

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Text: Acts 22:17-22 ¹⁷ And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;¹⁸ And saw him saying unto me, **Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.**¹⁹ And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:²⁰ And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.²¹ **And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.**²² And they gave him audience unto this word, 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.

Hebrews 3:7-10 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and **they have not known my ways.**

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Introduction: Paul's Credentials:

- Learned Man—Pharisee--Taught under Gamaliel
- Holy Man--Blameless under the LAW
- A Converted Christian Man—PERSONAL ENCOUNTER with JESUS on the Road to Damascus
- Holy Ghost Filled Man—I thank God I speak in tongues more than you all
- A Powerful Preacher of the Gospel—Miracle Worker of Signs and Wonders
- An Apostle Born out of season—Who confronted Peter and Straightened out Peter's Doctrine
- Writer of the Most of the NT—Moved by Holy Spirit as an instrument of the Voice of God

YET IN OUR TEXT WE FIND HIM ARGUING AND WRESTLING WITH GOD ABOUT WHAT PATH WAS BEST FOR HIM!!!!

Notice--What is Taking Place in our Text--Between Paul and God--- Paul is Arguing with God.

- **God--**Make haste, get thee quickly out of Jerusalem—they will not receive your testimony
- **PREVIOUSLY Holy Spirit—Acts 20:22-23** ²² And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:²³ Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.
- **PREVIOUSLY Holy People of God – Acts 21** ¹⁰ And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. ¹¹ And when he was come unto 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. ¹² And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁴ And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, **The will of the Lord be done.**
- **LET ME ASK—WAS PAUL IN THE WILL OF GOD??? I THINK NOT!**

Paul Argues with God, Holy Ghost and God's People —Lord, they know me---what kind of man I use to be—I used to be like them—I use to stand among them and persecute your people just like they do...

Notice the Lesson Learned:

- 1) Paul's Opinion of What was Right for Him was totally wrong and LED to Trouble!

World Full of EXAMPLES TODAY- A world filled with OPINIONS-- Our SOCIETY is filled with PERSONALIZED TRUTH! THE DEF. OF SIN IS A PERSONAL OPINION TODAY????

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in their own eyes.

SOCIETY'S PAST LAWS:

Moses--ILLEGAL to let a HEBREW MALE Child Live

ILLEGAL to leave your job to go and WORSHIP GOD

Daniel--ILLEGAL to bow to any other God other than Nebuchadnezzar

ILLEGAL to pray or offer an obligation to anyone other than the Medes Dictator

Jeremiah—ILLEGAL to VOICE GOD'S MESSAGE OF TRUTH IN PUBLIC

ILLEGAL TO LEAVE THE CITY OF JERUSALEM and FLEE from God's Wrath

Jesus' Day—ILLEGAL to SPEAK AGAINST CESAR OR OPPOSE THE ROMAN OCCUPATION

ILLEGAL to SPEAK AGAINST THE JEWISH LEADERS OR JEWISH CUSTOMS

Today's Laws—NOW SOCIETY PEER PRESSURE THAT MAY SOON LEAD TO IMPRISONMENT ---ABORTION LAWS—GAY MARRIAGE LAWS—GENDER IDENTITY LAWS—CHILDREN RIGHT TO CHOOSE LAWS – SOON TO BE LAWS AGAINST SPEAKING OUT

Antichrist Laws- Mark of the Beast- Worship the Beast- Kill all Who do not Submit!

PAUL'S EXAMPLE IS A Christian Warning for us Today:

Today-- God's WORD is Seldom USED as a ROAD MAP FOR LIFE

- 1) Paul was wrong--God Way was the Right Way--- ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS TRUE! 100% OF THE TIME God knows what is the Right Course for US.
- 2) God didn't change His MESSAGE to SPOIL Paul and give him his WAY
- 3) God didn't FORCE Paul to STOP doing what he was determined to do
- 4) God didn't alter the Events or Change the Outcome
- 5) Notice God's Mercy to MAKE A Way of ESCAPE for Paul--- Another Opportunity for Paul to FULFILL HIS Mission
ACTS 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.
- 6) Notice Paul's Heart for God LED Him BACK to the RIGHT PATH
God is waiting for us (His People) to GET IT RIGHT!

CLOSING: If you hear His Voice harden not your heart!!! Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God!!!

LET GOD CHOSE what is BEST for You! BEING LED OF THE SPIRIT MEANS FOLLOWING HIS VOICE!

NOTICE: THE NEEDLESS SUFFERING (BEATING), IMPRISONMENT, AND HARDSHIP PAUL ENCOUNTERED!

Even after we have been totally trained, matured, and even though filled with the Spirit, we must continually be made PLIABLE And YIELDED to God's Holy Voice to Direct us in our life!!!