

Church – The Beginnings, Part 69
Paul – Jerusalem & the Bondage of Judaism | Acts 21:15 – 23:11
02/25/2018
NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Paul – Jerusalem & the Bondage of Judaism:

1. What are some reasons why Paul went back to Jerusalem?

Romans 9:1-5 & 10:1 → His concern, prayerful and evangelistic concern and motivation Paul desired for his close family, relatives, cousins, and fellow Israelis to come to their Messiah in the New Covenant – being Born Again.

2. Why did Paul submit to James' suggestion of paying for purification and vows of those four Jewish Believers in Messiah?

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 → For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; **I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.** ²³ **I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.**

Focus on 1 Cor. 19:20 → To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law ... ²² ... **I have become all things to all men, so that I may BY ALL MEANS save some.** ²³ **I do ALL THINGS for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.**

→ I do all things for the Gospel's sake ... is that our life-goal – using every means possible?

3. What were some of the reasons why the riots occurred in relationship to Paul?

Paul was one of them – he admits it – a leader of the persecution of the church (Acts 22:4-5) The Jewish people, mostly, in the land of Israel –considered Paul as a Traitor to his own people. This was true even some within the Jerusalem church. They thought that he was teaching doctrines against God's Word, the Law of Moses, the People of Israel and their "Customs". It was mostly about their Customs or Traditions. It always comes down to the cultural identity that is represented by their traditions. Thus, the bondage of Judaism. Not God's Law – as per the Bible, itself, but their Jewish Customs/Traditions that was at odds. It was like the Mafia – and Paul was one of the Dons in the "Family" in the "Organization". He left it and was exposing it. That means death. And in the same way it was with Paul – who was an up and coming Leader in Judaism, among the Pharisees, etc. He left all that and became a follower of Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel. If a normal, no-named Jew, in some obscure town came to know Yeshua as his Messiah, Lord, and Savior – no one would really have cared. But Paul was well known, even by the Chief Priest (the sons of Aaron's) and Family. He was their agent of persecution, etc. Well known – and when he left to follow Jesus, it was like slapping the Chief Priest in the face – it was all about "family honor" – nation-wide – honor.

4. Why was it so important for Paul to give His Salvation Testimony to the People of Jerusalem? How does his giving of his testimony relate to us, today?

This is how sinners can relate to us. Our before and after – our conversion story. Sinners who are living in the sinful life like we used to, can relate to us. And they can see how to be saved out of that sinful lifestyle, just like we have been – through Jesus Christ – the Messiah/Savior. This is one way in which to share the Gospel of our Salvation. Sinners saved by Grace.

5. **Why was the direct encouragement from Jesus Christ (Yeshua h'Mashiach) Himself so helpful to Paul?** (see Acts 23:11)

The following night the LORD stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have **TESTIFIED** to the facts about Me in Jerusalem, so you must **TESTIFY** also in Rome."

a. This proved beyond any shadow of any doubt that God did, in actuality, lead Paul to Jerusalem. No matter what others thought leading up to him arriving in Jerusalem, this was the real confirmation, **after the fact**, that God was leading Him, directly.

b. This **encouragement was needed** – when the local church of Jerusalem "kind of thought" that those rumors were true – and the whole town of Jerusalem, from top to bottom is against you ... wow – having Jesus, the Shepherd's closeness means everything. Instead of feeling abandoned and left out to dry – God was close to Paul.

c. The encouragement also was an **Applause from Heaven** – God thought what Paul did was well done – Good Job – Excellent – You Testified about Me truthfully ... Your Reward → You get to do this, just like this – in Rome.

I am not sure Paul was thinking about anything beyond his situation ...

When we are in the midst of great crisis – when everyone is against you (for false reasons, of course) because you have stood up for God, His Word, His Righteousness ... you might feel that wall are closing in – and you want to go and hide somewhere and never come out. If that Happens – then Satan has won. Don't let Satan win.

d. **A Future** - The Encouragement – of Paul going to Rome – meant that God still had great plans for Paul and that God wasn't finished with him yet. He did not need to hide – but to continue to go beyond the walls to the next Gospel Mission opportunity.

For us – it means the same.

After spreading the Gospel – doing God's Work – and we encounter opposition and persecution. Our normal reaction would be to go and hide and get away from that and never do that again. When we want to go and hide, lick our wounds, etc.

God wants us to get close to Him – and get our healing, our significance, our identity, our LIFE, our strength, our encouragement from Him – directly.

So, that we can go out and be Warriors for the Gospel of Christ, again.