

Conflict and Persecution in Jerusalem. Acts 21:15-22:21

The opposition in Jerusalem was begun by some Jewish believers who were still zealous for the law of Moses. They were mischaracterizing Paul's message and his actions. (Acts 21:15-26).

Paul did all he could to not offend the Jewish Christians that were there and even the Jews who weren't Christians- but it wasn't enough for them. In addition, some Jews from Asia came to the city to stir up the crowd against Paul. He was dragged out of the Temple and tried to kill him. His rescue came from Roman Centurions sent by their Commander. (Acts 21:27-36) Before being put in protective custody, he asks to speak to the crowd, upon which he gives his testimony. Act 22:1-21. The crowd initially listens but become angry when his states his ministry is to the Gentiles. Acts 22:21,22

Now under the control of the Roman Government, Paul is to be scourged and questioned as to Why he has created such an uproar in the city. This is where Paul reveals he is a Roman Citizen. (Acts 22:25-29) The commander then comes to understand that this is a Jewish religious issue. Paul is released but is required to go before the Sanhedrin. As he stands before the Sanhedrin, he adeptly falls back on the fact that He is a Pharisee- and that he is being judged for a belief the Pharisees hold- the resurrection of the dead. This creates a distracting argument amongst the Sanhedrin because the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. In the argument then, the Pharisees start defending Paul. His gives him somewhat of a reprieve. The following night the Lord meets with Paul directly. Acts 23:11

Paul's close walk with Persecution and Suffering.

Paul was warned by the Lord at his conversion that He would suffer for the cause of the gospel. Specifically, the apostle Paul had been warned by the prophet Agabus In Caesarea that persecutions were facing Him in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-13). Remember that Paul himself had been a persecutor of the church. As he witnessed of Christ, he was willing to admit his past sinfulness. Paul did the to magnify the mercy of God. 1 Tim. 1:12-17

Although I cannot find any evidence Biblically to say that Paul suffered so much because he brought such great suffering to the church in his unregenerate life, do you believe that idea crossed his mind? Christ saves all who call on him to be saved, but the law of sowing and reaping is not always cancelled by the Lord. See Galatians 6:9

Paul was a tough character and like everyone not sinless. Romans 7:14-25
God used his sufferings to bring about continued change in his life. 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.

How do you suppose Paul kept a positive outlook on things throughout so many persecutions?
