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**A0932 – August 9, 2009 – Acts 21:1-14 – The Mentality Of A
Martyr**

Today we start Acts 21. Acts, as you've probably picked up, is a quick paced narrative. It's engaging because every week there's a different place, interesting people, fascinating history, and God the Holy Spirit is directing it all the way. It's His sovereignty that is directing this fantastic development of the early church and if it wasn't for Him the gospel would still be locked up in Jerusalem. And for that reason I've called the book The Acts of the Holy Spirit. Despite what man does and man's failures, the Holy Spirit is successful in moving these people out of Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. And hopefully by now you've detected the direction the Holy Spirit is taking us. At the moment He's taking us to Jerusalem but Jerusalem is just a stepping stone, a necessary one, to get to Rome. Rome is in the west and Christianity in the last two millennia has been the heavy influence on western culture and Acts is the justification for that influence. It was God the Holy Spirit's plan for world history to make the major arena of Christianity the west.

Last week, we covered chapter 20:17-38, Paul at Miletus. We said it amounted to what was essentially an elder meeting between Paul and the Ephesian elders. And he's giving them a farewell address. If you're familiar with the OT you won't see this as anything new. Paul is falling exactly in line with the great prophets and leaders who said farewell to the nation Israel, and we know that because his farewell address follows exactly the structure of prior farewell addresses. You can check Moses in Deut 33, Samuel in 1 Sam 12 and Jesus in John 14-16 for confirmation. So, we detect that Paul, at least in his own mind, realizes his career is coming to a close and this has a number of exciting implications for Paul's ministry.

First, we see a new emphasis in missionary journey three. That new emphasis is what I call the short-term goal of advanced training. He's got to get men trained to take his place. We can't emphasize this too much in a day when there is tremendous attack on the importance of Bible training. It's gotten so bad that I personally know a number of men who have gone to seminary simply to get Bible teaching. And the reason this is happening is simply because the churches aren't doing their job; they're not teaching the word of God. If they were teaching the word of God then people would be learning the word of God. But the churches have defected from the word of God. They wouldn't recognize Paul if he stood in their pulpit and taught. They'd probably throw tomatoes at him because if Paul were to stand in the pulpit he'd teach five to six hours non-stop. This man was tireless. He taught the word of God publicly and privately: on the road, at sea, five to six hours a day, six days a week. Anytime Paul got the opportunity to teach the word of God, he taught the word of God. And the reason for his emphasis on the word is simply because he sees his career coming to a close and men must be prepared to take over where he left off or that's going to be the end of Christianity. And so today we'll see more of that closure coming into focus for Paul.

The second exciting implication fulfills Paul's long-term goal and that's writing down the word of God. This is what benefits you and me 2,000 years later. There's been a tendency in church history for a group of men to rely on a group of men who taught them who relied on a group of men who taught them who were taught by the apostles. We don't rely on a chain of men. Since the apostolic teachings have been written down we can go directly back to the writings themselves. And therefore those who are truly the apostolic successors are not those who followed a chain of men but those who follow apostolic teaching in the word of God. We go directly to the apostolic source. So Paul trained teachers but he said teachers, I commend you to God and the word of His grace, that is sufficient, that and that alone is sufficient, sola Scriptura, Scripture alone, sola gracia, Grace alone. This is why at the Reformation they cried sola Scriptura and sola Gracia because they said the heck with a chain of men, what's important is the Scripture and the grace of God. In every Protestant church in Europe when you'd enter the church there would be a Bible laid open at the entry. You know why they did that? Because the word of God was for all men, not an elite class of men. There is no group of men that stand between you and the text of God's word. Paul

expected his students to be Bereans and to check these things out for themselves and that presupposes they had access to the Scriptures. So Paul in the long run is going to leave us thirteen epistles of Scripture, he's writing more and more of the word of God.

