

Audio Transcript of Sermon
February 6, 2021
Acts-Paul Returns to Jerusalem

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. After Paul had met with the elders from Ephesus at Miletus, they walked with him to a ship and from there Paul sailed to Coos and Rhodes. Coos, today known as Kos, K-o-s, is a smaller Greek island very near the coast of what today would be Turkey. Kos is smaller than Rhodes and has a smaller population and during Paul's time had a relative period of peace. Rhodes is located off of Kos and is much larger. Historically, it was home to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World which stood until it was destroyed by an earthquake more than two centuries before the time of Paul. The ship carried them to the port of Patara, which was a major maritime and commercial city on the southern coast of what is today Turkey. It had only been annexed by the Roman empire a few years before Paul stopped in Patara and today its natural harbor is silted over with the city abandoned. From there, Paul set sail for Phoenicia, the area along the Mediterranean Sea north of Israel. From Patara they sailed southeast skirting the west and southern coast of Cyprus arriving in Tyre.

Paul and his group found the brethren in Tyre and stayed there seven days. It was there even though Paul felt the need to go directly to Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit led him to take another course of action. Paul and his group returned to the port after being seen off by the brethren. Acts twenty-one verse one.

Acts 21:1-40

- 1. And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:**
- 2. And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.**
- 3. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.**
- 4. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.**
- 5. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.**

6. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

From Tyre they traveled to Ptoemais, another port city. It had been known as Akko and became a colony in Roman Phoenicia and had its harbor expanded. They only stayed for one day before traveling to Caesarea. The Caesarea of Paul's time was not the same as the modern city in Israel and is today in ruins having been abandoned two hundred twenty years ago. This Caesarea had been built near the site of a former Phoenician naval station and was named after Caesar Augustus. Aside from the port, it hosted regional sporting competitions and theatrical productions. It was there that Paul visited with Philip the evangelist and stayed with him. His unmarried daughters were filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. Agabus, a prophet, came to visit from Jerusalem, and relayed to Paul that the Holy Spirit was advising that Paul would be delivered into the hands of the gentiles at Jerusalem. Upon hearing this from Agabus, everyone urged Paul to not travel to Jerusalem. Paul would not listen to their concerns and told them he was more than ready to die for Jesus Christ. Verse seven.

7. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8. And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

9. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

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.

From there, they traveled by land to Jerusalem accompanied by some of the brethren from Caesarea, including Mnason of Cyprus, an older disciple. Once they arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren there received them warmly. Verse fifteen.

15. And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16. There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

The next day, Paul met with James and the elders at Jerusalem and shared with them the details of his journeys among the gentiles. Upon hearing the news from Paul they glorified God and then warned Paul that word of his success had gotten back to the Jews in Jerusalem who believed Paul had been busy preaching to the Jews living among the gentiles that they needed to forsake the law of Moses. They also told Paul it would not take long for his presence in Jerusalem to be known. They suggested that Paul go with four brethren to the temple to purify himself, to show that Paul was law-abiding. They shared with Paul that they had no temple requirement of gentiles except to keep themselves from things offered to idols and fornication. Verse eighteen.

18. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

22. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24. Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they

were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

Paul went with the four men to the temple and they purified themselves. Today the concept of adhering to the temple requirements for a Christian would seem strange. Back in this time, the religious requirements carried almost the requirements of law. Paul had no reason under the New Testament to go the temple to complete this ritual, and the reasons for his going through with this ritual are unclear. It may be Paul intended to preach at the temple and did not want an oversight of an expected religious ritual to overshadow the message about Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and the Kingdom of God. Verse twenty-six.

26. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

The cleansing ceremony itself took seven days, and by this time the Jews in the temple, who had also traveled to Jerusalem from what is today Turkey, created a huge scene and remembering Paul from his journeys through their land, grabbed Paul in an attempt to make an example of him. They claimed Paul was an enemy of the people who taught against the law, against the temple, who had brought gentiles into the temple. The Jews had previously seen Paul with an Ephesian named Trophimus in Jerusalem and claimed Paul brought Trophimus with him into the temple, but they were mistaken. Verse twenty-seven.

27. And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29. For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

These Jews incited a mob who quickly moved against Paul dragging him out of the temple. As soon as Paul was outside the temple, the temple doors were shut and the mob became enraged to the point they were ready to kill Paul. The authorities were able to see the mob and Roman soldiers and centurions were dispatched to stop the riot. These Romans saw that Paul had been beaten badly but was not dead. Not sure why the mob was angry with Paul, the Romans detained Paul demanding to know who he was and why everyone was angry with him. The crowd went wild and the anger of the mob returned. It became a confusing jumble of words being shouted by different people. Not being able to make sense of what was happening, Paul was taken to the nearby military garrison and had to be carried up the stairs because he had been beaten so badly. The mob followed Paul and the soldiers demanding that Paul be executed. Verse thirty.

30. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

As Paul was being taken into the garrison, the commander began talking with Paul at Paul's request wanting to know if Paul could speak in the Greek language and if Paul was the Egyptian who had recently created an uproar. Paul explained he was not the Egyptian but a Jew from Tarsus of Cilicia and a Roman citizen, and he asked for permission to speak to the mob from the stairs, and this request was granted to him by the military commander. Verse thirty-seven.

