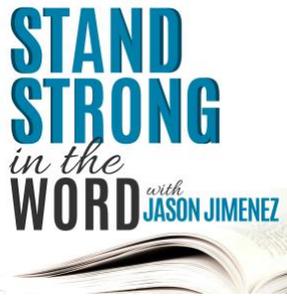


“PAUL IS ARRESTED BY THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM” **Acts 21:1-22:29**

Paul wraps up his third missionary journey (18:23-20:14), as he proceeds to Jerusalem despite the desperate pleas for him not to go (AD 57). Most scholars mark this stage of Paul's life as his fourth missionary journey.

I. Paul's Journey to Jerusalem (21:1-14)

1. ***And when we had parted from them*** (tore ourselves away from them) ***and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos*** (40 miles south of Miletus), ***and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara*** (main port of the province of Lycia; 400 miles from Phoenicia). ***And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia*** (Roman province of Syria), ***we went aboard and set sail.*** ***When we had come in sight*** (port side) ***of Cyprus*** (13:4-12), ***leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo.*** Paul had less than thirty days to reach Jerusalem in time to celebrate Pentecost.
 - A. ***And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.*** The fact that there are disciples in Tyre, points to the gospel spreading throughout Palestine by AD 57. Although Paul's fellow brethren inclined him to not go to Jerusalem, he knew that was God's will for him.
2. ***When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.*** Luke gives insight into the personal relationships Paul had with many people. He was a well-loved apostle who took great care of the needs around him.
3. ***When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais*** (modern day Akko), ***and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day.*** ***On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea*** (capital of Roman Judea), ***and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.*** ***He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.*** Paul visits Philip, one of the original deacons with Stephen (6:1-6) and sent to minister to the Egyptian eunuch (8:5-40).

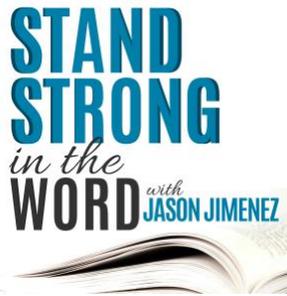


Each of his daughters had the gift of prophecy given by the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28; Ac. 2:17). Up to this point of Paul's arrival, Philip had been ministering in Caesarea for over 20 years.

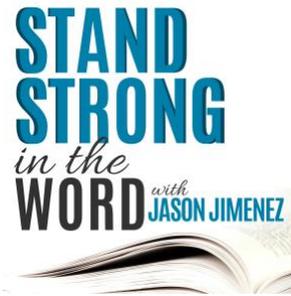
- A. ¹⁰ *While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"* Agabus was the prophet who warned of the famine that would hit Judea (11:27-30).
- B. ¹² *When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."* The Holy Spirit had already told Paul he would suffer great hardship in Jerusalem (20:22-23).
- C. ¹⁴ *And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."* Paul wraps up his third missionary journey (18:23-21:14). *Let the will of the Lord be done*—A common theme throughout the book of Acts (2:23-24; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30-31).

II. Paul Arrives in Jerusalem and Meets the Council (21:15-26)

1. ¹⁵ *After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.* Despite Agabus's prophetic words of Paul's future beatings and imprisonment, his companions remained by his side. *Mnason of Cyprus*—Perhaps one of the 120 disciples (1:15).
2. ¹⁷ *When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. ¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.* Paul reunites with James (the half-brother of Jesus; 15:13-21) and the elders in Jerusalem to give an update on the spreading of the gospel and to hand over the funds (20:3-6; Rom. 15:25-28; 2 Cor. 8 & 9). It had been seven years since Paul was there giving his report with Barnabas (15:4-5).



- A. ²⁰ *And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law,* ²¹ *and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.* The Jerusalem elders report to Paul the growing concern many Jews have about him and how they are misconstruing his ministry and message.
- B. ²² *What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.* ²³ *Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;* ²⁴ *take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.* To silence Paul's accusers, James advises Paul to participate with four Jewish men in taking a Nazarite vow (a vow he personally underwent in 18:18). ***That you yourself also live in observance of the law***—Paul lived by grace and observed the Jewish customs in recognition of his bloodline and respect for the Mosaic law. In 1 Cor. 9:19-22, Paul writes, "For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." However, observing certain Jewish practices isn't a matter of earning or maintaining salvation (see Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:15-21).
- C. ²⁵ *But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality."* At the Jerusalem Council, certain stipulations were drafted to unite Gentiles who were coming to saving faith (15:23-29). The early Christian leaders were

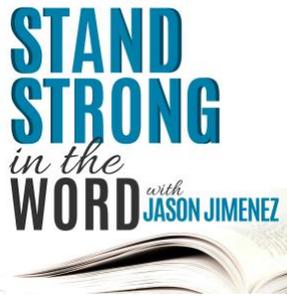


counteracting against the push to make Gentiles into Jews and Jews into Gentiles.

3. ***26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.*** Paul's participation (as an Israelite) in the Nazarite vow and covering the expenses of these four men was a charitable act.

