

Paul's Trip to Jerusalem

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[0 : 0 0] there. So, you want to be in Acts chapter 9, we'll get there just in a second. The Apostle Paul, we know him, we know him well, he's an important figure to us, very, very important figure in the New Testament, and it's from the Apostle Paul that we get our doctrine for this age, what we call the church age, others call it the age of grace, and the Apostle Paul is called, or he calls himself the Apostle to the Gentiles, and we follow his teaching, we follow his doctrine, we follow his manner of life, he's in a, he calls himself a pattern, and he's such a key figure. As a matter of fact, I hope this isn't shocking to you, but if sometimes the words of the Apostle Paul contradict the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and do you know which one we take? Do you know who we follow? We follow Jesus Christ.

Nope. We follow the Apostle Paul, and they're not red letters. The Apostle Paul doesn't have red letters, but his teaching is to us. Sometimes the teachings of Jesus Christ is to somebody else, it's to the Jews, it's an anticipation of a kingdom that God promised to that people, of prophetic kingdom that's not yet been fulfilled or realized, and you got to be careful, very careful. Now the Bible calls him the Apostle to the Gentiles, and he's a great leader, and he had a great ministry, but there's, in following him, and in reading him, and seeing all of his missionary endeavors, and from place to place, and seeing his persecutions, and seeing him preaching, and the great trials, and the great troubles, and yet the great victories, and the great successes, and the churches, and the word of God that he delivers, there's this one thing, just this one thing about him that it's always confusing to me. There's one choice, there's one decision that he insisted on making that I'll never understand why he would do that. I understand maybe why he did, but it just doesn't make sense. It doesn't, it doesn't, it's not balanced. It's wrong, and I don't understand truly. I just don't get it, Paul, and it's in regards to his desire to see his people, the Jews, converted.

He had such a strong desire. You can read about it a little bit in Romans chapter 10, in Romans chapter 11. He wants to see Israel saved so badly that he will go against the word of God. He'll go against what the Lord has shown him, and told him, and it's an interesting thought. It's confusing in a sense, because this is our guy. He's our pattern. He shows us. He delivers to us the word of God, and yet in this one area, it's strange. So in Acts chapter 9, he's, we see him as Saul in verse number one, and he's breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. If you're familiar with him, if you've read through this, you know he's a, he's on a mission, and he's trying to exterminate all of Christianity, just wipe it off the face of the earth, and be zealous for the traditions of his fathers, and the law of Moses, and the way he was brought up. He's, he puts his money where his mouth is.

He's a, an aggressive man, not intimidated by anybody, and, but then he meets the Lord Jesus Christ here in Acts chapter 9, and the Lord says, why persecutest thou me? And he gives them some instructions, and we'll come up a little bit later, we'll come across this material here, but great revelation was given to Saul, who was then changed to the apostle Paul. Great revelation, and great understanding of the scriptures, greater than the apostle Peter, who walked with Jesus Christ for years, and was taught by the mouth of Jesus Christ, even in private, and yet the apostle Paul shows up later and meets Peter and says, hey buddy, you've got some things wrong, and he tells him more perfectly, expounds to him what's right, and what's truth, and so Paul, he, he got some, some incredible understanding in the word of God.

Now in chapter 9, I have you here to show you verses 22 and 23. Just to start, we're going to move and hop a little bit here. Verse 22 of Acts chapter 9, but Saul increased the more in strength and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ, and after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him, but their laying a weight was known of Saul, and they watched the gates day and night to kill him, and he gets away, but that was their reaction

to him teaching them the scriptures, and proving that Jesus Christ was their Messiah, that he in fact came and fulfilled scripture, and they want to kill him. Now look over at chapter 17.

