

I. PAUL MEETS THE BRETHREN

- A. He had journeyed from Miletus to Jerusalem
  - 1. He had been caught up in the riots in Ephesus
    - a. Where the silversmiths were worried about their sales
    - b. If everyone gets saved, no one will buy idols of Diana!
    - c. And they caused an uproar
  - 2. He went to Greece (and the Jews followed him to lay in wait)
    - a. Wanted to go to Syria, but purposed to return through Macedonia
    - b. Some good brethren went ahead to Troas
    - c. Paul left Philippi and joined them there
  - 3. Eutychus fell from the third loft but God restored him to life
  - 4. He went to Miletus and called for the Ephesian elders
    - a. And he wept on their necks
    - b. He loved that church and prayed for that church
  - 5. He had been warned many times of what waited for him at Jerusalem
    - a. He knew the religious Jews were after him
    - b. He knew had been warned of capture, beating, and bondage
    - c. He had a MISSION to fulfill!
    - d. ACTS 20:24 – “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”
- B. He reports to the brethren at Jerusalem what GOD had done (vs. 19)
  - 1. They were glad to see him (vs. 17), he made his salutation (vs. 18)
    - a. But then they got down to the business at hand
    - b. The PREACHING of the Gospel to the lost!
    - c. The GLORY to God for what He has done!
  - 2. And that is exactly what they did (vs. 20) in response!
  - 3. SHAME on us when we cannot say Amen to what God has done
    - a. Shocking: God can use people we don't like
    - b. Not anti-Bible heretics, but even some who we find objectionable
    - c. We must remember that we are ALSO sinners
- C. It should be a great time of fellowship when we meet the brethren
  - 1. There aren't enough real Christians in the world for us to be insular
    - a. I don't have to approve of a non-Baptist church to enjoy a spiritual conversation with one of their members
    - b. I am NOT for dipping our colors! I am NOT for compromise!
      - i. It is WRONG to nod when someone praises a heretic
      - ii. Health and prosperity, Pentecostalism, Mormonism...

- iii. It is ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY to praise God when someone tells how God truly worked in their lives...
    - iv. Brought them through some deep loss or trial...
    - c. I don't agree with him entirely, but if Kirk Cameron got Saved?
    - d. Shouldn't we be able to praise God for that?
  - 2. It should be a great time when we visit a church on a trip
    - a. How many times have I gone to church in another city
    - b. And been BLESSED to meet people who love the Lord
    - c. I may never see them again here on Earth, but one day!
  - 3. I've also heard about churches that allow rumors, gossip, and tattling
    - a. To the point where some no longer feel welcome among them
    - b. No one knows the real reason, but suddenly everyone is closed off
    - c. PROV. 18:13 – "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."
- D. The elders talk Paul into making a bargain to appease his enemies

## II. PAUL MAKES A BARGAIN

- A. They warn Paul about the religious zealots who seek his life (vs. 20-22)
  - 1. "People will hear about it" – we need to get out in front of this issue...
    - a. Political maneuvering has no place in the ministry (my opinion)
    - b. God had protected Paul so far, why not trust Him a little longer?
  - 2. NATURALLY the religious are zealous of the law (vs. 20)
    - a. What else do they have to hold on to?
    - b. They believe their circumcision or baptism will save them!
    - c. TIT. 3:5 – "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
    - d. EPH. 2:8-9 – "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast."
  - 3. There are just as many legalists in Christendom today!
    - a. Let there be no DOUBT as to Paul's soteriology (Salvation)
    - b. He preached salvation by GRACE ALONE
- B. There were going to be Jews from every nation there at Pentecost
  - 1. And they would bring word of Paul, spread the lies, spread the rumors
  - 2. He had been one step ahead of them for years!
    - a. We see it in ACTS 20:3 – "And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia."
    - b. But also all the way back years earlier
    - c. ACTS 17:13 – "But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people."

3. Offenders have LONG memories!
  - a. But SO DOES GOD! Trust Him to repay what is owed.
  - b. LUKE 17:1 – “Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!”
- C. The elders put pressure on Paul to “appease” the religious crowd (vs. 23-24)
  1. Never apologize for telling the truth – be kind, but be steadfast!
    - a. We don’t have to say everything that goes through our mind
    - b. But we DO need to rebuke sin, confront lies, and preach Jesus!
    - c. How many politicians refuse to pray “in Jesus name?”
    - d. MATT. 21:22 – “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”
  2. We should be BOLD – MATT. 10:16 – “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”
  3. By following this advice, Paul puts himself back under Jewish Law
    - a. We are free from the Law
    - b. The LAW is our schoolmaster – it teaches us the NEED for Grace!
    - c. COL. 2:14-16 – “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (15) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (16) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:”
    - d. But the carefully derived plot fails to make the wicked love them

### III. PAUL SUFFERS A BEATING

- A. After 7 days, word gets around among those that hate him (vs. 27)
  1. One tells another, and then another, and soon it all blows up
  2. They take him – “lays hands on him”
    - a. They cry for everyone to come “help” (vs. 28)
    - b. They LIE about what him and his ministry
    - c. They HAVE NO EVIDENCE (didn’t know what they saw – vs. 29)
  3. They accuse him of teaching against the Law (he didn’t!)
  4. They accuse him of bringing Gentiles into the Temple (he didn’t)
- B. He is BEATEN (vs. 30-32) by the angry mob
  1. The majority of whom probably had no idea who Paul was
  2. Yet they intended to KILL him (vs. 31)
- C. Do you think that maybe Paul was reminded of another mob?
  1. Perhaps his mind recalled the mob who drew Stephen out of the city
  2. And stoned that godly man while Paul stood by and watched the coats

3. We see the story in ACTS 7:58-60 – “And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. (59) And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (60) And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

#### IV. PAUL TAKEN IN BONDAGE

- A. The captain immediately commands Paul to be bound (2 chains)
  1. One would have been enough but they Romans used two
    - a. Could have been feet and hands
    - b. I couldn't find any significance in it
  2. He certainly was bondman to the Gospel
  3. Perhaps bound both by his burden to the Jew and also to the Greek
- B. Paul was not a wild man, but an educated COMOPOLITAN man (vs. 37-39)
- C. We see:
  1. The Demanding Soldiers (vs. 33)
  2. The Confused Charges (vs. 34)
  3. The Protecting Custody (vs. 35)
  4. The Special Request (vs. 39)
  5. The Commanding Pulpit (vs. 40)

#### V. PAUL FREED FROM (BY) BLOOD

- A. Paul had a DUTY to tell of the ONLY way of Salvation
  1. Jesus said, “I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE...”
  2. He was bound not only by chains but his BURDEN to the lost
  3. Paul truly felt HEB. 2:3 – “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;”
    - a. Noah preached, “Get onboard the Ark!”
    - b. Moses preached, “Look and live!”
    - c. Paul preached, “Turn to JESUS and be SAVED!”
- B. So many suffer from their own PERSONAL beliefs
  1. They have been misinformed by someone else or their own heart
  2. Don't trust your heart, don't follow your heart, it is desperately wicked
    - a. 2 PETER 1:20 – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”
    - b. They rely on what they think rather than what God says
  3. They need to find out from the Word of God (measuring stick vs. eyeball)
- C. Paul is about to use this bully pulpit to preach the Gospel to everyone in earshot!
  1. That is our purpose here today. To tell everyone that Jesus Saves
  2. Be Saved Today!