

Paul Responds to Warnings of Impending Adversity

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What We Will Learn

- Paul warned of persecution in Jerusalem
 - Warned by disciples in Tyre
 - Prophet Agabus in Caesarea
 - And counseled by elders in Jerusalem
- Proceeded to Jerusalem despite warning
- Commitment to mission
- Faith of God's purpose
- Acts 21:1–26

Message from Disciples in Tyre

- Disciples told Paul not to go to Jerusalem
- Based on communication with Holy Spirit
- Paul and companions departed for Jerusalem
- Despite message
- Acts 21:1–6

Acts 21 (NKJV)

1 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.

2 And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.

Acts 21 (NKJV)

3 When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo.

4 And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 21 (NKJV)

5 When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed.

6 When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

Processing Message from Holy Spirit

- Paul and companions departed for Jerusalem
- Despite message from disciples in Tyre
- Did he process message as warning?
- Was message delivered accurately?
- Did he have additional guidance?
- Demonstrates personal responsibility even in processing message from Holy Spirit

Message from Prophet Agabus

- Prophesied Jews will arrest Paul in Jerusalem and hand him over to non-Jews
- Companions urged Paul to cancel trip to Jerusalem
- Paul declared he was ready for persecution
 - Committed to completing mission
 - Will accept whatever God allows for him
- Acts 21:7–14

Acts 21 (NKJV)

7 And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day.

8 On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Acts 21 (NKJV)

9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

10 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

- God chose Agabus to deliver the message
- Other prophets were available but not chosen
- God chooses his messenger

Acts 21 (NKJV)

11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' "

12 Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 21 (NKJV)

13 Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

14 So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, “The will of the Lord be done.”

Will Proceed to Jerusalem Despite Warning

- Paul decides to proceed to Jerusalem despite warning of impending persecution
- Going to Jerusalem necessary to conclude current mission
- Believed God wanted him to proceed to Jerusalem despite warning
- Could have been persuaded as he was during riot in Ephesus [Acts 19:29–31]

Acts 19 (NKJV)

29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.

31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Paul Advised to Make Peace

- On advice of Jerusalem elders
- Paul joins in purification rites
- To show obedience to the laws of Moses
- As peace gesture to Jewish accusers
- Acts 21:17–24

Acts 21 (NKJV)

17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

Acts 21 (NKJV)

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;

21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

Acts 21 (NKJV)

22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.

23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow.

24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

What We Learned

- Paul returned to Jerusalem despite warnings of impending persecution
- Personal responsibility in processing message of impending adversity
 - Commitment to completing mission
 - Faith of God's intervention
 - Commitment to God's purpose