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Acts 21 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

III. Launching Out • Chs. 13-28

E. To Jerusalem • 20:13-21:14

1. At Miletus • 20:13-38

2. Warnings • 21:1-14

¹ Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them [the Ephesian elders] and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.* [MAP]

Remember, sailing these waters is dangerous.

There are islands & reefs scattered all over and the currents are treacherous.

So sailing was done during the daylight hours. They would pull near land in the evening and drop anchor.

Following this pattern, they spent their first night after leaving Miletus at the island of Cos, then sailed to the island of Rhodes, and then to the port of Patara on the southern coast of Asia Minor.

That's where this particular ship was headed, so they had to find another ship to take them the rest of the way.

² And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo.

There were not cruise or passenger ships in that time.

People journeying by ship simply booked passage on one of the thousands of cargo ships that sailed the Mediterranean.

This ship was carrying goods to Tyre, the main port of Phoenicia, just north of

Israel.=

⁴ And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

When Paul & his band of companions landed in Tyre, they asked around to see if a church had begun there.

Sure enough, the Gospel had taken root in Tyre so they found the disciples & spent a week with them.

While there, the Tyrian Christians passed on to Paul the same message that'd been given him already in many places as they made their way back to Jerusalem – that trouble awaited him there.

But notice how Paul phrases it here – they told Paul through the Spirit NOT to go up to Jerusalem.

Apparently, as we suggested last week, this wasn't just a warning about coming difficulty, meant to prepare Paul so he wouldn't be surprised when it came.

Luke says the Tyrians were moved by the Spirit to dissuade Paul from going.

File that away, we'll come back to it in a bit.

⁵ When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed.

Though Paul & his team spent only a week with these believers, a strong bond developed.

So much so that when it came time for them to leave, their entire families accompanied them to the shore.

What an emotional moment this must have been as they all knelt there on the shore & prayed together!

What a testimony this was to the ship's crew and the others who were working the docks or passing by.

Our beach baptisms are a wonderful time of taking church out into the public arena to let the unchurched see that Christians aren't a bunch of wild-eyed freaks plotting an overthrow of the government.

We're not all a bunch of straight-laced moral mullahs, running around the beach demanding all the women put on burkhas.

We're just people filled with joy because we've been forgiven of our sins, and been given a new start at a new life and when all is said and done, get to go to heaven!

Though we make up a big group, we try to remain respectful of others & what they came down to the beach for.

We're not running around jamming gospel tracts in everyone's face and telling them they better get saved or their going to burn in the fires of hell forever.

Those beach baptisms give hundreds of the unchurched an opportunity to realize that what they may have THOUGHT being an evangelical Christian meant in fact isn't true at all.

We're a community of love, respect, honor, joy & generosity.

And the faith we talk so much about hasn't weirded us out. It's given us an unshakeable hope.

As Christianity is increasingly marginalized in our society, don't yield to the pressure to so privatize your faith that you hide it or avoid giving it any kind of public exposure.

The popular media will increasingly portray people of faith as dangerous, uneducated, unsophisticated, bigot-naysayers.

So it's important we let the unchurched see what we're really like, and that our Faith in God makes us better people; better friends, better neighbors, better employees, better customers, just better at whatever.

A great way to do this is by saying thanks before a meal.

Don't hide it or make it covert. Pray! Then tip & be a good customer.

⁶ When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home. ⁷ And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day.

Ptolemais was Accho, or as it was called during the Crusades, Acre, the primary port for the Crusaders.

There's a great harbor there and a natural landing place for the ship they were on.

Since the ship was doing business there in Ptolemais, Paul's team had a day to kill & spend it by looking up the local believers whom they spent some time with.

It's good to note how important Christian fellowship was to Paul & his team.

Wherever they went, they sought out companionship with fellow believers.

It wasn't just that Paul thought he was such an anointed minister that he had something to give to everyone.

He simply craved the mutual blessing that comes when God's people get together.

