



CAPITOL COMMISSION[®]

The False Accusations of the Unbelievers

JANUARY 16, 2020

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Acts 21:15-25 *And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. 16) Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. 17) And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18) On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19) When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20) And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; 21) but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. 22) What then? The assembly will certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. 23) Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. 24) Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. 25) But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.” (NKJV)*

PAUL'S ARRIVAL CAN BE DATED TO A PERIOD AROUND AD 57, WHEN JERUSALEM IS TENSE WITH RISING JEWISH NATIONALISM, POLITICAL UNREST, AND THE PRESENCE OF ROME IN A RULER, FELIX, WHO WAS SAID TO HAVE THE "INSTINCTS OF A SLAVE" (TACITUS, *HIST.* 5.9). MOST LOYAL JEWS WOULD HAVE VIEWED GENTILES AND THE GENTILE MISSION WITH SUSPICION. THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM WAS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, WANTING TO PREACH TO THE JEWS BUT SUPPORTING OUTREACH TO THE GENTILES.

DARRELL BOCK

Does Paul now get to Jerusalem as fast as he can? Why? Have the believers from Caesarea provided a protection team for Paul? Is there great wisdom in Paul meeting with James and the church elders? Are the believers possibly in majority again in Jerusalem? Are the deceivers inveterate liars?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JANUARY 23: ACTS 21:26-36 *THE SPECIFIC ACCUSATION LEADING TO MURDER*
- JANUARY 23: ACTS 21:37-22:5 *PAUL'S PAST AS A PERSECUTOR*

Paul had told his team, who begged him not to go to Jerusalem due to the danger, that he was committed “*even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 21:13). Paul probably had at least five reasons why it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem: 1) His commission (Acts 9:15), required that he bear Christ’s name before the “*sons of Israel*” and there was no better place to find them than in Jerusalem. 2) He needed to give the offering from all the Gentile churches for those in the mother church suffering from poverty. 3) He needed to give a full report of his latest missionary journey. 4) The false accusations about him needed to be corrected for the unity of the Jew & Gentile churches. 5) It was the will of the Holy Spirit that he visit the Religious Capital and then the Imperial Capital of the world (Acts 19:21, 20:22).

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR ROOM 300B

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR ROOM 300B

Virginia

The False Accusations of the Unbelievers

INSTEAD OF THEIR FEARS AFFECTING HIM, HIS COURAGE MOTIVATED THEM. THEY KNEW HE WOULD BE A MARKED MAN IN JERUSALEM, FACING HATRED, IMPRISONMENT, EVEN DEATH. THEY ALSO KNEW THAT BY IDENTIFYING WITH HIM THEY PUT THEMSELVES AT RISK. YET THEY WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT THAT RISK BECAUSE THE APOSTLE WAS. HIS COURAGE WAS CONTAGIOUS.

JOHN MACARTHUR

I. THE EXCELLENT DEBRIEFING ACTS 21:15-20A

Like David running toward Goliath, Paul immediately “packed” (a word referring to saddling or equipping horses) and “went up to Jerusalem,” the imperfect verb revealing his quick and continuous commitment to get to Jerusalem as soon as possible. The believers in Caesarea, with Mnason of Cyprus, were a security escort for Paul and his team, carrying the massive collection of money for the Jerusalem church and they brought them directly to his house. Many Jerusalem believers longed to see Paul and “received us gladly.” The next day, Paul with his Gentile team representing all his newest churches, humbly reported, one by one, “those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.” James and all the elders rejoiced and “glorified the Lord” for everything!

“THEY PRAISE GOD FOR HIS MARVELOUS WORK AMONG THE GENTILES AND SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK OF THE GENTILES COMING TO KNOW THE LORD.” SIMON KISTEMAKER

II. THE ENEMIES’ DECEIVING ACTS 21:20B-21

Now the elders share with Paul and his team the good news and bad news. They all rejoice, embracing Paul as a “brother” in the Gospel as they explain about “how many myriads” (tens of thousands) there are of Jewish believers again in Jerusalem. Before the persecution of Saul, there

had been “about five thousand” of the “men” (Acts 4:4) who were believers, possibly with their large families making a majority in the capital of about 50,000 people. That number does not include “a great many of the priests” who also believed when the apostles chose “prayer and the ministry of the word” to be their continual priorities (Acts 6:4). Though the believers may again have a majority in Jerusalem, these Jews seem to be more committed to country than Christianity in their zeal for the law. They have chosen to believe the accusations of the enemies of Paul rather than trust the foremost apostle to do what was right! There was great wisdom in Paul meeting with the elders at this time. Most members didn’t trust him!

“SOME BELIEVERS IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH BELIEVED, MISTAKENLY, THAT PAUL WAS OFF-BASE IN HIS TEACHING. THE CHURCH HAD HEARD AND PROPAGATED SLANDEROUS HEARSAY ABOUT PAUL – MISINFORMATION – LIES.”

KENT HUGHES

III. THE ELDERS DEFUSING ACTS 21:22-25

The elders have not defended Paul but have allowed the false accusations and gossip against Paul to go unchecked so that most have believed the lies. They are relieved to hear from Paul that the accusations are not true. Now they have planned a way for Paul to defend himself that will defuse the lies against him and prove them untrue. There were four men with a Nazirite vow. Paul was to join them in their final week of purification and pay for their sacrifices and offerings, which were quite expensive, so they can shave their heads, showing they have fulfilled their vow. Sufficient members would see Paul in the Temple performing this obvious act of loyalty to the law so that all the believers would be informed and the lies overthrown. The decision of the Gentiles’ freedom from the law would stand. Paul submits, ignoring his safety.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Does your courage to stand for Christ and His Word strengthen others in their courage to do the same?
- 2) Are others guilty until proven innocent by hearsay or do you accept others innocence until proven guilty?
- 3) Are you willing to be kind and accommodating, even when others have done you wrong, for the cause of Christ?