

Lesson 8: Acts 21, 22, 23 & 24**Read Acts Chapter 21:1-16 Paul takes leave of his beloved Saints and sets his face toward Jerusalem.**

1. Compare **Acts 19:21, Acts 20:22-23, Acts 21:4** and **Acts 21:10-14**. Using these scriptures, explain how it is possible to “hear” the voice of the Holy Spirit telling you something and yet misinterpret or “mis-assume” what it means in terms of the outcome, or next steps to be taken, etc.

2. **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE** Have you had a similar experience where you got a message from the spirit but misinterpreted it? Explain.

3. Several times in the Old Testament God would instruct a prophet to use an object or action as a visual aid to instruct the people—see for example Jer. 13:1-11. How is this done in Acts 21?

4. a. Why do you think the saints were weeping as Paul took his leave from them?

b. How does Paul deal with his well meaning friends and what lesson is there for us in his attitudes?

Read Acts Chapter 21: 17-40 Paul reports to the Jerusalem church--is attacked at the temple.

Note: Everywhere Paul went in the Gentile world, he collected money for the poor in Jerusalem. One possible reason that the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were in constant need was their persecuted state. Being regarded as apostate would have meant prejudice in the workplace and community that could affect their ability to earn a living.

5. Read Romans 15:20-28

a. In this passage, Paul explains what his modus operandi was for choosing where to establish missionary work. What was his criterion?

b. Paul tells the Roman saints that he wants to come to visit them but first he must return to Jerusalem to take a love offering of funds for the poor in Jerusalem from the saints in northern (Macedonia) and southern (Achaia) Greece. Why do you think this was so important to Paul and what do you think he hoped to accomplish by it?

6. We have seen that Paul felt he was free from the requirements of the Law of Moses, having received the new covenant of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why then do you think he consented to James' request to go to the temple and purify himself in the manner of the Jews when he arrived in Jerusalem?

7. Read **II Corinthians 9: 5-15**. This part of Paul's letter is essentially a fund-raising appeal in his ongoing plan to collect money for the struggling church in Jerusalem. a) From these verses, what blessings come into the life of believers from charitable giving?

b) What blessings have come to your family as a result of paying tithes and offerings and other charitable giving?

8. a) Read **Phillipians 1:12**. Why do you think God let Paul get into this “trouble” with the Jews in Jerusalem, resulting in his imprisonment?

b) What was the first thing Paul did when he was taken into custody? What does this show?

Read Acts Chapter 22: 1-30 Paul’s defense before the hostile Jews at the temple

Reading note: At the temple there was an outer “Court of the Gentiles” that anyone, including non-Jewish foreigners could enter. The inner courts were reserved for Jews and between the two was a 4½-foot barrier. Inscriptions in Greek and Latin were posted along it. They read : “No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows.”¹ The principle of separation from Gentiles was a serious matter to the Jews!

9. Considering his audience, name a detail from his defense from each of the following three categories and tell why you think he told the story that way.

a. His early life

b. His interaction with the risen Lord

c. His meeting with Ananias

10. Read, **Ezekiel 44:9, Numbers 3:38, Leviticus 19:34** and **Deuteronomy 10:18** (see SL). While it was true that there were strict prohibitions in the Law of Moses against a non-Jew entering the temple, how had the Jewish nation gone beyond the commands of God in their attitudes toward Gentiles? How did it bring negative consequences upon their nation?

b. How does prejudice close the mind against new truth?

c. How can it hurt missionary work?

d. How can it hurt personal growth?

11. How does Paul escape scourging by the Roman guards?
12. Paul may have avoided the worst in this situation but in his life of missionary service he suffered greatly. He does not usually mention these things in his letters, believing that it was his duty to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 2:3) However he is forced to overcome his natural reticence when he writes his letter of II Corinthians because false teachers who deny his credentials as a true apostle of Jesus Christ are attacking him. Read **II Corinthians 11: 23-33** .
- List as many of Paul’s labors and physical sufferings in his ministry as you find in this passage.
 - What phrases indicate his mental and emotional suffering?
13. a. Paul writes to his beloved Timothy later from prison in Rome. Read **II Timothy 3:10-12**. Do you believe that it is true that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus” will suffer persecution? Why or why not?
- How could a Latter-day Saint woman suffer such persecution in a country that has religious freedom?
 - How might she suffer persecution for following Christ in her own family or ward?
14. Do you think that sacrifice is an essential part of service to God? Explain.
15. Read the list of scriptures on sacrifice in the Scripture List. What are some of the sacrifices enumerated in these scriptures that we make when we are living a consecrated, covenanted life?
16. What compensating blessings might have come to Paul during his lifetime of ministry that would make all the sacrifices and tribulations seem worth it? (See 1 Thess. 2:19-20 for one idea)

Read Acts Chapter 23: 1-35 Paul defends himself before the Sanhedrin and escapes a plot.

17. Why does Paul lose his temper in verse 3? And what does this show about Paul?
18. After Annanias’ open hostility, Paul begins again and takes a different tack. What is his method for protecting himself from the council once he realizes a fair trial is going to be impossible?

19. a. How do you think the experience of verse 11 sustained Paul during the following months and years of various trials and imprisonments?

b. What does this vision tell us about the character of God and of His relationship with Paul?

20. How does Paul's nephew save his life? (Interesting note: This is the only mention of a relative of Paul in the New Testament. As is true even today, Jewish families often disown those who leave the faith.)

21. Read Romans 8:28 (and underline it!). How did the plot to kill Paul end up working in his favor?

Read Acts Chapter 24:1-27 Paul defends himself before Felix, the Roman governor of Judea

22. The high priest Ananias and an orator (lawyer) named Tertullus come down from Jerusalem to accuse Paul before the Roman governor in Caesarea. List the four charges Tertullus makes in verses 5 and 6. (You may need to use a dictionary!)

23. What are Paul's defenses against charges of pestilence and sedition in verses 11-13, & 18?

24. From verses 14-16, in what way does Paul rest his case upon:

a. His beliefs about God

b. His trust in God

c. His standing before God

25. Felix, the Roman governor, actually knows quite a lot about "The Way" (v.22) as the Christians were called. As is often the case with government officials who want to keep everybody happy, he defers taking action, resulting in two years of house arrest for Paul. Felix talks frequently with him about religious matters. From verses 24-26, what do you think was going on in Felix's mind and heart concerning what he was hearing from Paul?

26. What are some reasons why people today don't want to hear more about the gospel although they may sense that there is truth in it?

