

Acts 21v17-36

1) The report

Acts 21v17-20

When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "*You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed*"

1. The report (v17-20)

- Paul reports what God has done amongst the Gentiles
- The leaders in Jerusalem praise God

2) The request

Acts 21v20-26

Then they said to Paul: *“You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.”*

“What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you.”

“There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.”

“As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.”

The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

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2. The request (v20-26)

- The Jews who have recently become Christians have heard rumours about Paul
- Paul agrees to help squash these rumours by accompanying some guys who have undertaken a Nazirite vow (see Numbers 6)





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3) The riot

Acts 21v27-30

When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting:

“Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place.”

(They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)

The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.

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- Paul is spotted and seized in the temple
- He is dragged out of the temple and beaten

4) The rescue

Acts 21v31-36

While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks.

When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept shouting, *“Away with him!”*

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4. The rescue (v31-36)

- The Roman Commander arrests Paul
- Paul is carried away by the soldiers

1) The Christian life is not always easy

Paul encounters problems from various people:

❖ Within the church (v20-24)

- From Christian Jews who are “zealous for the law” who have heard rumours about Paul which are untrue
- Paul responds graciously and humbly (see Ephesians 4v2-3)
- Christians don’t always get things right!



❖ Outside of the church (v27-36)

- From non-Christian Jews who seize, falsely accuse and beat him.
- Paul is then arrested and carried away
- We can take comfort from Jesus’ example
- We can take courage from Jesus’ words (Luke 6v22-28)

2) What we say is very powerful

❖ Testimony (v19-20)

“Paul...reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God”

- Testimony brings glory to God and makes us glad
- Let’s share what God is doing in us and through us



❖ Gossip (v20-22, v28-29)

- “*They have been informed..*” (v21) How?
- What gossip does:
 - Spreads
 - Exaggerates
 - Assumes
 - Harms
- Gossip brings no glory to God and makes us sad