

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 30TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

LIES (ACTS 21:26-29) THE NEXT DAY

The day after Paul was encouraged to connect with the four men who were completing their Nazarite vows, he did just that. It's important to note that Paul was joining them but was not implying that he had started when they did.

- Paul was going to help them complete their vows and would walk alongside them in the final process.

IN THE TEMPLE

They entered the temple together, and Paul declared that he would be with them and help them fulfill their vows through purification and sacrifice.

- When ceremonies and rituals were urged as necessary to salvation, Paul opposed them. In all other cases, he made no opposition to them and was willing to comply in order to make the gospel known.

A FAILED PLAN?

Paul had made it clear to everyone that he didn't oppose the law.

- Still, some men from outside Jerusalem came to stir up the crowd against him.
- The plan of compromise didn't work.
- James may have had compromise on his mind, but Paul was a man of obedience and opportunity.
- **Being obedient and faithful to opportunities doesn't guarantee the outcome we expect.**

"THIS IS THE MAN"

Paul wasn't being judged by his actions in the temple or even his mission in Asia.

- The instigators pointed out Paul as the one they had already been telling lies about.
- The lies and gossip had been growing in Jerusalem for months, and now these liars were able to point directly to the object of their anger.
- **Liars and gossips will plant seeds of deceit, then add water and fertilizer until they see fruit ripe for picking.**

THEY SUPPOSED

Just to add fuel to the fire, they accused Paul of defiling the temple by bringing a Gentile (Greek) into an area reserved for priests alone.

- Luke says they had seen Paul with Trophimus in the city, and they, along with the crowd, assumed that Trophimus had somehow entered the temple.
- There is NO evidence that Paul escorted him into the temple. The very fact that Paul was there observing a ceremony reveals his respect for their customs.
- The instigators' goal wasn't truth; it was chaos.

CHAOS (ACTS 21:30-32)

"THE WHOLE CITY WAS STIRRED UP"

In a very short amount of time, the whole city was stirred up. Much like in Ephesus, an angry mob was easily formed with most not knowing the full story.

- In an effort to move fast on an opportunity to eliminate Paul, the crowd dragged him out of the temple and shut the gates. Now, they were ready to repeat the "justice" given to Stephen over 20 years before.

ALL OF JERUSALEM

We remember that Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost.

Although it was not as big as Passover, there still would have been many extra people in the city.

- With the size and intention of the mob, it drew the attention of the Roman commander responsible for keeping peace in Jerusalem.

"THEY STOPPED BEATING PAUL"

We soon realize that they weren't just trying to organize a killing; they were actively beating Paul for the purpose of ending his influence.

- The sight of the Roman commander, possibly with hundreds of soldiers, put an end to the beating.
- Paul was saved from the beating, but there was still the prophecy of Agabus.

VOICES (ACTS 21:33-39) "BOUND WITH TWO CHAINS"

With the mob under control, the commander approached Paul and took him into custody.

- The prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled, but the extent was unknown. This would be the end of Paul's freedom to move about and preach the gospel.
- In the remaining chapters, we will continue to see Paul taking every opportunity to testify of Christ while imprisoned.

WHO IS HE AND WHAT HAS HE DONE?

To the credit of the commander, he tried to discover Paul's identity and the charge against him.

- As with most lies and gossip, it was difficult to get a clear answer from the crowd. They weren't sure why, but they were sure Paul deserved what they were doing to him.
- The commander sent Paul to the safety of the barracks as the crowd continued to demand his death.

"AM I ALLOWED TO SAY SOMETHING...?"

It seems that Paul had been silent until now, but he also knew an opportunity when it was right in front of him.

- The commander was shocked that Paul was educated in Greek. He had assumed that Paul was the Egyptian terrorist returning to try and take over Jerusalem.
- **Sometimes communities and authorities rally against what they don't understand.**
- **Thank God for the community we have here!**

"LET ME SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE"

For now, Paul kept his Roman citizenship to himself. He didn't want to appear like a self-preservationist.

- He did claim citizenship of an important city within the Roman empire and requested an opportunity to speak to his accusers.
- **Sometimes, silence is golden. More often than not, we miss opportunities to share or listen to what God has done and is doing all around us.**

CONFIDENCE

- It's good to have confidence.
- **Without it, we can be slaves to fear.**
- **The problem comes when we have confidence in the wrong things. If we stand on lies and gossip and declare them to be true, we become the voice of evil.**

SHORTCUTS

- We like a good, time-saving shortcut.
- **Shortcuts can get us ahead of the competition.**
- **The problem is: we are not in a competition. Lies and gossip are not shortcuts to knowledge, just more lies and chaos. If we are going to tell the truth, we need facts, data, and evidence.**

WISDOM

- We seek wisdom, but it seems rare.
- **Wisdom can only exist as a result of knowledge based on truth and experience.**
- **We may glean some wisdom from others. The question is: are we ready to get our own? Wisdom is only elusive because we don't seek it. We start with the Truth (Jesus), read His Word, apply it, experience His plan, and recognize His hand. When our confidence is in Him, we won't take shortcuts, and we will do whatever it takes to know Him more. How well are we processing all He has done?**