

Church – The Beginnings, Part 68
What is the Will of God for You? | Acts 21:1-14
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NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Acts 21:1-14 - When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; ² and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴ After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul THROUGH THE SPIRIT not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵ When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. ⁶ Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.

⁷ When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. ⁸ On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. ⁹ Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. ¹⁰ As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the HOLY SPIRIT SAYS: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who OWNS THIS BELT and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" ¹² When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began BEGGING him NOT to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to DIE at Jerusalem for the name of the LORD Jesus." ¹⁴ And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The WILL of the LORD be done!"

"The Will of the LORD be Done" – what is the WILL of the LORD?:

- 1. The Global, Eternal Will of God, God's Will for the Ages - His Plans Worked Out throughout History: Basically the Full Biblical Timeline from [Genesis] the Beginning (and before) of Creation until the Consummation of the Ages [the book of Revelation] → It is UNCHANGING - IMMUTABLE God's Will being done, whether you like it or not, whether you want to participate or not.**
 - a. It includes the Old Testament ages leading up to the Messiah.**
 - b. It includes the Jesus Christ's Crucifixion, death, burial, and Resurrection.**
 - c. It includes the Gospel Age, the Church Age, Marching on until the Rapture.**
 - d. It includes the Great Tribulation – in which the Gospel will continue to march forward.**
 - e. If you are redeemed, in Christ (Messiah) – then you will spend eternity with God in heaven, in the New Heavens, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem, etc. (see Revelation 20 & 21)**
 - i. Beginning with the Restoration of Israel to her land, again, fully (see Ezek. 36 thru 48)**
 - ii. The Millennium (1000 years) - Global, Earthly Kingdom of Christ, Jerusalem, Israel, the Global Capital – The Earth will have Social, Relational, and Political Peace. But it will not be fully perfected yet. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will be the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and sit upon David's Throne, as prophesied in Isaiah 9:6-7.**
 - iii. At the end of the Millennium, Satan is released, then the Great White Throne Judgement – then the New Heavens, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem – Eternity Forever – will begin for all those Redeemed in Christ.**
 - f. Eternal Judgment – Armageddon (Rev. 16-19), the Millennium, and The Last Satanic battle**
 - i. Satan, his demons all cast into the Lake of Fire (see Rev. 20:7-10, and Matt. 25:41)**
 - ii. All those who are not in Christ, will face the Great White Throne Judgment and be cast into the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15)**
- 2. The "Passive Will of God" – what God allows - such as evil, sin, good, human choices within context, etc. The Passive Will of God – occurs in the context of God's Global Eternal Will. It never supersedes that.**

3. **The Direct Will of God – His Ideal WILL worked out, intervening, on display – as we’ve seen in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts. It is when God actively works, directly, powerfully, maybe quietly, but, nonetheless, actively. Usually we call these Miracles.**

These events from the Hand of God are typically out of the ordinary.

This can include miraculous:

- a. **Rescue, deliverance, and even Salvation in Christ (ref. Paul, road to Damascus, or Israel out of Egypt, etc.)**
- b. **Healings (even via Peter’s shadow, Paul’s handkerchief or apron, etc.)**
- c. **Provision & Protection (such as with Elijah or Elisha, etc. or feeding of the 5,000 and 4,000, etc.)**

4. **God’s Personal Will for you – individually.**

- a. **Although it is personally for you – it is never just about you.**

Notice with Paul, Joseph (son of Jacob), or Moses – God’s individual Will, His Plan for their lives never was just about them, but the role that they would play within God’s Global Eternal Plan of the Ages – the Plan of Redemption for the Lost.

With you or me, individually – it should always be seen within the context of the local church family you are a part of – in covenant relationship with. How can God use me to help others in their walk with Christ? How can I be used, within the context of my church family, to reach the lost for Christ and make Disciples of Christ? What part do I play in the overall Equipping ministry and Service Ministry of my local church family? Everything Paul was doing was for the sake of the church and/or churches (see 2 Cor. 11:28 - Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.)

It is not about you or me, but all of us – in Christ. It is hard to remember that, since we live in such an extremely individualistic, selfish, self-centered culture. Indicator → new word: “SELFIE” ... need I say more?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO BE AND TO DO – TO HELP OTHERS IN CHRIST?

- b. **God’s Will for you in Christ – is always Missional, for the Gospel’s sake, for Christ’s sake. It is always to Glorify God in Christ Jesus. (Here are some examples)**

Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:16-18 – compare with Philip. 4:4-8)

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who DESIRES all men [humans] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:1-4)

- c. **As with Paul, the Will of God – may NOT be a nice journey. The world may think that you are a failure. From the World’s Perspective you are stupid and crazy doing God’s Will. Nice outcomes or “successful” outcomes do NOT always mean that “it was the will of God” ... 2 Cor. 11:23-29 – from that list, today, on a pastor’s or missionary’s Résumé would usually mean he would NOT get the job. Paul would probably NOT be hired by most churches today.**

5. **So, how can you know what the Will of God is, in particular, for you, in your particular situation, etc.?**

Usually, on a normal basis, prayerfully – having the confirmation of a witness of 2 or 3 – a “thing” is confirmed. But, not always. As in the Paul’s case we are investigating.

In Paul’s specific, historical case – from Acts 20 & Acts 21 – Paul first knew that he would have much persecution as he headed back to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-24). God revealed this to him, first.

Then he had 2 confirmations by God’s Spirit in Acts 21:4 & 21:10-13 – persecution awaited him in Jerusalem. After that 3rd message by God’s Spirit (via Agabus) - it led Paul’s team (“we”) and the local church there in Caesarea to “conclude” that God did NOT Want Paul to go to Jerusalem.

But notice Paul’s response in all cases → Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 21:13)

Although others urged him NOT to go, based on the Holy Spirit’s pronouncements – the conclusion of others – is NOT your guiding principle. (James 1: 5-8)

- It is God, the Voice of Christ our Shepherd (John 10:14,27) – MATURITY in Christ – is key here.

- It must line up with God’s Word – that relates to us, in the New Covenant. * EXHAUST THIS FIRST *****

- Prophetic Pronouncements usually confirm something that God has already revealed to you. You have the original revelation, the confirmations confirm – to you – NOT to others. The others may not have the original picture, as you have – and thus they might conclude something entirely different.