



"Paul's Arrest and Defense"

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Acts 21:17-22:21

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1. Paul Meets the Jerusalem Believers – (21:17-25)

Paul is greeted with . . .

- **JOY:** Paul is greeted with **joy** by the Jerusalem church because of God's work through his ministry among the Gentiles.
- **SUSPICION:** Paul is met with **suspicion** by many Jewish Christians with concerns about his view of Jewish practices.

Those "**zealous for the law**" (v 20) were **Jewish Christians** who remained devoted to the ceremonial aspects of the law. While not viewing it as a means of salvation, they still observed its required feasts, Sabbath regulations, ritual vows, and dietary restrictions.

THEOLOGY MATTERS: The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), while forbidding the imposition of Old Covenant rituals on Gentiles, did not prohibit Jewish believers from continuing to observe them.

PAUL'S STRATEGY: Paul followed the advice of James so that he would not unnecessarily offend his fellow Jewish Christians.



Remember: Don't let non-consequential cultural differences become a stumbling block to the gospel. (See 1 Cor. 9:19–23)

2. Hellenistic Jews Riot Against Paul – (21:26-36)

Hellenistic Jews (non-Christian Greek-speaking Jews from Asia Minor) stir up a riot against Paul with false accusations. The gospel will always face hostile opposition.

3. Paul Asks to Speak to the Mob – (21:37-22:2)

The Roman tribune, Claudius Lysias (23:26), thought Paul was the Egyptian revolutionary, and was surprised he could speak Greek and Aramaic. But he lets Paul speak to the mob—perhaps so he could figure out what the ruckus was all about.

4. Paul's Defense of his Ministry – (22:3-21)

Paul's defense before the Jewish mob focuses on his **conversion** when God revealed himself to Paul on the Damascus Road in the person of the resurrected Jesus who called Paul into a radical new relationship.

Paul's Defense in Three Steps (Acts 22:8)

FIRST, God is greater than Paul ever imagined.

"Who are you, Lord?"

SECOND, Jesus was really raised from the dead.

"And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth . . .'"

THIRD, Paul was converted and brought into a radical new relationship with **God**, through **Jesus**, by the **Spirit**.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting."

Paul's Defense of His Ministry

Paul's defense of his ministry is grounded in the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. When Paul understood that God had fulfilled his Old Testament promises in the resurrection of Jesus, Paul knew that everything changed. The symbols of the temple and its rituals only pointed to the reality found in Christ. The law was still good, but was now fulfilled in the sinless life of Jesus.

With Paul's understanding of God's intervention in history with the coming of Christ, Paul's commitment to that truth was unwavering. This is why knowing the truth matters. Paul put his life on the line for the greatest truth we can ever know.