Now today we come to chapter 21 and in chapter 21 we have one minor thing we want to emphasize and one major thing. The minor thing has to do with the Doctrine of Inspiration. Luke is the author of two NT books; the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Holy Spirit. And the fact is that Luke was not an eyewitness of many of the things he writes. So how did he get the information? That's where our text invites. Luke is on this journey. Luke has been with Paul since Acts 20:5, and we know that because of the "we" pronoun. Luke never mentions himself by name in the Book of Acts but we have these enigmatic shifts in pronoun from "they" to "we." They did this, they went there, they said that. And then it will say, we went here, we did this, we did that, and we gather that when Luke says "we" that's an indicator that he'd joined the group. And one of the things that Luke was interested in when he was with Paul was what had happened. Luke was a doctor and he was interested in details and so he would research these things through direct eyewitnesses. In his Gospel his research centers on Jesus Christ and moves from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. In his Acts, his research centers on the gospel of Jesus Christ and moves from Jerusalem to Rome. And since Luke was not an eyewitness to everything that happened he liked to locate people who were. And since Luke is now traveling with Paul we think Luke is doing a lot of his research to write the Book of Acts from Paul's experience on the Damascus road in chapter 9 and forward. So as they travel by ship he probably asks Paul a lot of stuff. What happened on the Damascus road? Why were you on the road? Where did you go on your first missionary journey? How did you preach the gospel to Jews? What was their response? What kind of opposition did you face? How did you preach to Gentiles? How did they respond? Where did you go after that? And over time Luke compiled portions into the Book of Acts. So he's gathering data during this time and today we'll meet some of the girls that church history claims Luke used as a source for what happened with the church in Judea and Samaria, pre-Acts 9. So this shows you one of the techniques God the Holy Spirit used to bring us the Bible. He used a number of methods, one of which was human research, and you want to remember this about the Christian Doctrine of Inspiration. The Christian doctrine of inspiration is dual authorship. In Islam it's not this

way. In Islam with the Koran it was written directly by the hand of Allah himself, and so we would expect it to all flow the same, to read as if one person wrote it, but it doesn't. The Bible isn't like that. The Bible has as its primary author God, but God used human people to write and God preserved certain elements of the human authors; He used their vocabulary, He used their background, He used their personality and it shines through the text. So, when you read John it doesn't sound like Peter and Peter doesn't sound like Paul. There are distinctions and those distinctions are due to the human personality of those men. But what was written by each of those men is God's word preserved from the errors a man usually makes. So the minor thing you want to note today is that Luke used personal research to gather information during this time, and some of the people he interviews are with him at this time. When he compiled his Gospel and Acts in their final form what was included is exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted included, nothing less, nothing more.

The major thing in today's text has to do with the Doctrine of Suffering. Paul is going to suffer hardship in the near future and so we want to prepare by a review of the Doctrine of Suffering. The first thing in our doctrine is we have two categories: direct suffering and indirect suffering. By direct suffering we mean suffering due directly to a choice you made. In other words there's a one to one correspondence between the choice and the suffering. The first, **Effects of the Fall**. Why? Because in the law of Gen. 2:17, what did God say? In the day that you eat thereof you're going to die. This is inescapable, it's for all human beings. Why? Because we all somehow sinned in Adam, Rom 5:12. And therefore we get sick, we get old, we die, it's pretty straightforward. Since we all somehow sinned in Adam we all suffer category number one, effects of the Fall.

Second category, **Effects of Personal Sin**. This is the law of Gal 6:7, "whatsoever a man sows, this shall he also reap." In other words, here we are already in a fallen world and what do we do? Some idiot sin. And all that does is add more to the pile, and as a result of that we suffer more.

Third category, **Suffering by Association within Families and Nations**. This is a grand one, you just have to love this. Take for example a family member does some idiot thing. For them that's category 2, personal sin, but you're associated with them and by that association you suck up some of the

suffering. Some of these people you just wish weren't in your life because you think if they weren't around you could have some peace and quiet. The greater side of this is living in a nation that makes stupid policies. And just by the fact that you live in that nation and by the policies of that nation the whole nation suffers. You see this in OT Israel, you see this with Russia, and you can see it with America today. There's this gradual decline as the people in authority reject God and by default we have to live through the wreckage.

