

# Jerusalem Rejects The Testimony About Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are back in Acts after a brief Easter break from Acts. We are in our Acts study. And this morning we are in Acts chapter 21.

If you have a Bible with you, please turn there. And it's going to be slightly different this morning.

Instead of just reading the portion and then going on to explain it, I'm going to make comment as we go through this because it's a fairly long section that we're going to be looking at.

Acts 21.17 to Acts 22.29. So it's a fairly big chunk, but we're not going to be here all day, so don't worry.

I'm going to make comment as we go along, and then we'll draw out some points and things to notice at the end. But I want to start first by reading something from Deuteronomy chapter 30.

[ 1 : 12 ] Now you remember in the law and the Ten Commandments that the ninth one was, you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Now in Deuteronomy at the end in chapter 30, Moses said, of all the commandments, he said, for this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you.

Neither is it far off. It's not in heaven that you should say, who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the sea that you say, who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it.

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. And Moses says this, and this is the end of Moses' life.

Moses says this to the people of Israel. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, I command you today by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

[ 2 : 35 ] But if your hearts turn away and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish, shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob to give them.

Choose life. That's what Moses says. Before you I have set life and death, therefore choose life. Now this is something to have in mind as we go through this section because people are going to accuse Paul of things in relation to Moses and the law.

And these are the Jews that should themselves be keeping the law. So we're going to be reading from verse 17 of chapter 21. And I'll pause here and there to make comments.

Now, Paul, just to set the context, Paul's been going around all the Gentile churches and far, you know, and wide in Europe. He's planted many churches and he's went around these churches strengthening them.

[ 4 : 16 ] And as he's gone, I don't know if you remember this, there's a little verse in Corinthians about a collection. As he's gone, Paul has went through every Gentile church and he's making this big collection.

And the collection is for the Jerusalem church. It's not just a weekly collection in the church, for the church. He's collecting money and donations, a gift of love from all these Gentile churches that he's going to take to the Jerusalem church.

And a big effort, you know, to show the unity of the church and the Jews and the Gentiles. This big gesture from the Gentiles for Paul to say to the Jews, accept the Gentiles.

They are us. They are with us. They're part of the church, part of God's redemptive plan. And we've already seen a small demonstration of this when there was a famine in Jerusalem and Antioch sent money and sent aid to Jerusalem.

And this is a grander thing that Paul has been doing throughout all his missionary journeys. He's been getting collections from here and there and everywhere to take to the Jerusalem church. And also, you'll remember when he was in Troas and that poor boy fell out the window, there was a number of other men with him, Trophimus included, and other guys, Aristarchus and Timothy and so on and so forth.

[ 5 : 42 ] People, representatives from all the different Gentile churches. So Paul is coming to Jerusalem at this point in the passage with an entourage of representatives from the Gentile churches taking this offering of a gift of love financially for the Jerusalem church.

And this is the context. And so, 21 verse 17 says this, When we had come to Jerusalem, Luke is a witness. He's there with them and he's writing this.

When we come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the following day, Paul went in with us to James. James remembers the brother of Jesus.

He's an elder. And all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

when they heard it, they glorified God. Now, this is important. You know, Paul is not saying, I did this and I did that.

[ 6 : 48 ] He's relating what God did among the Gentiles through his ministry. What God did. And so, therefore, they glorify God. They don't glorify Paul or anything like that. They glorify God.

And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, and this is where it takes a strange turn. They said to him, You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.

Jewish Christians, thousands of them. They are all zealous for the law. And they've been told about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.

Now, this is false. They've been told this from who knows who, but it's false. This is hearsay. I don't know if you've ever watched Judge Judy on the TV.

Whenever someone's giving testimony and they say, Well, I heard this happened. Judge Judy will say, Hearsay! Not accepting that in a court. It's rumors.

[ 7 : 55 ] rumors. These people have heard these rumors about Paul. It's false. They've been told that you teach this and that to the Jews.

So. Now, I want to pause there for a second. I was in a church in Straven when I was young. It was the first church I was a part of. And I was there for about six or so years.