37. And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38. Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39. But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40. And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Paul then spoke to the mob in Hebrew to explain his actions. Speaking in a language they understood gave the mob a reason to listen to Paul. He explained to them that he was a Jew from Tarsus, the city in Cilicia. It's not recorded for us that he mentioned to the mob that he was a Roman citizen. Roman citizenship afforded rights to Paul that many of the locals would not have. In the modern era we think of civil rights as applying equally to all people. Back in this time, Roman citizens had rights not afforded non-citizens. Citizenship came with privileges and rights with respect to legal issues, property, and governance. Paul knew his rights gave him a higher level of protection than other people because what would impact him would be violations of Roman law, not Jewish law and any religious findings against him by the religious leaders would need to be substantiated by Roman leaders in a manner fully protecting Paul's rights.

Paul further explained that as a young child he had been brought to Jerusalem to be taught by Gamaliel, who was a well-respected leader within the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel had previously urged restraint against the early church explaining that the faith of the church if indeed it was from God could not be stopped and that if it was of man, it would come to nothing. Records indicate Gamaliel held a senior position with the Sanhedrin, with some believing he may have at one time even presided over the council. It is thought that local civil leaders consulted with Gamaliel from time to time. While seen as a teacher of the Jewish faith, Gamaliel was thought to be a teacher of his students rather than the general public and so it was a privilege to have been taught by him. Paul was explaining to the mob the person with whom they were angry was not just a random person, but a well-educated person who had been taught by the most respected teacher of the time. He was laying his claim to the tradition of the faith in his effort to explain why he was a follower of Jesus. Acts twenty-two verse one.

Acts 22:1-30

- 1. Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.**
- 2. And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)**
- 3. I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.**

He explained his devotion to persecuting all who were disciples of Jesus and explained what happened prior to his conversion showing that he was once the person who caused the death of believers bringing both men and women to prison and was so regarded for his zeal he traveled with letters from the high priest and other high-ranking religious leaders to help him with his persecution. It was while traveling to Damascus to capture disciples that his conversion happened. Verse four.

- 4. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.**
- 5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.**

Paul explained that at noon while traveling on the highway to Damascus he was blinded by a bright light and heard a voice asking him why he was persecuting him. Paul showed the audience at that time he had no idea with whom he was talking and that it was only after Jesus identified himself, that Paul understood with whom he was speaking. He went on to explain that he asked Jesus what he should do, and Jesus told him to continue on to Damascus, and he would be given more information once there. Verse six.

- 6. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.**

7. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8. And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

Paul then told them that the bright light was so blinding he could not see and had to be led by hand to get to Damascus explaining that once there he came into contact with Ananias who was highly regarded by the Jews who lived in Damascus. He relayed that it was through the interaction with Ananias that his sight was restored and that he was prompted to be baptized in the name of Jesus because Jesus intended for Paul to spread the gospel throughout the world. Verse eleven.

11. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13. Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Paul then told them of his return to Jerusalem, how he returned to the temple even though he was in a trance. While praying in the temple in Jerusalem, Paul saw Jesus tell him to leave Jerusalem because the people of Jerusalem would reject the teachings of Jesus. Paul then showed how he debated with Jesus reminding Jesus of how through Paul, the disciples had been imprisoned and assaulted, how Paul had been present when Stephen was martyred even agreeing

that Stephen deserved to die. It was at this time that Paul began to understand his mission would be to proclaim the gospel to the gentiles. Verse seventeen.

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.

It was at the mentioning of the gentiles that the mob became angry again. They quickly began talking about how Paul deserved to be put to death as the mob became increasingly agitated. Verse twenty-two.

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.

23. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

The garrison commander brought Paul into the garrison and gave an initial order that Paul should be questioned through scourging, very similar to what had happened to Jesus, because the commander felt Paul was not being thoroughly truthful. As he was being bound in preparation for being scourged, Paul asked them if it was lawful to scourge a Roman citizen who had not been condemned. This information got back to the garrison commander who asked Paul if he was indeed a citizen, which Paul affirmed. The commander explained to Paul that it cost him a lot of money to buy his freedom and citizenship, which was a common pathway toward citizenship. Paul countered explaining that he had been born free, which was considered a higher form of citizenship. Paul was explaining that he enjoyed the full protection of Roman law. Without using words, Paul was also explaining that these soldiers had just violated his rights, and this awareness caused fear among them. Paul knew and the soldiers knew that the only crime for which he could be put to death was treason and that the trial for treason at the

request of the citizen would have to be in Rome. Under no circumstances could a citizen be scourged. Instead of looking at Roman punishment, the military commander opted to have Paul taken to the Sanhedrin. Verse twenty-four.