The fourth category, **Eternal suffering in the Lake of Fire**. That's quite self-explanatory but if a person rejects the grace of God given in Jesus Christ then there's nothing else God can do with them. So he made a cosmic garbage heap for all who spurned His grace.

The fifth one we have is **Temporal Discipline of Believers**. If a believer sins and he doesn't confess it God's going to discipline him. He's a loving spiritual Parent and He is not going to sit there and let us rebel and rebel and rebel and get away with it. He implements disciplinary procedures. Of course, He does this out of His love for us; His love is so great that He comes after us and straightens us out. We all need straightening out. Is that related to choices? You bet, we make bad choices and Daddy comes along and whips us into shape.

The sixth category is **Judgment Seat of Christ for Believers Rewards**. The works of the believer will be evaluated. That's a sobering thought. In 1 Cor 3 Paul lays it all out and there are only two categories, the good and the bad and it'll all be heaped up, so to speak, and Jesus Christ applies His blow torch and it either burns up or is refined. It's not all pat on the back stuff. It's a sobering evaluation that brings focus to what you did with your life.

Those six are all direct suffering patterns, we call them that because it's directly related to some negative choice you made and therefore we can at least trace some of our sufferings back to these reasons and say, alright, I can at least see part of why I'm facing this mess. And I know God has a purpose for it and that helps us relax.

The other category is indirect suffering and these are often more difficult to handle for people. These are not due directly to choices you make and so these become the ones that people really begin to fall apart on. They can see

no reason for it and so they begin to get depressed. So we highlight these to show that there are often reasons we suffer that serve purposes we're not privy to. God has a lot more going on and sometimes you may be an experiment God is using to show someone else something.

This one, we'll call number seven is for the purpose of an **Evangelistic 'Wake-Up-Call'**: wake some unbeliever up to the gospel, get their attention. We had this one in Acts 16 when Paul was in jail at Philippi, and when the doors of that jail swung open the Philippian jailer had a real problem on his hand because if these guys escape that's it for me. Rome is coming after me and I'm as good as dead. So to cut the whole thing off short I'll just commit suicide. Did God use that event to wake this man up to the gospel? Sure did. It shocks arrogant unbelief back to reality, back to face ultimate questions.

The eighth is for believers, **A Nudge to Advance Spiritually**. Paul is going to face some of these; the Lord Jesus faced some of these so we want to pay attention to these. This one is when God puts a believer in a situation he can't control; and there's nothing you can do about it, no human solution. Why does He do that? To remind us that we don't live by our own strength, we live by trusting in Him. And it's a case where we're not comfortable because we're used to living by our own strength but then God says, not today you're not! And that suffering is really a nudge from God to advance spiritually.

Nine, ten and eleven are sufferings, all of which are evidences for something very real going on in history that are beyond us. They're very difficult to see, we just have to say, alright, I know you could be up to this so I'm going to relax and trust. The ninth one is **Evangelization of Unbelievers**. In 1 Pet 2-3 Peter says your suffering shows the reality of the gospel. When unbelievers look at you and they see that you respond to suffering in a radically different way than they would, they begin to ask questions. Why do they ask a question? Because they've watched you suffer and they marvel at how you handle it.

Number ten **Edification of Believers**, this is a classic one many believers have noticed. 2 Cor. 1:5-15 is a whole passage where Paul says that when you suffer and deal with something in your life that makes you a counselor in that area. We've seen that in this congregation, where someone suffered a

particular way and then someone else comes along a few years later and goes through the same thing. Those people can get together and be encouraged because we see that “Hey, other people have been through the same things I’m facing and maybe I can get through it too.” That’s what some of our suffering is about; it’s a set up to edify others. And out of this comes spiritual growth.