⁸ On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Philip, you'll remember, was one of the 7 deacons selected in Acts 6 to oversee the distribution of food to needy widows in the church at Jerusalem.

His friend Stephen was the Church's first martyr – executed under the auspices of a young Jewish leader named Saul.

Well, here it is, 20 years later, & Saul-turned-Paul is now knocking at Philip's door – not to arrest & haul him off to jail, but to join him in fellowship.

In Acts 8 we read that Philip had been mightily used by God to bring revival to the Samaritans.

Then God told him to head south where he met a high Ethiopian official & led him to faith in Christ.

Following that, he settled down in Caesarea, where we find him still, 20 years later.

So this man who'd pioneered taking the Gospel to non-Jews meets now with God's Apostle to the Gentiles & who'd begun as the leading persecutor of the Church.

What stories they must have swapped!

As far as we know, this was Luke's first trip to Israel.

So more than likely, it was the time spent in Philip's house that provided him the history of the early church he wrote here in Acts.

Note that he doesn't refer to Philip as "the Deacon" – he's "Philip the Evangelist."

He had a gift to preach the Gospel that resulted in the conversion of many.

This is the gift Billy Graham & Greg Laurie have.

⁹ *Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.*

Philip's ministry wasn't just a grand public work of preaching to with crowds.

He was faithful at home, with his family too.

He had 4 young daughters who were deeply committed to the Lord.

*So much so, God used them **prophetically**.*

They had a well-earned reputation for speaking a Word by the Holy Spirit that was recognized as anointed & sent by God.

¹⁰ *And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.*

Paul had been in a hurry to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost but the trip had progressed more quickly than anticipated, so they had some extra time to spend in Caesarea.

While they stayed with Philip, a well-known prophet named Agabus arrived.

In Acts 11, Agabus is the one who'd foretold a wide-spread famine that had in fact come to pass.

¹¹ *When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"*

Object lessons like this were very much part & parcel of the prophet's style.

Many of the prophets of the OT used dramatic signs to illustrate their message to Israel.

Agabus' method was simple – he took Paul's belt, wrapped himself in it, & said that the owner of that belt would in a similar way be bound by the Jews & turned over to the Gentile authorities.

*Now, let's face it—this looks like a pretty clear warning from God, via a notable & respected prophet, that Paul was **NOT** to go to Jerusalem.*

Luke tells us in v. 4 that the believers in Tyre had warned Paul by the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem.

Certainly with all this warning so clearly from God, Paul's going to change his plans.

¹² *Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded*

with = him not to go up to Jerusalem.

It was obvious to all those who'd been with Paul= & heard all the warnings along the way that God was turning him away from Jerusalem. They t= ried to persuaded him to be reasonable & turn away.

¹³ Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? Fo= r I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

Their urging went on & o= n - & though Paul was deeply moved by their love & concern for him, he tells them he's not worried about what the future holds for him in Jerusalem.

What's up here? Was Paul wrong to go? Was God se= eking to divert him but he was just stubborn?

First of all, let's take a look at what God said= about Paul's calling.

In Acts 9:15, God said Paul= was called to bear God's name before

#1 - The Gentiles,

#2 - Kings,

#3 (lastly) - The Children= of Israel.

As we look at Paul's ministry, we see that in al= l 3 of his journeys, whenever he arrived in a new city, the first thing he did was to go to the synagogue to preach.

He goes first to the Jews &= #8211; where he preaches the Gospel.

What's the reaction?= A few Jews & a whole lot of Gentiles get saved.

In many places, Paul stayed = & preached in the synagogue so long, all= he did was fire up his opponents to take violent action against him.

Even though Paul's primary calling was to the Gentiles, and that's where his most effecti= ve work was done,

Personally, he yearned for = the conversion of his fellow Jews & had a hard time accepting the fact that they had become settled in their unbelief and opposition.

Maybe he had a hard time le= tting go of this less fruitful side of his work because he himself had at one time b= een so deeply entrenched in the role of the hostile unbeliever & knew first hand what a change God's grace can make.

