

# Arrest & Apologia

*I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die  
at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*

Acts 21:13

## Study 22a: WARNINGS ON THE WAY (21:1-14)

### 21:1-12 Is the Spirit trying to prevent Paul's trip to Jerusalem? (19:21, 20:23)

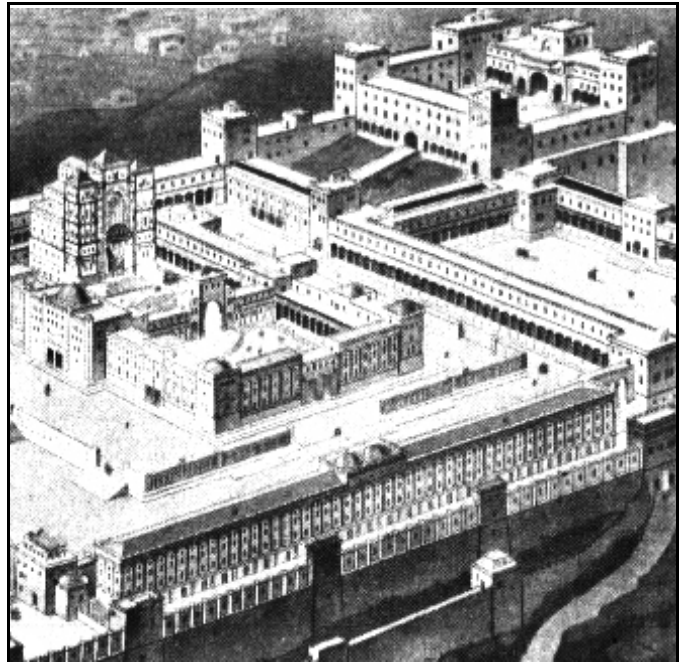
(1) But Paul also believed that he was guided by the Spirit to go on, 20:22, and Acts does not attempt to reconcile the two commands, not to go, and to go to Jerusalem. **C.S.C. Williams** *The Acts of the Apostles* p.237

(2) The voice of the New Testament prophet was always worthy of attention and respect, but it was not always authoritative nor even correct. The rule by which it was to be tried is found in 1 Thess. 5:20,21 -- "Despise not prophesyings, prove all things, hold fast to that which is good," which is just what Paul would be most likely to do in this case. He would say to these brethren that there was no doubt that bonds and afflictions awaited him, for he had heard that prediction again and again in this journey (20:23). But, he would note, when it was said that he must go to Jerusalem, how tender solicitude was mistaken for the utterance of God's Spirit, for he himself was so unmistakably directed that he was moving forward "bound in the Spirit" (20:22). Surely the man who was going in the teeth of the divine will could not receive such comfort as Paul was given in Jerusalem (23:11). When Jonah did not take the course prescribed by God he was not commended -- disaster overtook him. **J.M. Stifler** *Acts of the Apostles* p.206

### 21:13,14 Is Paul's self-will overruling the Spirit's voice?

(3) There is here an apparent discrepancy in the declarations of the Spirit. The disciples of Tyre through the Spirit assert that Paul should not go up to Jerusalem; whereas the apostle himself felt constrained in the spirit -- impelled by a strong sense of duty -- to go up (Acts 20:23). We must here distinguish between intimations of the Spirit, and the inferences drawn by men from these intimations. The Spirit revealed to the Tyrian disciples the dangers that awaited the apostle at Jerusalem; and they from love to the apostle, besought him not to go up. But Paul entertained a juster view of the matter; he recognised more correctly the voice of the Spirit: he was certain that, in spite of these bonds and sufferings which the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city, it was his duty to proceed. If the Spirit had actually forbidden him to go up to Jerusalem, he would have desisted ... **Paton J. Gloag** *Acts* Vol.2 p.262

(4) Was Paul wrong to ignore all these warnings ... Many scholars think so. They tell us that because of Paul's headstrong



The Castle of Antonia, the Roman fortress attached to the temple Court of the Gentiles at the northwest corner. In this illustration, looking at the temple complex from the southwest, the castle stands ominously and symbolically above the house of Yahweh, from which advantage the Roman cohort could sweep down the ramps instantly to quell any disturbance among the gathered Jews.