Number eleven is the most mysterious of all, **Resolution of Angelic Conflict**. Sometimes God will bring something into our life and we have absolutely no idea why. It appears to have no rhyme or reason. This one is saying that things are going on behind the scenes with the angelic conflict. Somehow we’re plugged into the angelic conflict by the Lord Jesus Christ and he’s working something in that realm that relates to this realm and we’ve got to go through it. It’s like the suffering of Job. No one ever explained to Job why he was suffering, but we have the book now and it’s like a backstage pass that gives insight to God and Satan. So, God has a lot more going on than just our lives, there’s more to history than the seen, there’s also the unseen realm and the resolution of that ages old conflict.

We point these out because there are reasons for suffering and some of those reasons we know, some of them we don’t. The encouragement is that when you think about it, there are at least eleven different areas; maybe you can find more but these at least give some of the possible explanations for why you suffer in this life.

Now we want to look at Paul’s life and see why he suffered in his life. Paul is nearing the end of his course, he knows its coming, and he knows he’s on a crash course. So we want to see if we can discover what suffering patterns he faced?

As we pick up in Acts 21:1 Paul is at Miletus having the elder meeting, he’s given his farewell address, they’ve prayed, and it says, **When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos** (that means smooth sailing), they came down to the island, one of the Dodecanese called **Cos and the next day to Rhodes, Rhodes** was the largest of the Dodecanese group and the city of Rhodes was on the NE corner of the island **and from there to Patara; Patara** is on the mainland of Lycia, southern Asia, **and having found a ship crossing over to**

Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. In other words, when it says they **found a ship crossing over** that means they found a large merchant vessel. We can tell that because the smaller ships kept their course along the shorelines, only the larger vessels went out into the open water. So they found a large merchant ship and that's going to save a lot of time. Eusebius tells us they made the trip in five days. That's going to speed up the trip and likely get Paul to Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Paul is very intent on reaching Jerusalem that day because he has contributions from the Gentile churches. Verse 3, **When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.** ⁴**After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days;** seven days it takes to unload and reload so what does Paul do for seven days? He looks up the disciples. Why would there be disciples of Christ there? Because they were scattered by Paul himself in Acts 8. See, before Paul became the great defender of the Christian faith he was the great persecutor of the Christian faith and in Acts 8 he was arresting men and women who professed faith in Jesus as the Christ. And many of them scattered up this seaboard (Acts 11:19). So they're living there because Paul scattered them there. And now Paul looks them up, he may have already had acquaintance with them in Acts 15:3 when he was headed down to the Counsel of Jerusalem, we don't know for sure, but we do know they spent **seven days** with them this time and that some of them had the gift of prophecy and kept giving Paul the message at the end of verse 4, **they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.**

Now, we have to face the age old question that every scholar in the Book of Acts has had to ask since the book was written: was Paul right or was he wrong in going to Jerusalem? So let's back up and see what we know so far. Acts 19:21 we see Paul has a plan, "Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem..." it didn't work out to a T but Paul did purpose in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem and now he was on his way. The debate here, of course, is whether this is Paul's human spirit or the Holy Spirit. I think it's Paul's human spirit, I think Paul made a plan here and that's not necessarily wrong. Something is on Paul's mind that he's got to get back to Jerusalem. Now turn to chapter 20:22. So far, Paul doesn't know of any troubles that lie in wait for him at Jerusalem but now he starts getting bad reports. "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³except that the Holy

Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.” Now, all you can say about that statement is that Paul is being warned in advance. There’s nothing here about the Holy Spirit saying, don’t go Paul, don’t go. Only that in v 22 he is duty bound by the Spirit and in v 23 that he is also being warned by the Holy Spirit. So all of the warnings up to this point are at least saying this: Paul you’re on a crash course; you are going to be in extreme physical danger in Jerusalem. Now we come to 21:4, the statement **they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem**. Now you may think the Holy Spirit is saying don’t go to Jerusalem. That’s probably not the way to take it. If you look at v 11 another prophet, this one after the OT style, his deeds illustrate his prophecy, it’s the clearest of all of them and nowhere does the Holy Spirit say don’t go to Jerusalem Paul. So probably what we’re getting in v 4 is their reaction to what the Holy Spirit told them. The Holy Spirit said trouble was ahead for Paul, they took that and said, Paul, don’t go. See, Paul was already duty bound in 20:22, so he knows that a later prophetic word isn’t going to contradict a prior word. Therefore, 20:22 takes priority and 21:4 must be their reaction to what the Spirit told them. So, all we know is that Jerusalem for Paul is going to be troublesome, it’s going to mean imprisonment but Paul says that’s all right, I’m going. So, the question is, was Paul right or wrong? Some commentators think he was right. Some commentators think he was wrong. F. F. Bruce, who wrote probably the great commentary on the Book of Acts, thinks Paul sees danger of a Jewish church/Gentile church split and that can’t happen at this early stage of the church. And therefore to avoid it he is duty bound to deliver the collection of money that had been given by the Gentile churches in Asia and Macedonia and Achaia. A split at this time would be devastating and so to preserve unity in the church Paul is willing to risk his life.