[5 : 10] Acts 17, just the very beginning here, he's making his way through from town to town, and I'm not going to read each location that he stops at and show you the reaction, but you'll see it's very similar everywhere he went. Verse number 1 says, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ's needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ, and some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women, not a few, but the Jews, the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and on and on and on. The Jews rejected, and resisted, and even very violent people against the preaching. Go to chapter 18,

Acts chapter 18, and check out verse number 4. It says, and he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks, and when Silas and Timotheus were come to Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, your blood be upon your own heads, and off he went. Now I could really, I could run you from just a few verses either direction. You're going to see him going into another place, and the same reaction, another place, same reaction. The Jews are just constantly rejecting the preaching, and resisting everything he has to say. Violent people. Now move ahead a little bit to chapter 20. Acts chapter 20, and this is where we're going to kind of pick up some of this thought tonight. When we get into Acts 20, 21, 22, we can see that Paul is set on going and taking this message to his people in Jerusalem. He gets it in his heart, and you can't talk him out of it. He desires so badly to go to Jerusalem, where everybody's telling him, don't do it. But he's like, I don't care what you say. I'm going. And he takes this attitude. He's fixed upon it. He just won't listen to a word of anybody. He's just so determined and headstrong that he's going to go. And it's as if it's, he thinks in his mind, I'm going to go there, and I'm going to set the record straight. I'm going to prove to them. Because he has the truth. He has the goods. He knows it from start to finish. He not only knows how they think and how they believe, because he was trained in that, but he knows the truth and how to take what they believe and turn it around and show them this was Christ. He's confident in his ability to handle the scriptures. And he believes, maybe even deceives himself to think that I can get there, and I can reason with them, and I can talk them into it. I can show them who Jesus Christ was, and what they did, and what they need to do.

Now, Paul eventually gets there, and I'm going to take you through the incident that occurs there, and really just kind of outline with you tonight what I see in these chapters. And as we outline it, just highlight some lessons or some insights that we can take away from it that I think can help you individually and can help this church. I think there's little practical lessons all through what we read about with Paul here and his decision. And I'm not really going to preach it so much of a themed message to you, but rather just some various insights throughout this situation where Paul insists on taking a trip to Jerusalem. Now, I read this a few days ago, and some things just jumped out at me, and I just kind of tabled it, and then came back to it, and there it was still just as fresh. And so today I sat down and just kind of outlined the whole thing, and I hope these little insights help you, and they're going to be like jumping around, but I think you'll be fine.

[9 : 26] You'll understand we're outlining the incident. Now, first thing I want us to consider is what I'll call the objective. From the Apostle Paul's standpoint, he has one objective and one goal.

It's to preach the gospel to the Jews at Jerusalem. Now, God told him, you're going to go to the Gentiles. You're going to preach to the Gentiles. You're the apostle to the Gentiles. And he got that, and he did that, but the whole time it was to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. He had it in his heart and in his mind, I'm going to get to my people. I've got a burden for them. His heart's desire is that they be saved. And so he had an objective. And you know, that sounds noble.

It sounds noble to care about your people, to want them to be saved. How could you possibly talk bad about that? Would to God more of us were as passionate about our families and our neighbors and our friends and coworkers and people around us to be saved? Paul had this objective.

Humanly speaking, he looked at Jerusalem as that's where it all started. That's where Christ was

crucified.

That's where the chief, if I could reach the chief priests, if I could get to the high priest, if I could show them from their scriptures that they read and study daily, that Jesus is Christ, the Messiah, their deliverer. Why, if I could get to the head, it would trickle down. All these Jews and all these other synagogues would follow suit. He has to get to Jerusalem. It is passionate in his drive and desire. His objective is to get to the temple, is to reach them. And by doing that, to reach all the Jews. But take a look at chapter 20 of the book of Acts and notice that he's been told some things already. And he even testifies this. He says in verse 22, he says to these brethren, as he's leaving Ephesus, he says, and now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. In other words, I'm bound in my spirit and my internal drive to get there. And I don't know what's going to happen when I get there, but I've been told the Holy Spirit's been testifying through his believers that I'm going to get bound and I'm going to be afflicted when I get there. But then his response to that in verse 24, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy in the ministry which I received to the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Now that really does sound noble.

It's a great verse to kind of to build yourself, your mindset on that I'm not going to quit no matter what opposition arises. That's a great thought. But the apostle Paul's actually saying the Holy Ghost told me this is not going to work out, but I'm not worried about that. Then Paul, how are you going to finish your course? Because you have a course to finish. This confuses me about this man.

