

ACTS 21:9-21

Introduction:

Paul is at Philip's home in Caesarea. Philip had been one of the seven chosen in Acts 6 to **help** distribute the finances-supplies to the needy widows at the Jerusalem church. I think Paul will use him to help distribute the collections he had gathered from the churches willing to aid the need of the saints at Jerusalem.

A. Acts 21:9 - And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Philip had four daughters who had been given the gift of prophesying. They were prophetesses in God's service to **Israel**. There was **nothing** wrong in this, for Joel had specifically predicted with regards to Pentecost - "Your daughters shall prophesy".

Acts 2:16-17 - But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; Acts 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

No doubt these girls added their Spiritual insight to also **warn Paul about going to Jerusalem, because of the danger that awaited him there.

B.

Acts 21:10-12 - And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. Acts 21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles. Acts 21:12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

1. Agabus was a friend of Paul's and a trusted prophet. They had worked together earlier to help raise money for the first time from the Gentiles for the **poor** believers of Judaea (11:27-30).
2. But this time, Agabus came to deliver a dramatic warning to Paul of what awaited him at Jerusalem. Agabus shows Paul in a dramatic **object** lesson that, if he persisted in going to Jerusalem, he would be bound by his hands and feet.

Note: Being a **true** prophet of God, Agabus' prophecy to Paul was literally **fulfilled** at Jerusalem as Paul will be turned over to the Gentiles (Roman government).

3. The question most have is whether the Spirit here is warning Paul not to go to Jerusalem, or warning him to **prepare** himself for what is about to happen to him? Certainly the Spirit **is** preparing Paul for his upcoming persecution.
 - a. Remember, Paul **himself** had a relationship with God. So Paul is not in the dark about all of this.
 - b. Has God **ever** warned his servants in order to prepare them to face their upcoming ordeal? To do this to encourage them to **remain** faithful?

Acts 18:9 - Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

Acts 23:11 - And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Acts 27:23-25 - For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,
Acts 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Acts 27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

*We have been warned in His Word how to be prepared to face difficult times.

C.

Acts 21:12-14 - And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Acts 21:13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 21:14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

1. Luke, Paul's companions, and all in Philip's residence, because of their love for Paul and understanding his importance, all began to plead with Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

**Paul responds by telling them that their tears were breaking his heart. But he did not see Agabus' warning the same way they did. Paul was willing to pay whatever the price, in order to complete what he believed to be the task God had assigned to him. He believed it was a test of his faithfulness.

2. Paul was determined not to cancel his plans to go to Jerusalem. His fellow believers, seeing this, commit themselves to Paul's decision. They say, [The will of the Lord be done]. The will of God would be done based upon what Paul understood was the right thing for him to do.

*Paul's objective standard for God's will is the doctrine of the Word of God. To do God's will is to live our lives with in the teaching of God's truth for today. We have the freedom to do things that do not violate God's doctrines, but are rather in agreement with truth. God does not make all of our decisions for us, but He equips us with liberty to make decisions that reflect truth - thus, His will. Paul believed he was living according to God's doctrine and not by feelings, emotions, or anything bad that might happen to him.

D.

Acts 21:15-17 - And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. Acts 21:16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. Acts 21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

1. After all of Paul's journeying and after many trying to persuade Paul to not go to Jerusalem, he finally comes to the final stage of his 3rd missionary journey. Paul arrives in Jerusalem!
2. Several others join Paul, perhaps to participate in Pentecost. One person is an older disciple, who evidently had a house in Jerusalem where Paul and his companions could lodge. Remember, at Pentecost in Jerusalem, it would be packed with people. Housing was full, so many stayed in temporary booths they put together.
3. By being with Paul, knowing he is a marked man, these men truly show their love for Paul - as well as their courage. Paul definitely was a leader for others to be willing to follow him, even into danger.

- a. **Paul's message was so **distinct** from believing and unbelieving Jews that, every time he came into contact with them, it seemed like he needed an emissary to go between them to help pave a way for Paul to enter. Paul and his dispensation of grace caused **conflict** and **hatred** mainly among the Jews who wanted the law to be a part of their lives.

Acts 15:1, 5 - And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

Galatians 2:4 - And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

- b. Also, this shows us that the Little Flock (believing Jews) were **not** part of the Body of Christ, for they acted out that they were not a part of the **same** program. They did not consider themselves to be a part of what Paul was doing and Paul himself did not think they were part of his ministry.

Galatians 2:9 - And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

4. Paul's arrival in Jerusalem did mark the **end** of Paul's missionary journeys. Soon he would be arrested. But before his arrest, Paul needed to accomplish a few things. As he arrives, the Jewish brethren give Paul a somewhat warm, **brief** welcome. No doubt, they are grateful for the generous offering that Paul and his companions had brought.

- E. 1. The next day, Paul goes before the bigwigs of the Jerusalem Messianic church. Remember that it had

Acts 21:18-19 - And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. Acts 21:19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

been Peter who had been appointed leader in those early days (Matt. 16:19; Acts 1:15, 2:14 & 37, 5:29). But, here we see the Lord's brother, **James** (not one of the 12), has now become the **pastor** of the Jerusalem church.

Acts 12:17 - But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Galatians 1:19 - But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Acts 15:13, 19 - And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me: Acts 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

2. James' authority is so established that it says only "all the elders were present". Since the Kingdom offer had **ceased**, most likely the apostles (who are no longer at the Jerusalem church) were elsewhere ministering to where the **scattered** Little Flock were.

F. Acts 21:20-21 - And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: Acts 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

1. Paul has explained how God had blessed his ministry, but he receives a very **cool** reception. It had been **un**believable how God had worked among the Gentiles (and Jews!). It also could have been at this time that Paul shared how the Gentiles had sacrificially given to the collection for them.
2. But the Jerusalem believers showed **suspicion** and **discord** concerning Paul's ministry. This did away with Paul's hope that the Gentile churches' offerings would show their love for the Jewish brethren at Jerusalem - thus causing some **un**ity. It didn't!
3. The response by the Jews! They say great, and then quickly change the subject to a topic that could only **embarrass** Paul. They point out how many thousands still kept the law, while **accusing** Paul of teaching converted Jews (synagogues) to turn from Moses and his teachings.

It seems they were **not worried about what Paul taught the Gentile believers, because that issue had been settled at the conference in Acts 15. Perhaps that appeased the Gentiles who had accompanied Paul, but no doubt this **upset** and perhaps even **hurt** Paul.

This shows what **legalism does (law keepers). These Jewish believers could not walk in the same shoes that Paul had walked in during his 3 missionary journeys! Paul had seen **multitudes**, Jew and Gentile, come to faith in Christ. He had taken up collections for them at Jerusalem. Yet, the **main** thing they focused on is that Paul did not do what they thought he should have done with the Jewish converts!

Acts 13:38-39 - Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Questions:

1. Do you have confusion with Kingdom saints and Body saints working together?
2. We see lady prophets here in the scripture. Does that mean women should be pastors-preachers today?
3. What made Agabus a true prophet?
4. Does God warn us/prepare us to do His will? How?
5. Why were the Jerusalem believers so distinct from Paul's?
6. How did James become the pastor/leader of the Jerusalem church?
7. Why was there friction from the Jerusalem saints toward Paul?