The counter argument is that Paul is going to make a catastrophic mistake in Jerusalem at the end of chapter 21 because he’s going to take a vow and the vow requires him to go into the Temple and undergo the rites of purification and that Paul was being legalistic and it was his legalism that got him in trouble and resulted in his arrest. And therefore if Paul had just avoided Jerusalem altogether this never would have happened. So those who think Paul was wrong to go to Jerusalem interpret the Spirit’s warnings through these prophets as commands for Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Those who think Paul was right to go to Jerusalem interpret the Spirit’s warnings

through these prophets as forewarnings of what Paul will face in Jerusalem so he could be spiritually prepared.

Well, which one is right? Was Paul right or wrong to go to Jerusalem? The text doesn't tell us. The text isn't interested in whether Paul was right or wrong. What the text is interested in is that Paul did go to Jerusalem. I personally think Paul was right to go to Jerusalem. He was unquestionably convinced he was duty bound to go to Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit never reprimands him for going. So these are all forewarnings so Paul will be spiritually prepared.

One of the things that surfaces with this approach is the parallel between Jesus' final days and Paul's final days in Jerusalem. Both men, as they near the end, get glimpses that the end is near and both have people try to turn them off course, both begin to prepare spiritually and neither is deterred. So that's what we want to watch for in the rest of our time. Verse 5, **When our days there were ended**, that's in Tyre, they spent seven days with the disciples there, **we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.** Another farewell, this one is friendly but not near as clingy as the one at Miletus. Verse 6, **Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.** ⁷**When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day.** Ptolemais was just down the coast from Tyre, it's the modern city of Acre and it was the most important port along this seaboard. There were believers there too; can all the area had been evangelized. Verse 8, **On the next day we left and came to Caesarea**, A Roman city, built by Herod the Great. It was an entertainment paradise. Herod had built a theatre and a hippodrome so there was plenty to do in Caesarea. This is where the procurator of Judea had his palace and you might find interesting this archaeological discovery of an inscription during the reign of Emperor Tiberius that says Pontius Pilate. We have evidence of his rule in this territory. And finally, there was a Roman garrison here. And one of the soldiers stationed in Caesarea was a centurion, Cornelius. Peter had visited his house and given him the gospel along with many others and they had believed. So this was the beginning of Gentile Christianity. It was here that Gentiles were first baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. So the

joining of Jew and Gentile in the one new man of Ephesians occurred at Caesarea. And this is where Paul and company come to and it says they entered **the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.** Remember **Philip**? In searching the book of Acts the two most prominent people are who? Obviously Peter and Paul. Stephen and Philip run a tight race for third. The end of Acts 6 and all of Acts 7 are devoted to Stephen. All of Acts 8 is devoted to Philip. He became known as **the evangelist** because he traveled all over with the gospel message. He was the first to evangelize Samaria, and the first to evangelize Judea, both sections of Acts 1:8, the theme of the book; You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria. Philip was the key man for Judea and Samaria, so he's probably the third or fourth most important man in the Book of Acts.

