

Acts

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OF THE APOSTLES

First
BAPTIST CHURCH OF OMAHA

Words Have Power – Acts 21:15–22:29

“ ¹⁵ After this we packed our things and left for Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Some believers from Caesarea accompanied us, and they took us to the home of Mnason, a man originally from Cyprus and one of the early believers. ¹⁷ When we arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly. ¹⁸ The next day Paul went with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry.

²⁰ After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, ‘You know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously. ²¹ But the Jewish believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They’ve heard that you teach them not to circumcise their children or follow other Jewish customs. ²² What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come.

²³ ‘Here’s what we want you to do. We have four men here who have completed their vow. ²⁴ Go with them to the Temple and join them in the purification ceremony, paying for them to have their heads ritually shaved. Then everyone will know that the rumors are all false and that you yourself observe the Jewish laws.

²⁵ ‘As for the Gentile believers, they should do what we already told them in a letter: They should abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.’”

~ ACTS 21:15–25 (NLT)

“ ²⁰ When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law.”

~ 1 CORINTHIANS 9:20 (NLT)

“ ²⁷ The seven days were almost ended when some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the Temple and roused a mob against him. They grabbed him, ²⁸ yelling, ‘Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who preaches against our people everywhere and tells everybody to disobey the Jewish laws. He speaks against the Temple—and even defiles this holy place by bringing in Gentiles.’ ²⁹ (For earlier that day they had seen him in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, and they assumed Paul had taken him into the Temple.)

³⁰ The whole city was rocked by these accusations, and a great riot followed. Paul was grabbed and dragged out of the Temple, and immediately the gates were closed behind him. ³¹ As they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the Roman regiment that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² He immediately called out his soldiers and officers and ran down among the crowd. When the mob saw the commander and the troops coming, they stopped beating Paul.

³³ Then the commander arrested him and ordered him bound with two chains. He asked the crowd who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some shouted one thing and some another. Since he couldn’t find out the truth in all the uproar and confusion, he ordered that Paul be taken to the fortress. ³⁵ As Paul reached the stairs, the mob grew so violent the soldiers had to lift him to their shoulders to protect him. ³⁶ And the crowd followed behind, shouting, ‘Kill him, kill him!’”

~ ACTS 21:27–36 (NLT)

_____ have Power.

“ ²¹ The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

~ PROVERBS 18:21 (NIV)

_____ does not allow good decisions.

“ ¹ ‘Brothers and esteemed fathers,’ Paul said, ‘listen to me as I offer my defense.’ ² When they heard him speaking in their own language, the silence was even greater.

³ Then Paul said, ‘I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. ⁴ And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. ⁵ The high priest and the whole council of elders can testify that this is so. For I received letters from them to our Jewish brothers in Damascus, authorizing me to bring the followers of the Way from there to Jerusalem, in chains, to be punished.’

⁶ ‘As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ⁸ ‘Who are you, lord?’ I asked. ‘And the voice replied, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, the one you are persecuting.’ ⁹ The people with me saw the light but didn’t understand the voice speaking to me.

¹⁰ ‘I asked, ‘What should I do, Lord?’ ‘And the Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you are to do.’

¹¹ ‘I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand to Damascus by my companions. ¹² A man named Ananias lived there. He was a godly man, deeply devoted to the law, and well regarded by all the Jews of Damascus. ¹³ He came and stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, regain your sight.’ And that very moment I could see him!’

¹⁴ ‘Then he told me, ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and hear him speak. ¹⁵ For you are to be his witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.’”

~ ACTS 22:1-16 (NLT)

“ ¹⁷ ‘After I returned to Jerusalem, I was praying in the Temple and fell into a trance. ¹⁸ I saw a vision of Jesus saying to me, ‘Hurry! Leave Jerusalem, for the people here won’t accept your testimony about me.’”

~ ACTS 22:17-18 (NLT)

“ ¹⁹ ‘But Lord,’ I argued, ‘they certainly know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. ²⁰ And I was in complete agreement when your witness Stephen was killed. I stood by and kept the coats they took off when they stoned him.’”

~ ACTS 22:19-20 (NLT)

“ ²¹ But the Lord said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles!’” ~ ACTS 22:21 (NLT)

“ ²² The crowd listened until Paul said that word. Then they all began to shout, ‘Away with such a fellow! He isn’t fit to live!’” ²³ They yelled, threw off their coats, and tossed handfuls of dust into the air.”

~ ACTS 22:22-23 (NLT)

We _____ have a story to tell.

“ ²⁶ When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and asked, ‘What are you doing? This man is a Roman citizen!’ ²⁷ So the commander went over and asked Paul, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?’ ‘Yes, I certainly am,’ Paul replied. ²⁸ ‘I am, too,’ the commander muttered, ‘and it cost me plenty!’ Paul answered, ‘But I am a citizen by birth!’ ²⁹ The soldiers who were about to interrogate Paul quickly withdrew when they heard he was a Roman citizen, and the commander was frightened because he had ordered him bound and whipped.”

~ ACTS 22:26-29 (NLT)

So What?

_____ Your Story.

“ ¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and respect;”

~ 1 PETER 3:15 (NASB)

_____ Your Story.

“ ¹⁵ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

~ ROMANS 1:16 (NASB)

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