

Acts 21
Paul's Calling to Jerusalem
Jay Hohfeler



Paul Goes to Jerusalem

21 And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ² And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. 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. ⁵ When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed ⁶ and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

⁷ When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. ⁸ On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

⁹ He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

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.'" ¹² When we heard this, we and the people there urged 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 imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

¹⁵ After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

The Holy Spirit had told Paul to go to Jerusalem

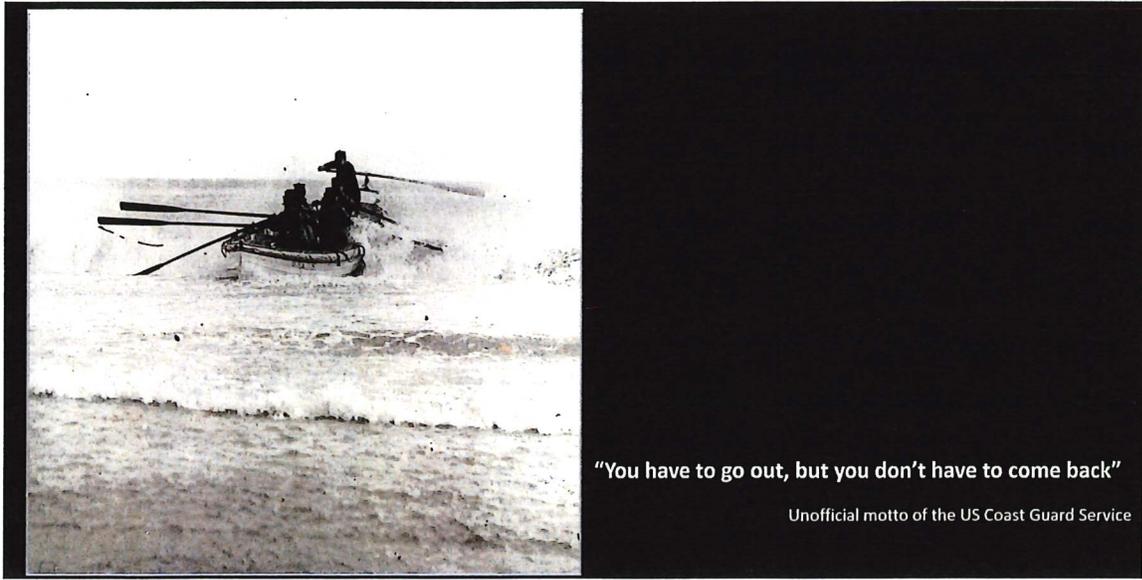
Acts 19:21

²¹ Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Acts 20:22-24

²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

How are the responses of Jesus to His disciples, similar to Paul's response to these loving brothers & sisters?



“This is the only way that we can understand the nature of Christian discipleship. The only way that a man or woman can ultimately sell out as a disciple of Jesus is when they regard death with contempt.”

John Calvin
Commentary on the Psalms

Paul was made into a man with a surrendered **will** and a **love** for sinners....and Jesus, Himself.

How did God make Paul like this?

One of His chief methods: **SUFFERING**

--2 TRUTHS--

1. GOD CALLS ALL CHRISTIANS TO SUFFER

For I will show [Paul] how much he must suffer for the sake of my name. (Acts 9:16)	Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:19)
For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake (Phil 1:29)	
For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. (2 Cor 1:5)	...and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3)
...[they returned] strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)	

Major misconception: “God’s main job is to remove pain.”

2. GOD TAILOR-MAKES SUFFERING

- God has Satan on a leash, he's not prowling around unrestricted.
- God knows just where to place His finger on my heart (motives, pride, false gods, security)
- He accomplishes His good, eternal plan in me.
- **But he knows the way that I take;**
when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. (Job 23:10)
- "We will thank God, endlessly in Heaven, for the trials He sent us here." Joni Eareckson Tada

Principle

When God shapes my heart with pain, loss and brokenness, I can finally follow Him with healthy abandon.

Good reference on Suffering: [When God Weeps](#) by Joni Eareckson Tada

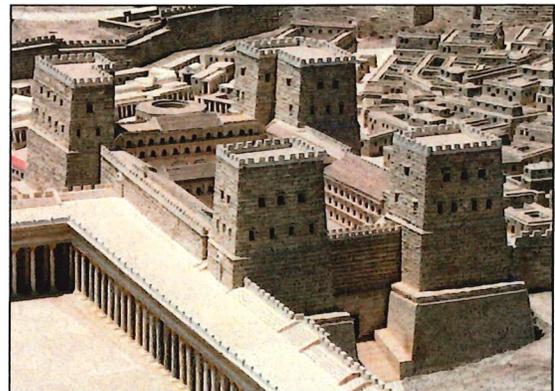
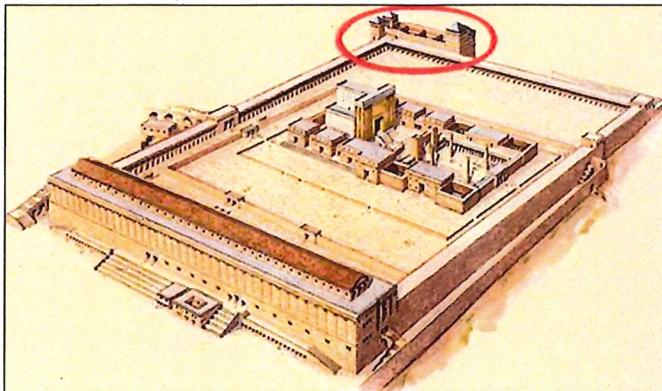
Paul Visits James

¹⁷ When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. ¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, ²¹ and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. ²² What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; ²⁴ take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. ²⁵ But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality." ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

Paul Arrested in the Temple

²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, "Men of Israel,

help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.³¹ And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.³² He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.³³ Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd,³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”



God lined everything up from before Paul was born—just like He said—to work it all together so that the gospel is advanced. In order for Paul to be arrested and survive, he has to have dual citizenship, speak Hebrew and Greek and be a knowledgeable Pharisee. He may be in prison, but his ministry hasn't been thwarted. He's not done preaching the gospel. And God has always been in every detail. He has infinite power, has an infinite attention span, and can handle every kind of complexity and nuance imaginable. God isn't just in the grand scheme of things; He's also in the tiny scheme of things. And in all the schemes of all the things, He's where the joy is!

Tara-Leigh Cobble
The Bible Recap

Principle

God does not expect us to see His purposes in the short-run.
But, God honors choices we make for the right reasons to please the Him—whatever the short-run outcomes may be.