Verse 9, **Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.** I said the minor point today was that Luke is gathering information to compose his two-fold work, Luke-Acts. Here are some of his informants. We owe thanks to Papias, bishop of Asian Hieropolis who was quoted by Eusebius to the effect that these daughters, or at least some of them lived to a great age and were highly sought after as informants for the people and events of the early Jewish church, so for Acts 1-8, Luke got much of his information from these women. For Acts 9-28 Paul was his major informant. That's our minor point today; research is not contradictory to the orthodox doctrine of inspiration. Research is one of several means the Holy Spirit used to write Scripture.

And now we come to the major point again in v 10. **As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.** ¹¹**And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'** " ¹²**When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.** ¹³**Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."** [Luke 9:51] ¹⁴**And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"** [Matt 26:42; Luke 22:42] Now, the

prophet named Agabus we've met before in Acts 11:27ff. He prophesied in AD46 of a famine during the reign of Claudius. He was a well-respected prophet; we already know his prophecies come to pass so he's passed the tests of a prophet given in Deut 13 and 18. And he comes in v 11 in the mode of the OT prophets with strange behavior. He takes Paul's belt and binds his own feet and hands to illustrate the prophecy. Like Ahijah the Shilonite when he came before Jeroboam and ripped his new cloak into twelve pieces and said, pick ten, because you're going to reign over ten tribes (1 Kgs 11:29ff). Or Isaiah when he walked around naked for three years (Isa 20:2-4). Or like Ezekiel who was told to lay on his left side for 390 days and then lay on his right side for 40 days for the iniquity of Israel (Ezek 4:4ff). These prophets did strange things to illustrate their messages. And by his strangeness he is clearly in the stream of the OT prophets.

So verse 12 we get the reaction, **When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him**, imperfect voice, it means they kept on begging him, don't go Paul, don't go up to Jerusalem, please don't go. Then Paul responds in v 13, **What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?** It's more powerful in the original, why are you trying to weaken my resolve, why are you trying to soften my determination, why are you trying to unnerve me. He's saying stop, please stop, this is the last thing I need right now: you guys trying to dissuade me from going to Jerusalem.

V 14, **And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"** So they give in. What's the implication of their giving in and falling silent? That they were trying to thwart the plan of God; that they wanted their will to be done. But finally Paul resisted and resisted and resisted and they give in to the will of God saying, **"The will of the Lord be done!"** Up until that point they wanted their will to be done. And they did everything they could to persuade Paul not to do the will of the Lord. Don't think that just because someone's a believer they can't be against the will of the Lord. Here they were until they gave up.

Now, in what has just been said there are tremendous parallels with the end of Jesus' life. I'll point out three. Acts 21:11. Here's Agabus' prophecy, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt *and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.*'" Hold your place here and watch for that phraseology in Matt 20:18. This one

concerning Jesus. “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, ¹⁹*and will hand Him over to the Gentiles*, there it is, exact parallel, both Jesus and Paul would be handed over to the Gentiles in the city of Jerusalem.

Second parallel, go back to Acts 21:12, the reaction by his friends. “When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.” Don’t go Paul. For the parallel with Jesus hold your place and turn to Matt 16:21. “From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.” What’s the context, I’m going to Jerusalem, it’s the end, I’m going to suffer, and I’m going to die. How does Peter respond? V 22, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” ²³But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.” What’s the real issue in these attempts to turn Paul and Jesus aside from the crash course? What’s really driving them? Satanic influence. Both the people that tried to stop Christ and the people that tried to stop Paul were demonically influenced people. They were all Christians but they were all deceived. I showed you in Acts 21 those people didn’t have the will of the Lord in mind, they had their own plans for history and this absolutely shocks some of you that Satan could speak through a believer. That a real believer could be fed a series of lies that would actually result in him trying to destroy the plan of God. But it’s true, all too true.

