

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 67 ACTS 21:15-29

ACTS 21:15-25 | PAUL ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM

- Verses 15-17 - So far, so good! They are welcomed with gladness by **the brethren** of Jerusalem.
- Verses 18-19 –
 - Paul is clearly speaking of his ministry of grace, explaining the results to the Jerusalem leaders.
 - Earlier he had explained the substance of the ministry, and they had “added nothing” to his message (Gal. 2:6).
- Verse 20 –
 - This verse demands an overlap of the Kingdom Gospel and the Grace (Pauline) Gospel. There were **thousands of Jews...which believe**.
 - What did they believe? That Jesus was the coming Messiah.
 - What did they do? They were **zealous of the law**.
 - This is (by almost every account) *long after* the book of Galatians.
 - One must either conclude that these Jews were stubbornly resistant to the Gospel of Grace (and thus duplicitous in their glad reception of v. 17) *or* there is an overlap of Gospels in which the Kingdom Gospel of law-abiding is still in effect for the Jewish nation, while Paul taught the grace Gospel to the gentiles. If there is no overlap, these Jews should be summarily chastised for continuing to insist on law-obedience.
- Verses 21-22 -
 - The response of the Jews (and Paul's later response to them) also speaks clearly about the issue of whether a law-based Kingdom righteousness was still being proclaimed (approx. 60AD).
 - The information that some believing Jews had (not all, as we can see by the use of the pronoun **they** rather than *we*) was that Paul was teaching **the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses**.
 - The manner of the question in verses 21-22 displays that they *assume* that Paul is *not teaching* the Jews to forsake circumcision nor **the customs**.
- Verses 23-24 –
 - Since the journey began so that Paul could complete his vow (Acts 18:18), the group says that there are four others among them that have such a vow. The Jewish elders want Paul to join them in a “photo op” to prove that he was not anti-Law for the Jewish people.
 - If this photo op was all a ruse, Paul would certainly forsake the plan boldly and quickly. If, however, it accurately communicated to the masses what Paul was teaching, then he would accept it.
- Verse 25 –
 - This verse seals the truth that the Gentiles were given a Gospel of grace, free from the law of Moses, and the Jews were continuing in the Gospel of the Kingdom. This is a reminder of the Jerusalem conference, and was made clear in Galatians 2:7.
 - It frankly baffles the imagination how nearly all of Christendom rejects this truth, holding rather to a “one gospel for all time” position.

- In truth, the Grace gospel is the only gospel that saves, will save, or has ever saved an individual “by grace through faith and not of works.”
- However, there were other gospels (of the Kingdom, for example) that led a person to right-standing with God so that they could be ushered into His Kingdom and thus receive “salvation.”
- The confusion comes because the Kingdom Gospel (or its previous “law Gospel”) is not in effect today.
- The confused church teaches that the Pauline Gospel (preached today) has always been preached. There is simply no spiritual support for such a claim.

ACTS 21:26-36 | PAUL IS ARRESTED IN JERUSALEM

- Verse 26 –
 - Paul has no qualms about giving this “show” of his Judaism, for this is what he had come to Jerusalem for in the first place.
 - Note that they **entered the temple**, which in itself required adherence to Judaism.
 - What kind of **offering should be offered for every one of them?**
 - If this is (as we suspect) a Nazarite vow, the offering is described in Numbers 6:13-20, then this offering clearly involves providing a lamb as a sin offering (Num. 6:14).
 - There is *nothing* about this act that is in accordance with the Gospel of grace. Nothing.
 - One can *only* conclude that either Paul is totally compromising and duplicitous, making a show in order to save his skin, OR that he, as a Jew, is still adhering to the Law as part of the Kingdom Gospel, which is totally separate from the Grace Gospel.
- Verses 27-28 –
 - The **seven days** were part of the Nazarite vow (Num. 6:9).
 - The crowd was **stirred up by the Jews which were of Asia**, possibly from Ephesus.
 - Notice the charge of which they accuse Paul: that he teaches **all men every where** things which are **against the people** (i.e., the Jews), **and the law, and this place** (the temple), and that, by bringing **Greeks also into the temple** that he had desecrated it.
 - One who has studied Paul’s teachings and practices would know that every one of these charges was patently false.
 - The Jews charging him had *mixed in* Paul’s message of grace to the gentiles, assuming that was his *only* message.
 - One should note that this is the same position of most Bible teachers today, and remains an incorrect position. In fact, if these things are true, then Paul is guilty of everything accused and should undergo the Jewish punishment.
- Verse 29 –
 - Luke gives some background to the charge that he had brought **Greeks also into the temple** (v. 28), by explaining that **they supposed** that Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple.
 - Notice that *the charge is false*.