

# Acts 21 - Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey: Return to Jerusalem; Riot in the Temple; Paul's Defense Before Jewish Mob

III. Outreach to the remote parts of the earth (Acts 13:1–28:31)

- (4) Third missionary journey (18:23–21:17)
  - (F) Return to Jerusalem (21:1-17)
    - (a) From Miletus to Tyre (21:1-6)
    - (b) From Tyre to Caesarea (21:7-14)
    - (c) From Caesarea to Jerusalem (21:15-16)
  - (5) Paul's journey to Rome (21:17–28:31)
    - (A) Paul in Jerusalem (21:17–23:22)
      - (a) Paul's arrest in the Temple (21:17-40)

## Acts 21

- (F) Return to Jerusalem (21:1-17)
  - (a) From Miletus to Tyre (21:1-6)

1 Now when we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to **Cos**, and on the next day to **Rhodes**, and from there to **Patara**;

1 When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara;

1 When we had torn ourselves away from those brothers, we sailed straight to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.

1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

- "...Cos" - an island 40 miles from Miletus
- "...Rhodes" - refers to the city on the island of Rhodes, 90 miles from Coos
- A giant statue of Apollo, "The Colossus of Rhodes," one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; it stood next to the entrance to the harbor (but by this time was in ruins)
- "...Patara" - 60 miles east of Rhodes
- Paul could've made this trip in three days

2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.

2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.  
2 There we found a ship going across to Phoenicia, so we went aboard and sailed on.  
2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.  
- In Patara, Paul and his entourage transferred to a ship bound directly for Tyre, 400 miles away; probably a grain or fruit ship

3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for the ship was to unload its cargo there.  
3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.  
3 We came in sight of Cyprus, and leaving it on our left, we sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre because the ship was to unload its cargo there.  
3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.  
- They sailed south of Cyprus

4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there for seven days; and they kept telling Paul, through the Spirit, not to set foot in Jerusalem.  
4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.  
4 So we located some disciples and stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit, they kept telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem,  
4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.  
- Refugees from the persecution that followed Stephen's martyrdom had evangelized Phoenicia (11:19)

### **Was Paul Disobedient in Returning to Jerusalem?**

Paul's biggest mistake of his life? If he hadn't gone to Jerusalem, he would not have been imprisoned for two years! There is also ample evidence that Paul was not disobedient to God in going on to Jerusalem (Cf. 9:16; 19:21; 20:22-24; 21:14; 23:1,11). However, Paul regarded the various prophetic utterances about the danger to him in Jerusalem not as a prohibition, but a divine forewarning so that he could be spiritually prepared for what would happen.

5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.

5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.

5 but when our time there came to an end, we left and proceeded on our journey. All of them accompanied us with their wives and children out of the city. We knelt on the beach, prayed,

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 Then we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

6 Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.

6 and said goodbye to each other. Then we reboarded the ship, and they went back home.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

- As they did before leaving the Ephesian elders, Paul and his fellow missionaries knelt and prayed with these believers before they departed (20:36)

#### (b) From Tyre to Caesarea (21:7-14)

7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at **Ptolemais**, and after greeting the brothers *and sisters*, we stayed with them for a day.

7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day.

7 When we completed our voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, greeted the brothers there, and stayed with them for one day.

7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

- "...Ptolemais" - Acco of the OT and modern Acre, located on the north side of the bay of Haifa, 25 miles south of Tyre

- Paul always met with Christians: The work of Philip? (Cf. v8) or possibly converts from Pentecost, 26 years earlier...

[There must have been millions of believers in the Roman Empire by the end of the first century.]

8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of **Philip** the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.

8 The next day, we left and came to Caesarea. We went to the home of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and stayed with him.

8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

- "...Philip" - one of the original seven deacons; he evangelized in Samaria and baptized the Ethiopian treasurer

— This was not the Philip of the gospels, who was one of Jesus' disciples

- It was at this time that Philip likely relayed the story of his evangelization of the Ethiopian eunuch to Luke (Cf. 8:26-40)

9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.

