



Reception & Fellowship At Jerusalem

"And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly" (Acts 21:17).

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"And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. 16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. 17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." (Acts 21:15-26).

Through Paul's dedication, faith, and humility, we can derive principles that are as relevant today as they were in the early Church.

1. Commitment to the Mission of God

"And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present" (Acts 21:18).


Paul's unwavering commitment to the mission entrusted to him by God is evident throughout his ministry. In Acts 21:15-26, we see Paul journeying to Jerusalem despite knowing the dangers that awaited him. His dedication to spreading the Gospel is a testament to his obedience to God's calling.

- ♦ "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there" (Acts 20:22).
- ♦ Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
- ♦ Philippians 3:14: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."
- ♦ Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Paul's commitment should inspire us to remain steadfast in our mission to share the Gospel, regardless of the challenges we may face.

2. Humility and Respect for Tradition

Even though it is not essential to Christian worship, Paul listened to the advice of the brethren when he arrived in Jerusalem, - demonstrating humility and respect for the Jewish traditions by participating in the purification rites (Acts 21:24). This act showed his willingness to be all things to all people to win some for Christ. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am



made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22). This highlights Paul's adaptability and willingness to meet people where they are in order to bring them to Christ. It is a powerful reminder of the lengths we should be willing to go to share the Gospel with others.

- ♦ "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law" (1 Corinthians 9:20).
- ♦ Philippians 2:3: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."
- ♦ 1 Peter 2:17: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
- ♦ Romans 12:10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."

Paul's example teaches us to respect and adapt to the cultural and religious practices of others without compromising our faith.

3. Endurance in the Face of Opposition

Paul faced significant opposition and persecution throughout his ministry, yet he persevered. In Acts 21:27-36, Paul was falsely accused and arrested, but he remained calm and continued to trust in God's plan.

- ♦ "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).
- ♦ James 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
- ♦ 2 Timothy 2:3: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."
- ♦ Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against

you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Paul's endurance encourages us to remain faithful and resilient, even when we encounter adversity in our walk with Christ.

4. The Importance of Community and Accountability

In Acts 21:18-19, Paul reported to James and the elders in Jerusalem, sharing the successes and challenges of his ministry. This act of accountability underscores the importance of community and mutual support among believers.

- ♦ "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17).
- ♦ Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."
- ♦ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."
- ♦ Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Paul's interaction with the church leaders reminds us of the value of being part of a supportive and accountable faith community.

Conclusion:

Beloved, as we reflect on the life and ministry of Paul, let us strive to embody his commitment, humility, endurance, and sense of community. May we be inspired by his example to faithfully serve our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in all that we do.