And at the end of my time there, just before I got married, there was a little bit of things that I was struggling with in relation to the teaching, the doctrine, the stuff like that. And I spent a good two years studying these things, trying to strengthen it, but working with the pastor and his wife and some others.

And eventually, we came to the position that it would be better to amicably leave part ways from the church. and it was done amicably and it was done privately because I included no one in this because I didn't want to create some sort of church split or anything like that.

I didn't talk to anyone other than the leaders about this. And then when I left the church, it was, weeks went by. Nobody phoned, you know.

[ 9 : 08 ] One person phoned, very close friend of mine's. He phoned me up and he says, what happened? Now, nobody else did. They got one side of the story and you know what that's like.

We've all probably experienced that. People get one side of the story and they draw conclusions from that and they think something about you but they've not even asked you. These Jews here, it's not like they're going to Paul and saying, are these things so?

It's not like they're going to the elders of the church and saying, is this true? We'll take your word. Over the people that we've heard. It's an important lesson, you know, not just about drawing conclusions ourselves but about who we listen to.

Are we giving our ears to rumours or to gossip? You know, you say, no thanks, you know, I don't want to hear that. Sometimes it's good to just say to someone, I don't want to know.

I don't want to know. Or if you do hear something, just say, well, I'm not making any conclusions until I speak to that person myself. Or I speak to someone that I trust. Or speak to the leaders of the church.

[ 10 : 17 ] Now, at this point in Jerusalem, there's thousands and thousands of Jews, he said, and the apostles are nowhere to be seen. They're out doing their missionary work.

James is a leader, the brother of the Lord Jesus. He's a leader in this church among the elders. There's probably, I don't know, somewhere about a hundred elders. There's a lot of elders.

Now, they say, well, these Jews have been told about you. Told by who, we don't know. And they've been told false things about your ministry and what you say to the Jews when you're among the Gentiles.

Verse 22, what then is to be done? It's a good question, that. How many things could Paul have said? What then is to be done?

Well, go and bring them. If they've got a question to ask me, let them ask me. Have they not asked you? Have they not listened to you, elders? What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come and they're not happy with you, brother.

[ 11 : 21 ] So the elders say to Paul, verse 23, do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. Take these men, purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads like a Nazarite vow.

An expensive thing. There were offerings to be made. Many offerings and many ceremony, much ceremony. It was an expensive thing and he's paying all of them. Now just think about that for a moment.

He's came with this great gift, financial gift from all the Gentiles and brought it into the church and they say, oh yeah, yeah, thanks very much. Now the Jews have a problem with you and we need your money to pay for them.

Some people have said that it was very wrong of James and the elders to jump so quickly and not notice, not acknowledge the gift, the great gesture.

Others say, perhaps it's just the way Luke's telling it. It was just moving quickly and he left those details out. But certainly, it's interesting, the Gentiles have brought this great gift of money and the Jews, the elders are saying to Paul, you need to pay for these guys, for these Jews to accept you.

[ 12 : 37 ] What does that say? It's not just Jews, this is Jewish Christians. What does that say about prejudices? About giving your ear to rumors such that you need someone to make a great gesture financially, commit to a vow himself.

So, go along with them. Purify yourself, Paul. Pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads. Thus, all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you.

Nothing. But that you yourself also live in observance to the law. The elders know there's nothing in what was told about Paul. But they want these other Jews to know that there's nothing in that.

So, they ask Paul to do this. Paul doesn't need to do this. he doesn't need to do any of this. He's got nothing to prove. But look at this. He does it.

As for the Gentiles who have believed, we've sent a letter. Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council. We've sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.

[ 13 : 51 ] The Gentiles don't need to do this, but we just need you to show that you're still a Jew. Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them, went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled, the offering presented for each one of them.

He's doing it. What a guy. You know, in 1 Corinthians 9, he talks about, to the Jews, I become a Jew. To those under the law, I become as one under the law.