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9 He had four unmarried daughters who could prophesy.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

- Philip's four daughters had the prophetic gift, which may mean they were worship leaders (Cf. 1 Chr 25:1)

10 As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named **Agabus** came down from Judea.

10 As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

10 After we had been there for a number of days, a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

- "...Agabus" - had previously gone from Jerusalem to Antioch to foretell the famine of 46 AD (Acts 11:26-30). Now he came down to Caesarea and prophesied Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (Cf. Mark 9:31; 10:33; John 21:18).

— He illustrated his prediction graphically, as many OT prophets had done (Cf. 1 Kings 11:29-31; Is 20:2-4; Jer 13:1-7; Ezek 4)

-- We have no biblical record on whether or not it was fulfilled at prophesied. We could assume that this indeed did happen because Agabus was named as a prophet, and his other prophecies were 100% accurate.

11 And he came to us and took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

11 He came to us, took Paul's belt, and tied his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt. Then they will hand him over to the gentiles.'"

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

- His prophecy came as no surprise to Paul (Cf. v4; 9:16)

— Possibly a reason Luke includes these prophecies was to show that Paul's arrest and later consequences were part of God's foreordained plan for the church's expansion (Cf. Mark 10:33)

12 When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

12 When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

12 When we heard this, we and the people who lived there begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

**12** And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

- It was becoming clearer and clearer to Paul's missionary companions and the local believers that Paul was going to be in great danger in Jerusalem; thus, they tried to persuade him from proceeding

13 Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

13 At this Paul replied, "What do you mean by crying and breaking my heart? I'm ready not only to be tied up in Jerusalem but even to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!"

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

- Paul's response shows that he wasn't sure if his arrest would result in his death

Why did Paul avoid the possibility of death in Corinth (20:3) and other places, but not here? His purpose, to strengthen the unity of Gentile and Jewish believers, would have failed if he

had died on a ship between Corinth and Jerusalem. However, arrest in Jerusalem would not frustrate that purpose. For Paul, and his friends, the Lord's will was more important than physical safety (Cf. Luke 22:42). He believed the Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem (19:21; 20:22), so he went.

14 And since he would not be persuaded, we **became quiet**, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

14 And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

14 When he could not be persuaded otherwise, we remained silent except to say, "May the Lord's will be done."

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.  
- "...became quiet" - since Paul wasn't listening to them, they stopped urging him and committed the situation to the Lord

### **Was Paul to Go to Jerusalem?**

Con: These repeated messages do sound like warnings to Paul to stay out of Jerusalem. For over 20 years before, the Lord had commanded Paul to get out of Jerusalem because the Jews would not receive his testimony (22:18). Paul had already written to the Romans about the dangers in Judea (15:30-31). He had shared these same feelings with the Ephesian elders (20:22-23), so he was fully aware of the problems involved.

Pro: The prophetic utterances can be taken as warnings ("Get ready!") rather than as prohibitions ("You must not go!"). Agabus did not forbid Paul to go to Jerusalem; he only told him what to expect if he did go. As for the Lord's command in 22:18, it applied to that particular time and need not be interpreted as a prohibition governing the rest of Paul's life. While it is true that Paul avoided Jerusalem, it is also true that he returned there on other occasions: with famine relief (11:27-30); to attend the Jerusalem Conference (15:1ff); and, after his second missionary journey (18:22)—"going up to greet the church" refers to Jerusalem.

In view of Paul's statement in 23:1, and the Lord's encouraging words in 23:11, it is difficult to believe that the apostle deliberately disobeyed the revealed will of God. God's prophecy to Ananias certainly came true in the months that followed as Paul had opportunity to witness for Christ (9:15).

Ever since the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), trouble had been brewing, and the legalists had been following Paul and seeking to capture his converts. It was a serious situation, and Paul knew that he was a part of the answer as well as a part of the problem. But he could not solve the problem by remote control through representatives; he had to go to Jerusalem personally.

(c) From Caesarea to Jerusalem (21:15-16)

15 After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem.

15 After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem.

15 When our time there ended, we got ready to go up to Jerusalem.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

- It was 65 miles from Caesarea to Jerusalem

16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to stay.

16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.

16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us. They took us to the home of Mnason to be his guests. He was from Cyprus and had been an early disciple.

