

Theme: Paul’s ministry to the gentiles will take him in the same path that Jesus took – from rejection by his own people to unjust suffering and arrest. All that matters is that by whatever means possible, Christ is proclaimed and glorified in all the earth.

Introduction/Background: We make our plans – And God has His own!

I. Rejoicing Together

- A. A joyous reception for Paul & company
- B. God’s glorious work among the gentiles recounted!
- C. Tensions surface in the church
 - 1. Two churches functioning in Jerusalem?
 - 2. Paul is “suspect” in the eyes of the Jews & Jewish believers.

II. Reaching Out

- A. The church in Jerusalem
 - 1. “Zealous for the law”
 - a. *The Moral Law?*
 - b. *Ceremonial law?* v.21
 - 2. Suspicious of Paul
- B. Paul before the Jerusalem church –
 - 1. Seeking to bridge the Gap.
 - a. A conciliatory action *or* a sinful compromise??
 - b. “All things to all men” 1 Corinthians 9:19ff
 - Not the situation faced in Galatia with Peter (Gal.2:11,12; 5:1)
 - c. Why risk it??? - Romans 9:1-3
 - 2. Follows advice of James and the elders
 - 3. *Bad advice!*
 - Gives credence to the charge against Paul
 - Doesn’t stop the Jews who have followed him to Jerusalem

III. Violent Rejection

Jews from Asia provide the spark

- A. Charge #1 - He “teaches against the law and this place”
- B. Charge #2 - Accused of blasphemy – bringing gentiles into the temple.
- C. The crowd reacts!
 - 1. Tried to Kill Him!
 - 2. The Gates Were Shut!! At Once!

IV. Unlikely Rescue!

God intervenes through the Romans.

- A. Paul is arrested and bound
- B. “Away with him”
- C. Paul’s Path as Christ’s Apostle to the Gentiles
 - 1. Paul will follow the path the Jesus took.
 - 2. Paul would know of suffering for the sake of Christ – but he would not have the same end.
- D. Prepared in advance!!
 - God has prepared the way in advance (20:16; 9:15,16)
 - God’s mighty hand ruling over the whole situation!
Turning point in book of Acts – and in the life of Paul

V. Conclusions/Application

- 1. Are the Lord’s plans *your* plans??
 - How do you/will you respond when God’s plans supersede yours?
- 2. Can you trust that His plan is *good*? (Romans 8:28; 11:33-36)
 - Will it involved suffering? Likely. (1 Peter 2:20,21; 5:10; 1 Thess.2:14)
- 3. Are you willing to “bend” for the sake of the gospel?
 - To give up freedoms – to reach others?
 - To live with “discomfort” – in order to seek or maintain unity??
- 4. Pray for the Lord to put people (individuals and communities) on our hearts.