To the Gentiles, I become a Gentile. Those outside the law, I become as one outside the law, though not the law of God, but under the law of Christ. Paul is doing all things, being all things to all men, and it's, you know, he doesn't need to prove himself here, but he does it.

And it's not to the other apostles, it's not Peter and John and James and the other apostles saying, you need to do this, you need to listen to us. Paul is submitting to these elders here, and he's doing it gladly, because Paul wants peace and unity in the church.

So he does it, and it says, when the seven days were almost complete, the Jews from Asia, you remember in chapter 19, there were Jews in Asia who didn't like Paul. The Jews from Asia were there, because it was a feast day, it was Pentecost, and all the Jews had to come back to Jerusalem on these feast days.

[ 15 : 20 ] And so the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him. They grabbed him, they huddled him, crying out, men of Israel, help, help.

This is the man who's teaching everyone everywhere against the people. This is the one who's teaching against the law. This is the one who's teaching against the temple. Moreover, he even brought the Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place, for they had previously seen Trophimus, the Ephesian, with him in the city.

And they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. They were wrong. One commentator says that hatred added wings to imagination.

You see, they didn't even witness him taking. They knew Trophimus, they were from Ephesus, he was from Ephesus, they knew Paul, they seen them together, they made an assumption. But they didn't even witness it.

They inferred it, and it was nonsensical. Since Paul was going through a rite himself to dispel lesser accusations, why would he do this?

[ 16 : 32 ] Why would someone who's putting himself through a rite of purification defile the temple? It doesn't make sense. It's not even a logical inference. Their assumption is illogical.

But nevertheless, they do it. They cause trouble, they stir up the city. Then all the city was stirred up. The people ran together, they seized Paul, they dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 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. Paul's getting beat up here. The tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains.

Now you'll remember back in Acts last time, I think it was Bill was talking about this. The prophet Agabus had went up to Paul and bound his arms and said, when you go into Jerusalem, this is what's going to happen.

[ 17 : 36 ] And this is it fulfilled. Paul is bound with chains and for the next five years he will basically be bound with chains. And so the tribune inquired who Paul was and what he had done.

Then some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another, and he couldn't learn about the facts because of the uproar. So he ordered them to be brought into the barracks.

When he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd. For the mob of people followed, crying out, away with him.

Now, I don't know if you remember when we were in Ephesus in Acts chapter 19, you remember there was a riot that happened there and it was about the, I think it was Demetrius, the silversmith.

And if you go back in your Bible later on and you compare this chapter and chapter 19, you'll notice the same words. The Jews in Asia stirred up the crowd, crying out.

[ 18 : 41 ] The city was stirred up. They seized Paul. They dragged him. The city was in confusion. Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some were another. This is the same thing that's going on.

It's a parallel to what's going on. And these Jews are the ones causing a riot, just like Demetrius the silversmith caused the riot. What does that say about these Jews? And it's the same thing happening again in Jerusalem.

It's a parallel to the unjustified riot in Ephesus. But not only is this a parallel to the riot in Ephesus, if you notice other terms, it's a parallel to the rejection of Christ in Jerusalem.

Now, if you go to John 19 or Luke 23, this is what they said of Jesus. Not only did they shout crucify him, but they said, away with him. Away with him.

And so, it's important to note that Luke, when he talks about the rejection of Jews, Luke is not anti-Semitic. There's no anti-Semitism in Luke's account of the Jewish persecution.

[ 19 : 53 ] You see, at the start, he mentions many Jews believed. Many thousands of Jews believed. But nationally, they reject Christ. And so, the question here is, why are they treating Paul like this?

Why are they treating Paul like this? On the account of rumors? On the account of them breaking the ninth commandment, bearing false witness? On the account of them causing the riot and not Paul?

Paul's doing a purification right, and they're causing a riot. Who are you going to listen to? Who's telling the truth? The ones violently causing a riot or the ones purifying themselves? Why are they treating Paul like this?

Because they treated Christ like this. Why did they say to Paul, away with him? Because they said to Jesus, away with him. You see, this is the same thing happening.

