

September 11, 2022

“The Start of Something Big”

Acts 21:27-40

Background

(27) Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, **(28)** crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." **(29)** (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) **(30)** And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. **(31)** Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. **(32)** He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. **(33)** Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. **(34)** And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. **(35)** When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. **(36)** For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!" **(37)** Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?" He replied, "Can you speak Greek? **(38)** Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" **(39)** But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people." **(40)** So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew language, saying,

INTRODUCTION

21:17 – 24:23 → 12 days

Acts 30+ years 28 chapters

3 full chapters on these 12 days

There are things here of high value for us to take note of

Things that God wants us to see and know

Outline

The Riot

The Rescue

The Request

I. The Riot 27-30

Mob riot

(27) Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,

the seven days purification ritual – Numbers 19

the Jews from Asia during the feast of Pentecost
{Psalms of Ascents}

him Paul

stirred up to throw into disorder / uproar

laid hands on him seized him

False Accusations

(28) crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." **(29)** (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

1. Paul loved the Jewish people – they were his people
Romans 9-11
2. Paul didn't teach against the law! What did he teach?
 - **(Romans 3:20)** Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
 - **(1 Timothy 1:8)** But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,
 - **(Romans 7:12)** Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.
3. Paul wanted to return to the Temple – Passover / Pentecost
 - These were the same charges brought against Jesus and Stephen ...

Court of the Gentiles

Court of the women

Court of Israel

Wall separated the outer court, the court of Gentiles from the court of the women. There was a barrier wall between them. Sign: "Any Gentile who enters this area will have himself to blame for his immediate death." **(Ephesians 2:14)** For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

Full scale riot – (Ephesus)

(30) And all the city was **disturbed**; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the **doors** were shut.

disturbed = moved, stirred up

doors gates – it would have defiled the Temple to kill someone inside the Temple area

They intended to kill him

Legally, they needed the approval of the Sanhedrin.

Legally, they would need to stone him.

But, they were taking matters into their own hands.

Their plan was to beat him to death.

Why did they hate Paul so much?

Why such hatred over religious differences?

Because they understood what Paul preached!

The message of salvation by grace alone apart from human goodness or human merit offends the pride of man!

{Free Grace Broadcaster}

Pride

Look at me.

Look at who I am.

Look at what I have.

Look at what I can do.

Look at how good I am.

Self

part of us that:

loves to be praised

hates to be criticized

always wants its own way

Mankind loves humanism ...

Men hate the message of free grace because it assaults their pride that promotes self.

They don't want to hear the message of free grace through the cross of Christ.

Don't you ever doubt it. People are offended by the message of the cross.

Because the message of the cross says this to a man: "Your sins are so bad, that the only way God could forgive you was for His Son to die on a cruel cross. And when you see the Son of God nailed to the cross, bleeding and gasping for breath and dying, that's what God thinks of your sins. And there's nothing you could ever do to atone for the sins you've already committed, much less for all the sins you are yet to commit. So, the only way for your sins to be atoned for and forgiven so you can be redeemed to God, was for God to offer His Son to pay that penalty in your place. And you don't deserve that and you could never deserve that, and that's why it is only by grace that you can be saved!"

Oh listen, mankind hates true Biblical Christianity!

{Aaron Renn -
Positive 1964 – 1994
Neutral 1994 – 2014
Negative 2014 – Present}

The Riot

II. The Rescue 31-36

(31) Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

they were seeking to kill him

the commander

a commander in the Roman army; chief captain; chiliarch – over close to a thousand men – 960

Name – Claudius Lysias 23:26

(32) He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

They knew what they were doing was not lawful even according to their own law.

(33) Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done.

two chains

Acts 20:23 – “chains and tribulation await me”

Claudius could not determine the truth about what was going on:

(34) And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks.

Claudius implemented the doctrine of the Lesser Magistrate
He interposed himself between the angry mob and Paul

He was more concerned about what was just and right than these religious people who claimed to represent God.

They had hurt Paul badly:

(35) When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob.

(36) For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!"

This reminds us of the crowds that cried out against Jesus:
"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

The Riot
The Rescue

III. The Request 37-40

(37) Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?" He replied, "Can you speak Greek?"

Claudius was surprised that Paul spoke Greek because he mistook Paul for an Egyptian insurrectionist that had led a failed rebellion prior to this and had escaped into the wilderness

(38) Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

The existence of this Egyptian insurrectionist is verified in history by the Jewish historian, Josephus.

(39) But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people."

mean city Tarsus was not an insignificant city

implore earnestly request

(40) So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew language, saying,

Conclusion/Applications

What would God want us to lay hold of from this text?

1. Sudden change

911 – 21 years ago today

unexpected

Paul expected to face tribulation when he came to Jerusalem

We would be wise to expect the unexpected and prepare ourselves to face it . . .

2. God's Sovereignty

Paul planned to go to Rome and then to Spain **Romans 15:28**

But not this way

God often accomplishes desires He has placed in our hearts, but not in the way we think

Isaiah – His ways and thoughts are not our ways ...

Eph 3 – He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we could ever ask or think

Acts 9 – The Lord told Ananias: Paul will testify of Me before kings ...

This is how God was going to accomplish that!

Paul did make it to Rome. And from his imprisonment there in Rome he wrote this to the church in Philippi: “I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;”

(Philippians 4:22) All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

And in a later imprisonment, he said this to Timothy, “I suffer trouble as evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.”

So, Paul's arrest in Jerusalem that day that we've just read about really was the start of something big!

3. Paul's readiness to testify about Christ in the middle of a horrible circumstance

“Let me speak to them ...” You have to understand the scene here!

He really did love them.

He really did want them to be saved.

Do we have that kind of love?

The kind of love that is thinking about the eternal souls of others even when they may want us dead!

We may need that kind of love in the future!

That's why we must keep growing and maturing in Christ ...