

I. Introduction

A. John Allen Chau

1. After nine years of preparation, 26-year-old John Allen Chau arrived on North Sentinel Island in November of 2018. He made it to the beach and that is where his life ended.
2. Since that day there has been a flurry of opinions, articles, and social commentary about this young man who was a fool, a racist, a Christian supremacist, a martyr, or just a man who, like Paul, took the commission of Jesus seriously and obeyed the specific assignment given to him by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, you can tell where I land on the characterization of John Chau.
3. John Chau voice of the martyrs...
 - a. *John knew there was a high likelihood of death on that island. Why did he go? Paul, warned by Agabus the prophet, went to Jerusalem even though he knew that is where his freedom would end and he would be definitively in chains from then on, maybe even die for his insistence in going to Jerusalem. Why did he go?
 - b. *Obedience to the One Who deserves. Obedience to Jesus cannot be attached to an outcome. It cannot be attached to an idea of success nor a fear of danger. Obedience to Jesus is not about doing something exciting or adventurous or desired. It's not about doing something that you don't want to do. Obedience is the act of worshiping and glorifying God and responding to the unbelievable love and sacrifice Jesus the Savior King has given to us.

B. Communion, concern, compromise, and now consequences

II. The story continues (21:27-36)

A. Accusation

When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. (Acts 21:27-29)

1. Paul's follow through with the purification ritual and demonstration of his support of the Mosaic customs
2. Jews from Asia stirred up the crowd
 - a. Careful not to assign motive
 - b. Passover holiday - many Jews/Jewish Christians from all over the diaspora
3. Behind the escalation
 - a. "Teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the Law"
 - 1) Rumors, and untrue rumors at that
 - 2) Exactly what the leaders of the Jerusalem church were trying to clarify!

- b. "Brought Greeks into the Temple"
 - 1) If true, whole Temple would be shut down and need to go through a purification/rededication ceremony
 - 2) Seen... thought: Surely Paul, the renegade/rebel, would do something like this
 - 3) Temple proper, not just Court of Gentiles
 - a) Short wall around the Temple proper
 - b) Inscription in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew warning that no Gentile go beyond that point and if they did, they only had themselves to blame for their death that followed
- c. *Note of cultural and historical unrest: growing Jewish identity/nationalism, peaked about 10 years later with the Jewish revolt resulting in the destruction of the Temple by Rome.

B. Action

Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (Acts 21:30-31)

- 1. Seized Paul and shut the doors to the Temple
- 2. Began beating Paul with the intent of killing him

C. Intervention

He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!" (Acts 21:32-36)

- 1. Roman presence
 - a. End of the Temple was a series of four towers = Roman barracks in Jerusalem
 - b. Extra forces deployed during holidays
 - c. Had direct access to court of Gentiles
- 2. Roman response
 - a. Watchmen would have immediately seen the commotion
 - b. Soldiers and Centurions
 - 1) Centurion = leader of 100 soldiers (often closer to 80)
 - 2) Plural, so at least 160-200 soldiers responding
 - c. Couldn't make sense of the confusion
 - 1) Arrested Paul
 - 2) Carried him away because of the violence of the crowd (wonder if he was even able to carry himself ...)
 - 3) *Paul is in chains, just as Agabus, the prophet, had prophesied.

III. Three things to think and pray about

A. The difficult demand of the Gospel

1. Even though Christians confessed they were one body, the Jewish Christians still tended to worship in the Temple and the Gentile Christians were not allowed in. The church at Jerusalem had at least some disobedient division.
2. The Gospel demand
 - a. *And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the Earth shook, and the rocks were split. (Matthew 27:51)*
 - b. *Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:11)*
 - c. For He Himself is our peace, Who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. (Ephesians 2:14-16)
3. The enemy's strategy: divide/split Jesus followers into groups against each other, even in a single church. In the House of God, the family of God, we come surrendered, humble, and laying down our agenda to worship the only one deserving of worship. God and His Kingdom take priority and cast into dark shadow our desires, agendas, and ideologies.

B. Zeal without wisdom

1. There's something to be said about being zealous for the things of God, but we have a tendency to let our conclusions and methods outpace our knowledge, wisdom, and verification.
2. Zeal without wisdom
 - a. Judges 10-11
 - b. *Desire without knowledge is not good, and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way. When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the Lord. Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend. (Proverbs 19:2-4)*
 - c. *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. (Romans 10:2-3)*
 - d. *For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. (Galatians 1:13-14)*
3. *Flip side ...

C. The persistence of God's sovereignty and will

1. Paul, the messenger to the Gentiles, is in chains—seeming end of ministry.
2. Warned over and over again about the loss of freedom that awaits him in Jerusalem
3. But as we will see, whether free or in chains, the Word of God, the mission of God cannot be stopped.
4. 1 Corinthians 9:16-27

- a. 1 Corinthians was written about 53-54AD at Ephesus.
 - b. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem about 55AD.
 - c. Paul's words were prophetic and he was called to live out what he claimed about himself.
5. *Am I willing to live out the testimony of Scripture no matter the consequences?

John Chau: You guys might think I'm crazy in all this but I think it's worth it to declare Jesus to these people. Please do not be angry at them or God if I get killed—rather please live your lives in obedience to whatever He has called you to and I'll see you again when you pass through the veil. Don't retrieve my body. This is not a pointless thing—the eternal lives of this tribe is at hand and I can't wait to see them around the throne of God worshipping in their own language as Revelations 7:9-10 states. I love you all and I pray none of you love anything in this world more than Jesus Christ.

Karen Kegley: a simple life of consistent obedience in loving others, going "small places" gladly because she too, will do anything for Jesus. And even as she slowly has lost her mobility, her color, her ability to focus, she is still inspiring those around her to see Jesus as the only treasure.

- Good news is that God will never give up on His Word or on His people.
- Whatever awaits you, as you obey, God will lead and love you through the greatest of odds for the glory of His Kingdom!