III. Paul is Arrested in the Temple (21:27-36)

1. ***27 When the seven days were almost completed, 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 is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even 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, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.*** Upon finalizing his Nazarite vow (Num. 6:9), Paul is identified by Jews from Ephesus and accused of four things: (1) opposing the Jews, (2) teaching against the Jewish law, (3) undermining the temple, and (4) unlawfully inviting a Gentile into the inner courts (for Jewish men only) of the temple. Each accusation was a serious offense and carried maximum sentencing—particularly allowing a Gentile to enter the inner courts (which Paul did not do).
 - A. *NKJV Study Bible*, "The temple in NT times was surrounded by three courts. The innermost court was the Court of Israel where Jewish men could offer their sacrifices. Only consecrated priests actually entered the temple building itself, and only the high priest could enter the inner sanctuary of the Most Holy Place—once a year on the Day of Atonement (see Heb. 9:7). The second court was the Court of the Women where Jewish families could gather for prayer and worship. The outer court was the Court of the Gentiles, open to all who would worship God. If any Gentile went beyond the barrier into the second court, he or she would be liable to the death penalty. The Roman authorities, out of respect for the Jewish religion, authorized the death sentence for this trespass even for their own Roman citizens."
2. ***30 Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates***

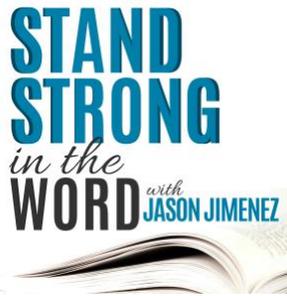


were shut. The Levites who guarded the temple shut the gates to prevent the mob and the Roman soldiers from defiling the temple. Shutting the gates may also imply the mob intended to kill Paul.

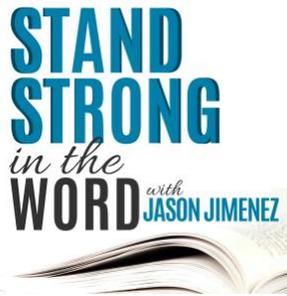
3. **³¹ And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort** (several hundred soldiers) **that all Jerusalem was in confusion. ³² He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.** Claudius Lysias, the Roman commander stationed in the Fortress of Antonia (near the northwest section of the temple), dispatched soldiers to put an end to the Jews disturbance over Paul.
4. **³³ Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains** (bound to a guard). **He inquired who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. ³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, ³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!" away with him—**Reminiscent of the crowds shouting to Pilate to kill Jesus (Lk. 23:18).

IV. Paul Speaks to the Jewish Mob (21:37-22:21)

1. **³⁷ As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks** (Fortress of Antonia), **he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"** Lysias assumes Paul is an uneducated criminal. **Do you know Greek—**The common language used in everyday life in the Mediterranean world. **Are you not the Egyptian—**Josephus provides an account of an Egyptian leader (AD 54) who led his followers to the Mount of Olives—promising the destruction of Rome. The Egyptian escaped and many people died.
2. **³⁹ Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people." ⁴⁰ And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:** Paul, in his first "defense speech," presents his credentials as an educated Jew in Hebrew, the mother tongue of his people. This proved he was not just a Diaspora Jew who spoke Greek.



- A. **22:1-21: “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”² And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:** To grab the mob’s attention, Paul opens his defense formally (in Jewish fashion) and speaks in Hebrew. His main defense is to prove he is not a Jewish apostate.
- B. **PAUL’S UPBRINGING:** ³ **“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.** Paul mentions his schooling under Gamaliel (one of the most esteemed rabbis in the first century) to point out that his Jewishness and formal training is undisputed (see Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:4-6).
- C. **PAUL’S PERSECUTION:** ⁴ **I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.** Paul tells the audience that he too was once zealous for the law (Gal. 1:13), and persecuted members of the Way (early Christians) who didn’t abide by the strict teachings of Judaism. Paul isn’t condemning the Jew’s for their treatment of him—but merely showing compassion to his attackers.
- D. **PAUL’S CONVERSION:** ⁶ **“As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. ⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ⁸ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ ⁹ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ ¹¹ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.** Paul’s account of his conversion on the road to Damascus closely parallels what Luke had recorded in 9:3-6.
- E. ¹² **“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³ came to me, and**

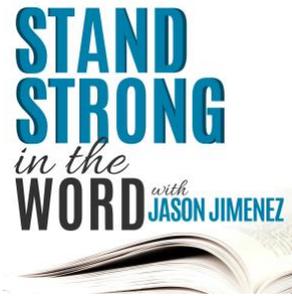


standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. ¹⁴ And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' Paul brings up Ananias to stress how a devout and honorable Jew was sent by God as a messenger and healer to help Saul (Paul) figure out his commissioning to spread the gospel. **Wash away your sins**—Baptism outwardly symbolizes the inward regeneration of the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 6:4; Tit. 3:5).

F. **PAUL'S VISION:** ¹⁷ *"When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' ¹⁹ And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' ²¹ And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "* Paul concludes his speech by comparing his former life with those of the mob—testifying to their own lostness.

V. Paul Appeals to His Roman Citizenship (22:22-30)

1. ²² *Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."* Up to this point the mob listened while Paul shared his testimony, but the moment he (a Jew) claims the Lord sent him to the Gentiles, they had enough. The Jews were not going to accept equality with Gentiles.
2. ²³ *And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging* (Latin, *flagellum*; leather whips containing shards of glass, bones, rocks, or metals), **to find out why they were shouting against him like this.** By taking their cloaks off, the Jews were demonstrating they were ready to kill Paul on their own. **Flinging**



dust in the air—A gesture depicting rage after hearing a blasphemous/profane statement (see 2 Sam. 16:13). **Examined by flogging**—Paul had already been flogged five times and beaten with rods by Roman magistrates three times (2 Cor. 11:24-25).

- A. ²⁵ **But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?”** A Roman citizen was exempt from being tortured; thus, Paul announces he a Roman who hasn’t been formally charged or has received a legal hearing.
- B. ²⁶ **When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”** ²⁷ **So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”** And he said, “Yes.” ²⁸ **The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.”** Paul said, **“But I am a citizen by birth.”** ²⁹ **So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.** *Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament:* “We do not know how and when Paul’s family acquired Roman citizenship. Most likely one of Paul’s ancestors received it for valuable services rendered to a Roman administrator or general in either the Gischala region of northern Palestine or at Tarsus.” **Tribune also was afraid**—The way Paul was bound and treated could have major repercussions on Lysias.