

Anatomy of Revival Part 12

21 “testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. When you exercise faith toward Jesus Christ, you are automatically repenting to God for your attitude toward His son. Repent means “to change your mind.” You do not change your mind about sin, although that is part of it. You change your mind, your attitude about Jesus Christ. You have been rejecting Him and now you are accepting Him.

22 “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,”

In his own heart, Paul senses the warning of the Holy Spirit. He feels bound in his own spirit because he will be bound in his own body when he arrives in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit says “no” but Paul will rationalize it into “yes.”

Paul has probably thought since he will face suffering it must be God’s will. Some people think if they are not suffering, they are out of God’s will. Paul even says in this verse that he does not know. Paul is usually “confident,” “always confident,” “knowing,” etc. (2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8, and 11).

23 “except that the Holy Spirit testifies (gives solemn warning) in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.”

Paul has been visiting many places on the way to Miletus trying to relax. But ever since he has been determined to go to Jerusalem, he has been warned by the Holy Spirit and believers in every city not to go.

24 “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

Paul was simply saying, “I am hard-headed.” Although he knows he will end up in prison, he is saying he is willing to die for the gospel. This is noble but stupid. All the things Paul is saying he is willing to do are right and commendable. But if you are out of God’s will, you can have all the right attitudes and still be wrong.

Paul is planning on going to jail and being persecuted, but he still plans on preaching the gospel. He will end up in jail and he will be persecuted, but he will *not* get to preach the gospel in Jerusalem. He specifically will not be able to preach the gospel of grace. He will take a legalistic vow to preach the gospel of grace. In essence, he will sin that grace may abound.

25 “And indeed, now I know that you all (pastors at Ephesus), among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.”

26 “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood (responsibility) of all men.”

Paul is pure from their blood. He is free from responsibility. Their blood is now on their own hands because Paul has done everything for them God has commanded.

27 “For I have not shunned to declare (teach again and again) to you the whole counsel of God.”

This was Paul’s responsibility to teach the word to these men. He is free from their blood (responsibility for them). If they fail, they were responsible, not Paul. He gave them the word. They are now responsible for their own decisions and the consequences. When a minister gives his people the word of God and leaves nothing out, he is free from responsibility over them. The pastor can walk away from the pulpit knowing he has delivered all God had told him to. When a minister finally leaves this earth and enters heaven, he can do so with the assurance that he has preached all the word of God and left nothing out (Colossians 4:12).

Paul walked away from these ministers knowing he gave them everything God told him to. Paul’s conscience is free toward God and these ministers. When the congregation opens their hearts to the teaching of the word, it makes the pastor’s job even easier. Not only is the pastor free from responsibility, so are the people (2 Corinthians 6:11-13).

28 “Therefore take heed (pay attention) to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit (not men) has made (appointed) you overseers (bishops), to shepherd (pastor) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

Paul told the pastors to first take heed to themselves before they take heed to the flock. If a minister does not take care of himself and his own personal life, he will not be in any good condition to take care of the flock of God. He must spend time with his family, take days off and, holidays. Without these, he will not live long enough to take the congregation to the level they need to go. Moses faced this issue, and his father-in-law told him to delegate the responsibilities so he would live long (Exodus 18:17-23).

29 “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”

Wolves represent unbelievers (Matthew 7:15, 10:16, Luke 10:3). They come from the outside (Colossians 4:5) and desire to destroy the work of God. They do not seek people to follow them, they only desire to destroy the work of God.

30 *“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”*

This is the worst group. They “rise up” in arrogance from within the church. They know correct teaching but twist and pervert it to draw people away to themselves.

“Shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

Phygellus and Hermogenes in 2 Timothy 1:15 were looking for an audience for themselves. A congregation they did not have to raise on their own. They preferred to take an existing congregation, split it, and start with them. They were looking for a unique teaching to make their ministry known. They took good doctrine, sound teaching, and confused people with perversions. These men sat right in front of Paul and Paul prophesied they will rise and split congregations for their own selfish desires.

Peter also mentions these types of ministers in 2 Peter 2:10, *“and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries...”*

31 *“Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”*

In this verse, Paul is concluding his teaching and instruction to the pastors at Ephesus. He wants them to remember his own teaching and examples from the past three years. They must use the word for themselves and set an example before their own people. They have seen Paul at his best and worst and know of his love for the Lord and the people.