

The Book of Acts

Chapter 21 part 2

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

- I. Review
 1. Chapter 21 included a lot of travel details, for as we mentioned, Luke, the author of Acts, a physician and journalist, was traveling with Paul on this final leg of Paul's Third Missionary Journey.
 2. In chapter 21, we saw the details of their departure from the coastal city of Miletus (in modern day Turkey), as they hugged the coast on a small sailing vessel, then boarded a sea-bound ship to the Phoenician coast to the city of Tyre, and after a few more hops, to Jerusalem. [maps]

3. We saw how James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem received Paul gladly, but they had also discussed rumors that were being spread and uproar among some of the Jewish Christians because of those rumors.
4. The rumors were spread by unbelieving Jews who had rejected Paul's preaching in Ephesus and other areas who accused Paul of throwing out all the writings of Moses and encouraging Jews to do the same.
5. To prove these rumors untrue, the elders asked Paul to go to the temple with four Jewish Christians, participate in and help pay their expenses associated with ending a Nazarite vow.
6. The plan to end those rumors got another rumor started which led to Paul's arrest and brought the end of his personal freedoms as a Roman citizen.
7. And as far as the available written records we have on Paul's life, from this day

forward, Paul was a prisoner under Roman custody.

8. Someone had seen Paul walking through the city streets with a Ephesian gentile brother, and they had also seen Paul in the temple, so the accusation was that Paul had brought a Gentile into the temple.
 9. That started a public disturbance at the temple, Paul was grabbed and hauled out of the temple and the doors were shut behind him.
- II. End of Chapter 21—Paul arrested (Acts 21:30-40)

- A. Paul assaulted, again
 1. We pick up our story from there.
 2. The anger of the Jews ignited hostility against Paul, and the whole city was moved with mob violence.

Acts 21:30-31

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.

3. A great crowd gathered at the Temple and dragged Paul out of the Temple grounds into the court of the Gentiles, shutting the doors behind them, intending to kill him.
4. Paul's life was saved from their murderous intents by the chief captain of the Roman garrison, who heard the violence and dispatched several soldiers to investigate and intervene.

Acts 21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down [the stairs of the castle see v.35] unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

B. Other beatings

1. Had Paul ever been physically assaulted for preaching? Yes. On his first missionary journey, angry Jews raised persecution and expelled him from Antioch.
2. In Iconium, the next city, after preaching and doing miracles among them, some Gentiles and Jews made plans to stone them.
3. Paul learned of that and fled to Lystra, preached there and healed a lame man, and some men dragged him out of the city stoned him to death, and he raised up alive.
4. On the second missionary Journey, in the city of Philippi, he was beaten and thrown in prison.
5. In Thessalonica, the house of Jason was assaulted targeting Paul but he had escaped. The same people pursued Paul to Berea and stirred up the people there.
6. On the third missionary journey, in the city of Ephesus, Paul barely escaped a mob riot. Yet none of these things moved him!

7. In his second letter to the Corinthian church, he found it necessary to defend his role as their elder worthy of respect.
8. Some ministers had come to their church, false apostles making themselves out to be apostles of Christ, and some obviously had compared those people to Paul:

2 Cor 11:23-28, 32-33

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one [Deut 35:3 set the “cruel and unusual punishment” limit at 40].

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods [Philippi], once was I stoned [Lystra], thrice I suffered shipwreck [Acts 27:41], a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in

*perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness,
in perils in the sea, in perils among false
brethren;*

*27 In weariness and painfulness, in
watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in
fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

*28 Beside those things that are without,
that which cometh upon me daily, the care
of all the churches.*

*32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas
the king kept the city of the Damascenes
with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:*

*33 And through a window in a basket was I
let down by the wall [Acts 9:24], and
escaped his hands.*

- c. No clear accusation
 - 1. So we return to Jerusalem, right after the mob beat Paul...

*Acts 21:33 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.

2. With Paul bound in chains now in Roman custody, the captain demanded of the crowd what Paul had done.
3. No one in the crowd was able to explain Paul's crime, "*some cried one thing, some another*". Mob justice doesn't need to know the crime, they just go along with the crowd.
4. The captain decided to have Paul taken into the "castle" or fortress near the temple mount.

Acts 21:34 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.

5. This castle which was built by Herod was a 60-foot-high fortress with towers on each end, had been used as Pilate's headquarters, but at this time was being

used by Romans to monitor activities near the temple.¹

6. As the soldiers reached the stairs to ascend into the castle, they had to lift Paul above the crowd to keep him away from being assaulted again:

Acts 21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

7. The crowd continued to cry: “Away with him!” v. 36
- D. Paul gains respect of the captain
 1. As they ascended the stairs, Paul addressed the captain in the Greek language, which surprised the captain, as he thought Paul was an Egyptian and a leader of murderers.
Acts 21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

¹ Archeology Study Bible, “Pilates Headquarters,” p. 1581.

2. Paul confirmed he was not that Egyptian, but instead provided his credentials as a Roman citizen from an important city:
Acts 21:39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean [average] city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.
3. Perhaps because of Paul's claims of being a respectable citizen, and the fact that he could speak Greek, the captain viewed him less as a murderer, and gave him the opportunity to address his accusers.
Acts 21:40 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,
4. And Paul's speech continues in chapter 22.