

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 30TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

FALSE ACCUSATIONS (ACTS 21:26–29)

“ANNOUNCING THE COMPLETION”

Paul's participation in the Nazarite vow with the four young men was meant to dispel any rumors about him being in opposition to Believers participating in Jewish laws and customs.

- However, near the end of the purification days and right before the sacrifice was offered, a group of Jews from Asia Minor was enraged when they saw Paul in the temple.

“SAW HIM IN THE TEMPLE”

The Jews traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. When they entered the temple, they became furious at the sight of Paul.

- These were not Christian Jews but, most likely, Jews from Ephesus who had opposed Paul and his message along his missionary journey and had previously come close to having him killed.

“DEFILED THIS HOLY PLACE”

A mob formed and seized Paul as they convinced the crowds that he taught against the Jews, their law, and their temple. They also **claimed that Paul had taken Trophimus, a Gentile convert, into the temple with him.**

- The false accusations against Paul were very similar to the ones made against Stephen, when Paul presided over his execution (Acts 6:13).

WHO IS TROPHIMUS?

Trophimus was one of Paul's traveling companions on his third missionary journey, accompanying Paul through Macedonia, back into Asia Minor, and eventually into Jerusalem.

- He traveled with Paul, even after his first imprisonment, until he became ill and stayed in Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20).

“THEY SUPPOSED...” (V. 29)

Luke tells us that Paul did not take Trophimus into the temple with him, but they wrongly assumed he had since he was with a group of men and Trophimus was seen with him earlier in the city.

- The gospel will cause offense and break down barriers, but **we must be careful not to be the cause of offense or break down barriers in a way that is not honoring to God.**

BOUND (ACTS 21:30–36)

“AT ONCE THE GATES WERE SHUT”

Luke mentions the gates being shut when the mob dragged Paul out. An interesting fact is that this is the last time we hear about the temple mount in the book of Acts.

- The scene unfolding is now the **sixth riot incited because of Paul** (Lystra in 14:19, Philippi in 16:22, Thessalonica in 17:5, Berea in 17:13, and Ephesus in 19:29).

“AS THEY WERE TRYING TO KILL HIM”

They were trying to beat Paul to death right there in the outer courtyard of the temple.

- The Antonia Fortress at the corner of the temple mount would have had up to 1,000 Roman soldiers stationed there to ensure public order. Word of the disruption made its way to them, so **they arrested Paul to remove the cause of the uproar.**

“TOOK HIM INTO CUSTODY”

Paul was bound with chains to a soldier on either side, fulfilling the prophecy from Agabus (Acts 21:11).

- **The troops asked who he was and what he had done** to garner such hatred from the Jewish people. Luke doesn't tell us if Paul responded at this point, but God would soon provide the opportunity (21:40).

“Because of the uproar” and “some in the crowd...shouting one thing and some another,” the commander ordered Paul “**to be taken into the barracks.**”

- The barracks in the Antonia Fortress, where Paul was brought, are most likely **the same place where Jesus was brought for trial before being crucified.**

“WHEN PAUL GOT TO THE STEPS”

The angry mob crying out for Paul's death may have reminded him of the time he was part of the angry mob that stoned Stephen to death, even “**agree[ing] with putting him to death**” (Acts 7:54–8:1).

- The mob would not give up so easily and tried to continue attacking Paul, so the soldiers had to carry Paul up the steps.

“THE MASS OF PEOPLE FOLLOWED”

When the crowds yelled, “**Get rid of him!**”, they did not mean that they wanted Paul removed from the temple, but **they wanted him removed from the earth.**

- Not far from the spot where Paul stood, the shouts of “**Take this man away! Crucify him!**” had rung out against Jesus about 27 years earlier.

PERMITTED TO SPEAK (ACTS 21:37–39)

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

We find out the reason the Roman commander had Paul beaten to the brink of death and chained between two soldiers was because he thought Paul was the Egyptian leader of a revolt.

- Historical writings mention an Egyptian who led an army of 4,000 men, declaring to overthrow Rome on the Mount of Olives. Roman soldiers scattered them, but the leader got away.

SURPRISED

The Roman commander was surprised that Paul was educated and could speak Greek.

- What is surprising to us is how calm and polite Paul was when he asked for an opportunity to speak. Paul had been severely beaten, his life was still in danger, and he was suspected of being a criminal, yet Paul had one thing on his mind: *Let me preach the gospel!*

“NOW I ASK YOU, LET ME SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE”

Paul's introduction of himself confirmed he was not the suspected terrorist but was a citizen of Tarsus. Paul had not yet informed the commander he was a Roman citizen—that would come up later.

- Paul would prepare to give a defense of himself and his ministry to the ones who were responsible for beating him.

THE GOSPEL...

- The gospel will divide, but we are not to be the cause of division (Luke 12:51–53).
- The gospel will offend, but we are not to be the cause of offense.
- The gospel will convict, but we are not the Holy Spirit (John 16:8).
- The gospel will break down spiritual, social, and economic barriers.