

Small Group Questions: I Love the Church

Acts 21:15-26

1. What was the purpose of Paul's visit to Jerusalem (see 1 Corinthians 16:1-4)?
 - a. Do you think his purpose had anything to do with why Paul was welcomed so warmly (21:17)?
2. Paul was warned three times about upcoming capture and bondage if he continued on to Jerusalem (see Acts 20:22-24). Describe how you have gone ahead with a plan where you knew it might end in disastrous results.
 - a. Why did you continue with the plan despite potential for disaster?
 - b. Why might the prophets and disciples have initially interpreted the warnings from the Holy Spirit differently than Paul did?
3. The journey from Caesarea to Jerusalem was about 64 miles, a two-day journey. Why do you think so many people traveled with Paul?
 - a. Would you have wanted to travel with him? Why or why not?
4. Was Mnason a Gentile or a Jew? Why is this important, and why did Paul want to stop and stay with him (21:16)?
5. In light of biblical historic record, what significance is there with Luke staying at Mnason's home?
6. What other significant disciples were from Cyprus? (Review Acts 4:36 and 13:5.)
7. Who was James and what position did he hold with the Church (21:18)?
 - a. Who was he related to? (Galatians 1:19)
 - b. Was Peter included in this meeting?
8. Luke was present while staying at Mnason's home, and while Paul gave his report in verse 19. This report is similar to what Paul did when he was last in Jerusalem a decade before. How does hearing details from Paul and others help validate Luke's accounts in the New Testament?
9. How might Paul's teachings (like Gal 2:16 or 3:10) have caused some strict Jews to be upset with him and even lead to a misunderstanding?
10. Acts 21:20-21 tells us that thousands of Jews were misinformed about Paul's actions. Were the accusations made against Paul true? Why or why not?
11. Have you ever been misrepresented? What action did you take?
12. Does a Gentile need to keep the Jewish law in order to be saved?
13. Can a Jew keep the law and still be a Christian?
14. Acts 21:22-23 indicates that the elders might have been thinking about Paul's problem for some time and conceived a plan using four men to help Paul's situation. How was this problem solved earlier in the Jerusalem Council in chapter 15?
 - a. Why did these tensions still plague the Jerusalem Christians?
15. What Jewish ritual was Paul being asked to participate in (21:23-24)?
 - a. Is Paul at fault in any way? Could Paul demand his own "rights" and refuse the elders' request?
16. If you had been Paul's friend, what might you have said to Paul when he explained that he was proceeding?

17. What can we learn from Paul's involvement in the Jewish ritual and his willingness to participate?
- Was his participation out of obligation or deep concern for the unity of God's people?
 - Was it okay for Paul, as a Christian, to participate in this ceremony?
 - What was included in the cost of this event? (Numbers 6:13-21)
 - What were the actions required to participate in this event?
18. Is it okay today to be involved in cultural ritual or ceremony (i.e. Stations of the Cross, Ash Wednesday, Coming of Age ceremonies, tailgating, Sunday sports, etc.), if the event does not go against biblical teaching?
- What other cultural rituals or local event rituals can you list that are common to your community?
 - How do these impact your family?
19. Think about today's lifestyle. Where do you draw the line between participation in current trends and standing up for biblical beliefs?
20. What similarity and characteristics do you see between Jesus in Luke 18:31-33 and Paul in Acts 21:13-14? Describe their focused goal of going to Jerusalem.
21. What outcome should you expect in your life as a follower of Jesus Christ? (Philippians 3:7-10, 20-21)
22. Do you live daily as a follower of Jesus or do you take a "day off" from time to time? Explain.

Next Steps:

- I will strive to gather all the facts before jumping to conclusions, and guard my tongue carefully.
- I will strive for a Christian unity that is firmly grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- I will lay down my rights at the foot of the cross—understanding that I must now be careful about demanding my own way.