

Fact Sheet for “The Mix”
Acts 21:27-40

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Paul had come to Jerusalem knowing that there would be difficulties there.

Revelation to Ananias (Acts 9:15-16)

In Ephesus just before the riot (Acts 19:21)

Later while speaking to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:22-25)

While traveling to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4, 10-13)

When meeting with James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem...

Paul and 4 others take Nazarite vow

^{ESV 27} ¶ **When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,²⁸ crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."**

These were not Jewish Christians. Neither of these charges was true.

²⁹ **For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.**

The crowd accepted these two charges as true. Paul was not in the Holy place as was Zechariah in Luke 1. Paul would have been in the court just outside of the temple.

³¹ **And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.³² He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.**

These soldiers were in the Antonio Fortress that was built by Herod the Great in order to keep the peace.

³³ **Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.³⁷ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd,³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!"**

The steps of the fortress

³⁷ ¶ **As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek?³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"**

"The commander had mistaken Paul for an Egyptian false Messiah who had planned to seize power from the Romans around AD 54"¹ Josephus wrote of this Egyptian in War II, 261-63 and Antiquities XX, 169-172.

³⁹ Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people."

Ah... Paul let the tribune know he was a Roman citizen.

⁴⁰ And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

Literally "in the Hebrew dialect"
Aramaic

Application

Were these tough times for Paul? Yes! Can we learn from them? Absolutely!
Consider what we know to be true here.

1st – Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem even though he knew what awaited him there, and this determination came from the Holy Spirit.

2nd – Paul knew, again by the Holy Spirit, that he would eventually make it to Rome. Jerusalem was not the end of the line.

3rd – Paul was in no way depressed by these events. You get absolutely no sense of this.

4th – Paul saw these events as an opportunity to fulfill his calling from God, and he made use of it.

5th – Paul's letter to the Romans was written just before these events. In that letter is a passage that has given so many Christians so much encouragement (Romans 8:28-32).

Was God working in these events for good? God chose to have these events and Paul's words that follow in the next chapter recorded in the Bible. Remember what Paul would also write (2 Timothy 3:16-17). How did Paul's treatment here fit into this "good"? How did the death of Jonathan, Saul's son? How did Wycliffe's being burnt at the stake? How did Joni Eareckson Tada's paralysis? How do the problems you face?

There is a mix in life... consequences of our choices and God's sovereign plan for us. Can we know which is which? Often not, but we do know that life turns out better for those who live for Christ than it does for those who don't. All of us will experience trouble in life, but God is never out of control. He never has forgotten us. He always has the good for us in mind.

¹ NLT Study Bible notes.