

ACTS: To the Ends of the Earth

Study 50: For the sake of unity

READ Acts 21:17-26 and **LISTEN** to the [sermon](#) by Pastor Craig.

The Apostle Paul's long hoped for visit to Jerusalem is marred by rumors that seek to undermine his ministry and divide the church. For two years Paul had worked tirelessly to gather a gift from the Gentile churches across Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia, for the Jewish church in Jerusalem, for the purpose of building unity among Jewish and Gentile believers. However, rumors relating to Paul's view of the Law sought to destroy any attempts at unity and cause further polarization.

Big idea: Paul was willing to sacrifice his liberties, without compromising the gospel, at great cost to himself, to protect the unity of the church.

Questions:

1. A. What was the purpose Paul had for going to Jerusalem and who went with him? See 1 Cor 16:1-3; Rom 15:24-27; Acts 24:17.

B. How does the gospel unite Jew and Gentile and how might Paul's purpose in going to Jerusalem display the gospel? See Gal 3:28; Eph 2:14.
2. What place did the Law have in the life of Jews who believe? Were they required to keep the Law (sacrificial or ceremonial) or could they keep it so long as it did not clash with loyalty to Jesus?
3. What had the Jews been told about Paul (v. 21) and how might Paul's teachings (see Gal 2:16 or 3:10) have caused some strict Jews to be upset with him and even have led to a misunderstanding (vv. 20b-21)?

4. How damaging was this rumor towards Paul's ministry and the unity of the church? What do you learn from this?
5. Why do you think the Bible speaks very harshly of those who spread gossip? See Prov 11:9, 16:28; 1 Cor 6:9-10.
6. A. Compare Acts 21:20b-26 with 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. Are Paul's actions and his missionary policy consistent? Explain your answer.

B. What can we learn from Paul's willingness to participate in the Jewish ritual?

C. What do you think was the motivation for Paul's involvement and how might this be governed by the law of Christ and not legalism? See Gal 6:2; Rom 13:10.
7. What difference has this study made to your personal walk with Christ and involvement in the body of Christ at HBC?

STOP AND PRAY:

Praise: *the Lord for uniting both Jew and Gentile into one people under Christ*

Confess: *those times when you have listened to and perpetuated gossip*

Pray: *that you would walk in wisdom and humility in releasing your liberties in love*