[12:40] How is he going to finish his course with joy in the ministry he received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God if he insists upon going and getting himself locked up in prison?

Because he has this drive and this desire. So this is his objective. Keep reading. Look at chapter 21 and notice in verse number 4.

21-4. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days, who said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

through the Spirit. Disciples being led of God to inform him and to warn him and to caution him and try to deter him from his own self and his own desires.

Chapter 21, look at verse number 10. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus. And when he was coming to us, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

[13:55] When we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not only, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Again, very noble sounding Paul. But is this the will of God for your life and for your ministry that he called you to? Is this what he's sending you on to Jerusalem? He's telling you, don't go.

Multiple times, don't go. And yet he's headstrong. Against all counsel, he insisted upon going to Jerusalem to preach to his brethren. He was warned, but he was burdened.

And his burden was too strong for his own good. So there's a problem here. The Holy Ghost told him not to go. His brethren and disciples and others told him, don't go.

He was desirous of a good thing. No question. But God had other plans for him. God had other better plans for him than being bound in Jerusalem.

[15:03] God had a separate calling that did not involve Jerusalem. And in this case, Paul's desires, his plans and desires did not line up with God's plans and desires.

And his intentions, though they could be noble and good and profitable and spiritually minded, they were against the will of God. They were against God's plan.

And so who really wins then? I'm going to preach the gospel in Jerusalem. But who's winning in this? Because do you really think it's going to be blessed?

Do you think it's going to go forward? Or just because you have it in your mind, it's going to work out this way. If I go this direction, God will bless it. Did he? The way he planned?

This is the objective. And a quick lesson we can get off of this initial thought here is be careful that your good intentions and that your good desires line up with God's will for your life.

[16:04] Be careful that you're not wanting something that is good, sounds good, seems good. It may be somebody else's calling like Peter, James, and John. But Paul desired so badly to be part

of that and to have it that he wouldn't, maybe he just wouldn't wait on God's timing.

I'm not saying that God didn't want him to ever go to Jerusalem, but it certainly wasn't in the cards in this moment. But he insisted that it was. And he went instead and he went against the warnings and the will of the Lord.

And so the lesson is be careful about that and learn to wait on God and learn to trust God and learn to obey what he does reveal to you and stay in that lane.

Willing to wait, willing to follow, even if it means you don't get your heart's desire. Stay here at Acts 20, but look back at chapter 7. And I'll show you an example of a guy that we've been studying on Sunday morning, Moses.

And Moses, his intentions were good, but the timing was wrong. Chapter 7, Stephen is preaching and he's reminding the Jews of some things.

[17:22] And we'll actually come back to this in a little bit. But in verse 23, when he was a fool 40 years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him that was oppressed and smote the Egyptian.

Look at verse 25. For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them. Guess it didn't work out though. And now he's a murderer and a fugitive and runs away.

But Moses thought, I got this figured out. I'm going to go out and see them and show them what God has made me to be. And he was wrong. And so that matches the Apostle Paul here.

The objective is to preach the gospel. To preach it sounds noble, but the timing's wrong. And he's going outside of his calling to do this. And he knows it.

So let's keep reading back in Acts. And I want you to notice that he decided, he made his own choice, that he would go. And let's see, where's that at?

[18:27] Chapter 21. And verse, we stopped at 13. Look at 21, 14. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done.

And after those things, we took up our carriages and went up to Jerusalem. So he went. He went to Jerusalem. And just to kind of be brief in this whole passage of scripture, he goes and meets with some of the brethren there.

Things are going good. And they're discussing some things, making some headway. And he decides that I'm going to go into the temple.

I'm going to go reach him. But to do this, I've got to follow the protocols. I've got to follow this purification process. You can read about it. It's mentioned in verse 26. And I've got to do this a certain amount of days because I can't just, I've been with Gentiles.

I can't just show up and go in there or they're going to take my head off. And Paul is doing everything by the book. And he's determined to teach his kinsmen the truth of the scriptures.

[19:35] And so he's going to do this the right way. So notice in verse, let's see, verse 26. I'll read that and then we'll go forward.