And it's on the same argument. He teaches against Moses, teaches against this people, teaches against this place, the temple, and the law. It was the same charges that were against Jesus.

[ 20 : 56 ] The same charges that were against Stephen are now the same charges that are against Paul. Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, verse 37.

He said to the tribune, may I say something to you? And he said, do you know Greek? The tribune's surprised that Paul speaks to him in Greek.

And he says, are you not the Egyptian then who recently stirred up a revolt and led the 4,000 men of the assassins out into the wilderness? No.

Paul says, I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. And he says, I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.

Paul's begging. Again, Paul's got nothing to prove. Paul doesn't need to make a defense before this people who tried to kill him. they're shouting away with you, away with this guy, Paul.

[ 21 : 56 ] Paul could have said, well, stuff you guys. I'm not making a defense to you. I'm not even giving you the gospel. Paul doesn't owe them anything. Yet he's standing here to the tribune saying, I beg you, let me speak to them.

Why does he say that? Why does Paul, after getting beat up, dragged, nearly killed, falsely accused, why does Paul say, I beg you, let me speak to them?

Why does Jesus on the cross say, forgive them, for they know not what they do? Why does Jesus, looking to Jerusalem, weep over Jerusalem? You see, Romans 9, Paul says, he, you know, he loves his people.

Let me read from Romans 9 so that you get an idea of Paul's heart. And it's likely that Paul has already written Romans at this point. Paul says, I'm speaking the truth in Christ.

I'm not lying, my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit. I have great sorrow, unceasing anguish in my heart, for I could wish that I myself were accursed, cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, they are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

[ 23 : 25 ] To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. Paul's heart is for his fellow kinsmen, the Jews.

Even when they're beating up, even when they're dragging him out of the city, even when they're trying to kill him, Paul's heart is for the Jews. Everywhere he goes, to the Jew first. He didn't need to justify himself to these ignorant Jews who were falsely accusing him.

He didn't need to give a defense or even the gospel, but he does. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people. And so the tribune gives him permission. Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hands to the people, and there was a great hush, a great hush, and he addressed him in the Hebrew language, saying, brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.

And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. See how Paul is accommodating himself to people. To the Jews, I become like a Jew.

Paul being gentle. 1 Peter 3 says that you should always be ready to give a reason for the hope that's within you. Do so with gentleness and respect. Paul's doing this.

[ 24 : 45 ] He accommodates them all the way through. What gentleness and grace after the way that they had just treated him. You see many people being treated like that with just shout and curse, swear.

Paul says, I am a Jew. Now notice as we go through his defense, how many times he relates to them, how many times he identifies with them. I'm one of you guys. I am a Jew, born in Tarsus and Cilicia, but brought up in this city, in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is my home, educated at the feet of Gamaliel. He's no small figure in Judaism. He was well known.

In fact, the only complaint that said that Gamaliel, when Paul was his student, the only complaint that Gamaliel had against Paul was that he had, he didn't have enough books for Paul.

That's what Gamaliel says, I don't have enough books for this young man who's just devouring everything, studying. Brought up in Jerusalem, his home, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are to this day.

[ 26 : 00 ] I persecuted the way. That's what Paul says, see this thing? I persecuted this way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.

The high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. If you want to know who I am, go and ask them, because from them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed towards Damascus to take those also who were with there, bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

As I was on my way, I drew near to Damascus about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

And I answered, who are you, Lord? And he said to me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting. Now those who were with me saw the light but didn't understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

And I said, what shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said, rise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do. Since I couldn't see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me.

[ 27 : 12 ] Ask them. And I came into Damascus, and one Ananias, again see how he accommodates them, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there.

He came to me, and standing by me, said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight. And at that very hour I received my sight, and saw him. And he said, the God of our fathers, the God of our fathers appointed you to know his will and to see the righteous one.

The Jews would have known who the righteous one was. To hear a voice from his mouth, for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. And then Paul says, when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple. See, even post conversion, Paul seeing the righteous one becoming a Christian, he's saying, I'm still a Jew.

