

## **Paul Arrested**

Acts 21:18 - 22:29

by Don Falkos

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James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, was concerned the local Jewish believers would be displeased with Paul, who taught Gentile believers it was not necessary to follow the Law of Moses. He asked Paul to take part in a Jewish purification ceremony. Paul agreed. But when he went into the Temple some people grabbed him and started shouting, "This is the man who tells everybody to disobey our Law." They also accused him of taking Gentiles into the Temple, which was not true.

A great riot followed. The mob started beating Paul. But Roman soldiers ran into the crowd to stop them. Paul was arrested and led away as the crowd shouted, "Kill him! Kill him!"

Paul asked for permission to speak to the crowd. He told them how he, who had hunted down believers in Jesus, had become a believer himself when he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. The crowd listened intently until Paul explained, "The Lord sent me far away to the Gentiles!"

That one word – Gentiles – sent the crowd into a frenzy and they again shouted, "Kill him! Kill him!"

Paul was taken into the barracks. The commander ordered him to be whipped and questioned to find out what he had done to provoke such anger from the crowd. But Paul asked, "Is it legal for you to whip a Roman citizen without a trial?"

The Commander said, "My citizenship cost me a lot of money. How did you get yours?"

"I was born with it."

When they heard Paul was a Roman citizen, the soldiers who had been about to interrogate him quickly withdrew. And the commander who had ordered the beating feared for his life.