

Reflecting on Acts 21

Discussion Questions | October 9, 2022

Introduction: In Acts 21, Paul faces somewhat of a new challenge: While being fully convinced that the Spirit of the Lord is leading him into trials, Paul receives equally compelling warnings from his brothers and sisters in Christ to avoid the trials. By the end of the chapter, Paul is under arrest in Jerusalem and in grave danger. From this chapter, we observe the complexities of following the Spirit and having fellowship with other Christians. By way of summary, we learn that ***God's people will not always agree on the mind of God, but we can joyously pursue the will of God for His glory.***

1. **Read Acts 19:21 and 20:22-23.** What do these passages reveal about the Spirit's leading in Paul's life? Judging from Paul's own words, what circumstances will he soon face?

2. **Read Acts 20:10-14 and Mark 14:32-36.** Despite the pleas of his friends to avoid suffering, Paul is intent on going to Jerusalem. Eventually, even the brothers and sisters in Caesarea resign themselves to, "the will of the Lord."

This question continues on the next page.

How does this story compare to Mark's account of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane? How have you seen God's will be done through difficult circumstances?

3. **Read Job 19:23-27 and Psalm 130.** In these passages, both Job and the Psalmist are in the depths of trial and discouragement, yet they offer praise to the Lord. According to each passage, what is the source of the author's hope? Do you find encouragement in these same realities? Why or why not?

4. **Read Acts 21:17-40.** Some Bible scholars view Paul's willingness to take a vow and make a blood sacrifice in the temple as an act of gospel compromise. Others applaud Paul's decision to avoid offending his Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ.

Whether or not Paul makes a poor decision here, how does God glorify Himself in the circumstances of this passage? What do these verses teach us about the challenges and importance of Christian unity?

5. **Romans 12:9-21 (especially verse 18)**. As we've already stated, there are various and competing interpretations on the circumstances of Acts 21. We have also tried to highlight how God works in all circumstances, even in spite of His people, for their good and His glory.

What are some practical ways for our church to unify around the gospel and obey the commands of Romans 12:9-21? How might you act on some of these ideas this week?