I came to Jerusalem, I went to the temple, I was praying in the temple, I'm not against this place. I fell into a trance, verse 18, and I saw him, that is Jesus saying to me, make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.

[ 28 : 32 ] Paul tried to reason with Jesus, and he said, Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another, I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. When the blood of Stephen, your witness, was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.

And he said to me, go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles. up to this word they listened.

This word, what word? Gentiles. All that testimony, they listened up to that one word, the last word of his whole testimony, Gentiles.

Then they raised their voices and said, away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live. Because of that one word.

Away with him from the earth, he should not be allowed to live. You see, John 19, Luke 23, away with him, they said to Jesus. We see the hatred that comes from darkness.

[ 29 : 39 ] These people, like that Deuteronomy passage in chapter 30, Moses says, I put before you life and death. Choose life. But we see what they did to Jesus, what they did to Stephen, what they're saying about Paul.

These people are not for life. These people are on the side of death. They were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, flinging dust into the air.

The tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging. To find out why they were shouting against him like this. When they stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?

When the centurion heard us, he went to the tribune and said, what are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen. The tribune came and said to him, tell me, are you a Roman citizen?

And he said, yes. The tribune said, I bought this citizenship for a large sum. Paul said, but I'm a citizen by birth. And so those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately.

[ 30 : 53 ] The tribune was also afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him. Now, the tribune we later learn in chapter 23 is Claudius Lysias.

Now, a tribune is no small figure. He wouldn't be afraid easy. But yet, such was the seriousness of what they were doing to Paul and what they were about to do, that he was afraid.

Now, on the one hand, under Roman law, Romans had more protection and rights as citizens, so it was illegal, illegal in Roman law to scourge an untried Roman.

It was illegal. In fact, you could be punished yourself for doing such a thing against a Roman citizen. That's the benefit of being part of the empire. But on the other hand, and here's what's important, it was just as serious a crime to claim citizenship when you didn't have citizenship.

So when he says, tell me, are you really a Roman citizen? Because if you're not, then you're for it. But if you are, then you get the benefits of being part of the empire. Such was the seriousness of this.

[ 32 : 09 ] But you see, the thing is, it's not just a parallel of the riot at Ephesus, it's a parallel of the rejection of Christ. Now, throughout this whole thing, I've got a question.

What does it mean to be Christ-like? Now, just think for a moment in your head. Think, who do you know who is like Christ? Just think for a moment, a name will come to your head, a person, who do you know who is like Christ?

And you'll probably be thinking of someone who is loving, someone who is kind, someone who is gracious and merciful, someone who is compassionate. I don't know what things you'll be thinking, but I wonder if any of you will think, yeah, that person who suffered and was beat up and died, they're like Christ.

That person who was about to be scourged, the person who was thrown in prison, beat up unjustly, they're like Christ. Maybe you are, maybe you're not.



But it's funny because we talk about being like Christ. You see, what God is doing with Christians is conforming them into the image of Christ. What does it mean to be like Christ?

[ 33 : 23 ] This is what it means to be like Christ. You see, all the way throughout, Paul is replaying the trial and death of Jesus. You notice that he's accused falsely by the Jews.

The Jews are shouting to him, away with him, just like they did with Jesus. They're accusing him of being against Moses and the law and the people and the temple, just like they did with Jesus.

They're delivering Paul over to the Gentiles, just like they did with Jesus. The Gentiles, the Romans, are taking him in and out, just like they did with Jesus, trying to figure it out. The Romans are about to scourge him like they did with Jesus, by way of inquiry.

But at every turn, the Romans are protecting him. The Romans are holding him. The Romans are trying to show that there's nothing deserving of death. And Paul, we'll get to that in the following chapters.

He is replaying the rejection of Jesus. Now, Paul learned this. Paul learned this in his own conversion. Why are you persecuting me?

[ 34 : 34 ] Paul's like, I'm not persecuting you. Yes, you are. Why are they persecuting Paul? They're persecuting Jesus through Paul. Four quick points. Number one, throughout this whole scene, at the start, we see Paul, who was the brother who submits humbly.

