

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

26. Christ's Use Of Paul To Disciple Others Unto The Highest Motive

(Acts 21:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus had told His disciples that their love for one another would be the hallmark of their Christian testimony (John 13:35), so it was imperative that they love one another, cf. 1 John 3:11.
- B. However, there is a higher calling, one Paul displayed and disciplined in others in Acts 21:1-14 (as follows):

II. Christ's Use Of Paul To Disciple Others Unto The Highest Motive, Acts 21:1-14.

- A. Acts 21:1-14 records Paul's journey by ship from Miletus where he had met with the elders of the Church of Ephesus in the province of Asia until he disembarked from the ship for the final time at Caesarea on the coast of Israel en route to his destiny of Jerusalem, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., map 13.
- B. This trip leads us to recall Jesus' journey when He set His face to go to Jerusalem for His suffering and death (cf. Luke 9:51), for Paul had testified that the Holy Spirit had revealed through Christian prophets in every town that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem, Acts 20:22-23.
- C. Accordingly, Acts 21:1-14 reveals a tremendous **contrast** of *opinion* between **Paul's motive to continue** to Jerusalem and the **motive of many believers** that he **NOT go there** (as follows):
 1. Repeatedly, many other believers believed that Paul should not go to Jerusalem because of the sufferings and potential death that awaited him there, Acts 21:1-12:
 - a. In traveling from Miletus to Tyre, some disciples there testified the Holy Spirit had revealed to them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, so they urged him not to go there, Acts 21:1-4.
 - b. At Caesarea, Christian prophet, Agabus came down from Jerusalem and predicted Paul would be bound and delivered to the Gentiles at Jerusalem, Acts 21:5-11. This set the other believers, including Luke, the author of Acts, *pleading* with Paul **not to go there**, Acts 21:12 NIV.
 2. Nevertheless, Paul asserted that regardless of their pleading, he was more determined than ever not only to be bound and to suffer at Jerusalem, but to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus, Acts 21:13-14.
- D. Viewing the **motives** involved reveals (1) though fellow believers had a **high** motive of not wanting Paul to suffer out of **love for him**, (2) Paul had the loftiest motive -- to *fulfill* his *calling* out of love for Christ:
 1. We know from several passages in Acts that Paul was not sinning by declining the advice of other believers that he not go to Jerusalem (Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 415):
 - a. Acts 20:22a and 21:14b imply it was within God's will that Paul continue on to Jerusalem.
 - b. God's comfort to Paul in Acts 23:11 indicates he was not rebelliously refusing to do the will of God.
 - c. Paul claimed in Acts 23:1 that he had lived with a pure conscience before God up to that day.
 2. Also, we know from Romans 9:1-3 that Paul had an overwhelming desire that his countrymen, fellow Jews, might believe in Christ to be saved, Ibid. Thus, Paul was driven to go to Jerusalem out of a love for Christ and His call to disciple all men, be they Jews or Gentiles, G. Campbell Morgan, The Acts of the Apostles, 1924, p. 480-481.
 3. Thus, though other believers had "a very high motive", that of "love for Paul" in not wanting him to be afflicted and martyred, his decision to press on to Jerusalem came from "an infinitely higher motive. It was love for the Lord, and passion for the accomplishment of His purpose," Ibid., p 481.
- E. When the other believers realized Paul was so resolute to continue to Jerusalem, they consented, saying, "The will of the Lord be done," and ceased pressuring Paul about it, Acts 21:14.

Lesson: *Though other believers were well-motivated out of love for him in not wanting Paul to go to Jerusalem to suffer, Paul was more highly motivated in wanting to fulfill his divine calling from God.*

Application: *(1) May we appreciate the lofty calling that we LOVE OTHER BELIEVERS. (2) However, may we view as an even HIGHER calling that of LOVING CHRIST in FULFILLING HIS CALLING, John 21:15-19! (3) May we thus love God even above loving Christian brethren!*