

Acts 20:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Analysis

Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus (παρέπλευσεν, parepleusen—to sail past)—a deliberate strategic decision showing apostolic priorities. Paul intentionally avoided stopping at Ephesus despite his deep love for this church (Acts 19:8-10; 20:31). The verb 'determined' (κρίνω, krinō) indicates a firm, reasoned decision.

He hasted...to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost—Pentecost (πεντηκοστή, pentēkostē—'fiftieth day') came fifty days after Passover, when Jerusalem swelled with Jewish pilgrims from across the empire. Paul's urgency reflects both pastoral duty (delivering the Gentile collection, Romans 15:25-27) and personal devotion to his Jewish heritage. Despite knowing 'bonds and afflictions' awaited him (Acts 20:23), he pressed toward Jerusalem with prophetic resolve, foreshadowing Christ's own steadfast journey to the cross (Luke 9:51).

Historical Context

This occurred during Paul's third missionary journey (circa AD 57), as he traveled from Greece toward Jerusalem. Ephesus had been Paul's ministry base for three years (Acts 19:8-10; 20:31), making his decision to bypass it remarkable. The Pentecost deadline suggests Paul planned to participate in the temple festivities and present the Gentile churches' financial gift to the impoverished Jerusalem.

believers—a visible demonstration of unity between Jewish and Gentile Christianity.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does Paul's willingness to bypass beloved friends for a higher calling teach about Christian priorities and stewardship of time?
2. How does Paul's determination to reach Jerusalem despite prophesied suffering (Acts 20:23) model faithful obedience when God's will leads into hardship?

Interlinear Text

ἔκρινεν γὰρ ὁ Παῦλος παραπλεῦσαι τὴν Ἔφεσον
had determined **For** ^{G3588} **Paul** **to sail by** ^{G3588} **Ephesus**
G2919 G1063 G3972 G3896 G2181

ὅπως μὴ γενέσθαι αὐτῷ χρονοτριβῆσαι ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ·
because **not** **to be** **for him** **spend** **in** ^{G3588} **Asia**
G3704 G3361 G1096 G846 G5551 G1722 G773

ἔσπευδεν γὰρ εἰ δυνατὸν ἦν αὐτῷ τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς
he hastened **For** **if** **possible** **it were** **for him** ^{G3588} **the day** ^{G3588}
G4692 G1063 G1487 G1415 G2258 G846 G2250

πεντηκοστῆς γενέσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα
of Pentecost **to be** **at** **Jerusalem**
G4005 G1096 G1519 G2414

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 16:8 (Parallel theme): But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

Acts 2:1 (Parallel theme): And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 19:21 (References Paul): After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

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