refusal to listen to God's prophets, he lost at least four years of his life: two in custody in Caesarea and two in house arrest in Rome. He accomplished nothing by going to Jerusalem. His plan to bring about unity of the Jewish Christians and the gentile churches was lost in the riot that broke out. Some even suggest that he had to use all the money he brought to pay the expenses of trials and travel (which is why Luke, embarrassed, never mentioned the fund!) ... It is false theology that assumes that success results from doing the will of God, while every calamity and failure indicates that God's will has not been done. **W.S. LaSor** *Church Alive* p.315

## Study 22b: RUMOURS, RIOT AND ARREST (21:15-40)

### 21:15-25 Is the Jerusalem church reactionary?

(5) How astonishing is this! Did none of the apostles beside Paul know that this dispensation was now abolished? And if they did know and testify this, how came their hearers not to believe them? **John Wesley** *Notes* p.489

### 21:26-29 Does Paul compromise the gospel? (16:1-4)

(6) Yielding his own judgment to their advice, which seemed to flow not out of spiritual, but carnal wisdom; seeming to be what he really was not; making as if he believed the law still in force. **J. Wesley** *op. cit.*, p.490

(7) A truly emancipated spirit such as Paul's is not in bondage to its own emancipation. **F.F. Bruce** *The Book of Acts* p.432

### 21:30-36 Whether Gentile or Jewish, 1st century or 20th, what is true of the mob? (19:32,40)

21:37-40 Note Paul is not too 'spiritual' to take advantage of 'secular' means that advantage his work

## Study 22c: PAUL'S APOLOGIA -- A JEW TO THE JEWS (22:1-21)

### 22:1,2 The first rule of apologetics -- SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE! (21:37,40; cf. Daniel 1:3-6)

### 22:3-14 How does Paul attempt to maintain common ground with his hostile audience?

(8) This speech of Paul to the Jews was an apology in answer to the accusation that he taught all men everywhere against the people, the law, and the temple (Acts 21:28). In his defence he adapts himself to his hearers, using every lawful method to propitiate their favour, and secure a patient hearing. He addresses them in their native language; he mentions that he himself, although a Greek Jew, was brought up in Jerusalem, and educated under one of their most renowned rabbis; he alludes to his former zeal for Judaism, and his persecution of the Christians; he represents Ananias who administered to him the initiatory rite of Christianity, as a devout man according to the law, and well reported of by all the Jews resident in Damascus; and he tells them that even after his conversion he did not neglect the rites of Judaism, but that it was while he was worshipping in the temple that a vision was imparted to him. **P.J. Gloag** *op. cit.*, p.289

### 22:15-18 Notice the NAME with which Paul's baptism, forgiveness, prayer and witness are connected? (9:20,22)

(9) A man so taught, and so zealous for what he had learned, how could he be so different now unless there has been a divine intervention? Every such change is an argument for God and for his direct and immediate agency in the hearts of believers. If nature is uniform, and there is no activity outside and above her laws, why in one hour should the persecuting bigot Saul become the broad-minded Paul, with sympathies as tender as Christ's,

and a love as wide as human woe? Character is as stable as the hills and of itself will no more change than they will change their place. Paul was once as full of hate against the "way" as he is now full of love for it. Did any power in nature turn the salt Dead Sea into refreshing water? **J.M. Stifler** *op. cit.*, p.219

### 22:17-21 What is Paul's (Luke's?) motive in adding these details to his testimony?

(10) Paul, in the relation of this vision, declares to the Jews his intense love for their nation; that he did not willingly forsake Jerusalem, but departed in consequence of the repeated command of Christ. In the narrative we are informed that his departure was occasioned by the plots of the Jews to kill him; here the motive which he assigns was an express command from Christ. **P.J. Gloag** *op. cit.*, p.296

## Apologia as witness

The keynote is struck with the term *defence* (Greek *apologia*) which reappears in this section of Acts (24:10; 25:8; 26:1f., 24; cf. 19:33). This word does not simply mean the giving of reasoned answers to charges made in court; includes the concept of witness to him. This explains why we do not get a point-by-point reply to the charges made against Paul: he uses

the opportunity primarily to testify to the Lord, showing how his conduct is justified by appeal to the Lord's commands. Thus Paul's speeches become a means of preaching the gospel and confronting the audience with the claim to their faith and obedience to the Lord. **I. Howard Marshall** *The Acts of the Apostles* p.353