Listen to what he says about his desire to win his fellow Jews to faith in Christ.

Romans 9:1-5 - ¹ = I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that = I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵ of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God.

*As we put all of this together, weighing carefully the way Luke words the warnings Paul received, I think we're safe in concluding God was telling Paul **NOT** to go to Jerusalem.*

It wasn't that Paul was outright disobedient & rebellious in going anyway.

He heard the warnings & knew they were from God, but interpreted them as simply being warnings about what would happen so that he wouldn't be surprised.

He chalked up the comments & counsel people gave him to not go as merely their interpretation on the how he should respond to the warnings.

It was difficult for Paul to understand how his zeal & passion for the salvation of the Jews COULDN'T be in line with God's will.

F. & Paul Arrested & Jailed • 21:15-Ch. 28

1. & The plan to prove Paul's devotion • 21:15-26

¹⁵ And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.

Besides Paul's band of 9 went a group of believers from Caesarea.

Mnason, one of the first converts & a native of Cyprus, was on his way to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost – ; so he went with them.

He owned a home in Jerusalem & asked Paul to stay with him when they arrived.

¹⁷ And when we had come to Jerusalem<= /st1:City>, the brethren received us gladly.

Well of course they did – Paul's team had brought a huge financial gift to relieve the needs of the poor.

18 On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

Though the church is now over 20 years old, James, Jesus' brother is still leading it.

19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.

Here= 217;s where the verse break ought to be, because from here on out it seems to all= go south!

Paul gave a full report of his 2nd & 3rd missionary trips, of all that God had done in Asia & Greece.

The church leaders rejoiced & praised God.

But then they turn to Paul --

And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have

believed, and they are all zealous for the law;

Thousands of Jews in Jerusalem and Judea had come to faith in Christ.

What that conversion had done was re-invigorate their devotion to the Law!

Quite frankly, this had to be terribly disheartening for Paul.

Years before, in Acts 15 following his first missionary journey, when teachers came from Jerusalem to Antioch, telling the Gentile believers they had to be circumcised and become good, law-abiding Jews, Paul & Barnabas had gone to the leaders of the church at Jerusalem to settle the matter once and for all.

You remember the verdict in Acts 15; Gentiles don't have to keep the law to be followers of Christ.

Why hadn't the Jewish leadership of the Church realized what that meant, that ultimately, if Gentiles aren't bound by the law, neither are Jews.

Salvation is by grace through faith, not according to works.

Over the intervening years since the counsel in Jerusalem, the leaders had a golden opportunity to teach & persuade the Jewish legalists that grace had redefined their relationship to the law.

They hadn't! If anything, they'd allowed the error of legalism to grow.

The Judaizers had grown stronger, with more influence!

²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

Now, here's the deal – this was partly true!

In preaching the Gospel of grace, Paul was saying that the Jews' relationship with the law needed to change.

Actually, it needed to change because they'd been treating it wrong for generations.

They thought the Law was a means to making them righteous when Actually God gave it to point out their sin.

Now one is made right before God on the basis of the law.

It's a guide to reveal how far from God sinful men & women are.

Paul knew & taught that the law was holy, just & good when used in the way God intended it.

It was a slanderous misrepresentation of his teaching to say that he was advocating an abolishment of the Law.

Paul kept many of the Jewish customs himself because he recognized them for what they were – ways to commemorate & communicate God's gracious work.

He circumcised Timothy when he joined Paul's team.

Paul took a Nazarite vow at least once, & probably more times.

He continued to observe the Jewish holy days & Sabbath.

It's just that he didn't trust in these things to earn him points with God.

What's disturbing is that these leaders were telling Paul this knew the rumors being told about him weren't true, but it seems they did nothing to squelch them!

Not only did they not hold forth on the right way to understand the law among the believers in Jerusalem, they didn't defend Paul's rep when they easily could have.

