

Fact Sheet for “Your Calling” Acts 21:1-17

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Read Acts 21:1-17

I'm going to tell you right up front where I am going this morning. We're going to look at three things.

1st – Paul was prophetically warned *by God* on at least three occasions about going to Jerusalem. We'll consider each of those warnings.

2nd – We'll look at why Paul chose to go to Jerusalem anyway.

3rd – In the spirit of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 I want to explore the instructive value Paul's choice about these warnings has for our own lives today.

Acts 21:1-17 is a travelogue. In advance it's called an itinerary. After the trip it's called a travelogue. But, as we will see, even biblical travelogues can have instructive value for our Christianity (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

1st – Three Prophetic Warnings

True prophecy can only come from God. Listen to the words of Isaiah (41:21-23; 42:8-9; 44:6-7; 45:20-21). If God was telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem, then he disobeyed God, because he went.

Paul had just finished speaking with the Elders of the Ephesian church. Luke records three prophetic warnings to Paul, beginning with that conversation (Acts 20:22-23).

Was the Holy Spirit telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem? No.

Acts 21:4

⁴ And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

Was the Holy Spirit telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem, or were the disciples telling him not to go? It was the disciples.

Acts 21:10-11

¹⁰ While we were staying for many 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, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

Was the Holy Spirit telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem? No.

In each of these there was a warning as to what would occur in Jerusalem, but God was not telling Paul not to go.

2nd – Why did Paul go?

Read Acts 9:15-16; 20:22-23

This is just like Jesus as made His way to Jerusalem for the last time.

Matt. 16:21; Mk. 8:31; Lk. 9:22 (Consider Matt. 16:21-23)

Matt. 17:22-23; Mk. 9:31-32; Lk. 9:44-45

Matt 20:17-19; Mk. 10:32-34; Lk. 18:31-34

Paul was willing to pay the cost for the ministry God had given him (Acts 20:24).

3rd – What Instructive Value Does This Have for Us?

We may think that we are masters of our own destiny and captains of our own ship, but this is far from the truth.

Election (Romans 8:28-30)

Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

Opportunities, both bad and good

Jesus before Pilate (John 19:11)

John the Baptist (John 3:26-27)

Conditional blessings (Eccl. 2:26 and 5:19; 6:1-2)

What has God given you?

By birth

By the thousands of decisions each of us make

By God's choice for our spiritual gifting

What should be our goal?

To get bigger and better things

Or to be faithful to what God has placed before us?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and Hebrews 12:1-2, then Acts 20:24

What has God given you?

Are you being faithful to His calling?

Family

Spiritual

Work