

Acts of Jesus 47 Paul's Journey to Jerusalem notes

We continue on in our study of Acts **Acts 21:1-14**

--After over 20 years in ministry and missions, Paul returns for a final time to Jerusalem...there ultimately to be imprisoned and sent to Rome.

VV. 1-3 – Tyre was a port city in what is today Lebanon

--Conquered by Nebuchadnezzar around 600 B.C.

--In **Is. 23:1**, God predicted that both the harbor and buildings of Tyre would be destroyed, but Nebuchadnezzar didn't do either.

--He conquered it but left it in similar shape to the way he had found it.

--After the Babylonians conquered Tyre, the people of Tyre decided to rebuild their city but they decided not to do it on the mainland where another army could get to them.

--They left the old city on the mainland intact and built their new city on an island that was just off shore on the other side of the harbor.

--In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great decided that he wanted to take the city, but how do you get an army to an island that has a wall around its perimeter?

--He tore down the old city, the one God predicted would be destroyed but which Nebuchadnezzar left standing, and pushed the rubble into the harbor, the one God said would be destroyed but Nebi didn't destroy it. He made a land bridge by which he conquered the new Tyre and he also fulfilled the prophecies of God to a tee!

--If you think the prophecies of God are not going to be fulfilled, just hang on.

VV. 4-14 – First impression might lead us to conclude that Paul is making a bad decision here

--Not only that, but when he gets to Jerusalem he's going to take the advice of elders and go and worship at the Temple which leads to him getting arrested.

--Not only that, but during his prison stay he will appeal to Caesar which leaves him in chains for another few years—but we find out that if he hadn't appealed to Caesar he could have been set free.

--Looks like he's making mistakes, but all these apparent mistakes are just that "apparent" (ie. Not real ones)

--This is not so clear while Paul is in Tyre but its perfectly clearly in Caesaria with the prophecy of Agabus.

--Watch what he says again in **V. 11** – That's what He said and that's all He said---There is no "Don't go to Jerusalem" added on.

--Paul is following the leadership of the Spirit in going to Jerusalem and ignoring the contradicting voices of other believers.

1. There are several lessons we can learn here.

1. One lesson is the lesson of steadfastness = doing what you know God has told you to do and sticking with it until its done.

--Paul does that quite well even in the face of bad advice.

A recent television documentary pointed out that the cheetah survives on the African plains by running down its prey. The big cat can sprint seventy miles per hour. But the cheetah cannot sustain that pace for long. Within its long, sleek body is a disproportionately small heart, which causes the cheetah to tire quickly. Unless the cheetah catches its prey in the first flurry, it must abandon the chase. Sometimes Christians seem to have the cheetah's approach to ministry.

- We speed into projects with great energy. But lacking the heart for sustained effort, we fizzle before we finish.
- We vow to start faster and run harder, when what we need may be **Not more speed** but **more staying power**—

Consider the example of the postage stamp: Its usefulness consists in its ability to stick to one thing till it gets to its final destination.

2. The Second lesson we need to learn from this is concerning advice: both giving and receiving advice.

First, some general advice on advice.

1. Good advice rarely comes lightly or hastily – In this situation, the saints don't stop to consider the grand scheme of things they just shoot from the hip.
 - Ask a strong Christian when looking for advice
 - Don't listen to or give any advice that is not thought over and prayed over.
2. Refrain from giving or taking advice that have emotions tied to them.
 - These saints are speaking from emotion and therefore don't give advice in compliance with God's will.
 - Emotions can lead you to say do almost anything—they are very intoxicating—they can control us like alcohol or drugs.
3. Be careful about giving and receiving advice to or from those you are close to (because of the emotions issue) especially if emotions are involved.
 - The believers were close to Paul and loved him and were not good candidates for advice.
 - If doctors are reluctant to perform surgery on those they are close to, we need to be cautious about giving and receiving advice from those we are close to.

Secondly, some advice on giving advice.

1. We all like to give advice; based on our text, we should give less advice than we do.
2. Give advice only to the degree that you have clear biblical principle underlying it.
 - Did the saints have any Biblical principle underlying their advice? no, they just said “don't go!!!”
3. They said don't go based on what? **Emotions**--Which were based on what? Fear of suffering.
 - Now we all know God doesn't want us to suffer...right? He does allow us to suffer for His purposes.
 - Jesus told us take up our cross daily and follow Him...a cross is not something you carry to a party!

--Jesus told His disciples to follow Him and then left them and us an unequivocal example of disregard for self-preservation.

--Advice based on preserving self with regards to ministry and spiritual matters may not be good advice.

4. The best advice may not be what the majority says:

--Paul certainly found that to be true.

Several million Israelites thought it was a bad idea to go into the Promised land as opposed to only 2 spies and Moses and Aaron who thought otherwise—the majority was horribly wrong.