Paul took the men and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Did Paul think offerings needed to be offered for anything? No. He understood. He had perfect revelation. But he's just following their instructions and the way so that they would listen to him.

So they receive him. He's being smart. He's trying to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves in this situation. And that's the objective is to get there and preach.

But there's opposition. And that's what we're going to see next is the opposition. And follow along. We're going to read from verse 27 down to verse 34. And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews, which are of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people and laid hands on him, crying out, men of Israel, help.

[20:40] This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place. And further brought Greeks into the holy temple and hath polluted this holy place.

For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus and Ephesians, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was moved and the people ran together and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple.

And forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, that's right, they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band that all Jerusalem was in an uproar, who

immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down unto them.

And when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. And the chief captain came near and took him and commanded him to be bound with two chains and demanded who he was and what he had done.

And some cried one thing, some another among the multitude. And when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. So there's opposition.

[21 : 47] Paul's intentions, you know what they are already. But did that work out for him? Not even close. There's opposition that he wasn't counting on. What Paul desired and what he experienced were two completely different things.

Two completely different things. What he thought would happen, he'd get to go in there and get to preach and minister and open the scriptures and get to stand and speak to them. And what he was met with was opposition, resistance, violence.

They sought to murder him. They were beating him on the ground when the soldiers came up and broke it up. Now he's shackled up with two chains. Now he's probably bloodied up and bruised up and they're totally against him, completely against him.

They falsely accused him. And you can't stop them from doing that, falsely accusing him. They said that he did something he never did. He followed the plan that he had conceived.

He was doing it all by the book. Like I said, I think he was very cautious. He was very careful. He was very deliberate with his intentions and his plan to preach the gospel in the temple. But he can't control the lost.

[23 : 02] He can't control the opposition. Only God can do that. And you see the folly in his whole plan was, I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it. I'll even die for his sake. I don't care.

You can't go ahead of God. Because the opposition and the enemy is ready for you. When the Lord tells you it's time, he's going to, he'll make a way.

He'll move somebody out of your way because he's working things out. Paul needed the weight on God. Instead, he went ahead of God, even tried it his way, and now he's bound in chains and beaten.

And a lesson you can draw and take away from this is when you're dealing with spiritual warfare, whether it's winning souls, whether it's building a church or working in a ministry or any work of God.

When it's spiritual warfare, you cannot control, you cannot orchestrate, you cannot plan how things will go. What you can do is expect there to be opposition.

[24 : 02] You can expect that. You can't expect that the world or the lost are going to assist you in the work of God. A spiritual work will absolutely have opposition.

The lost are by nature the children of wrath, the children of disobedience. They're not going to say, oh, you want to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to us and our families? Come on in. Can I get you something to drink?

We want to be saved. That doesn't, ever, that doesn't happen. You'll never have that happen in your lifetime. You may witness somebody and see them get saved, but you're not going to see them come begging for you and falling at your feet to tell you the gospel.

They're going to resist it. The only expectations that you can have or anticipations you can have in the ministry is when you're obeying the leading of God and His word.

Outside of that, you're on your own and the adversary is aware of what you're doing and he will get in the way. And the devil knows how to manipulate his children to resist the preaching of God's word.

[25 : 03] And so the opposition in verse 28 lied. They lied. Yeah, they said that Paul polluted the holy place. He did not. They made a bigger deal out of the situation than it really was because he didn't do anything wrong.

But in verse 30, all the city was moved. The people ran together and they ripped him out of there and started beating him, ready to kill him for what? What did he do wrong? Nothing. And they're going to kill him.

Dead. Bloody. Walk away from his corpse. And Paul thought he had it under control. They're going to kill him and lie about him. You know, that sounds like they've got another spirit in them of a liar and a murderer.

John chapter 8. If that rings a bell to any of you. Amen. And the point again is you can't control the situation and you can't devise a plan in your mind of how the work of God should go and then expect it just to all line up and fall into place.

Every way of man is right in his own eyes. But be not wise in thine own eyes. Fear the Lord. Learn to trust the Lord. Learn to wait on God. Learn to let his voice lead you.

