

The Acts of the Apostles, Part 48: Persecution & Faith

Key Scripture: Acts 21:27-36

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. 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. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort 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. 33 Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. 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!”

❖ Background/ Context

➤ Paul’s Mission to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles

■ Attempted Murder and Arrest

❖ Trouble in the Text

➤ Paul’s attempt to demonstrate his shared faith with the Jews brings persecution!

➤ “Mob Mentality” rules here

❖ Trouble in the World

➤ Mob Mentality

■ Division

■ Confusion

■ Lies

❖ Persecution and the Church

➤ John 15:18-21

- “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know Him who sent me.

❖ Set Apart

➤ Christians are different from the world because...

- We value human life
 - Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
- We are offended by sin

❖ Offended by Sin

➤ The Three Commandment Test

- Murder
- Adultery
- Theft

❖ Grace in the Text

➤ Acts 21:37-40

- As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, 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?” 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...

➤ Finding Common Ground

■ And seeking opportunity.

- Paul's persecution provided him an opportunity to bear witness for Christ.

❖ Grace in the World

➤ Persecution becomes Opportunity

- Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

❖ God's Word never fails

➤ Isaiah 55:11

- “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

❖ Challenge

➤ Engage in Kingdom Work