

1. Last week we completed the study of the Third Missionary Journey and when the clock tolled 11:30 we were reviewing Paul's Reversionism.
2. I want to review some of that learned and then begin new material at point 1.5 on page two.



Paul's Reversionism

1. It was the will of God that Paul's third missionary journey should go west into Spain. Rom 15:24
 - 1.1 He was in Ephesus in about AD 58 and knew he was supposed to go to Spain, but he wanted to go to Jerusalem. Rom 15:25-32
 - 1.1.1 Also see Rom 1:10 "... if by any means I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.
 - 1.2 Paul dearly desires the approbation of Jewish Christians at Jerusalem and finds exhilarating the thought of taking an offering from Gentiles to the much-persecuted Judaeo Christians at Jerusalem.

1.3 Paul elects to go east instead of west into Macedonia. His trip may have been hurried by the riot in Ephesus of the silver-smiths. Acts 20:1-3

1.4 Paul wants to arrive at Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. It is in the Jerusalem Church he wants to preach and be recognized as one of the early leaders of the Judaeen Christian faith.

1.5 This from a man who has warned his congregations to avoid the Mosaic law with its evil feast days like the plague. See the *Doctrine of the Mosaic Law*, and the *Book of Galatians* for additional information concerning Paul's earlier teachings of avoiding the legalism taught by many Judaeen Christian teachers.

1.6 The driving force behind this reversionism seems to be his desire to do what makes him feel good. It would seem his Old Sin Nature needed the recognition of people like James, Peter, John etc.

1.7 Paul recall has not had the "success" of those Apostles working in Jerusalem and Paul's teachings had many of the elders in the very large Judean Christian church in Jerusalem upset.

1.8 This unpopularity of Paul seems to be very troublesome to the great Apostle. He unfortunately is willing to water down the gospel for the sake of the approbation of his Jewish colleagues. Act 21:18-24

1.9 Since Paul is being urged to join several men waiting in the wings of the Temple to take a vow, I want to give you a point or two about vows.

- Vows were quite common and are even mentioned twice in the New Testament.
- Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea (a seaport on the east side of the Isthmus): for he had a vow.
- Paul stayed in Corinth an indefinite period of time (many days), before deciding to go to Jerusalem.

- Before leaving Corinth, he assumed a Nazarite vow (see Num 6:1-21) which was an Old Testament act of thanksgiving and dedication to God.
- During the period of the vow, the devotee allowed his hair to grow uncut, and at the end of the period he cut his hair.
- During the period he did not have sex, drink wine or eat grapes, defile himself with the dead, nor cut his hair.
- Num 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:
- Num 6:3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink ...
- Num 6:5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled ...
- Num 6:6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body.
- Num 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head.
- Num 6:8 All 30 days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD ...
- Num 6:18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

2. It is significant that while Paul steadfastly refused to permit the Law to be imposed on Gentiles, he himself, as a Jew, continued to practice many of its demands.

2.1 Paul it seemed was at times as stubborn and reversionistic as some of his Jewish adversaries. Jesus you may remember said "the law and the prophets were until John but now the Kingdom of God is preached and every man pressed unto it."

2.3 Recall we are under the perfect law of liberty and we need to stare into it. Jam 1:25

Jam 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

4. As when Paul came to Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, on his way to Syria and Palestine, the time of his vow elapsed, and he therefore cut his hair.

5. James and the Jerusalem elders realized something must be done to show the Jews that Paul was still a “good Jew.”

5.1 There were four Jews who had taken a Nazarite vow.

5.2 They had apparently incurred some defilement that had placed them in a condition of ceremonial impurity. After seven days they would shave their heads and offer certain sacrifices of purification to God.

5.3 The elders suggested to Paul that he identify himself with these four and practice the common Jewish custom of paying the expenses for the sacrifices.

5.4 This would prove to the Jewish church that Paul himself accepted the Jewish customs.

6. Paul did this dastardly deed and as a result received from the Lord severe discipline resulting in his being “tried” and incarcerated for some six years.

Paul And Approbation

1. Paul’s desire for approbation is understandable, though evil, for after all Paul has been ministering to the Gentiles in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia etc. and suffering greatly from primarily Jews.

1.1 His crowds are small and yet he was the greatest of all Bible Teachers.

1.2 You could in the flesh certainly empathize with the poor man but for one salient fact. God made clear to Paul that He did not want him to go to Jerusalem.

1.3 Jerusalem was a very evil church full of Jewish Christians who were lovers of the Law and the pleasure of "big time liturgical worship."

2. Paul however was given a ministry of hard-nosed Bible teaching with small crowds of people interested in the mind of Christ. For many Christians then and now, what God's Word has to say is not so very important.

3. God communicates His will to Paul.

Acts 21:3 After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo.

Acts 21:4 Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem ...

Acts 21:7 We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day ...

Acts 21:10 After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

Acts 21:11 Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

Acts 21:12 When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem ...

Acts 21:15 After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

Acts 21:17 When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly.

Acts 21:18 The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.