[26 : 13] And as it does, he will be obligated to open the way. That's what he'll do. He seeks to do. If you're going to do a work for God, whether it's in this church or seeking souls, if it makes sense to you, if you have a desire to do something for God, learn how to wait on God to direct your steps.

He sees. He knows what you don't see and what you don't know. And he's got three steps ahead of you planned. He's got 30 years ahead of you planned.

There could be a king or a politician or a neighbor in the way and whatever the case is, just wait on him. He'll move him out of the way. He'll set it up. You got to learn to trust the Lord.

You make a mistake when you have a desire, but you don't seek the Lord's timing. You don't seek his direction and the opposition is not going to comply. That's the greatest point of all of this.

But when God makes a way, it'll work out. So there's the objective. There's the opposition. And thirdly, I want to show you the opportunity. This is really neat. So even in Paul's mistakes and even in his doing, there's still an opportunity.

[27 : 22] So his idea to preach in the temple got blown up by the opposition. But it didn't mean that the case was completely hopeless. And Paul, to his credit, he never gave up and he never relented.

And he carried forth his desire and his goal and sought an opportunity. And I want you to see, the prophet said he would be bound and he was bound. And so, yep, the word of God came true.

Afflictions. The Holy Ghost warned him of afflictions. Yep, he's already bloodied and beaten up.

Check too. So far, so good. Everything that the Lord said would come to pass. So I'm here now.

What should I do? Take a look at what he does. This is awesome. In Acts chapter 21, look at verse 35. The last thing we read was that he was commanded to be carried into the castle.

Verse 35, And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was born of the soldiers for the violence of the people. Sounds like they're carrying him. He was born of the soldiers. Verse 36, For the multitude of the people followed after crying away with him.

[28 : 32] Sound familiar? He said that about somebody else not too long ago. Verse 37, And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days made us an uproar and led us out into the wilderness 4,000 men that were murderers? But Paul said, I'm a man which I'm a Jew of Tarsus, a man of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city.

And I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. Do you know what Paul did? He's getting led and carried by these soldiers up these steps to the castle.

And it said there, well, let me find the verse. Okay. What does it say about him going into the castle? I missed it.

34. He commanded him to be carried into the castle. And then in the next verse, he came upon the stairs. And so he's getting up, up the steps.

[29 : 34] And as he sees the, it says the multitude, he sees them, and they're his people. And he's about to be taken into the castle. So he's up on some level, some balcony, or some patio up above, the second floor patio coming outside of some, whatever.

He's up elevated above the multitude, and he says, hey, can I talk to him quick? Is it all right if I say something to these people before you take me in here and we go through all of this legal stuff?

He saw an opportunity. Would you have saw or seen an opportunity in that moment while you've been beat down and bloodied and just completely annihilated with your plan?

Would you have seen an opportunity to preach to that crowd that had just beaten you and set away with him like they said of Jesus Christ? Paul walks up those steps.

He faces the multitude. It strikes him. I've got a chance now to talk to him. I've got them in front of me. They're all gathered together. They're against me. But maybe I could say something now.

[30 : 45] I think it's phenomenal. And in verse 40, when he had given him silence or license, he said, go ahead. Paul stood on the stairs and beckoned with the hand unto the people.

And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them. This is one of those chapters, if it's in your Bible reading, you cannot stop on a comma.

You've got to read 22. If your daily reading catches you to stop at 21, don't ever do it. I don't know how you can do that. He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, men, brethren, and fathers.

And he begins to speak to them. And the lesson of this thought here I want to draw out quickly is that when it comes to witnessing, I'd say it's helpful for you to be, to not tie your own hands, to allow yourself to think outside of the box.

To not think, well, I'm going to plan this day and this event and I'm going to speak to them right here in the temple and this is how it's going to go. Because that's not how it went at all. But then, little did he know, things went terribly wrong, whereas most of us would have just said, forget it, that's why I don't do this stuff.

[32 : 05] Instead, he beat down, saw an opportunity, and said, hey, now's my chance. Now let me talk to him.

Most of us probably would have conceded and would have just said, forget it. I tried, you don't want the truth? Go to hell then, it's your funeral.

