

“Home, James”

Session Seventeen

“So far Luke has portrayed his hero on the offensive, taking bold initiatives under the leading of the Holy Spirit to evangelize most of Asia Minor and Greece. But when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, his whole career abruptly changed. He was assaulted, arrested, bound and brought to trial. He found himself on the defensive” (335).

“Paul was confronted with this zealotism when he arrived in Jerusalem in AD 58” (Reicke, 37).

Acts 21:17-26

After arriving in Jerusalem, Paul goes to see James. This is not their first meeting. It's at least their fourth. Who is James and what is his role?

“In depicting Paul and James face to face, Luke presents his readers with a dramatic situation, fraught with both risk and possibility. For James and Paul were the representative leaders of two Christianities, Jewish and Gentile” (339).

“Shave and a hair cut, two bits!” The four men in v. 23 have taken a Nazirite vow. Shaving the head marked the _____ of the vow. James invites Paul to take part in the purification rites and pay for their expenses (in this case, the costs of 8 pigeons and 4 lambs to sacrifice; see Num. 6:9-12).

The days of purification lasted for ____ days (see v. 27).

Acts 21:27-36

What are the two baseless charges against Paul?

Gentiles are only permitted in the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles. A 4 ½ foot stone wall separated it from the Court of Israel and the rest of the inner temple area. Signs were posted that Gentiles would be killed if they entered and defiled the temple. “Two of these notices (both in _____) have been found—one in 1871 and one in 1935—the text of which runs: ‘No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the temple and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death’” (344).

The temple goes into “lockdown” mode as the gates are shut. The Roman commander (Claudius Lysias, see 23:26) comes to Paul's rescue as the mob was about to kill him (v. 31).

T / F Luke consistently portrays the Roman authorities as friends of the gospel, not foes.

Acts 21:37-22:22

The barracks (v. 37) are located “in the Fortress of Antonia, which is connected to the northern end of the temple area by two flights of steps. The tower overlooked the temple area” (CSSB).

“Walk like an Egyptian?” The historian Josephus tells us of an Egyptian false prophet who led 4,000 people to the Mount of Olives. His promise? “When the walls of Jerusalem fell flat at his command, they would be able to break into the city and overpower the Romans” (347). The Roman soldiers killed hundreds of his followers, but the leader escaped and disappeared—until now, so the commander thought!

It’s the Hour of Tower. Paul speaks in _____ to the commander. He speaks in _____ to the people.

What does Paul stress at first? How would you describe his speech?

“In their eyes, making Gentiles into Jews was fine (proselytism); but making Gentiles into Christians without first making them Jews (evangelism) was an abomination. It was tantamount to saying that Jews and Gentiles were equal, for they both needed to come to God through Christ, and that on identical terms” (348).

Acts 22:23-29

According to Roman law, all Roman citizens were assured exclusion from all degrading forms of punishment: beating with rods, scourging, crucifixion and watching “The View” (CSSB, mainly).

“The scourge was a fearful instrument of torture, consisting of leather strips, weighted with rough pieces of metal or bone, and attached to a stout wooden handle. If a man did not actually die under the scourge (which frequently happened), he would certainly be crippled for life” (349).

What is the consequence for unfairly imprisoning or punishing a Roman citizen?

How could one become a Roman citizen?

- 1) receive it as a reward
- 2) buy it (not cheap!, see v. 28)
- 3) by birth

Paul’s life lesson from today’s study?

Thoughts, comments, questions...