And yet these guys are going to counsel Paul & make suggestions on what to do now.

22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. 24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. 25 But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

Their counsel to Paul was that HE could redeem his reputation & end the rumors about him by being the benefactor for 4 guys who'd taken a Nazarite vow and were now ready to end it.

There were some religious rituals that needed to be performed at the end of the vow & if Paul joined them by taking care of the expenses, well then everyone would see that & realize he was supporting the most rigorous requirement of the law – the Nazarite vow.

As for the counsel's previous decision not requiring Gentiles to become law-abiding Jews, that still stood.

In other words—Paul's Gentile companions didn't have to join him in this.

In fact, it would be much better if they were nowhere in sight when it came time for Paul to go to the temple with these 4 Jewish guys.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

Paul consented to their counsel & jumped through the religious hoop they set for him.

2. Paul arrested • 21:27-22:29

a. the riot • 21:27-32

27 Now when the seven days were almost ended, 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 teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ (For they had previous

ly seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

It takes 7 days to complete the various requirements ending the Nazarite vow.

On the last day, as Paul was with the 4 in the temple, some of the Jew's who'd opposed him in Asia & were in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, saw him and assumed that He'd brought a Gentile into the temple – which was utterly verboten!

³⁰ And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.

The people would not want to defile the temple with violence, so they grabbed Paul and hauled him to the outer courtyard where they proceeded to beat him.

³¹ Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Just north of the Temple mount was the Antonia, the Roman fortress & administrative center in Jerusalem.

There were frequent disturbances on the mount so they'd built a large stairway from the fortress to the outer courtyard.

During Passover & Pentecost, when Jerusalem swelled by hundreds of thousands, the Romans sent reinforcements from the capital at Caesarea to fill the Antonia.

As soon as the watchmen saw this disturbance they notified their commander who rushed troops to the scene.

The Jews knew once troops were dispatched, if they continued to brawl, the Romans would draw their swords and start swinging.

The Romans tolerated no breach in public peace & order.

b. the arrest • 21:33-36

³³ Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. ³⁵ When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by

the soldiers because of the violence of the mob.³⁶ For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!"

The rioters stopped when the Romans first arrived.

But as soon as Paul was put in chains they renewed their violence to urge the Romans to get rid of him = 211; which is really what "Away with Him" means.

What they meant was "= Do away with him!"

The Romans were pragmatists and the Jews knew from experience that many a Roman military commander was not above killing an innocent person if it would only keep the crowd quiet.

c. &nb= sp; Paul addresses the crowd • 21:37-22:21

³⁷ Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?" He replied, "Can you speak Greek?" ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" <= /span>

Picture the scene. The soldiers carrying Paul arrive at the top of the stairs & are about to enter the Antonia when Paul calls out to the commander in perfect Greek & asks for permission to address the crowd turned angry mob.

He's got a nice platform over the courtyard and can be seen by thousands below.

The commander is surprised that Paul can speak such fluent Greek.

Apparently he didn't know Hebrew too well because he'd not been able to sort out what the people were saying about Paul at the foot of the stairs.

He'd assumed Paul was a well known insurrectionist from Egypt.

Not long before this an Egyptian terrorist had come to Jerusalem & recruited a small army of assassins.

They were called the "Sicarii" because they carried a small curved dagger of the same name which they used to assassinate their enemies – usually, in a public place.

Under their Egyptian leader, the Sicarii had recently assassinated a large number of Roman officials and Jewish sympathizers. They even murdered Jonathan, the high priest's son.

This resulted in a widespread crackdown that drove them out of the city & onto the Mt. Of Olives where the Egyptian said he would command the walls of

Jerusalem to fall, they then would over= power the Romans & take control of the city

While camped on the Mt. Of = Olives, the Roman governor sent a company of soldiers & wiped them out - but the Egyptian got away.

This commander thought Paul was the terrorist leader who'd come back to the temple, either to raise another army or to assassinate someone.

