

Paul's Mistake

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Acts 21:1-26.

B. It was not necessary for Paul to be a prisoner—Paul was well aware of the danger that awaited him.

C. Paul was told “through the Spirit” that he was not to go up to Jerusalem.

D. God expects us to make decisions and only change our mind unless impressed by the Spirit otherwise.

II. Paul's desire to return to Jerusalem.

A. Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost because of the urgency he had for his own people. (Romans 9:1-5)

1. Paul also understood that the world would not be right until Israel was in a right relationship to Jesus Christ. (Romans 11)

2. Paul wanted to be a part of ushering in the kingdom—there was nothing wrong with this motive.

3. The problem was that God was directing him otherwise—toward the Gentiles.

4. The Spirit of God did not want him in Jerusalem.

5. Paul acted out of a mistaken zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ.

B. Paul stubbornly refused to listen to Agabus and those around him.

III. The nature of Paul's mistake.

A. It was not a doctrinal error.

B. There was not a problem with the sacrifices of Pentecost—they did not end until the destruction of the temple.

C. Paul was free to live as a Gentile among the Gentiles and a Jew among the Jew if there were certain advantages to be gained.

IV. Long continued Christian experience is no guarantee against missing the mind of God. Even an Apostle could fall to the flesh, showing the danger of the pitfalls that await us.

Application questions:

1. Have you ever been directed by God but chose another way?

2. What was the problem with Paul's mistake? What can we learn from it?

3. What causes us to miss the mind of God? How can we try to prevent this?
