul; this beating was what the Jews call **tydrm twkm**, “the rebels’ beating”; or beating, on account of rebellion and obstinacy; and differed from whipping or scourging, which was done by the order of the sanhedrim, and in measure with forty stripes save one; but this beating was without any order from a court of judicature, and was without measure and mercy: this was inflicted upon various offenders, particularly on such who received not admonitions given them, or transgressed by doing what was forbidden by the words of the wise men^{f1107}; or if any defiled person entered into the court of the women; and such the people would fall upon at once, and beat them unmercifully with their fists, or with clubs and staves, and which often issued in death; so, for instance, when a priest ministered in his uncleanness, his brethren the priests did not bring him to the sanhedrim, but the young priests brought him without the court, and dashed his brains out with clubs^{f1108}

Ver. 33. *Then the chief captain came near*, etc.] To the place where the Jews were beating Paul:

and took him the Arabic version adds, “from them”; he rescued him out of their hands, as he himself says, (⁴²³⁷Acts 23:27).

And commanded him to be bound with two chains: partly to appease the people, and partly to secure Paul; who, he supposed, had been guilty of some misdemeanour, which had occasioned this tumult; these two chains were put, one on one arm, and the other on the other arm; and were fastened to two soldiers, who walked by him, having hold on those chains, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; and thus Agabus’s prophecy in (⁴²¹¹Acts 21:11) was fulfilled:

and demanded who he was; or asked and inquired about him, who he was, of what nation he was, what was his character, business, and employment: this inquiry was made, either of the apostle himself, or of the people; and so the Arabic version renders it, “he inquired of them who he was”; also

and what he had done; what crime he had been guilty of, that they used him in such a manner.

Ver. 34. *And some cried one thing, and some another, among the multitude*, etc.] For though they agreed to beat him, and even to kill him, yet some of them knew not for what; being led by a blind zeal for Moses, the law and temple, or rather by fury and madness:

and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult; could not come at the truth of the matter, or any certain knowledge of it, not anything that could be depended upon, because of the noise of the people, and the different notes they were in:

he commanded him to be carried into the castle; of Antonio, formerly called Baris, of which Josephus^{f1109} gives this account;

“on the north side (of the wall) was built a four square tower, well fortified and strong; this the kings and priests of the Asmonaeon race, who were before Herod, built, and called it Baris; that there the priestly robe might be laid up by them, which the high priest only wore, when he was concerned in divine service:”

this tower King Herod made more strong, for the security and preservation of the temple; and called it Antonia, for the sake of Antony his friend, and

the general of the Romans: the description of it, as given by Dr. Lightfoot ^{f1110}, which is collected by him out of Josephus and other writers, is this;

“upon the north side, and joining up to the western angle (but on the outside of the wall), stood the tower of Antonia, once the place where the high priests used to lay up their holy garments; but in after times a garrison of Roman soldiers, for the a wing of the temple: when it served for the former use, it was called Baris (it may be from **rb**, “ad extra”, because it was an outer building), but when for the latter, it bare the name of Antonia; Herod the great having sumptuously repaired and called it after the name of the Roman prince Antony: it stood upon the north west point of Moriah, and was a very strong and a very large pile; so spacious a building with all its appurtenances, that it took up to two furlongs’ compass; the rock it stood upon was fifty cubits high, and steep, and the building itself was forty cubits above it; it was four square, encompassed with a wall of three cubits high, which enclosed its courts, and had a turret at every corner, like the white tower at London; but that it was more spacious, and that the turrets were not all of an height; for those at the north east and north west corners were fifty cubits high, but those on the south east and south west were seventy cubits high, that they might fully overlook the temple: it had cloisters or walks about it, and baths and lodgings, and large rooms in it; so that it was at once like a castle, and like a palace. There was a passage out of it, into the north and west cloisters of the mountain of the house, and by that the Roman garrison soldiers went down at every festival of the Jews, to take care against tumults and seditions, in those great concourses of the people.”

And it was by this passage that the chief captain, with the centurions and soldiers, came down so quickly and suddenly upon the Jews, while they were beating Paul in the temple; and this castle being on such an eminence as described, hence he with the soldiers is said to run down, (^{<4013>}Acts 21:32) And it was in this way that the apostle was led up to the castle.

