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SHOWDOWN IN JERUSALEM

ACTS 21:15-22:30



The future of the gospel was at stake, as powerful forces raged for and against it. On the one hand, the Jewish persecutors were prejudiced and violent. On the other hand, the Romans were open-minded and went out of their way to maintain the standards of law, justice, and order of which their best leaders were understandably proud. Between these two powers, religious and civil, hostile and friendly, Jerusalem and Rome, Paul found himself trapped, unarmed and totally vulnerable. One cannot help admiring his courage and our God who never leaves us nor forsakes us.

MAKING THE GOSPEL THE CENTER (21:15-26)

1. Read Acts 21:15-26. Paul and his companions have been received warmly at Jerusalem. Consider Paul's interaction with James. How far were both men willing to go for the sake of Jewish-Gentile solidarity?
2. What do you think of Paul's response to James's plan to satisfy the Jews regarding their problems with Paul's ministry? How is he promoting the gospel by his actions?
3. How willing are you to compromise on the nonessentials of the Christian faith in order to show solidarity with your brothers and sisters in Christ? What would the nonessentials be?

PAUL ARRESTED (21:27-36)

4. Read Acts 21:27-36. What two accusations are made against Paul by the angry crowd? How are they accurate but ironic?

DEFENDING GOSPEL MINISTRY (21:37-22:30)

5. Read Acts 21:37-22:30. Paul has just been beaten and narrowly escaped being killed by a mob. Soldiers are carrying him into their barracks. Paul is in a vulnerable position. How does he manage to take command of the situation?

6. In 22:1-5, how does Paul establish his credentials with the Jewish crowd?

7. What is it about Paul's speech the crowd appreciated? What did they reject? (See vv. 21-22)

8. The Jews treasured their status as God's people and found it difficult to accept that God was grafting in those from outside their race. Read Romans 11:11-24. How does this shed light on God's call to Paul in Acts 22:21?

9. What is God doing in this text? What is he doing with Paul? What is he doing with the Jews? What is he doing with James? And what does this text have to do with you?