

Acts 21-22 “No, Not Them”
Acts 21:26- Acts 22:22
April 26, 2026

Acts 21-16-40

26 So the next day, Paul took the men, having purified himself along with them, and entered the temple, announcing the completion of the purification days when the offering would be made for each of them. 27 When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd, and seized him, 28 shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place. What’s more, he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

30 The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

31 As they were trying to kill him, word went up to the commander of the regiment that all Jerusalem was in chaos. 32 Taking along soldiers and centurions, he immediately ran down to them. Seeing the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

33 Then the commander approached, took him into custody, and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He asked who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd were shouting one thing and some another. Since he was not able to get reliable information because of the uproar, he ordered him to be taken into the barracks.

35 When Paul got to the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, 36 for the mass of people followed, yelling, “Get rid of him!”

37 As he was about to be brought into the barracks, Paul said to the commander, “Am I allowed to say something to you?”

He replied, “You know how to speak Greek? 38 Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a revolt some time ago and led four thousand men of the Assassins into the wilderness?”

39 Paul said, “I am a Jewish man from Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of an important city. Now I ask you, let me speak to the people.”

40 After he had given permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people. When there was a great hush, he addressed them in Aramaic:

How many of us would be simply grateful to have escaped with our life?

Acts 22:1-5

“Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you.” 2 When they heard that he was addressing them in Aramaic, they became even quieter. 3 He continued, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strictness of our ancestral law. I was zealous for God, just as all of you are today. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, arresting and putting both men and women in jail, 5 as both the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. After I received letters from them to the brothers, I traveled to Damascus to arrest those who were there and bring them to Jerusalem to be punished.

Paul wants to establish common ground saying, “just as all of you.”

Acts 22:6-22

6 “As I was traveling and approaching Damascus, about noon an intense light from heaven suddenly flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’

8 “I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, the one you are persecuting.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light,[b] but they did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

10 “I said, ‘What should I do, Lord?’

“The Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything that you have been assigned to do.’

11 “Since I couldn’t see because of the brightness of the light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and went into Damascus. 12 Someone named Ananias, a devout man according to the law, who had a good reputation with all the Jews living there, 13 came and stood by me and said, ‘Brother Saul, regain your sight.’ And in that very hour I looked up and saw him. 14 And he said, ‘The God of our ancestors has appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the words from his mouth, 15 since you will be a witness for him to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now, why are you delaying? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

17 “After I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance

18 and saw him telling me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’

19 “But I said, ‘Lord, they know that in synagogue after synagogue I had those who believed in you imprisoned and beaten. 20 And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I stood there giving approval[d] and guarding the clothes of those who killed him.’

21 “He said to me, ‘Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

22 They listened to him up to this point. Then they raised their voices, shouting, “Wipe this man off the face of the earth! He should not be allowed to live!”

Betrayal.

“How could you associate with those people?”

Luke 15:25-32

25 “Now his older son was in the field; as he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he summoned one of the servants, questioning what these things meant. 27 ‘Your brother is here,’ he told him, ‘and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

28 “Then he became angry and didn’t want to go in. So his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 But he replied to his father, ‘Look, I have been slaving many years for you, and I have never disobeyed your orders, yet you never gave me a goat so that I could

celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.'

31 "'Son,' he said to him, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.

32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

Can we be elder brother-ish?

"Everything I have is yours."

Life Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you through the Scriptures?
- In Jerusalem, Paul is beaten and taken into Roman custody. How did the Lord prepare Paul for adversity?
- Paul takes a traumatic event and uses it to share his testimony. Why do you think Paul leveraged this moment the way he did?
- Read Paul's story in Acts 22:1-21. How does Paul's story open? What connection is he trying to make? What can we learn about sharing our own story of life change and conversion from Paul?
- The crowd feels betrayed by Paul being sent to the Gentiles? Have you ever felt hurt by a friend switching to another team or becoming friends with someone that had hurt you?
- Read Luke 15:25-32. What is the elder brother upset about? Discuss how his feelings may be justified and in what ways he may be wrong?
- In what ways can we also be "elder brother-ish?" What helps us not become the elder brother?
- How can your Life Group help you apply this passage to your life this week?