But the Apostle Paul saw an opportunity and so the lesson, be ready, be ready at any moment. You never know when the opportunity can and will present itself.

It's an opportunity to witness to one or one thousand, whatever the case. It's an incredible thought there, looking for the opportunity and taking advantage of it when it presented itself.

And so there's the opportunity. Then number four, the oration coming in chapter 22, the sermon, the speech that he gives. He says, men, brethren, and fathers.

[33 : 04] And I want to point some things out to them to you quickly. Hold your place right there. Notice how he began his address. And look back at chapter seven again where we saw Stephen earlier.

Acts chapter seven. And here is Stephen gets his chance. I mean, of course, he's about to get stoned by the same group of people. But before that happens, he gets to address them all.

And in verse number two, chapter seven, verse two, and he said, men, brethren, and fathers. And he starts it off the same way Paul did.

But what Stephen did was a lengthy expository sermon and an overview of the entire Old Testament. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.

And it was good. And they needed to hear it. And he made a, built a very good case about how they rejected the Lord, rejected Moses, but received him the second time, rejected Christ the first time, but they'll get him the second time, like it or not.

[34 : 16] And he gave them something in Acts chapter seven, but Paul didn't do that. I want to make a point about this and learn a quick lesson back in Acts 22. The oration that Paul gave, same start, like Stephen's, but he didn't go into all of that.

First thing he did was he related to them. In Acts 22, and verse number three, this is the first thing he says, I am verily a man, which am a Jew, just like you, every one of you.

I'm just like you. Born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, Jerusalem. I was raised right here with you at the feet of Gamaliel.

They knew who that was. And taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers and was zealous toward God as ye all are this day. Look how relatable he is in his introduction.

I am no better. I am just like one of you. My upbringing, the location I was raised, just like you all, right here today. He didn't come in there condemning them all to hell.

[35 : 29] He didn't come in there sounding pious and religious. He came in there on their level. Let me talk to you. Can I talk to you all? And he beckoned with his hand and they got quiet and he said, I'm just like you.

Me and you, we're the same. We live in the same world. We were brought up the same religion, the same teaching, the same truth. All of it's the same. And with their ear, he began to tell them the things that he did.

And what did he do? He gave his testimony. He gave them his testimony. He told them how he had persecuted the Christians in verses 4 and 5 and so forth.

And then told them a whole bunch of stuff that took place to him. In chapter 9, he kind of recalls this scene from Acts chapter 9. You can see it in verse 6.

Came to pass that as I made my journey and was come nigh unto Damascus, about noon suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell up under the ground and heard a

voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

[36 : 31] And I answered, who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Now this is incredible to me. And before we go further into that, just just park on that very thought right there, a lesson you can take away from this oration or his message to them.

He related to them and gave them his testimony. And you know what the most powerful thing you can give to somebody that's lost? It's that right there, your testimony.

That's the best thing you got. That's the best message you can preach. You don't need to have the book figured out. You don't need to know the difference between dispensationalism and covenant theology.

You don't have to have passages and places memorized. That's what your flesh tells you. You can't witness because you don't know enough Bible verses. Do you know that you're on your way to heaven?

Do you know how you got saved? Then I think you could probably convey to them how they could get saved. It's not that complicated. I think it's the most effective witnessing tool that you have is your testimony.

[37 : 43] And it's not a thorough understanding of typology in the Old Testament. It's that you were a sinner. You understood that from the scriptures.

And you can take it from there, I trust. You don't have to know the Romans road. You have to know your testimony. I think that's powerful. Tell somebody how Jesus Christ saved you.

That's exactly what Paul did. He told them what Jesus Christ did for him. He told them, this is how I met Jesus Christ. This is who he is. And he started with just being just like you.

That's something they listen to. There's the oration and finally, before we close, the outcome. How did this all turn out? I'm going to skip through much of what he said and just get to where it kind of fell apart.

And notice in verse number 21, he's quoting Christ. It says, He said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

[38 : 44] And they gave him audience unto this word, Gentiles. And then lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live.

And as they cried out and cast out their clothes and threw dust into the air and the mayhem pursued. The outcome, a complete and total rejection of his message of Jesus Christ.