4. Paul chooses his very own will over God's will and the result is discipline from the Lord—a six-year prison sentence (3 in Caesarea and 3 in Rome).

5. Let's take a look at the *Doctrine of the Trials of Paul*.

Doctrine of the Trials of Paul

1. After the Third Missionary Journey Paul returns to Jerusalem in hopes of gaining access to the hearts and minds of the many Jewish converts living in the city.

1.1 Paul spends several days in the Temple participating in a purification rite, the purpose of which being to assure his Jewish brethren that he is not a heretic.

2. The Jews at Jerusalem are however implacable and outraged thinking that Paul had taught the Jews of Asia Minor to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to Jewish customs.

2.1 Certain Jews from Asia Minor traveled to Jerusalem where they spread specious rumors concerning Paul, even alleging he had desecrated the Temple by bringing his gentile friends inside.

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.

3. An angry mob gathers outside the Temple to confront Paul. On the steps of the Temple he is physically accosted.

4. Paul is rescued by a platoon of Roman soldiers. Acts 21:31-36

Acts 21:31 While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

Acts 21:32 He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Acts 21:33 The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

Acts 21:34 Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks ...

Acts 21:36 The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!"

5. Paul's first defense therefore is before an unruly mob; first on the steps of the Temple and later from the steps of Fort Antonia. Paul is mistaken for an earlier Egyptian heretic. Acts 21:38-40

Acts 21:38 "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"

Acts 21:39 Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

Acts 21:40 Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic (Hebraic language of the street):

6. Paul witnesses to the angry gathering by telling of his conversion experience. Acts 22:2-21

Acts 22:2 When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said:

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Acts 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

Acts 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

Acts 22:6 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light

from heaven flashed around me.

Acts 22:7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

Acts 22:8 "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.

Acts 22:9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

Acts 22:10 "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

Acts 22:11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

Acts 22:12 "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

Acts 22:13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him ...

Acts 22:21 "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

7. All seems well until he mentions he took the Gospel to the gentiles, then the Jews go berserk. Acts 22:22

Acts 22:22 The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

8. Paul is saved from the crowd by the Roman soldiers who take him into custody. Paul declares himself a Roman citizen and the Centurion becomes concerned that he has bound a Roman without examination and just cause. Acts 22:25-29

Acts 22:25 As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

Acts 22:26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."

Acts 22:27 The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered ...

Acts 22:29 Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately.

The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

8.1 Roman citizenship could be obtained by birth from parents who were Roman citizens, or by purchase with money, or as a gift from the Roman government. After the abuse he had just suffered, Paul did not look like your ordinary Roman citizen.

8.1.1 The Roman Tribune accordingly, assumed Paul had acquired his citizenship very cheaply.

8.2 Paul replied that he did not buy citizenship but was born of parents who were already citizens.

8.3 We do not know how his parents became citizens, but it is usually supposed that citizenship was given them as a reward for some service rendered to an earlier Roman ruler.

9. Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin. Acts 22:30-23:5

Acts 22:30 The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

9.1 After being told he had reviled the High Priest; Paul apologizes and divides the Sanhedrin by bringing up the question of the resurrection. It is questionable if Paul did this because he did not recognize Ananias or whether Paul was being his sometimes cantankerous-self.

9.2 Paul began his defense before the Sanhedrin by claiming that he had acted in good conscience before God, not only in these affairs for which he was being accused but throughout his entire life.

9.3 Ananias was the high priest from c. A.D. 48 to c. A.D. 58. He was reputedly a very greedy, insolent, overbearing man. Angered by this bold claim of Paul, he commanded some who stood near the apostle to strike him on the mouth.

9.4 With indignant words Paul now challenged this irregular conduct from a member of the Sanhedrin, accusing those who claimed they were

enforcing the Law while actually violating the Law themselves.

9.5 Whited wall suggests a tottering and dirty wall which has been disguised by a generous coat of whitewash. The meaning is that although he held a high position, Ananias was bound to come to grief. In fact, Ananias was assassinated some eight years later.

10. Paul decides to divide the Sanhedrin by letting it be known he was a Pharisee who was on trial because he believed in the resurrection of the dead. Acts 23:6-7

Acts 23:6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees ... "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead."

Acts 23:7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

10.1 The Jews were so divided they became violent; soon Paul's life was in jeopardy so the Roman officer in charge ordered his men take Paul into Fort Antonia. Acts 23:10

Acts 23:10 The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops ... to take him ... by force and bring him into the barracks.

11. The Lord visits and comforts Paul in a night vision.

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.

12. Paul is removed from Jerusalem under armed guard because a plot to kill Paul is discovered. Acts 23:12-22

Acts 23:12 The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.

Acts 23:13 More than forty men were involved in this plot ...

Acts 23:16 But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

Acts 23:17 Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." ...

Acts 23:19 The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

Acts 23:20 He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him.

Acts 23:21 Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

Acts 23:22 The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

13. Paul is taken to Caesarea. Acts 23:23-24

Acts 23:23 Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight.

Acts 23:24 Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

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