24. The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26. When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

29. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30. On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

The Sanhedrin were assemblies of elders who were appointed to act as judges interpreting the law of Moses. Each city had its Sanhedrin comprised of twenty-three elders. In a close decision this would mean at least twelve elders would have to vote in agreement for an action to occur. Each city Sanhedrin was considered a lesser Sanhedrin. The Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was comprised of seventy-one elders, meaning at least three dozen elders would have to vote in agreement for an action to occur. When reading of the Sanhedrin in Acts, it is this Great Sanhedrin we are reading about. The Sanhedrin not only interacted with Roman authorities but served as leaders within the Jewish community regulating the religious calendar, laws of Moses, while also having taxing authority.

Paul was prepared to give an answer for the hope that was within him, and he recounted his life experiences to share his story. Similarly, we must be prepared to give an answer for the hope that lies within us. Peter wrote about this in his

first letter rhetorically asking that if we are followers of Jesus who can really harm us? We are told to not be afraid or troubled by what others say about us or the faith we have knowing others will persecute us for our beliefs. We are advised by Peter to purposefully keep God holy in our mind at all times and to be ready to give an answer explaining why we believe what we believe, the reason for the hope that is within us. If we examine what we are told to do by Peter, we are being told to be able to explain why we believe rather than what we believe.

What we believe is important and explaining why we believe helps us connect with other people. Explaining why we believe removes faith from an academic consideration where others can agree or disagree. Because faith should lead us to take action in our life, being able to explain why we believe explains to others how what we believe has led us from our prior to our current life.

Peter also tells us we should never be worried about what others may think or say about us realizing it is probable just as people lied about Jesus, people will lie about us as well, and that even in the face of lies we should maintain a good conscience, knowing we have done nothing wrong in the eyes of God. Even if we should suffer, we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus also suffered and was resurrected having been put to death. First Peter three verse thirteen.

1 Peter 3:13-22

13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Paul who would soon be facing persecution was the same man who advised Timothy on persecution. To Timothy, he wrote explaining how Timothy knew Paul's teachings and lifestyle, his purpose in life. Our purpose in life needs to be aligned to the hope that we have within us, and we need to be able to explain not only what this hope is within us but we have this hope, linked together with faith, patience, love, and endurance.

Paul reminded Timothy of the persecutions he endured during his journeys and how he was always delivered by Jesus. Having previously explained to Timothy how at the end time people would be lovers of themselves living in a perilous time, he went on to tell Timothy that the persecutions suffered by people will continue because people will become more, not less, evil. It would be important for Timothy to remember what he had been taught and to continue in these through the remainder of his life. We must do the same also, knowing that all scripture is inspired by God and can be used for doctrine, spiritual growth, and to learn the faith so that we can become perfect in the eyes of God. Second Timothy three verse ten.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

10. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11. Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

In the beatitudes, Jesus spoke of persecution telling that when we are persecuted, it is for the Kingdom of Heaven. He warned that persecution will include false accusations and that instead of being worried about these persecutions, we should be glad knowing that the people of God have been persecuted here on earth through all periods of time reminding us that our reward is not here on earth but is laid up for us in heaven through the Kingdom of God. Matthew five verse ten.

Matthew 5:10-12

10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

We are told in Psalms to depart from evil, to do good, to seek peace and pursue it because the eyes of God are on the righteous, whose cries God hears, who God delivers. We know from Psalms that even though the righteous will face evil people and bad situations, God will deliver the righteous from their trouble. Psalm thirty-four verse fourteen.

Psalm 34:14-22

14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

- 18. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.**
- 19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.**
- 20. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.**
- 21. Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.**
- 22. The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.**

In writing to the Romans Paul tells us to hate evil as we cling to that which is good, to be kind to each other, even blessing those who persecute us. Even when persecuted, as much we may want to repay evil for evil, we are told not to, and instead caring for our enemies overcoming evil with good. We are not to let the evil that is around us in the world consume our life and become part of who we are. Romans twelve verse nine.

Romans 12:9-21

- 9. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**
- 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;**
- 11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;**
- 12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;**
- 13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.**
- 14. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.**
- 15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.**
- 16. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.**
- 17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.**
- 18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.**
- 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.**
- 20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.**
- 21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

To the Corinthians, Paul wrote that even though we have this treasure of the Holy Spirit, we hold this treasure within our physical bodies so that God may be magnified. Even though trouble may be around us, we can take comfort that just as Jesus was resurrected from the dead, so too, we will be saved from the troubles of our life, and even if death is our physical destination, we have this hope of eternal life that comes through faith. Second Corinthians four verse seven.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9. Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

15. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

Paul in writing to the Romans asked the question that if God is for us who can be against us? He added that if God delivered Jesus from death, the same will be done for us as well. There is no person who can condemn us, because no man has power of eternal death. Whatever charges are brought against us by man, or Satan and the demons, God will find reason to adjudicate us not guilty of these charges through the request of Jesus Christ. Nobody will be able to separate us from the love of Jesus. Nothing will be able to separate us from this love. Even in the most severe form of persecution, even when this persecution results in loss of our physical life, it is through Jesus we conquer all, including death itself. There is no person, animal, or anything within God's creation, physical or spiritual, that

can separate us from the love of God that is made possible through Jesus Christ. Romans chapter eight verse thirty-one.

Romans 8:31-39

31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As an apostle, Paul started his spiritual journey by persecuting the church. He would later face persecution himself and next week we will read of his time before the Sanhedrin. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.