Kind of what we expected from the beginning because he was going against what God had told him to do. I want you to notice something about these self-righteous Jews. They allowed him to talk about a great light shining from heaven in verse number 6.

He told him about, It shone from heaven a great light round about me. They allowed him to talk about a voice from heaven. I fell to the ground, I heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, a voice from heaven that called him by name.

If you come in here and want to give me a testimony and tell the church that you heard the voice of God from heaven calling you by name and telling, you know, you're going to get run out of here. But these guys didn't run him off.

[39 : 52] They just kept their mouth shut and listened. They let him talk about a shining light from heaven. They've never seen a shining light from heaven. They let him talk about the voice of God calling his name from heaven. They never heard that themselves but they were willing to listen to him talk about it.

And that's not all. Later in the passage he says that that light blinded him and that he couldn't see for days and then he went to Ananias and he received his sight. This was a supernatural miracle that he claims happened to him.

They were fine with that. No problem. Go ahead. Nobody's objecting. Nobody's throwing stones at him for claiming to have some thing and then later on another thing took place.

In verse 17 it came to pass that when I was come again to Jerusalem even while I prayed in the temple I was in a trance and saw him saying unto me make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem for they will not receive the testimony concerning me.

You have these supernatural visions. Do you Saul? And nobody's objecting. They'll let him talk about all that stuff. But then he gets to the word the forbidden word the blasphemous word the profane word Gentiles.

[41 : 06] Gentiles. And as soon as he says Gentiles they go berserk. He had their attention and then he lost it when he said Gentiles.

Why did they go nuts when he said Gentiles? Why? Because they're so steeped and cemented in their system and religion and their belief and version of the truth.

that when they heard that that's the buzz word. That's the one that can never ever ever be. And they flipped out on him through the dust in the air made a ridiculous show of themselves.

They have cemented themselves into their little box of Judaism that they can never get out of. They are in it they poured the cement into their onto their legs it came up to their knees and it's solidified and hardened and cured and they're never leaving.

They don't want to leave. And anything contrary to that get out and get lost. They weren't hearing it. God knew that from the beginning when he never sent him there.

[42 : 16] But Paul had other ideas he thought he could get to them and there's the outcome. They are so slow of heart to believe the scriptures to believe the scriptures that they didn't understand.

The disciples of Christ were blinded to the scriptures until he opened their eyes and opened their understanding. So many of these Jews were blinded to the truth in the book that they held and believed and claimed to be the word of God and they couldn't touch it.

And so they ignored parts they didn't get and they held on to Moses and ignored what the scriptures said of Christ. And Paul thought oh I'll show them. I'll show them because the Lord showed me so I'll show them.

One more scripture here. We're almost done. Look at Romans 15. There's a bunch of these in the New Testament and Paul's writings but I'll show you this one in Romans 15. Oh man there's two other verses I want to turn to.

Let's get there. Let's get there quick. The Jews were ignorant of their own scriptures. Look here what Paul says.

[43 : 23] He's making a case to the Romans and he's going to quote some scriptures off the just back to back to back to back. In verse 9 he says and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy as it is written he's quoting the Old Testament for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles and sing unto thy name and again he saith another quote from the Old Testament rejoice ye Gentiles with his people and again praise the Lord all ye Gentiles and laud him all ye people and again Isaiah saith there shall be a root of Jesse and he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles and him shall the Gentiles trust just back to back to back to back he's preaching the Old Testament of what it said about the Gentiles why did the Jews flip out?

