

## **Acts 21:1-26** **Intimidation**

### **Introduction:**

Chapter 21 sets the stage for the great apostle Paul to journey to Rome. We might say this is the beginning of the final chapter of Paul's long and profitable ministry for the Kingdom of God. In is in this chapter perhaps for the first and last time we see Paul quite flexible in his doctrinal beliefs concerning the gospel. His flexibility came about by intimidation from a group of Elders in Jerusalem. This chapter for me is an enigma. I'm puzzled by it because our great stalwart appears to be frail and intimidated.

### **I. God's Warning To Paul**

#### **A. Do not go to Jerusalem – v.4**

1. Previous context – 20:22,23
2. Agabus the Prophet illustrates his warning – v. 10-12
3. Future context – 22:17-21

#### **B. Was Paul out of the will of God?**

1. Most commentaries say no as though he could do no wrong.

#### **C. Understanding Paul's Motives:**

1. Paul's very strong and determined personality – v.13
2. Paul's love and compassion for his own fellow-Jews – Rom. 9:1-3 – ( Luke 6:40; John 15:18)
3. Paul's unparallel evangelistic plan – I Cor. 16:1-3
4. Paul was not afraid to die for the sake of Christ – Phil. 1:21cf. Acts 20:36-38; Rom. 12:1; Rom. 14:8,9

### **II. Paul's Compromise or Liberty?**

#### **A. Paul admits his sin and weakness – Rom. 7:18**

#### **B. The Jerusalem elders instruct him to abide by the ceremonial law –v.21-26**

#### **C. Supportive text for Christian liberty – Turn To: 9:19-23**

1. Continued tension between the Jews and Gentiles regarding dietary laws
2. Presbytery meeting in Jerusalem seemed to resolved this tension v. 25 cf. Acts 15:7-29

#### **D. Paul Trapped in Compromise:**

1. At this point in time, Paul had already written Galatians, Corinthian, and Roman epistles. (Gal. 3:13; 5:1-4; Jam. 2:10; Rom. 5:1; 4:2-8)
2. Paul apposed Peter and rightly so when he compromised the gospel - Gal. 2:11-14
3. How is this different from what Paul was doing? Note.v.25 (Matthew Henry)

### **Conclusion:**

1. *God's purposes in the gospel must not be compromised. ( many throughout the history of Scripture had compromised (Moses, Samson, David, Jonah, Peter)*
2. *God often intervenes in our error so we will not be eliminated from God's service or lose our gifts for further service.*
3. *The way we restore:*
  - a. *Restore in the spirit of gentleness examining our own selves lest we fall – Gal. 6:1*
  - b. *Restore by speaking the truth in love – Eph. 4:15*