

>>>>>> Acts - Lesson 33 <<<<<<<

- 1) As you may recall from last time, we discussed the fact that Paul was being wrongly accused of teaching the Jews to abandon Moses and the Law.
- 2) Again, as I said last time the implication here is that Paul is forcing the Jews to abandon Moses and the Law in order to become a Christian.
 - a) This is the antithesis of what the Judaizers were promoting – circumcision and following the Law was required before one could become a Christian.
- 3) Looking further at this, I wanted to bring another scripture to bear here that I think has a really important message from Paul himself in this regard.

Romans 2:25–29 (NASB 2020)

²⁵ For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a violator of the Law, your circumcision has turned into uncircumcision. ²⁶ So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will his uncircumcision not be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a violator of the Law? ²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.

- 4) I truly believe that Paul is saying here as clearly as one could that no one has to abandon Moses (meaning abandoning the Law).
- 5) To the contrary, what he is saying is that Jew or Gentile, physical circumcision or uncircumcision does not matter.
- 6) It is only circumcision of the heart by the Spirit that matters.
- 7) It is not the rituals or the keeping of the ritualistic practices that make one a “true” Jew or, for the matter a “true” Christian.
- 8) It is living by the Law fulfilled – taking it into our hearts and living it out everyday that is the bottom line of being what God wants us to be.
- 9) Nowhere in this does he say that one is required not to obey the Law – only be transformed to what the Law intended to begin with.
- 10) Moving on ...

- 1) We finished last time with Paul being convinced that he should take part in the purification rites and pay the expenses, for the four men involved.
- 2) The end result is supposed to be that the dissenting Jews will see him as a faithful keeper of the Law and therefore he would not be espousing the heresies he was being accused of.
- 3) We pick up where that ritual is at its end ...

Acts 21:27–29 (NIV)

- 4) Looks like that idea did not work so well.
- 5) We really do not know who the Jews from the province of Asia were or even what city they came from.
 - a) We can surmise they were from Ephesus because they recognized Trophimus but that is as close as we can come.
 - b) Virtually any place where Paul had established a church, there would be Jews who were not happy with him and were more than ready to cause him trouble.
 - c) So, here we go again with lies, lies, lies...
 - i) They say that he teaches everyone everywhere against our people.
 - (1) Paul had never taught anything derogatory against the Jews. To the contrary, he wanted more than anything to save them.
 - ii) That he teaches against the Law.
 - (1) All Paul ever tried to do is explain the Law and how it had been fulfilled in Christ. He kept the upmost respect for the Law in all his teaching.
 - iii) He teaches against this place.
 - (1) The assumption here is that they were speaking of the temple. Again, to our knowledge, this would totally be a lie.
 - (2) In his teaching, the temple has no real significance because he absolutely understands and states that we are now the temple – God lives in us.
 - (3) Out of respect, he would never say anything against the temple if for no other reason than it was still the place of worship for the Jews.
 - iv) Finally, he brought someone into the temple who was a Gentile.
 - (1) They saw him with Trophimus and assumed he had taken him into the temple – then, stated it as fact.
 - (2) In other words, an assumption that turns into a lie.
- 6) For a moment, I would like to give these folks the benefit of the doubt.
 - a) Motives, good or bad, can cause us to see things and jump to conclusions.
 - b) It is what we do next that makes all the difference.

What would have been a proper next step in this case for these men before they began inciting this crowd?

- 7) Obviously, these same next steps should apply to us as well when we find ourselves in a judging situation.

- 8) The results of our not doing so can cause great pain and suffering to a brother and sister who might be on the receiving end because of our bad handling of a given situation.

Acts 21:30–36 (NIV)

What do you see as odd in the commander's actions in the situation?

- 9) He arrested Paul rather than those who were beating him.
- a) In a situation like that today, we would expect the police to save us (us being Paul) rather than arrest us.
 - b) It almost indicates another bad assumption – the commander must have assumed that since the crowd was beating Paul to death, he must have done something wrong.
 - c) Truth is the word arrested here can also mean took hold of or taken into custody. NASB translates it that way.
 - d) The chains and the fact that he is going to attempt to flog Paul shortly says that probably it started out as seizing him to save him but actually ended up in an arrest.

Acts 21:37–22:22 (NIV)

What is the thing that we have talked about over the past few weeks that is clearly stated here in these folk's response to him going to the Gentiles?

- 10) I think this is just one more place where it is clear that the Jew is shown to have missed their mission statement!
- 11) Again, they have been told from the very beginning that they were going to be the light to the Gentiles. They were to be the ones through whom all creation would be blessed.
- 12) When Paul says he was sent to the Gentiles, that was it! They were back against him!

Acts 22:23–29 (NIV)

- 13) These folks were truly upset with Paul's last comment which led the commander to do what he thought perhaps was necessary to calm the crowd.
- 14) This really strikes me as odd that he would conclude that Paul needed to be flogged before he interrogates him.
- 15) Here again, we see the Roman citizen card being played ***and*** the stark contrast between how the authorities (Romans) treated Jews or for matter any other nationality compared to how they were to treat their own citizens.
- 16) This of course caused the whole situation to change.
- 17) Those who were going to flog and interrogate him withdrew and the commander goes into panic mode (for good reason).