He thought the Jews who were beating him up were loyalists to Rome.

³⁹ But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus, = in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore y= ou, permit me to speak to the people."

Paul was from Tarsus to the north; he wasn't an Egyptian.

Then he asked for permissio= n to speak to the crowd.

He knew the commander would= prefer to find a peaceful solution to all this than to put Paul into custody and go through all the administrative hassle of arresting & charging him.

⁴⁰ So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to = them in the Hebrew language, saying,

22:1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now." = ² And when they heard th= at he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said: ³ "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and= was zealous toward God as you all are today. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death= , binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, ⁵ as also the high pries= t bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those= who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

Paul la= ys out his spiritual background for them.

He'd been trained by one of the all-time great luminaries of the Jewish religion, Gamaliel.

Not only that, he'd been a standout in both his studies & lifestyle, showing such zeal for the Law he'd attacked the followers = of Jesus as dangerous heretics.

In fact, he'd been the point man of persecution, the Sanhedrin's bull dog as all the leaders of Israel would attest.

⁶ “Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me.⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’⁸ So I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’⁹ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’⁹ “And those who were with me = indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me.¹⁰ So I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’¹¹ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.’¹¹ And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.¹² “Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there,¹³ came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him.¹⁴ Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.’¹⁵ For you will be His witness to all men of whom you have seen and heard.¹⁶ And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’”¹⁷ “Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance¹⁸ and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’¹⁹ So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You.’²⁰ And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’²¹ Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’”

d. Paul “examined” by the Romans • 22:22-29

²² And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”

Paul held them in rapt attention.

The testimony of how he came to faith in Christ was filled with dramatic twists & remarkable miracles.

It was an exciting tell until he got to a plot twist they didn’t see coming and went berserk when it did.

What infuriated them and sent them into a rage was the absolutely ludicrous idea that God would tell a Jew to turn away from other Jews and go with the message of salvation to Gentiles!

I mean, if you can imagine what kind of reaction an ex-member of the KKK would get from a clan meeting if he said that God had spoken to him about

forsaking the Clan to become a member of the NAACP, you have a slim idea of how vehemently this crowd reacted to Paul at this point.

Where is all this taking place? On the Temple Mount, in the outer courtyard.

Separating that courtyard from the temple itself, which represents God's presence, is a fence with gates holding signs that say Gentiles aren't permitted any further and if they do enter into the next courtyard, they will be immediately executed!

No, in their minds, Paul's uttered a terrible blasphemy – to attribute such words to God was unthinkable – so they demanded that he be killed.

²³ Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, ²⁴ the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.

The commander didn't know what Paul had been saying because he spoke to the crowd in Hebrew.

All he knew is that Paul's words threw them into an even greater fit than before.

Paul was obviously a dangerous fellow so he decided to apply the common & preferred means of interrogation – scourging.

People would confess to just about anything under the lash.

²⁵ And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

When they started binding Paul he knew what for & = ask the centurion assigned the oversight of his interrogation if it was now legal to lash an uncharged & uncondemned Roman citizen.

²⁶ When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."²⁷ Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" = He said, "Yes."²⁸ The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

Rome was so hard up for cash by this time that it had become the practice that for a certain sum & so many years of service in the military, you could buy citizenship which resulted in all kinds of benefits.

The commander had secured his citizenship by this means and asked Paul =

what his claimed citizenship was based on.

Paul told him he was a freeborn citizen – which was the truest kind of citizenship and carried the greatest privileges.

²⁹ Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Meaning had bound him in preparation for being scourged.

3. Face-off with the Sanhedrin • 22:30-23:10

³⁰ The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Before anything more official can happen, the Commander needed to know what to charge Paul with.

But at this point he's confused; he doesn't know what Paul has done or said that's so enraged the Jews.

He figures this is a good way to find out – call for the Jewish rulers to come and make THEIR charge against him, then see what Paul has to say in reply.

We'll see what happened next week.

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Feed My Sheep

Feed My Sheep

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