

Acts 22:17-21 Surely They Will Listen to the Good News from Me, Lord!

12/24/16 Sat Morn Prayer – Phil Twente

***Joy to the World** - Isaac Watts/G.F. Handel; Sung Tabernacle Choir/Phil. Orchestra*

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart Prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing And heaven and nature sing And heaven and heaven and nature sing*

*Joy to the world, the Savior reigns. Let men their songs employ. While fields and floods Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy*

*He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love; And wonders of His love; And wonders, wonders of His love.*

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her King Let every heart Prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing And heaven and heaven and nature sing, And heaven and heaven and
nature sing*

Context/Biblical Background – Paul is back in Jerusalem – Acts. 21:17 and following. He had come back from his missionary journey bringing an offering from the Gentile churches to the Jewish church in Jerusalem. He is trying to break down these barriers between the Gentile and Jewish believers by bringing the offering. He also desired to be there for the Feast of Pentecost. Now those were the two ostensible reasons. There probably was a third reason that Paul wanted to be there and that is to share the gospel with the Jews. Paul always desired to bring the gospel message to the Jews. He felt that he understood them sufficiently so that he could convince them that Jesus was the Messiah. Saul's (Paul's) conversion is one of the most significant events in the Bible. Today, we want to look at Paul's second question.

Paul, back at Jerusalem is addressing the mob: - Act 22:17-21 *"Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance (*ek'-stas-is* – consciousness partially suspended) [18] and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' [19] So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. [20] And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' [21] Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.' "*

- How he was commissioned to go and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. This was the great thing for which they were so angry at him, and therefore it was requisite he should for this, in a special manner, produce a divine warrant; and here he does it. To reconcile them, if possible, to his preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, he tells them,
- First, that he received his orders to do it when he was at prayer, begging of God to appoint him his work and to show him the course he should steer; and (which was a circumstance that would have some weight with those he was now speaking to) he was praying in the temple, which was to be called *a house of prayer for all people*; not only in which all people should pray, but in which all people should be prayed for.
- Now as Paul's praying in the temple was an evidence, contrary to their malicious suggestion, that he had a veneration for the temple, though he did not make an idol of it as they did; so God's giving him this commission there in the temple was an evidence that the sending him to the Gentiles would be no prejudice to the temple, unless the Jews by their infidelity made it so. Now it would be a great satisfaction to Paul afterwards, in the execution of this commission, to reflect upon it that he received it when he was at prayer.
- He received it in a vision. I was in a trance (Act 22:17), his external senses, for the present, locked up. In this trance he saw Jesus Christ, not with the eyes of his body, as at his conversion, but represented to the eye of his mind (Act 22:18): I saw him saying unto me. Our eye must be upon Christ when we are receiving the law from His mouth; and we must not only hear Him speak, but see Him speaking to us.
- Before Christ gave him a commission to go to the Gentiles, He told him it was to no purpose for him to think of doing any good at Jerusalem; so that they must not blame him, but themselves, if he be sent to the Gentiles.
- Paul came to Jerusalem full of hopes that, by the grace of God, he might be instrumental to bring those to the faith of Christ who had stood it out against the ministry of the other apostles; and perhaps this was what he was now praying for, that he, having had his education at Jerusalem and being well known there, might be employed in gathering the children of Jerusalem to Christ that were not yet gathered, which he thought he had particular advantages for doing of.
- But Christ crosses the measures he had laid: *"Make haste,"* He says, *"and get out of Jerusalem quickly;"* for, though you think yourself more likely to work upon them than others, you will find they are more prejudiced against you than against any other, and therefore *"will not receive your testimony concerning Me."* As God knows before who will receive the gospel, so He knows who will reject it.
- Notwithstanding this, Paul renewed his petition that he might be employed at Jerusalem, because they knew, better than any did, what he had been before his conversion, and therefore must ascribe so great a change in him to the power of almighty grace, and

consequently give the greater regard to his testimony; thus he reasoned, both with himself and with the Lord, and thought he reasoned correctly (Act 22:19-20): **“Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You.**

