

## Acts Chapter 21 Second Continued

**Acts 21:30 "And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut."**

“Doors were shut”: This was done by the temple guards, since Paul’s death on the temple grounds would defile the temple (2 Kings 11:15). They made no effort however, to rescue the apostle from the crowd, which was intent on beating him to death.

These Jews from Asia had stirred up the city against Paul. It appears that the people captured Paul and took him out of the temple. It is strange how one minute he is a hero, and a few moments later, they want to kill him. No violence could take place in the temple.

**Acts 21:31 "And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar."**

“Chief captain of the band”: The tribune (Claudias Lysias, 23:26), commanding the Roman cohort based in Jerusalem. He was the highest ranking Roman official stationed in Jerusalem (the governor’s official residence was in Caesarea, see note on 8:40).

“Band”: The 1,000 man Roman occupation force. Their headquarters was Fort Antonia, located on a precipice overlooking the temple complex. From that vantage point, Roman sentries spotted the riot and informed their commander.

You could say, mob rule had taken over and they were about to kill Paul without a trial and without the public authorities.

**Acts 21:32 "Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul."**

“Soldiers and centurions”: The use of the plural “centurions” suggests Lysias took at least 200 soldiers with him, since each centurion commanded 100 men.

There are a number of similarities to the affliction of Paul by the people and the affliction of the Lord by the people. These were Paul's own people. They were beating him without a reason. They desired to kill him, as they did the Lord, but they drug him out of the holy place to kill him.

Both the crucifixion of Jesus and this beating of Paul should be a warning to all religious people to make sure of who they come against. You can see the terrible error these religious people made when they crucified Jesus (thinking they were pleasing God), and now making another terrible mistake trying to kill Paul.

Religious conviction must be grounded in truth, or else we will make mistakes too, thinking we are doing right. The only way to know the truth is to study God's Word daily. We see here, that they stopped beating Paul when the civil authorities showed up.

**Acts 21:33 "Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded [him] to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done."**

“Two chains”: Assuming Paul to be guilty of something (since the Jews were so enraged at him), Lysias arrested him. The tribune thought he knew who Paul was (verse 38).

At least, the chief captain saved Paul's life. The chief captain thought he might be a desperate criminal, so he had him bound hand and foot. He says to Paul, tell me who you are and what you have done?

**Acts 21:34 "And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle."**

“Castle”: In Fort Antonia, overlooking the temple grounds.

“The castle” was in the fortress Antonia located in the northwest corner of the temple area. Serving both as a palace and a barracks for Roman soldiers, it provided a tower for observing the affairs within the temple area, and its stairs gave an instant access to the temple court-yard.

The accusers could not agree on what the charges were, so the captain had the soldiers take Paul, bound, into the castle. This multitude was just a mob who wanted to kill someone. Once you get a crowd stirred up like this, they forget why they are doing this; they just want to kill someone.

**Acts 21:35 "And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people."**

This just means that the soldiers carried Paul to keep the people from continuing to beat him.

**Acts 21:36 "For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him."**

“Away with him”: Or, “kill him” (22:22; Luke 23:18; John 19:15).

As I said, this mob (stirred up by the Jews from Asia), really had no idea why they wanted him killed. Now, Paul will speak in defense of himself.

**Acts 21:37 "And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?"**

“Canst thou speak Greek?” Paul’s use of the language of educated people startled Lysias, who assumed his prisoner was an uncultured criminal.

Paul was a learned man and he could speak Greek, as well as Hebrew. When he spoke in Greek to the captain, it surprised the captain. He even asked who spoke.

**Acts 21:38 "Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?"**

“That Egyptian ... Madest an uproar”: Lysias’ question revealed who he (wrongly), assumed Paul was. The Egyptian was a false prophet who, several years earlier, had promised to drive out the Romans. Before he could do so, however, his forces were attacked and routed by Roman troops led by governor Felix.

Though several hundred of his followers were killed or captured, he managed to escape. Lysias assumed he had returned and been captured by the crowd.

“Murderers”: Called “Sicarii,” they were a terrorist group whose Jewish nationalism led them to murder Romans and Jews perceived as sympathetic to Rome. Since they often used the cover of a crowd to stab their victims, Lysias assumed the mob had caught one of their leaders in the act.

This captain feels that Paul must be some desperate person, such as the Egyptian he mentions here. He would never be able to understand that these people were trying to kill him, because of something he preached.

We see here, a preacher of the Word of God. Paul may be chained as far as the world sees, but his message is not chained up. Paul will preach from these steps which lead to prison for him. How many preachers of today would still be confident in our Lord, if they were chained and possibly speaking for the last time?

Paul's speech lets us know that he has peace within. The Holy Spirit had warned him of this very encounter, and he had come to Jerusalem anyway.

**Acts 21:39 "But Paul said, I am a man [which am] a Jew of Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people."**

“Tarsus” (see note on 9:11). Tarsus was an important cultural city, with a university rivaling those at Athens and Alexandria.

Paul is in the hands of this captain. Paul has not been evasive and has answered the captain's questions. He not only tells who he is, but tells him in detail. Paul has already surprised him in that he can speak Greek, and now he tells this captain that he would like permission to speak to these Jews who accuse him.

He probably will give Paul permission out of pure curiosity himself. Who is this man that is so hated of all these people?

**Acts 21:40 "And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto [them] in the Hebrew tongue, saying,"**

We see that this captain has granted this wish of Paul's. Most of these people had not even been informed why they were persecuting Paul. They had just joined a mob. To give Paul license, just means that he allowed Paul to speak.

It does seem strange also, that Paul would encourage this mob, who tried to kill him, to come closer. Paul wants them to hear every word. When he began to speak in Hebrew, a great silence fell on this crowd. They were probably surprised that he was an educated man.

We, in the next lesson, will hear a sermon that will save his life. Possibly one of the most important sermons he has ever given, and one that will change many lives.

### **Acts Chapter 21 Second Continued Questions**

1. In verse 30, the people ran together and did what?
2. Who had stirred up the city against Paul?
3. Why did they drag Paul out of the temple?
4. Verse 31 tells us what they want to do to Paul, what is it?
5. What message was brought to the captain?
6. They were about to kill Paul without what?
7. Who did the captain take and stop the mob?
8. When did the people stop beating Paul?
9. Name at least three similarities between what they were doing to Paul and what the people did to Jesus?
10. Religious conviction must be grounded in what?
11. How can you acquire that?
12. When the chief captain took Paul, what did he command to be done to Paul?
13. What question did the captain ask?
14. What were the people crying out?
15. Why did the captain decide to carry Paul into the castle?
16. What could you call this multitude in one word?

17. Why were the soldiers carrying Paul?
18. What was the multitude crying out?
19. What did Paul ask?
20. Why did it surprise the captain?
21. What question did he ask Paul?
22. Who did the captain think Paul was?
23. How many men had this murderer led out to the wilderness?
24. Paul's speech lets us know that he has \_\_\_\_\_ within.
25. Who did Paul say he was?
26. Where was Paul from?
27. Why do you suppose he grants Paul's request?
28. What did Paul do before he began to speak?
29. What language did he speak in?
30. What effect did this have on the people?