For a third parallel between Christ and Paul turn to Rom 15:31. We know during this time Paul was receiving all the bad news about what awaited him in Jerusalem and that he was praying for his persecutors and he was praying if there be a way for him to escape them let it be done. Verse 31, “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, ³¹that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;” Notice that, v 31, that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, those are the one’s who will bind him and imprison him, and if it be your will Lord, rescue me from them. And for the parallel turn to Luke 22:42. The Lord Jesus Christ’s prayer in the Garden

of Gethsemane. He's near the end, what does He pray? "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." Paul and Christ, both prayed, if there be a way of escape I want that, if not I want what you want God, I want your will to be done. Now, to conclude return to Acts 21:14. How did Paul finally get his friends to respond? **The will of the Lord be done!** These two men track very closely as they near the end of their lives. Both of them suffered. Paul was told from the very start, Acts 9:21, you will suffer many things. Ultimately he was to be martyred, some people God gives this course, this is their calling, and this is his will for their life. It's not something to yearn after. It's not something you walk into like an idiot. There's a difference between being an idiot and being a martyr. Being a martyr is something these people sense is their destiny and there's nothing you can do to stop them.

Let's conclude with the question. What patterns of suffering did Paul face and how did he handle them? Now, obviously he was involved in suffering pattern one, everyone suffers due to the **Effects of the Fall**, but that's not what's in view here. Number two, **Effects of Personal Sin**. Is that the case in this scenario? I see no disobedience on the part of Paul; he's not going to suffer here because of a wrong choice. Three, **Suffering by Association with Families and Nations**, he did suffer some by association, those who tried to deter him from going, that softened his determination, made it difficult for Paul. Their sin affected him. Number four, **Eternal Suffering in the Lake of Fire**, obviously not. Number five, **Temporal Discipline of Believers**, no, Paul had done no sin in this instance, he's not being disciplined. Number six, **Judgment Seat of Christ**, no, he's still alive. Second column, number seven is for unbelievers only, to stimulate them to faith in Christ. Number eight, now we're getting a lot closer, **A Nudge to Spiritually Advance**, was that possibly involved in Paul's sufferings? Yes, it was, and with every new report that you're going to suffer in Jerusalem Paul, you're going to be bound, you're going to be handed over to the Gentiles, what was that in effect? A nudge to prepare spiritually. And so Paul would pray and Paul would study more of the word and Paul would teach more of the word and Paul would write, it was all spiritual preparation. So number eight definitely. Who else faced number eight in parallel with Paul? Jesus Christ. Heb 5. What did the Son learn by suffering? Obedience. How about number nine, **Evangelism of Unbelievers**. Do you think unbelievers by watching how Paul handled his trials were effected by it? Absolutely. It was

supernaturally designed suffering and God is going to squeeze everything He can out of Paul. Who else suffered for reason number nine? The Lord Jesus Christ. Who was it who stood by the cross and said, "Surely this man was the Son of God?" A Roman centurion said that. A man who believed in Christ simply because He watched how our Savior handled the heat. Number ten, **Edification of Believers**. You think that was involved? That was heavily involved, clearly many believers saw Paul face these turmoil's and they were encouraged by how he responded. It shows that God's grace is sufficient for my difficulties. There's no problem too great the grace of God can't handle it. Paul's a living testimony to it. Who else testified of it? The Lord Jesus Christ. And finally, number 11, **Resolution of Angelic Conflict**. Could some of that be going on? Unquestionably it was. With all Paul's friends against the will of the Lord at one point. Where did those ideas come from? Satanic influence. So God was working out something in the angelic conflict with Paul. Paul didn't give in.

Now when you face some trial, some difficulty in life go back to Paul, this man knew in advance persecution was coming, terrible persecution and this man was prepared. We're soft today as American Christians. We think being a martyr or something is strange. It's only strange in America. All over the world for the past 2,000 years martyrdom has been the norm. But for some reason the Lord has seen fit to keep us relatively well protected. But it's led to us being soft, we're not prepared like Paul in v13. So let's conclude with v 13, **For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus**. Spiritual readiness. I don't know where you are today but every one of us ought to have this as our goal. To have the mentality of Paul at least, not that it will happen but if it does happen we're ready to go all the way for the name of the Lord Jesus. This utterance clearly raises Paul to heroic status in the annals of God. That this man was ready, not only to go to jail but to die, not for our sins, but for the name of the Lord Jesus who did die for our sins.

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