They're against their own scriptures they're ignorant to their scriptures they're blinded to their scriptures but it was truth that Paul was preaching and they were too steeped in their beliefs and it's easy for us to realize the hypocrisy of these religious Jews but I want to point it out to you and to me and to us today in hopes that we don't ever think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think because they had the word of God the oracles of God given to the Jews they had the holy scriptures they had the prophets it was all theirs and nobody else's it wasn't the Gentiles it was sacred to them we have the King James Bible we know it and believe it and love it and it shines to us and declares the truth of God to us they had religion they were set apart from everybody else they had what they felt as the truth they lived different lifestyles than most they even believed they were better than they truly were but there's a caution and I want to throw it at you and we'll be done look at Romans 11 we're going to just read two passages on the way out

Romans 11 and then I'm going to get 1 Corinthians 10 Romans 11 it's a long passage I won't read it all so verse 13 is where Paul calls himself the apostle of the Gentiles and he's discussing in this passage how the Jews have forsaken what God had offered them and now God is blessing the Gentiles he's giving them something that they didn't deserve but he's trying to get the attention of the Jew and I want to notice the warning that he then puts to the church to those of us who have believed on Christ and have gotten in on eternal life and the blessings of God I just want to catch the right spot save the time here verse 21 for if God spared not the natural branches that's the Jews take heed those are the two words

I want you to get take heed lest he also spare not thee church church Paul's warning the church to take heed of something because if he did what he did to his own people those that he called and blessed and gifted you better pay attention that you don't turn into them and follow after their shoes and become just like them high minded heady thinking you got it going on thinking you don't need to hear it from anybody you've got the word of God and nobody else does it was given to you and

nobody else has it take heed because God will dump you just as quick he doesn't need you he doesn't need this church he doesn't need us in Silmar he can go anywhere he wants to go he can do anything he wants to do he could burn the whole thing up he could burn the whole LA up and just Sodom and Gomorrah all over again no sweat to him moving on still holy still pure still righteous so take heed look over 1st Corinthians 10 last verse last verse we're dealing with the outcome here and their total rejection of the message

Paul preached to them when they heard one word and it flipped them out it buzzed them to just drop the whole thing and to ignore the truth and watch this okay verse chapter 10 the whole beginning here is about the Jews and about the way they did not believe the Lord and how they were idolaters and fornicators and tempted Christ and all of what God then did to them as a result and verse 12 is the verse that I want to point out in the context of the Jews and their disobedience verse 12 says wherefore this is a lesson for you the reader wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall those Jews thought they were standing and they thought they were right and they were quick to dismiss the preaching and the truth when it was hitting them in the face because there was something else that they were holding on to a little stronger and they resisted and there's another warning it just matches the context in Romans chapter 11 and 1st

[49 : 09] Corinthians 10 of the Jews mistakes and the warning to the church and to believers you better keep your eyes open you could fall right into that same pit of self righteousness and thinking you're better than them and you're not going into apostasy and you're not listening to that music and you're not following the ways of the world we've got our church we've got our bible we know the truth better get your eyes opened up you better remember always remember the only righteousness you have is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that's it it is not your church attendance it is not the amount of bible you read in a day none of that adds up to your righteousness if that were adding up to your righteousness you'd fall so far short because you and I stink we're stinky people we're filthy before a holy god your righteousness is not what you abstain from it's not the circle that we run in and the people that we know and the preachers that we have in here that is not our righteousness that's not our status

Jesus Christ is our status alone nothing but thank god for a king james bible and a place to stand on it but it's the lord jesus christ above everything he's our righteousness and there's no better example than seeing a bunch of self-righteous jews than the ones that crucified christ and resisted the work of the apostles and all of that now I'm just going to shut this down but going forward Paul gets tossed around for a while in the book of acts when all that time he could have been pursuing the calling that god had given him and I told you from the beginning this one confuses me why the apostle paul let something get in the way of what he was called and commissioned to be doing and it fell apart it fell apart for him so let's take heed church and not get self-righteous and not think we've got a plan and we can just put it together and manipulate things because we know what we're talking about let's just learn to trust god follow his leading hear his voice stay in your lane stay on your face be sure you're doing what god's telling you to do and it's all good then he'll make a way all right let's close father we've gone a little longer than we normally do but I pray lord that you'll use these words and these thoughts and these little lessons in this story to help us all and to grow us in different areas whether it's just in timing and trusting you or whether it's in witnessing and seeking opportunities in all of these areas god and especially help us to stay humble and to understand that our relationship with you is the best and only thing that matters most and help us to love you and do something for you we thank you for this evening thank you for those that are here with us pray you'll bless as we go keep us safe and healthy we pray in Jesus name amen amen