16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

This ends Paul's 3rd missionary journey, and begins the first phase of his plan to visit Jerusalem, then Rome (19:21). He brings one chapter of his ministry to a close, while he opens the door on another. His return to Jerusalem was an essential part of God's plan to send Paul to Rome. In all, Paul traveled about 2,700 miles on his 3rd missionary journey. The events that transpired in Jerusalem on this occasion of Paul's visit were critical in spreading the gospel to Rome. The events of 21:17–23:35 took 12 days, whereas the events that follow (24:1–26:32) took 2 years. Luke presents these events partially to reveal God's methods to his readers.

(5) Paul's journey to Rome (21:17–28:31)

(A) Paul in Jerusalem (21:17–23:22)

(a) Paul's arrest in the Temple (21:17-40)

17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers *and sisters* received us gladly.

17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers there welcomed us warmly.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the following day Paul went in with us to **James**, and all the elders were present.

18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

18 The next day, Paul went with us to visit James, and all the elders were present.

18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

- "...James" - half-brother of Jesus; still the recognized leader of the Jerusalem church (Cf. 12:17; 15:13), but the church also had elder leadership (Cf. 11:30)
- Herod Agrippa I had killed James, the brother of John, earlier (12:2), not James the half-brother of Jesus

19 After he had greeted them, he *began* to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

19 After he had greeted them, he *began* to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

19 After greeting them, Paul related one by one the things that God had done among the gentiles through his ministry.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

- As he had done before, Paul de-briefed a group of elders on what God had done on his missionary journeys among the Gentiles (14:27; Cf. 18:23)

- Luke does not mention Paul's delivery of the monetary gift, Paul's main reason for going to Jerusalem (Cf. Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-4)

20 And when they heard *about them*, they *began* glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

20 And when they heard it they *began* glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

20 When they heard about it, they praised God and told him, "You see, brother, how many tens of thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and all of them are zealous for the Law.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

- Even though the Jews are free from the law if they are Christians, that doesn't mean that they can't observe it, even though they are no longer under the law (Cf. Galatians).

21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

21 But they have been told about you—that you teach all the Jews living among the gentiles to forsake the Law of Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs.

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

- The elders explained that these Jewish Christians had misgivings about Paul's ministry, referring to rumors that Paul was instructing new Jewish converts not to practice circumcision or observe the customs of Judaism

— However, this was fake news, as Paul did not teach that these customs were evil, just unnecessary for justification and sanctification

22 So what is *to be done*? They will certainly hear that you have come.

22 What, then, is *to be done*? They will certainly hear that you have come.

22 What is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

- You get the impression that the legalists had been working behind the scenes. No sooner had Paul finished his report than the elders brought up the rumors that were then being circulated about Paul among the Jewish Christians.

— It has well been said that, though a rumor doesn't have a leg to stand on, it travels mighty fast

23 Therefore, do as we tell you: we have four men **who have a vow** upon themselves;

23 Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;

23 So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

- "...who have a vow" - the Nazirite Vow (Num 6), but also could've been a temporary vow, as Paul had done recently (18:18)

24 take them along and purify yourself together with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and *then* everyone will know that there is nothing to what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also conform, keeping the Law.

24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

24 Take these men, go through the purification ceremony with them, and pay their expenses to shave their heads. Then everyone will know that there is nothing in what they

have been told about you, but that you are carefully observing and keeping the Law.

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

- The leaders suggested that Paul demonstrate publicly his reverence for the Jewish Law. All they asked was that he identify himself with four men under a Nazarite vow (Num 6), pay for their sacrifices, and be with them in the temple for their time of purification. He agreed to do it.

— If it had been a matter involving somebody's personal salvation, you can be sure that Paul would never have cooperated; for that he would have compromised his message of salvation by grace, through faith.

25 But regarding the Gentiles who have believed, we sent a letter, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and what is strangled, and from sexual immorality."

25 But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication."

25 As for the gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our decision that they should keep away from food that has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from anything strangled, and from sexual immorality."

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

- James and the elders repeated their former conviction from the Jerusalem Council (Cf. 15:20,29) regarding the instruction of Gentile converts

— This is simply a point of clarification to show that the decision of the council still stood, and their counsel to Paul did not contradict their commitment to salvation by grace

### **Paul is Arrested in the Temple**

26 Then Paul took along the men, and the next day, after purifying himself together with them, he went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until **the sacrifice was offered** for each one of them.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

26 Then Paul took those men and the next day purified himself with them. Then he went into the Temple to announce the time when their days of purification would end and when the sacrifice would be offered for each of them.

