

Acts of the Apostles
Week 10 Summary
Acts 20:1–21:40

After the riot dissipates, Paul gives instructions to the disciples in Ephesus and then moves on to his other churches. After describing some of Paul's movements, Luke tells us of the group of Gentile disciples traveling with Paul, representatives from many of his churches. Luke focuses in on an incident when Paul began teaching a group of local disciples. These would have been slaves, many of them, so Paul's ministry begins in the evening after a day's work. This young man is naturally sleepy and even sitting by the open window cannot keep him awake. He falls to his death, but Paul—reminiscent of Jesus—declares the young man to be alive.

We are into another "we" section and it's clear that Luke is relying on logs because of the detail of the travel being more precise than in other sections of Acts. Luke relates that Paul has the goal of reaching Jerusalem for Pentecost, so he is taking a more direct route. So the elders from Ephesus come to him by boat so he can say farewell. Paul doesn't know what will happen next—he wants to go to Rome, the Spirit is warning him of affliction in Jerusalem—but he knows he will not see these people again. As such much of his speech is to ensure that there is nothing in between them and himself, so it can be reconciled if there is. He is also charging them with responsibility of overseeing this flock, knowing that they will have challenges from within and without of the church.

Luke then gives us a few scenes in which Paul is more directly warned (from our perspective) that Paul will face affliction if he goes to Jerusalem. This culminates with Agabus, who predicted the famine in Jerusalem to Antioch, prophetically acting out the warning. Paul, like Jesus, sets his face to Jerusalem, willing to drink whatever cup God might have for him.

When Paul arrives he and his disciples report the work God has been doing among the Gentiles that leads to much rejoicing. They have, however, heard some disturbing reports that Paul is preaching to Jews to reject the traditions and laws of Moses. They affirm that the Gentiles do not need to pursue those things, but are worried about how Paul will live and minister in Jerusalem with this reputation. So, they propose that he join and pay for a group of devout Jewish Christians who are finishing a vow. This will demonstrate to the Jewish population that Paul does support the traditions of Moses.

However, the Jews who have been so active against Paul in Asia are also in Jerusalem for Pentecost. They make a leap that Paul has taken a Gentile into the temple with him (a death sentence!) and a riot breaks out. They are ready to, and have the right to, kill Paul. However, enough of a disturbance has occurred that the Roman guards come and intervene.

The leader assumes Paul is an Egyptian who had started a riot in the past and slipped away. But, as Paul is being led away for questioning he asks to speak and lets the man know that he is a Roman citizen. Paul turns to the crowd to speak.

Faithful Presence
"Chapter Eight"

1. What do you think of this chapter generally?
2. What do you think specifically of what he says around five-fold leadership in the dotted circle?
3. How could Northview benefit from this discipline?