

Act 21-23:11

STANDING ON THE TRUTH

Paul testifies before a Jewish crowd and also the Sanhedrin.

Paul goes from Miletus to Tyre 21:1-6

- Christians were told by the Holy Spirit to tell Paul not to go to Jerusalem.
- One commentator identified this event as “Paul’s mistake”. Out of his passion and love for his people and nation, he disregarded the Holy Spirit’s directive and pressed on ahead to Jerusalem. Yet the Lord graciously worked all things to the good of the one who loved Him and was called according to His purposes.

Paul goes from Tyre to Jerusalem 21:7-14

- The prophet, Agabus from Judea, declared that Paul would be bound by the Jews at Jerusalem and handed over to the Gentiles.
- Paul’s response, “...I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Compare this statement with Paul’s words in Romans 9:1-5.
- The Lord had told Paul he would go to Rome. Paul knew he would not die in Jerusalem.

Paul in Jerusalem 21:15-23:22

- Paul’s acquiescence to the brothers’ request for purification is another indication of his love for his people, his heritage, and his law (the law of Moses).
- Yet, the purification observance was not enough to stop some Jews from the province of Asia from maligning Paul based on some assumptions that Paul brought Greeks (Gentiles) into the forbidden temple area.
- We see that the Lord saw to it that Paul would not be killed; Roman soldiers caught wind of what was happening and came to the rescue.

22:1-23 Paul’s testimony of God’s grace to a Jewish crowd

- † Paul was the right man for the job.
- † What freed Paul from the guilt (20:26) of being a murderous blasphemer? How can a man be declared justified and truly innocent from the blood of all men?
- † Only when Jesus revealed Himself was Paul given the opportunity to repent, hear, and believe unto justification and redemption.

- † Paul's response to Jesus, "What must I do?" is the acceptable response to God's call.
 - Line of demarcation – identify what you are willing and not willing to believe and do. True belief always leads to humble inquiry of the Master's will.
- † "Go..." to God's messenger.
- † After instructions from Ananias, Paul returned to Jerusalem and in a dream, was told to leave Jerusalem and bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. When Paul told the Jews what God had told him about going to the Gentiles, the Jews began crying out for Paul's death. In essence, Paul was pointing out God's rejection of the Jews.

22:24-30 Paul was rescued by Roman soldiers. He proceeded to reveal his Roman citizenship. The following day, the captain set a court appearance for Paul in front of the religious leaders.

Discussion: From Paul's testimony, what are essential elements which reveal the truth of one's conversion?

23:1-11 Paul Speaks to the Religious Leaders' Court

- 📖 "...I have fulfilled my duties to God in all good conscience to this day." Paul was struck because he was implying that the authorities had made an error.
- 📖 "...I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection from the dead." This caused contention between the two parties present. Why did this result in Paul being moved out of Jerusalem and eventually to Rome?
- 📖 The Lord Jesus drew near and stood next to Paul and strengthened him. Note that the Lord is with those who are first with Him. We must be careful of thinking too cavalierly that God is always with us or for us. Check out Joshua 5:13, 14a.

Discussion: From this testimony, what can we learn about standing on truth?

From these two testimonies by the Apostle Paul, what is the truth that he was standing on? Please be specific from the text.

After identifying the specifics, discuss what should be the central focus in our minds and how should our thinking be renewed so that the central focus of Paul's thoughts is also ours.