Ver. 35. *And when he came upon the stairs*, etc.] Or steps, which led up to the castle; for it was built upon a very high place, as appears from the account of it in the preceding verse; to which agrees what Aristaeas ^{f1111} says of it in the following words;

“in order to have knowledge of all things, we went up to a castle adjoining to the city, which is situated in a very high place, fortified with very high towers, built with large stones, as we supposed for the preservation of the places about the temple, if there should be any lying in wait, or tumult, or enemies should enter; so that none might be able to make way in at the walls about the temple; for in the towers of the castle lay very sharp darts and various instruments, and the place was upon a very great eminence.”

So it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people: the sense is, either that the crowd of the people was so great, and they so pressed upon Paul and the soldiers that conducted him, that he was even thrown upon them, and bore up by them; or else such was the rage of the people against him, that the soldiers were obliged to take him up in their arms, and carry him, in order to secure him from being tore in pieces by them.

Ver. 36. *For the multitude of the people followed after,* etc.] The captain and the soldiers, who had taken away Paul from them, and were carrying him to the castle:

crying, away with him; or “take him away”, that is, by death; or “lift him up”, upon the cross, crucify him, crucify him, as they said concerning Christ.

Ver. 37. *And as Paul was to be led into the castle,* etc.] Just as he was got up to the top of the steps, or stairs, that led up to the castle, and was about to go into the door of it:

he said unto the chief captain, may I speak unto thee? the apostle was one that had had a good education, and was a man of address, and this his modest and respectful way of speaking to the chief captain shows; and the question he put to him, was in the Greek language: hence it follows,

who said to him, canst thou speak Greek? or “dost thou know the Hellenistic language?” which the Jews who were born and lived in Greece spoke; hence such were called Hellenists; (see ^{<RB>}Acts 6:1) of this language we read in the Talmud^{f1112};

“R. Levi bar Chajethah went to Caesarea, and heard them reading “Shema”, (hear O Israel), etc. (^{<RB>}Deuteronomy 6:4) *ˆytsynwl a* in the Hellenistic language; he sought to hinder them; R. Rose heard

of it, and was angry; and said, he that knows not to read in the Hebrew language, must he not read at all? yea, he may read in whatsoever language he understands.”

The nearest to this language spoken by the Jews dispersed in Greece, must be the Greek language, in which Jews have written; as the books of the Old Testament translated by the “seventy” interpreters, who were Jews; and indeed it was this Bible which the Jews called Hellenists made use of; and the writings of Josephus, and Philo the Jew of Alexandria, and even the books of the New Testament, which are written by Jews; and Paul being a Jew of Tarsus, and so an Hellenist, could speak this language; as he did, when he disputed against the Hellenists, in (~~409~~ Acts 9:29). This the chief captain said, either as wondering to hear him speak Greek, when he thought he had been a Jerusalem Jew, or rather an Egyptian, as in the next verse; or it may be he put this question to him, as choosing rather that he should speak in Greek, it being the language he might best understand himself, and was the least known to the people, who he might not care should hear what he had to say; since if he took him for the Egyptian, the Greek tongue was what was chiefly spoken by such.

Ver. 38. *Art thou not that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar,* etc.] Josephus speaks ^{f1113} of one that came out of Egypt to Jerusalem, and gave out that he was a prophet, and deceived the people, whom he persuaded to follow him to the Mount of Olives, where they should see the walls of the city fall at his command, and so through the ruins of it they might enter into the city; but Felix the Roman governor fell upon them, killed four hundred, and took two hundred prisoners, and the Egyptian fled: the account which he elsewhere ^{f1114} gives of him, and Eusebius ^{f1115} from him, is this; a certain Egyptian false prophet did much more mischief to the Jews; for he being a magician, and having got himself to be believed as a prophet, came into the country (of Judea), and gathered together about thirty thousand persons, whom he had deceived: these he brought out of the wilderness to the Mount of Olives, from thence designing to take Jerusalem by force, and seize the Roman garrison, and take the government of the people but Felix prevented his design, meeting him with the Roman soldiers, assisted by all the people; so that when they engaged, the Egyptian fled with a few, and most of those that were with him were destroyed or taken: now it was some little time before this, that this affair happened; and by these accounts of Josephus, though the Egyptian was discomfited, yet he was not taken; he had made his escape,

so that he might be yet in being; and therefore the captain could not tell but Paul might be he, who had privately got into the city, and was upon some bad designs:

and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? Josephus says, that he brought them out of the wilderness, or led them through it to the Mount of Olives, from thence to rush into Jerusalem, when the walls should fall down at his command; but he says, the number of men that he led out were about thirty thousand; it may be at first there were no more than four thousand, but afterwards were joined by others, and increased to thirty thousand; or among these thirty thousand, he had four thousand “murderers, or sicarii”: so called from the little swords which they carried under their clothes, and with them killed men in the daytime, in the middle of the city, especially at the feasts, when they mingled themselves with the people ^{f1116}.