**26** Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

- A Jew would normally announce the "completion" of his vow to the priest, then seven days later present his offerings (Cf. Num 6:13-20). The law did not prescribe a week's wait, but it was customary.

- "...the sacrifice was offered" - why would Paul, who spoke at length about the finished work of Christ on the cross as the only means of justification, be involved in animal sacrifices years after the beginning of the Church?

-- He did it to avoid being an offense to the Jews; Paul reasoned that if they would give him a hearing, he would submit to their customs

— Paul accompanied the four men into the temple and underwent the rites of "purification" with them, because he was paying the expenses of their vow

— The Jews considered paying the charges for offerings an act of piety and a symbolic identification with the Jews

**27** When the seven days were almost over, the **Jews from Asia**, upon seeing him in the temple, *began* to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him,

**27** When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, *began* to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him,

**27** When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, seeing Paul in the Temple, stirred up a large crowd. They grabbed Paul,

**27** And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

- This was the introduction to the closing section of Luke's account. There were many visitors in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

- "...Jews from Asia" - obviously unbelievers

28 crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who instructs everyone everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides, he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place!"

28 crying out, "Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

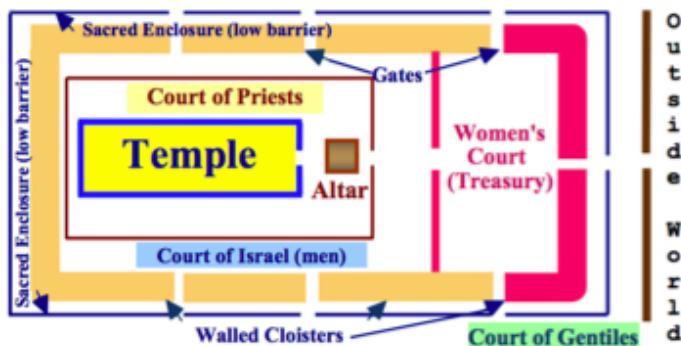
28 yelling, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere to turn against our people, the Law, and this place. More than that, he has even brought Greeks

into the Temple and desecrated this Holy Place."

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

- They accused Paul of the same kinds of crimes the unbelieving Jews accused Stephen of committing (6:11,13-14)

The Jews permitted Gentiles in the outer court of the temple, the court of the Gentiles. They could not go in beyond the sacred enclosure into the women's court, the court of Israel, or the court of the priests.



Jewish men like Paul, who were not priests or Levites, could not go past the court of Israel. The Romans allowed the Jews to execute any Gentile, even a Roman citizen, for proceeding beyond the low, stone barrier.

29 For they had previously seen **Trophimus the Ephesian** in the city with him, and they **thought** that Paul had brought him into the temple.

29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

29 For they had earlier seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him and assumed that Paul had taken him into the Temple.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

- "...Trophimus the Ephesian" - Paul's Gentile traveling companion from Asia (20:4)

- "...thought" - they assumed Trophimus, since they had seen him with Paul in the city, was with Paul in the sacred enclosure of the temple

30 Then the whole city was provoked and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the **doors** were shut.

30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

30 The whole city was in chaos. The people rushed together, grabbed Paul, dragged him out of the Temple, and at once the doors were sealed shut.

**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.

- The rumor of Paul's alleged capital offense spread quickly throughout the city

- Evidently, the priests (Levites, temple police) "dragged" Paul "out of" one of the inner courts and into the court of the Gentiles.

- "...doors" - separated the court of the Gentiles from the inner courts that were accessible only to Jews. The priests closed these doors to prevent the defiling of the inner courts by the riot and bloodshed.

The evidence was against Paul's enemies:

- Paul had Timothy circumcised before taking him along on that second missionary journey (16:1-3)
- Paul had taken a Jewish vow while in Corinth (18:18)
- It was his custom not to offend the Jews in any way by deliberately violating their customs or the Law of Moses (1 Cor 9:19-23)

31 While they were intent on killing him, a report came up to the **commander** of the *Roman* cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.

31 While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the *Roman* cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.

31 The crowd was trying to kill Paul when a report reached the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

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.

