

Participant Handout — Acts 21–23

Acts 21 — Arrival in Jerusalem & Paul's Arrest

Chapter Summary

Paul arrives in Jerusalem despite repeated warnings that suffering awaits him. He meets with James and the elders, joins purification rites to promote unity, and is falsely accused of defiling the temple. A violent mob forms, and Roman soldiers intervene, placing Paul under protective custody.

Key Verses

- *"I am ready... to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."* (21:13)
- *The whole city was aroused... they were trying to kill him.* (21:30–31)

Discussion Questions

1. What does Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem teach us about obedience?
2. How does Paul model humility and unity in a tense situation?
3. Where do misunderstandings or false assumptions create conflict in our own communities?

Notes

Acts 22 — Paul's Testimony to the Crowd

Chapter Summary

Paul shares his story: his Jewish upbringing, his persecution of Christians, his encounter with Jesus, and his calling to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. The crowd listens until he mentions Gentiles, then erupts again. Paul avoids illegal flogging by revealing his Roman citizenship.

Key Verses

- *"The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will..."* (22:14)
- *"I will send you far away to the Gentiles."* (22:21)

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you in Paul's testimony?
2. Why does the crowd react so strongly to the mention of Gentiles?
3. How can your own story highlight God's initiative rather than your achievements?

Notes

Acts 23 — Before the Sanhedrin & the Plot Against Paul

Chapter Summary

Paul faces the Jewish council, strategically declares his hope in the resurrection, and divides the room. Jesus appears to him that night, assuring him he will testify in Rome. A group plots to kill Paul, but the plan is uncovered, and Roman authorities transfer him safely to Caesarea.

Key Verses

- *“Take courage... you must testify in Rome also.”* (23:11)
- *The dispute became so violent...* (23:10)

Discussion Questions

1. How does Paul’s declaration about the resurrection shift the entire scene?
2. What does Jesus’ reassurance in verse 11 mean for Paul — and for us?
3. Where have you seen God work through “ordinary means” to guide or protect you?

Notes

Connecting Themes Across Acts 21–23

- Obedience in the face of suffering
- Testimony as mission
- The gospel’s inclusion of the nations
- God’s sovereignty over human plans
- Providence through ordinary people

Personal Reflection

Take a moment this week to reflect on one question: **Where is God inviting you to courageous obedience, even when the path is uncertain?**