

Paul's 3 Public Sins, out of God's will

1. Circumcising Timothy. . .because of. . .Jews, Acts 16.3
2. Ignoring Spirit's direct command not to go to Jerusalem, Acts 21.1-6
3. Offering sacrifices. . .because of. . .Jews, Acts 21.21-24

#1 Acts 16.3 CIRCUMSIZING TIMOTHY

Paul was foolish and wrong: “[Paul]. . .circumcised. . .him [Timothy] because of the Jews”
Immediately after the Jerusalem Council had forbidden circumcision. Paul bowed to the pressure of Jews think if Timothy isn't a law keeping Jew.” why didn't Paul allow Timothy to make the decision. After all, Timothy had grown up as a practicing Gentile with a Jewish faith.

- Acts 16.33 Paul made his decision, “because of the Jews.”
- Acts 21.21 Clearly in chapter 21 Luke speaks of the OT law of circumcision was expunged with almost the same words as in chapter 16.33, “fearing them which were of the circumcision.”

#2 Acts 21.1-6 IGNORING SPIRIT'S DIRECT COMMAND

Ignoring the Holy Spirit's direct command not to go to Jerusalem was wrong.

There are 2 warnings to Paul /vss. . He disregards the Holy Spirit's message.

- The command which Paul disregards came directly from the Holy Spirit!
- vs. 4 “[disciples] told [kept telling] Paul, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem.” Paul absolutely gave no response and ignored the Holy Spirit's command.
- v.6 Paul continued his journey to Jerusalem by boat.
- I have not found one commentator [yet] who says Paul sinned. No one even comments on the fact that these friends of Paul spoke “through the Spirit”. Surely I'm not the only believer who thinks that it is wrong, even for Paul, to ignore a message sent by the Holy Spirit.
- vs.11 Ah, yes, it is true that in the very next paragraph [another city] another speaker [Agabus, a prophet] is sent by the Spirit and carries the message that Paul is granted permission by God that Paul is free to enter Jerusalem. But that does not negate the fact that the Spirit had given a direct command just 7 verses prior [remember Balaam]. We will admit that God allowed it after Paul's first refusal.
- Perhaps God's prohibition would have circumvented 2 years of imprisonment in Caesarea, physical pain, trouble for the local churches, etc. and allowed Paul to plant several more churches. pjm
- Agabus, informs Paul, “thus said the Holy Ghost”, it's okay to go to Jerusalem but you're going to get arrested. [21.11]
- Friends “knelt down on the beach and prayed”, relentless prayer.

#3 Acts 21.21-24 OFFERING SACRIFICES TO PLEASE THE JEWS

Jews asked Paul to prove that “you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.”

Paul takes this vow specifically to prove he still obeyed the Mosaic Law. Anathema!

Paul succumbs: “purifying himself. . .sacrificing.”

- Paul was challenged to prove he was still under the Law [21.24].
- Here Paul falters under the pressure of “James and all the elders [v.18]”.
- Paul's decision was just as wrong then as it would be today in the 21st century if members of our churches demanded that you and I also “[vss. 24-26] purify. . .shave [our] heads. . .”
- abstain from meat. . . [offer an animal] sacrifice”. We're in the Church Age, same as Paul was.