November 7th & 8th, 2026

All Things to All People

For the Sake of the Gospel

Acts 21:17-27

Paul and his companions entered Jerusalem; they had fellowship with the Jewish followers of Christ, bringing a financial offering to the Judean church and testifying of the work of God among the nations through ministry; there they received news of serious concern about his teachings to the Jews and the counsel to take a decision to address it.

Celebration of the Gospel

❖ The followers of Jesus in Jerusalem received Paul and his companions gladly.

Acts 21:17 "When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

↳Paul's purpose for the trip is accomplished.

Romans 15:30-31 "I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, [31]that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints."

❖ Paul goes to see James and the elders.

Acts 21:18 "On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present."

↳The leadership of the church in Jerusalem was well established and led by James and the Elders.

Mark 6:3 "'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him."

Acts 12:17 "But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, 'Tell these things to James and to the brothers.' Then he departed and went to another place."

Acts 15:13 "After they finished speaking, James replied, 'Brothers, listen to me.'"

↳The apostles who led the church with the elders had left to share Christ with the world.

Acts 15:6 "The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter."

❖ Paul testifies about everything that God had accomplished among the Gentiles.

Acts 21:19 "After greeting them, he related one by one the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry."

↳Paul gives a detailed account of his missionary ministry centering on the work of God.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. [6]I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. [7]So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. [8]He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. [9]For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building."

1 Corinthians 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."

❖ The way Paul shares his testimony ensures that the glory was to God.

Acts 21:20a "And when they heard it, they glorified God."

- They acknowledge the hand of God, who does all things.
- They recognize the grace of God in the salvation of the Gentiles and the Jews.

Concerns Regarding the Gospel

❖ Paul's work is recognized among the Gentiles, but also among the Jews who believe.

Acts 21:20b "And they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.'"

- *Acts 19:8 "And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God."*

❖ Paul is informed of the opposition against him among the crowds of those who were in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:20c-22 "... 'They are all zealous for the law. And they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. [22]What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come."

- False reports and misunderstandings had circulated concerning Paul's teaching.
- Paul taught that salvation was obtained through Jesus' redemption and grace, not through circumcision or obedience to the Mosaic Law.
- Yet he never forbade Jewish believers from maintaining their ceremonial and Jewish practices.

Acts 16:3 "Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek."

Galatians 2:3-5 "But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. [4]Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— [5]to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."

Counsel Through the Gospel

❖ Paul is counseled to take part in a purification rite by the elders in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:23-24 "'Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; [24]take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.'"

- This was to show that reports of his hostility toward Jewish customs were unfounded.

❖ Paul is assured that the Gentiles are not part of the customary laws that the Jews are involved in, especially in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:25 "'But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.'"

❖ Paul accepts the counsel, joining the purification rites, sponsoring the expenses of other believers, and giving notice in the temple.

Acts 21:26 "Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them."

- Paul is seeking to demonstrate his conduct as a practicing Jew.
- He knows that justification is by grace and that these practices are not a requirement for the Gentile believers.

1 Corinthians 1:20-23 "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. [21] To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. [22] To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. [23] I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

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