

A Textual Study of Acts 21-22

By Bob Young

Acts 21

Paul had come to Jerusalem to bring the offering (24:17)

He goes to see James—a recognized leader of Jerusalem church, all the elders were present

Jewish Christians numbered many 1000s (20?), likely there are a large number of elders

Paul and James represent two groups—Gentiles and Jews. They have different perspectives.

This conflict may be reflected in Luther's hesitancy to accept James as a "chief" book.

Paul reports God's work among the Gentiles (19).

Paul desires to be conciliatory—offering, acceptance of James' proposal.

James' concerns: (1) not about way of salvation but about way of discipleship, (2) not about

what Paul taught Gentile converts, but what Paul taught Jews who lived among the Gentile

converts, (3) not about moral law and holiness, but about Jewish customs.

Should Jewish believers continue to observe Jewish cultural (national) practices?

Paul is urged to participate in the vow/cleansing process. He had perhaps done something

similar on a previous visit (Acts 18). He would have been ceremonially unclean after a long

absence from Jerusalem.

Also, the Gentile instructions referenced were cultural.

Both Paul and James display a generous spirit.

BUT....

A problem arises because of a false rumor, based on assumption.

The result is that Paul is arrested, apparently at first for his own protection.

Acts 22

Paul's Speech

His Jewish birth and upbringing, training in the law of the fathers

His zeal for God

The circumstances of his conversion

The ministry of Ananias

His vision, which took place in the very temple he was accused of defiling