

PART 29: PAUL IN JERUSALEM, PT 1

ACTS 21:17—22:21

Mike Taylor

www.TaylorNotes.Info/monday



SUMMARY



I. PAUL MEETS WITH CHRISTIAN BROTHERS IN JERUSALEM (21:17-26)

A. Paul meets with fellow believers, James, and the elders in Jerusalem (21:17-19).

1. Paul arrived in Jerusalem, presumably to celebrate Pentecost, as he planned.
 - a) He was received gladly because of the much-needed offering Paul and his companions brought, also because the Gentile converts with Paul provided visible evidence of God's work of salvation in the Roman world.
 - b) James was the half-brother of Jesus and head of the Jerusalem church.
 - c) Since the Jewish Christians now numbered in the thousands, a large number of elders must have been needed to pastor them (Stott 339)
2. Paul gave a detailed description of his journeys, always giving credit to God for their successes.

3. They all gave glory for his accomplishments to God.

B. Paul is warned about false accusations against him (21:20-22)

1. Paul is warned about Judaizers who were spreading false reports that Paul was telling Jewish believers to forsake their heritage.
2. Some Jewish believers continued to observe the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Law ("zealous for the law"), but unlike the Judaizers, they did not view the law as a means of salvation.
 - a) The issue here was not if Jews should continue keeping the Mosaic Law, but should Jewish believers continue to observe Jewish cultural practices.

C. Paul advised how to respond to these accusations (21:23-25)

1. Paul is advised to take four men, who are under a (Nazirite) vow, to the temple, and pay their expenses for shaving (cutting) their hair.
 - a) By paying those expenses for another was considered an act of piety.
 - b) It would also show that Paul still supported Jewish cultural practices.
2. By doing this, Paul would give proof that he had not forsaken his Jewish heritage.
 - a) Both Paul and James agree doctrinally that salvation is not based on law-keeping but out of respect for Jewish customs and culture, they wanted to make it clear that they respect these customs.
3. A Nazirite is one who voluntarily took a vow which is described in Numbers 6:1-21.
 - a) They would refrain from cutting their hair (but allow the locks of the head's hair to grow).
 - b) A Nazirite would abstain from all wine and anything else made from the grapevine plant, such as cream of tartar, grape seed oil, etc.
 - c) They were not to become ritually impure by contact with corpses or graves, even those of family members.
 - d) After a period of usually 30 days the individual would cut (shave) their hair and present it at the temple along with an offering.
4. Gentiles, however, were to continue with what was directed at the Jerusalem Council (15:28-29).
 - a) Abstain from what has been offered to idols
 - b) Abstain from eating animals that had been strangled.
 - c) Abstain from sexual immorality

D. Paul's compliance (21:26)

1. The next day Paul complies with the suggestions of the Jerusalem church leaders.
2. Having returned from an extended stay in Gentile lands, Paul was considered ceremonially unclean.
 - a) He, therefore, needed to undergo ritual purification before participating (as their sponsor) in the ceremony marking the end of the four men's vows.

II. PAUL ARRESTED IN THE TEMPLE (21:27-22:21)

A. Arrest because of mob violence (21:27-36)

1. Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple and made false accusations against him.
 - a) That he taught the Jews to forsake their heritage.
 - b) That he opposed the Mosaic law.
 - c) Blaspheming or defiling the temple
 - d) The Jews from Asia were probably from Ephesus since they recognized Trophimus as a Gentile and just assumed that Paul had taken him into the temple.
2. These Jews stirred up the crowd against Paul which seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple with the intent of killing him, much as they did to Jesus.
 - a) The phrase "away with him/get rid of him" (21:36) is reminiscent of what was shouted about Jesus 30 years before.
3. When Roman soldiers intervened, they stopped beating Paul.
4. Because of the noise and confusion from Paul's enemies, the Roman soldiers took Paul to their barracks.

B. Paul speaks to the mob (21:37—22:21)

1. Paul asks the Roman tribune if he could speak to him, getting his attention by speaking Greek.
 - a) The Roman tribune thought Paul may have been the individual who had previously led a revolt against the Romans by an Egyptian Jew (ESV Crossway Bibles p. 2133, note 21:38).
2. Speaking to the Jewish mob in Aramaic, Paul defends himself.
 - a) He defends his Jewish roots (Gamaliel).
 - b) He defended his zeal for God since he persecuted Christians.
 - c) He revealed how Jesus confronted him personally after his resurrection.

- d) He explained how God commissioned him to be an apostle to the Gentiles.
3. He gives his testimony to the crowd and how he himself had persecuted those who defiled the temple, but how his life was changed when he was encountered by Jesus and called to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.
 - a) Paul's first main point: He was still a devout Jew.
 - b) His calling to the Gentiles was God's idea, not his.

C. Wrap Up

1. Paul arrives in Jerusalem. Paul and his companions arrived in Jerusalem with money collected from his journeys to help those poor Christian Jews who had been impacted by a recent famine.
2. Paul is falsely accused of violating Jewish customs. He is gladly received but is warned by James that some Jews thought he was teaching them to forsake their Jewish customs. Some also mistakenly believed Paul has desecrated the temple by bringing a Greek (Trophimus) into it.
3. Paul shows that this accusation is not true. To correct these misunderstandings, James suggests that Paul pay for the shaving of the four Nazirite men and undergo the traditional 7-day purification process since he had been with Gentiles.
4. The whole city rises up against Paul when they see him in the temple, assuming that Trophimus, a Gentile, was with him. Paul is taken by the Roman soldiers for questioning.
5. Paul speaks to the Jewish mob and defends himself. He explains to the Jewish mob that he is still a devout Jew by keeping Jewish customs but also that God called him to the Gentiles.

Bibliography

ESV Crossway Bibles. *ESV English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2008.

MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Stott, John R. *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church, & the World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990.