

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

28. Christ's Oversight Of Paul's Violent Jerusalem Crises So He Could Fulfill His Mission

(Acts 21:27-23:11)

I. Introduction

- A. Many folk today need help to manage the stress from the crises they face in their lives.
- B. However, if a believer is heeding the Lord's will in his life, he can rest assured that all the stress he faces is firmly in the hand of His Sovereign Lord Who equips him to achieve His will through the crises.
- C. This truth was made clear in Acts 21:27-23:11 where Paul faced three life-threatening crises in two days:

II. Christ's Oversight Of Paul's Violent Jerusalem Crises So He Could Fulfill His Mission.

- A. We know from a past lesson in this series that the Lord knew Paul would face bondage and associate hardships when he arrived in Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-23), but that He still let Paul go there, Acts 21:12-14.
- B. However, the crises Paul actually faced in Jerusalem were multiple and life-threatening, Acts 21:27-23:10:
 1. While in the temple, Paul was slandered, leading to a riot where he was nearly killed, Acts 21:27-32.
 2. However, Roman soldiers rescued Paul from them with at least two hundred soldiers, Acts 21:33-36.
 3. Paul asked the official in charge if he might speak to the crowd, and after the official learned that he was not a known criminal, he let him speak as he had requested, Acts 21:37-40.
 4. Paul gave his testimony of salvation by faith in Christ (Acts 22:1-20), but was met by fury when he told Christ had directed him to go to the Gentiles, Acts 22:21. The Jews were angered at knowing he taught Jews and Gentiles were equal without the Law, Acts 22:21; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 418.
 5. The chief captain brought Paul into the castle to examine him by flogging with a special Roman whip that could kill or cripple a man for life, Acts 22:22-24; Ibid., p. 419.
 6. Paul then revealed that he was a Roman citizen by birth and uncondemned by a Roman court, showing the beating he was about to receive was illegal under Roman law, Acts 22:25-28.
 7. This news terrified the Romans since they realized they had already violated Roman law for binding an uncondemned Roman (Ibid., p. 419), so they left off trying to flog him, and the official brought him to the Sanhedrin the next day to discern from them what Paul had done to anger the Jews, Acts 22:29-30.
 8. Before the Sanhedrin, Paul's testimony of having lived with a good conscience was interrupted by the High Priest, Ananias who ordered him to be struck across the mouth as a deceiver, Acts 23:1-2.
 9. Not knowing he was the High Priest, Paul retorted that Ananias was a whitewashed wall in ordering him disciplined when he had done nothing in violation of the law, Acts 23:3.
 10. In learning he was the High Priest, Paul apologized as Law forbade reviling him, 23:4-5; Ex. 22:28.
 11. However, to shift attention away from his predicament, Paul succeeded in dividing the Sanhedrin between Pharisees and Sadducees, suddenly claiming that he was on trial for the resurrection that the Pharisees believed and the Sadducees denied, Acts 23:6-9.
 12. This division became so intense that Paul was in danger of being torn to pieces, so the Roman official took him by force from them and brought him into the Roman castle, Acts 23:10.
- C. Regardless of these crises, the Lord encouraged Paul, revealing His purpose in them, Acts 23:11:
 1. Christ appeared to Paul that night, directing him to take courage, Acts 23:11a.
 2. The reason was in the purpose of Christ realized in the severe crises Paul had just faced, Acts 23:11b: as Paul had testified of Christ in Jerusalem, He would also testify of Him at Rome, Acts 23:11c, d.
 3. This statement reveals the Lord had sovereignly used Roman soldiers and their law to rescue Paul from the repeat, life-threatening crises he had faced so he could witness both in Jerusalem and in Rome!

Lesson: *Though having been threatened with life-threatening harm three times in two days, the Lord encouraged Paul, revealing He had used the Roman soldiers and their laws to protect his life in each case for him to fulfill his mission of testifying of Christ both in Jerusalem as well as later in Rome.*

Application: *If we like Paul are obeying the Lord in our lives, may we rely on God's sovereignty in facing multiple, great crises, for He is at work in them to achieve His will in our calling from Him.*