

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 21:30 | Session 62 | Paul is Arrested in Jerusalem | A.D. 60

Paul arrived in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The *believing* Jews were against him and accused him of *teaching against the Law of Moses*. Their false accusations were based on one thing. They **had seen him...in the city with Trophimus and Ephesian...supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple** (Acts 21:29).

Verse 30—

Paul is in the Temple with four other men who had taken a vow. **And the people ran together**. The term **the people** in the New Testament is used 168 times and appears to always refer to the Jewish people. In this case there were *many thousands of Jews...which believe* who attacked Paul and **drew him out of the temple**. His attackers are all the Jews in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus as their Messiah (Acts 21:20). Those who had repented and were baptized. To say these Jews were *the early church* and believers as we understand the church and believers today is an error in interpretation. These were Jews, living under the Law of Moses *zealous for the Law*, not believers saved under the individual gospel of salvation by grace through faith. In their zeal, they got it wrong. This should also show us that having zeal (energy or enthusiasm) for church, or the Bible, or for worship does not necessarily equate to being spiritual. Before zeal there needs to come knowledge (Romans 10:2), yet many churches are more interested in the hype, and many believers today do not know God's Word. **And drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut**. The word **drew**, means they actively dragged him out. And shut the doors so there was no possibility of him getting back in.

Verse 31—

We don't always get the gravity of what is taking place until we see the bigger picture. There are thousands of people gathered, pushing, shoving, dragging and they were **about to kill** Paul, just as Agabus had prophesied in verse 11. Paul was not caught off guard by what was happening to him. Fortunately for Paul news his beating by the people made its way to the Roman **chief captain** of the military cohort stationed near the temple, and his job was to keep the peace.

Verses 32,33,34—

When the people saw the **soldiers and centurions coming**, they ceased their **beating of Paul**. **The captain...took him...bound with two chains** and demanded answers, but there was too much commotion for him **to know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried to the castle**. If you have a modern translation of the Bible the word **castle** is not used, rather it probably says barracks. The KJV has a lot of critics who say the word *castle* was used because the translators (of 1611) had their own concept of a medieval castle, which, they say, shows how inaccurate and outdated the KJV is. But is it? The Greek word for castle is *parembole*, a compound word from *para* (*alongside*) and *emballo* (*to cast, or throw*). The English word **castle** is built from

the Latin word with the same root as our English word *cast*. A castle is a fortress which was typically cast down next to the city. The word literally means to cast beside. **Castle** is a correct and adequate translation. In truth, the modern versions get it completely wrong since a *barracks is simply the place where soldiers sleep*. Don't be too quick to dis the KJV until you understand the rest of the story.

Verses 35,36—

He was borne (carried) **of the soldiers for** (because of) **the violence of the people**. Perhaps this means because of the beating he just endured, Paul couldn't walk up the stairs and had to be carried. Or, they carried him to simply shield him from the violent crowd? The author does not tell us. **Away with him** (can mean *lift up*), these were the same words spoken when Jesus was before Pilate 30 years earlier, in which the crowd continued **crucify him, crucify him** (Luke 23:21). Luke might have been using wordplay in his use of *away with him*. Either way, like the crowd thirty years earlier, we know they wanted Paul dead (vs. 31). This is not an *agape* filled early church as many think.

Verses 37,38—

Here Paul is no longer being carried, but **was to be led into the castle**. The **chief captain** is surprised that Paul spoke to him in Greek (and most likely quality Greek). The **chief captain** has already prejudged who it is he is dealing with. He thinks Paul was **that Egyptian**, and a leader of **murderers**. This is misinformation at its finest!

Verses 39,40—

Paul gives some of his background to the captain announcing to him that he is first, a Jew and a citizen of **Cilicia**, not an insignificant city. We are going to see later that Paul is also a Roman citizen. Why he does not announce that at this point is uncertain. Maybe he is saving that piece of information as a trump card in case the situation escalates? Nonetheless, he requests from the captain to **speak unto the people**. With permission granted **Paul stood on the stairs**, quieted the crowd, and **he spake to them in the Hebrew tongue...** Some say this means he spoke in the dialect of the Hebrew people which is often presumed to be Aramaic; however, this same phrase *Hebrew tongue* is used in Revelation 16:16 where it says, *And he gathered them together in to a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon*. The word Armageddon is of Hebrew origin, likewise Revelation 9:11. The chapter break should not be here.

Chapter 22:1,2—

Paul is going to defend (*apologia*) himself and begins by stating **I am verily a man which am a Jew...brought up at the feet of Gamaliel**. The people would have known who **Gamaliel** was. In Acts 5:34 **Gamaliel** was described as a **doctor of the law**, with a **reputation among the people**. Paul could not have any better credentials. He was well trained in the law; in fact, he says he was **taught according to the perfect manner of the law**. He was just as **zealous** for God's Law as they were.