

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW
Christianity In The Making: From Jerusalem To The South Bay
Acts 21-22

Digging deeper in personal study and reflection.

1. Read Acts 21:27-29. What is significant about the ones stirring up trouble for Paul being from Asia? What are they hoping to accomplish?
2. What is Paul accused of? How does this compare with the charges brought against Stephen 20 years earlier in Acts 6:11-13? What does this say about Jewish-Christian relationships in Jerusalem?
3. Paul was in agreement with the charges against Stephen, but now finds himself as the object of these same kinds of accusations. How do you think this made Paul feel?
4. Twice in this story (Acts 21:28, 38) false rumors have been spread about Paul. Why do you think people were so willing to believe this “fake news”? What does this say to us about how easily we believe certain things to be true, even without proof?
5. In verses 30-36 Paul requests to address the crowd. Why do you think he did this? Why do you think he waited to appeal to his Roman citizenship rather than use it to escape the mob immediately? How might this inform how we face difficult situations?
6. Paul’s speech is a retelling of his own story. He recalls the events of Acts 9. Read that chapter and compare it to how Paul now tells the story from his perspective. What are some of the ways he seeks to identify with those in this hostile crowd? What is he hoping to achieve by this?
7. What part of Paul’s speech triggers the crowd’s negative reaction? Why do you think this particular part of his story caused such hostility? What does this reveal about their prejudice?
8. In Phil. 3:20 Paul states that our citizenship is in heaven. How do you think he reconciled or balanced this with his earthly Roman citizenship?
9. Late in his life, Paul instructs Timothy about living out and proclaiming the gospel in a hostile world. Take time to read 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and 10-17. What warnings does Paul give Timothy? What are some of the ways Paul encourages Timothy to deal with this? How is Scripture an essential element in Timothy’s preparation? What can you learn from this passage as you seek to live faithfully for Jesus?



For discussion with your small group, an accountability partner, your spouse, or for your own reflection.

1. What part of Sunday's message most clearly spoke to you? Why?
2. Why do you think the Jews were so hostile to Paul? Have you ever encountered hostility because of your faith? If not, why do you think you have not experienced this? If so, what were the reasons you were opposed and how did you respond?
3. Paul uses his personal story as a defense of his actions. How might your personal story serve as a platform for explaining the gospel to someone?
4. How do Paul's actions in Acts 21:17-26 and his speech in Acts 22:1-21 address the issue of how the gospel confronts our cultural pride? How do we decide what is culturally acceptable for a believer to engage in? What is the line we can't cross without compromising the gospel?
5. What are some of the ways you can communicate your faith this week in your life context?