Ver. 39. *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus*, etc.] And not that Egyptian; he was not of that country, much less that man; but a Jew, both by birth and religion; he was born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the Jewish religion; though his native place was Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, where it is placed by Pliny ^{f1117}, Ptolomy ^{f1118}, and Mela ^{f1119}; and is by some thought to be the same with the Tarshish of the Old Testament:

a citizen of no mean city; Pliny ^{f1120} calls it a free city, and Solinus ^{f1121} says it is the mother, or chief of cities, and Curtius ^{f1122} speaks of it as a very opulent one; which when Alexander drew near to with his army, the inhabitants of it set fire to, that he might not possess their riches; which he understanding, sent Parmenio to prevent it: through this city, as the same historian, in agreement with Pliny and others, observes, ran the river Cydnus; and it being summer time when Alexander was here, and very hot weather, and being covered with dust and sweat, he put off his clothes, and cast himself into the river to wash himself; but as soon as he was in, he was seized with such a numbness of his nerves, that had he not been immediately taken out by his soldiers, and for the extraordinary care of his physician, he had at once expired. Josephus ^{f1123} calls this city the most famous of the cities in Gallicia; and derives it, and the whole country, from Tarshish, the grandson of Japheth, (^{<0000>}Genesis 10:4) his words are,

“Tharsus gave name to the Tharsians, for so Cilicia was formerly called, of which this is an evidence; for the most famous of the

cities with them, and which is the metropolis, is called Tarsus; Theta being changed into Tau for appellation sake.”

Though some say it was built by Perseus, the son of Jupiter and Danae, and called Tharsus, of the hyacinth stone, which is said to be found about it: others think it was so called, *παρα το τερσαννηναι*, because the places of this country were first dried up after the flood: it was not only a city of stately buildings, as it was repaired by Sardanapalus, and increased after the times of Alexander; but there was a famous academy in it, which, for men of learning, exceeded Athens and Alexandria^{f1124}; though these exceeded that in number of philosophers: here it is thought lived Aratus the poet, from whom the apostle cites a passage, in (~~417B~~ Acts 17:28) and of this place was the famous Chrysippus, who is called *ταρσευς*, “a Tarsian”,^{f1125}, as the apostle is here. Hermogenes, a very celebrated rhetorician, some of whose works are still extant, came from hence^{f1126}. Jerom^{f1127} reports it as a tradition, that the parents of the Apostle Paul were of Giscalis, a town in Judea; which with the whole province being destroyed by the Romans, they removed to Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, whither Paul when a young man followed them; but certain it is, that the apostle was born there, as he himself says, in (~~421B~~ Acts 22:3). Ignatius, in^{f1128} the “second” century, writing to the church at Tarsus, calls them citizens and disciples of Paul; citizens, because he was of this city; and disciples, because of the same faith with him; and very likely the first materials of the church in this place were converts of his; since it is evident that he went hither after he was a preacher; (see ~~408B~~ Acts 9:30, 11:25).

And I beseech thee suffer me to speak unto the people; first he desired to speak with the captain, and that was in order to obtain leave to speak to the people; and which he asks in a very handsome and submissive manner, and hopes to have his request granted him, since he was not the person he took him for, but was a Jew by birth, and a citizen of a very considerable Roman city; and was not a mean, sordid, vagabond creature, nor need he fear that he would sow any discord and sedition among the people.

Ver. 40. *And when he had given him licence*, etc.] To speak to the people, which he could not well deny him, after he had so freely declared who he was, and in so courteous a manner addressed him, and asked leave of him:

Paul stood on the stairs; on the steps of the ascent to the castle, on the top of them:

and beckoned with the hand unto the people; to desire silence, which he might be able to do, notwithstanding his chains; for his being bound with a chain to a soldier, did not hinder the moving and lifting up of his hand:

and when there was made a great silence; either through the authority of the captain, who might command it, or through the desire of the people, to hear what he could say for himself:

he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue; which the people he spoke to best understood, and was his own mother tongue; the Alexandrian copy reads, “in his own dialect”; this was not pure Hebrew that was spoke in common in those times, but the Syro-Chaldean language:

saying; as in the following chapter.