

# Outline of Acts 21:17–36

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- I. In Jerusalem – meeting with James & the Elders of Jerusalem, 17–26
  - A. Arrived at Jerusalem, greeting by the brethren, 17
  - B. Paul & company meet with James & the elders, 18
  - C. Description of the meeting, 19–25
    - 1. Paul relates the work of God among the Gentiles, 19
    - 2. Those in attendance give praise to God, 20a
    - 3. Problem stated:
      - a. many Jews (in Jerusalem) who were believers are zealous for the Torah, 20b
      - b. these Jews had received false reports about Paul’s work, 21
        - 1) teaching Jews in the diaspora to forsake Moses
        - 2) teaching Jews in the diaspora not to circumcise their children
        - 3) teaching Jews in the diaspora not to walk according to the customs
      - c. “what should we do?” since these Jews will surely know that Paul is in Jerusalem
  - D. Plan of Action, 23–25
    - 1. Four men (within the community of James & Elders) are under a vow
    - 2. Paul to go with them to complete their vow and his
    - 3. Paul to pay for the expenses of the four men in completing their vow
  - E. Result of Action:
    - 1. the false accusations against Paul will be dismissed
    - 2. positive affirmation –
      - a. Paul “walks orderly”
      - b. Paul “keeps the Torah”
  - F. Question: Does Paul teach the Gentiles to “forsake Moses, not circumcise their children, and not to walk according to the customs?”
    - 1. The issue of how the Gentiles are to integrate into the Jewish community of The Way has already been settled.
    - 2. Reiteration of the Jerusalem Council’s edict: abstain from
      - a. meat sacrificed to idols
      - b. blood
      - c. things strangled
      - d. fornication
  - G. Plan Enacted, 26
    - 1. Paul takes the four to the Temple the next day
    - 2. Purifies himself along with them (=does a *mikveh*)
    - 3. Gave notice of the completion of the Nazirite vows they had taken with scheduled offering of sacrifices in seven days
- II. Mob Seeks Paul’s Life, 27–36
  - A. Exposition: setting the scene, 27
    - 1. Jews from Asia, seeing Paul in the Temple, stir up crowd
    - 2. Jews from Asia lay hands upon Paul
  - B. Accusation against Paul, 28–29
    - 1. Jews from Asia rally the support of the Jerusalem Jews
    - 2. Paul’s Message: he preaches
      - a. against our people
      - b. against the Torah
      - c. against the Temple

3. Paul's actions: he has
  - a. brought Greeks into the Temple (into the court of the Israelites?)
  - b. defiled the Holy Temple
  - c. explanation of this accusation
    - 1) Trophimus the Ephesian was seen with Paul
    - 2) it was presumed that Paul had taken Trophimus into the Temple courts
- C. Results of the Accusation against Paul, 30–32
  1. all the city was in an uproar
  2. the mob drags Paul from the Temple
  3. doors of the Temple are closed
  4. the mob seeks to kill Paul / they are beating him (cf. v. 32)
  5. Roman commander is notified of the mob
  6. Roman commander & his troops arrive
  7. mob stops beating Paul when they see the Roman troops
- D. Paul Taken into Custody by the Roman Commander, 33–36
  1. Paul taken and bound with two chains (hand & feet) by order of the Roman Commander
  2. Commander inquires regarding
    - a) Paul's identity
    - b) Paul's actions (that presumably had caused the riot)
  3. Commander seeks answers from the crowd
    - a) some were saying one thing
    - b) some were saying another thing
  4. Commander decides to take Paul to the Roman barracks
    - a) when they came to stairs, Paul is carried by the soldiers (he could not climb the stairs since he was shackled)
    - b) this was necessary because of the violence of the mob
    - c) the mob was still intent upon killing Paul
- E. Paul's Request to Speak to the Mob, 37–40
  1. Paul requests the Commander's attention (does so in Greek)
  2. Commander's surprise: "Do you know Greek?"
  3. Commander's initial conclusions:
    - a) Paul is not the Egyptian who stirred up a revolt
    - b) Paul is not the Egyptian who led 4000 men of the Assassins to the desert
  4. Paul's response to the Commander
    - a) I am a Jew of Tarsus
    - b) I am a citizen of that city
    - c) let me speak to the people
  5. Commander's permission granted to Paul
  6. Paul prepares himself to address the mob
    - a) motions to the people
    - b) mob is silenced
    - c) Paul speaks to them in Aramaic (or Hebrew)