- The Jews proceeded to beat Paul, seeking to kill him, in the court of Gentiles

— This was the "rebel's beating" that the Jews commonly gave to people who supposedly openly defied the Mosaic Law or the teachings of the elders (Cf. Luke 4:29; John 8:59; 10:31)

- "...commander" - Claudius Lysias (23:26)

— This commotion reached the Roman "commander" of the Fortress of Antonia, which was connected with the temple area. He was responsible for the 1,000 soldiers stationed there.

32 He immediately took along *some* soldiers and centurions and ran down to the crowd; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

32 At once he took along *some* soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

32 Immediately the tribune took some soldiers and officers and ran down to the crowd. When the people saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

- Cladius and his men ran into the court to rescue Paul. The Jews stopped beating him when "they saw the chief captain and the soldiers"

- This was the 6th time in Acts that Paul's ministry ignited a public disturbance (Cf. 14:19; 16:19-22; 17:5-8,13; 19:25-34)

33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered that he be bound with two chains; and he *began* asking who he was and what he had done.

33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he *began* asking who he was and what he had done.

33 Then the tribune came up, grabbed Paul, and ordered him to be tied up with two chains. He then asked who Paul was and what he had done.

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.

- The captain arrested Paul, assuming he was a criminal

34 But among the crowd, some were shouting one thing *and* some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be brought into the barracks.

34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing *and* some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

34 Some of the crowd shouted this and some that. Since the tribune couldn't learn the facts due to the confusion, he ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks.

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.

- Upon questioning witnesses, the captain received conflicting information, so he brought Paul into the Fortress of Antonia for further questioning

35 When *Paul* got to the **stairs**, it came about that he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob;

35 When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob;

35 When Paul got to the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because the mob had become so violent.

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

– "...stairs" - one of two south stairways leading from temple courtyard into the fortress

36 for the multitude of people kept following *them*, shouting, "**Away with him!**"

36 for the multitude of the people kept following them, shouting, "Away with him!"

36 The crowd of people kept following him and shouting, "Kill him!"

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

– "...Away with him!" - recalls the words about Jesus about 27 years earlier (Luke 23:18; John 19:15; Cf. Acts 22:22)

— The Antonia Fortress was likely where the soldiers took Jesus for trial before Pilate; it was also the prison from which the angel had freed Peter (12:5)

### **Paul's Defense Before the Jewish Mob**

37 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he \*said to the commander, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek?

37 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I say something to you?" And he \*said, "Do you know Greek?

37 Just as Paul was about to be taken into the barracks, he asked the tribune, "May I say something to you?" The tribune asked, "Oh, do you speak Greek?

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said thou speak Greek?

38 Then you are not the **Egyptian** who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"

38 Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"

38 You're not the Egyptian who started a revolt some time ago and led 4,000 assassins into the desert, are you?"

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?

– "...Egyptian" - the captain assumed Paul was a certain Egyptian who had appeared in Jerusalem three years earlier

— This man came out of Egypt, claimed to be a prophet, advised a multitude of followers to go with him to the Mount of Olives, and at his command the walls would fall down

— Felix was informed; soldiers with weapons attacked; many of his followers were killed, but the Egyptian escaped [Josephus]

— Claudius Lysias evidently thought this Egyptian freedom fighter had returned to the temple area to recruit more followers, and that people had now recognized him and turned against him

39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."

39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."

39 Paul replied, "I'm a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. Please let me speak to the people."

**39** But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

- Paul explained that he was a Jew, and thus a right to be in the temple court of Israel. He was not a resident of Egypt, but a Roman citizen of Tarsus.

40 When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, **motioned to the people with his hand**; and when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the **Hebrew dialect**, saying,

40 When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying,

40 The tribune gave him permission, and Paul, standing on the steps, motioned for the people to be silent. When everyone had quieted down, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language:

**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,

- After presenting his credentials and origin to the captain, he permitted Paul's request to address the mob

- "...motioned to the people with his hand" - Paul gestured to quiet them and rivet their attention (Cf. 12:17)

- "...Hebrew dialect" - Paul spoke to the mob in Aramaic, the Hebrew dialect. This would've helped his hearers realize that he was one of them.

- Paul would have yielded his salvation for them (Cf. Rom 9:3)