Paul is the brother who submits humbly. You see, Philippians 2, like Christ, you know that, who didn't grasp a colleague with God as something to be held on to. But he humbled himself, sacrificially accommodating us out of obedience.

Well, likewise, Paul didn't cling to his authority or stance as an apostle, but he submitted to the elders in Jerusalem. Not even the apostles. Paul didn't say, well, I'm an apostle.

You can't tell me what to do. Paul submitted sacrificially out of his own pocket, paying for these other Jews to the elders. He didn't need to submit.

Given the admission that the elders knew that the rumors were false, he didn't need to prove anything. So why should Paul placate these Jewish Christians who are mistaken about him, who have been listening to rumors, gossip?

[ 35 : 46 ] Why should he do that? He doesn't need to prove himself. These Jews, these Jewish Christians, should get a hold of Galatians or Romans and learn something before they accuse Paul.

Paul doesn't need to do that, but he submits to the requests of the elders. Paul's a brother who humbly submits. He submits to the elders willingly, because to the Jews he became like a Jew, in order that he might win some.

To those under the law, he became as one under the law, though himself not being under the law, that he might win those that are under the law. When we make compromises, we make compromises based on our rights.

We don't compromise the truth, but where we have rights, we don't need to enact those rights if it's for the benefit of a brother or sister or for the church. Paul wants unity and peace in the church, and he says, you know what?

My rights can take a back seat if it means unity in the church. Humility is the way of Christ. Paul was being like Christ by being humble here.

[ 36 : 52 ] Humility is the way of Christ in laying aside our rights for others. Yet when it comes to the truth, we must never compromise, and Paul never compromises on the truth.

Number two, Paul is the servant who suffers unjustly. Again, what is it to be like Christ? Paul says in Philippians 3 that although he was as Jewish and zealous and blameless as they come, Paul counted all things lost for the sake of Christ.

And he says, this is why, only that I may know Christ, that I may share in his sufferings, and watch this, become like him in his death. We don't often think of being Christ-like as becoming like him in his death, but Paul becomes like his master, the suffering servant.

Peter says in his letter that it's blessed to suffer for righteousness' sake. Paul's not suffering for doing anything wrong. He's suffering for doing what is right. And when we suffer, we shouldn't be surprised at the hatred towards the message or the ministry of the Lord.

For as they hated the master, so they will hate the servant. And Paul is experiencing what he himself learned, that they're persecuting not him, but Jesus through him.

[ 38 : 07 ] Those who love the darkness will always persecute the light. And if we want to be people of light, then that will include us. They persecute Jesus through persecuting us.

And it's their hatred of light, that's why. Why are they persecuting Christians? It's their hatred of light and hatred of Jesus. You see, to suffer for Christ and for the gospel is to become like Christ.

Take heart when this happens. Take heart when you suffer for Christ, for in doing so, you are becoming like him. You are following your master. And so as you share in his sufferings, so you will share in his glory.

Third point, Paul is the Jew who testifies truthfully. Even the Jewish Christians are listening to rumours. And the Jews from Asia are falsely testifying against Paul.

Out of all these Jews who say Paul's against the law, they're breaking the law. Paul's the only one that's keeping the law. Paul is purifying himself and Paul's telling the truth.

[ 39 : 11 ] And these Jews who say Paul's against the law, they themselves are breaking the law. It's a great, terrible contrast. Paul's the only Jew in this account.

He's the only Jew who's testifying truthfully in his testimony. They're breaking the law. They're abandoning Moses by testifying falsely and by doing what they're doing.

Paul not only testifies to the truth, but he gives his own testimony. We can all do that. This is like what we were saying earlier. Don't speak about the things that you don't know, but the things that you do know, speak about them.

Share your testimony. You see, the way that Paul tells his testimony as well, we'll learn this three times in Acts, Paul's testimony. When it happened, Acts 9, when Paul tells it here in verse, chapter 22, and then later on when he's before the rulers, he tells his testimony again.