- Therefore they will not impute my preaching Christ to education nor to any prepossession in his favor (as they do that of other ministers), but will the more readily regard what I say because they know I have myself been one of them: particularly in Stephen's case; they know that when he was stoned I was standing by, I was aiding and abetting and *consenting to his death*, and in token of this **and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.** Now “Lord,” says he, “if I appear among them, preaching the doctrine that Stephen preached and suffered for, they will no doubt receive my testimony.”
- “No,” says Christ to him, “they will not; but will be more exasperated against you as a deserter from, than against others whom they look upon only as strangers to, their constitution.”
- Paul's petition for a warrant to preach the gospel at Jerusalem is overruled, and he has peremptory orders to go among the Gentiles (Act 22:21): **‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’**
- **God often gives gracious answers to the prayers of his people, not in the thing itself that they pray for, but in something better.** Abraham prays, *O that Ishmael may live before thee*; and God hears him for Isaac. So Paul here prays that he may be an instrument of converting souls at Jerusalem: “No,” says Christ, “but thou shalt be employed among the Gentiles, and **more shall be the children of the desolate than those of the married wife.**” It is God that appoints his laborers both their day and their place.
- Paul hankers after Jerusalem: to be a preacher there was the summit of his ambition; **but Christ designs him greater preferment.** He shall not enter into other men's labors (as the other apostles did, Joh 4:38), but shall break up new ground, and *preach the gospel where Christ was not named*, Rom 15:20. **So often does Providence contrive better for us than we for ourselves; to the guidance of that we must therefore refer ourselves. He shall choose our inheritance for us.**
- Paul shall not go to preach among the Gentiles without a commission: **I will send you.** And, if Christ send him, his Spirit will go along with him, he will stand by him, will carry him on, and bear him out, and give him to see the fruit of his labors.
- **Now, if they would lay all this together, surely they would see that they had no reason to be angry with Paul for preaching among the Gentiles, or construe it as an act of ill-will to his own nation, for he was compelled to it, contrary to his own mind, by an overruling command from heaven.**

SUMMARY:

- ❖ **Paul is so sure because of his experience, knowledge of his former Jewish friends, and of the great news of the gospel, that he can surely convince them of it. The Lord keeps reminding him they won't receive it from him! But Paul in asking for favor to minister to the Jews is turned down by the Lord. As so often occurs when the LORD doesn't answer our prayer, which are of His will, that He has something much better in store for us!**
- ❖ **Paul, who has such a deep love for them – Romans 9 -For I could wish myself accursed. – continues! It is not good to argue with the Lord, however Paul's faithfulness is rewarded – (Acts 23:11) – Be of good cheer!**

PRAY TODAY FOR:

Our Church, Nationally and locally; Our Nation: Our leaders; for kings and those in authority
Police officers/military. Supreme Ct. Justices: John Roberts, Jr., Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, Ruth Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and the one VACANCY
Our President Elect and V.P.: Donald & Melania Trump; Mike & Karen Pence. New administration being formed! Cabinet Members: Sec. of State – Rex Tillerson; Energy – Rick Perry; Interior Sec. – Ryan Zinke; Sec of Defense – James Mattis; Treasury Sec. – Steven Mnuchin; Attorney General – Jeff Sessions; HUD Sec. – Ben Carson; Commerce Sec. – Wilbur Ross; Health & Human Services Sec. – Tom Price; Education Sec. – Betsy DeVos; Transportation Sec. – Elaine Chou; U.N Ambassador – Nikki Haley; Labor – Andrew Puzder; Homeland Security – Gen. John Kelly; EPA – Scott Pruitt; Budget – Mick Mulvaney; SBA – Linda McMahon; Cabinet Level Officials: – Reince Priebus; Nat'l Security Advisor – Michael Flynn; Chief Strategist – Stephen Bannon; White House Council – Donald McGahn; Counselor to President – Kellyanne Conway; Press Sec. Sean Spicer; Agriculture – still open; Vet. Affairs – still open; Trade – still open; Economy – still open; C.I.A. Director – Mike Pompeo ; Ambassador to Israel – David Friedman; Supreme Court candidate: Judge Raymond Gruender

CCCM Pastors: - Abraham de Alba, Baron Harris, Bob Wolfe, Brian Brodersen, Cameron Franklin, Carl Westerlund, Chaz Celaya, Cory Emery, Craig Coffin, Dave Eason, Dave Manne, Dave Shirley, George Scanlan, James Caggegi, Jay Henry, Joel Wingo, John Chubik, John Henry Corcoran, John Hwang, Jon Hughes, Jon Rogers, Josh Evans, Josh Hughes, Justin Bright, Kellen Criswell, Lance Emma, Mike Harris, Mickey Gonzales, Phil Twente, Roger Wing, Scott Cunningham, Tim Wylie, Will Lynn, Paul Duke, Gary Neumann, Jim Kuehnert, Jim Pamplin, Tommy Cota, Brian Adel, Gerson Hernandez, Paul Chun, Shintaro Mamada, Onsi Mousa, Sergio Lopez, Tony Tan
CCCM Pastor's School – Andy, Brycen, Chris, David, Isaiah, Jamie, Joe, Justin, Moses, Roman

Please Note: You may see or download any of the past notes and audio of the Prayer/Devotional Notes by going to: www.ptwente.com