

Whose Voice Do I Listen To? Acts 21:1-40

Introduction:

What do you do when you consult godly friends about a matter and they all seem to come to the same conclusion, citing they have heard the Lord's will in this matter? Follow their advice, right? But what if you feel God is leading you in the completely opposite direction? Now what?

This is the situation we find the Apostle Paul in as we read through Acts chapter 21. As we read the chapter, hear the heart felt pleas of his friends and learn about what he decides to do and the consequences of his decision ask yourself if you think God's will was accomplished in this matter. We will address this question again in the conclusion.

Paul's Journey and Warning - Acts 21:1-6

1. Paul leaves Miletus and starts his journey towards Jerusalem. In verse 3 we are told his group lands in Tyre. The ship needed time to unload cargo there. What did Paul and his crew do (v. 4)?
2. What message did the believers of Tyre have for Paul (v. 4)?
3. According to verse 5 did Paul listen to their warning? How did the believers respond to Paul's decision?
4. What did Paul and the Christians of Tyre do at the beach (v. 5)? Does this teach us anything about prayer?

Paul in Caesarea - Acts 21:7-14

5. Who does Paul and his traveling companions stay with in Caesarea (v. 8)? Who is he and where did we first meet him (hint: Acts 6:5)?
6. In verse 9 we are told about Philip's daughters. What do we learn and why might this be important?

7. Who is Agabus? What message does he have for Paul (v. 11)?

8. Verse 12 gives the response of the Christians from Caesarea as well as Paul's traveling companions to this message. What is their response? Why?

9. Paul answers the group in verse 13. What is Paul's perspective on this?

10. Since Paul cannot be persuaded to change course, what do the people do (v. 14)? What is their response?

(By the way, look at verse 14 again and note Luke is among those trying to convince Paul to avoid Jerusalem. He also knows it was no use trying to argue with Paul.)

Paul's Reception in Jerusalem - Acts 21:15-26

11. Despite all that has been said about the dangers that lie ahead in Jerusalem, where did Paul take his ministry team (v. 15)?

12. Who joined Paul's team (v. 16)? Why might they want to go to Jerusalem?

13. Who is Paul introduced to in verse 16? What do we know about him?

14. What was the reception of Paul's missionary team in the Jerusalem church (v. 17)?

15. Reading verse 18 who might we conclude is leading the church in Jerusalem? Why?

16. What in verse 19 makes us think this was a long conversation with James and the elders of Jerusalem?

17. Verses 20-22 tell us the good news that thousands of Jews have turned to Christ in faith. However, we learn something about these believers that is causing

trouble, especially as it relates to Paul. What is the problem?

18. What "sign" did the Jerusalem leaders want Paul to give showing that he had Not tossed the Jewish Law out the window (vv. 23-24)?

19. In verse 19 the Jerusalem elders recount their message to the Gentile believers. What was expected of them? What was not expected?

20. How does Paul respond to this proposal (v. 26)?

Opposition in Jerusalem - Acts 21:27-40

21. Who raises a fuss about Paul when they see him at the Temple (v. 27)? Why might they be in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 20:16)?

22. What do they accuse Paul of according to verse 28? How serious was their charge? On what grounds did they base it (v. 29)?

23. What happens when this accusation is made (v. 30)? Why shut the temple doors?

24. What does the crowd want to do to Paul (v. 31)? Who gets a report of the disturbance at the Temple?

25. In verse 25 Paul gets help from an unlikely alie. Who is it? What happens when he shows up?

26. Paul's troubles are not quite over yet. What happens to him according to verse 33?

27. Did the commander get any information from the crowd (v. 34)? So what does he decide to do?

28. Verses 35-36 show the intensity of the hatred against Paul. How do the soldiers get Paul up the stairs? When the demand "Away with him" what do they

want the Romans to do?

29. Before Paul can be taken away he asks to speak. Who does the commander think Paul is at first (v. 38)?

30. Paul assures the commander he is a Jew (v. 39). What one request does Paul make of his captor (v. 39)? Why?

Conclusion:

Amazingly our passage ends with the crowds hushed ready to listen to Paul. That great crowd gathered around the time of the feast of Pentecost is about to hear of the new life only Jesus can give them.

But as we look back over this chapter we see that Paul has been warned twice by Godly Christians not to go to Jerusalem because arrest and likely death awaits him there. But Paul goes anyway. Is he being stubborn? Foolish? Proud? Or has he heard something from God no one else has heard?

This passage shows that following Jesus is not always easy, and God 's will is not always (actually, never) written in the sky for all to see. So the believer must listen as best they can to what the Holy Spirit is saying to them and act on that. There may be those who see things differently, good, godly people, but it always comes down to this one question : "What does the Holy Spirit want me to do?" People around us may not agree and may shake their heads in dismay, but if we feel this is what God wants, this is what we must do. It takes much courage to swim against the flow of opinion, especially when it is your friends. But God 's way will always be best, and obedience always pays off...

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