

## **UNEXPECTED ANSWERS**

### **Romans 15:30-32**

#### **How do we handle unexpected answers to prayer?**

#### **I. PAUL'S INVITATION - Romans 15:30-32**

##### **A. PRAY HARD (30)**

##### **B. PRAY SPECIFICALLY (31-32)**

1. For Paul's protection from the disobedient in Jerusalem (31a)
2. For Paul's reception among the saints in Jerusalem (31b)
3. For Paul's celebration with the saints in Rome (32)

#### **II. PAUL'S RECEPTION - Acts 21:17-26**

- The prayer was: "that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints."

##### **A. CORDIAL (17-20a)**

1. Received gladly (17)
2. They glorified God for Paul's Gentile ministry (18-20a)

##### **B. BUT CONCERNED (20b-26)**

1. Accusation (20b-21)
2. Question (22)
3. Suggestion (23-26)

##### **C. CONCLUSION**

- This was not exactly the warm reception for which Paul had asked the Romans to pray!

#### **III. PAUL'S PROTECTION - Acts 21:27-23:35**

- The prayer was: "That I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea."

##### **A. MOBBED BY ANGRY JEWS (21:27-36)**

##### **B. RASHLY JUDGED BY ANGRY JEWS (22:1-23)**

##### **C. NEARLY SCOURGED BY A CARELESS COMMANDER (22:24-29)**

##### **D. CONSPIRED AGAINST BY FORTY FIESTY JEWS (23:12-22)**

##### **E. CONCLUSION**

- This was not exactly what Paul had in mind when he asked the Romans to pray for his protection!

#### IV. PAUL'S CELEBRATION - Acts 28:16-24

- The prayer was: "That I may come to you in joy and find refreshing rest in your company."

A. ARRIVING IN ROME AS A PRISONER (16-20)

B. ALL THEY KNOW IS THAT HE'S SPOKEN AGAINST EVERYWHERE (21-22)

C. SOME RECEIVE HIS MESSAGE BUT OTHER REJECT (23-24)

D. CONCLUSION

- There's nothing about this scenario that hints at refreshment, rest or a celebration!

#### V. PAUL'S SUBMISSION

A. HIS Demeanor - Romans 15:29-32

1. Knowing that he would come to Rome in the fullness of God's blessing (29)

- Though he did not know the blessing could look like a burden

2. Coming to them by the will of God (32)

- A submission to God's sovereignty and that the events that came to pass were what He willed

B. GOD'S DIRECTIVES - Acts 24:1- 28:10

1. For Paul to witness to Felix - Acts 24

2. For Paul to witness to Festus - Acts 25:7-12

3. For Paul to witness to King Agrippa - Acts 26

4. For Paul to witness to storm-tossed passengers - Acts 27

5. For Paul to witness to Malta islanders - Acts 28:1-10

C. GOD'S DECISION - Acts 23:11

1. For Paul to witness at Jerusalem and Rome

2. Paul prayed for peace (reception, protection, celebration) but God desired proclamation

3. Paul's prayer was answered ... but in unexpected ways.

#### CONCLUSION:

*Sometimes God says "no" to our well-intentioned prayers in order to accomplish greater things that bring glory to Him.*

**We can pray definitively but must yield completely to God's unexpected answers.**