Every single time it's slightly different. Does that mean Paul contradicts himself? It means that Paul always accommodates himself to the people that he's speaking to. And so when you tell your testimony, think about the things that are relevant to the people that you're talking to.

[ 40 : 21 ] Tell your testimony. Be brief. Be respectful. Be contextual. But here's the thing to remember. See, when you do tell your testimony and you testify of the truth, don't be surprised.

Even when the best testimony falls on deaf ears, don't be surprised. Finally, point number four, the Roman who is treated legally.

Paul is the Roman who is treated legally. And ironically, while the Jews accuse Paul of teaching against the law, the only ones who treat Paul legally are the Romans.

What does that say about these Jews here? The only one who treats Paul legally are the Romans. You see, the Romans in this account are more faithful to their law than the Jews are to the law of God.

The Jews won't listen. Yet Paul is vindicated as neither a menace to Judaism and nor a menace to Rome. In respect to the Romans, near mistake, when you are charged, if ever you are charged with breaking the law, you are well justified to hold the judges to uphold that same law.

[ 41 : 38 ] Whenever the church is charged with anything, we have every right and we are justified to hold those who charge us to uphold the law themselves.

Have we not experienced that in this country? Have we not experienced our rulers bearing down on the church in illegal ways they themselves not upholding that law?

They're expecting us to abide by the law, but they don't abide by the law themselves. You're in your right to say, listen, here is the law. Paul says that. Are you going to beat someone who's a Roman citizen?

And the point is, we don't need to suffer unnecessarily. Paul doesn't need to suffer at the hand of the Jews, illegally and unnecessarily. But it's sad. saddest thing about this whole account is in this whole account, the Romans are the only ones that abide by the law.

The Jews themselves don't even abide by the law of God. The Romans are about the only one as well that treat Paul with respect, and that is including the church as well.

[ 42 : 49 ] That's including the many thousand Jewish Christians who were listening to rumors. So don't be afraid to use the systems that God put in place. Paul spoke about this, didn't he, in Romans?

Paul says, submit to the authorities, to the government. They are meant and given by God as a terror to evil, not to good. Use them.

God has put them in place, and when you see this happening, you see the justice of God come into play. But whatever the case, in the end, trust God. God for the outcome.

Paul was trusting God. Paul says, I'll go to Jerusalem. Even if it means that I get beat up, even if it means I die for the sake of Christ, I'll go to Jerusalem. But we'll find out, as Gene said, Paul trusts God for the end, and we know that this is not the end.

Paul's the brother who submits humbly. He's the servant who suffers unjustly. He's the Jew who testifies truthfully, and he's the Roman who's treated legally. Folks, this is what it means to be like.

[ 43 : 53 ] Christ. To submit humbly. To sometimes suffer unjustly. To always testify truthfully. And to trust God when it comes to the law and how we're charged in the end.

For God is just, and justice will come in the end. Let me pray. God, our Heavenly Father, we thank you that we were able to go through this large section.

Please help us by your spirit to remember, to be edified, to be encouraged and exhorted, and even challenged by the truths that are in your word. God, we thank you for Paul, a faithful servant.

We thank you for his example to us. We thank you that his example shows us what it is to be Christ-like. Help us, God. Help us to always remain humble.

Help us in our submission. Help us in our service to serve and even suffer with dignity, even if we suffer unjustly.

[ 45 : 01 ] Help us to trust you. Help us to respond like Christ would. God, would you help us by your spirit to always testify truthfully. Help us to be on the side of truth and never bear false witness, but even have the confidence and strength to tell our own testimony, the things of which we know.

And God, help us to trust you when it comes to legal matters, that we would uphold the law ourselves, that we would challenge others to uphold the law, and in the end, God, we would trust you for the outcome.

For God, you are sovereign, and we thank you that even in these things that we follow Christ, that we would become more like him, even in his death. For then, by all means possible, we would attain the resurrection of the dead.

We thank you for Jesus. In his name we pray.