



# PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

## Understanding Acts - Chapter 20-21

### Part 12 - Jim Staley 2024

Follow along with me. Let's see what God has to say from here. All right, so just a little context: Paul is coming from Ephesus. Giant uproar there in the theater. He gets run out of town, just like he has in every town, and we now find ourselves after multiple different places.

In **verse 6**, *"**we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.**"* Now, this is important because we're seeing a pattern through the Book of Acts of two major components as we deal with the second half of the Book of Acts, which is all about Paul, whereas the first half of the Book of Acts is all about really Peter.

So what we see is Paul's continual ritual, or habit, of going first into the synagogues, and then he's talking to the Gentiles that are in the synagogues as well. So he always is attending a Shabbat service on the Sabbath, on the seventh day of the week, what today would be Saturday. And he's going into the synagogues. He is expounding on the Scriptures, showing how Yeshua is the Messiah, Jesus is the Christ, and they keep inviting him back.

Now, the next thing to notice that was a constant pattern in Paul's life is the feast days are very important to him. What are the feast days? They are all about the Second Coming and the first coming of Christ. God specifically put these in place, putting the sun, moon, and the stars in the sky. **Genesis, chapter 1, verse 14**, He says, *"**For times and for seasons.**"* And that Hebrew word *seasons* is not spring, summer, winter, and fall. It literally is the Hebrew word *moedim*, which means feast days, the appointed feast days of the Lord.

So He put the sun, moon, and the stars in the sky specifically so we would know exactly when to meet with Him, which would have set us up to fully understand the first and second coming of the Messiah, with the first four feast days out of the seven being all about the first coming of Messiah, where He dies on Passover, is put into the grave during Unleavened Bread, and He rises on First Fruits—coincidentally, right? And then, 50 days later, the Holy Spirit comes down on the day of Pentecost, which is Shavuot. And they've been celebrating that for 1,400 years prior to that, fulfilling every one of those feast days of the Lord of the spring.

The Second Coming of Christ will revolve around the fall feast days of the Lord. And many of you already know this. If you've already watched my feast day calendar information, I've got tons of teachings on that. But if you want to learn more about the Second Coming of Christ, and you're not really familiar with the feast days, text **"FEAST DAY"** to **844-763-9543**, and you'll automatically get a free download that'll give you a cheat sheet over the seven feast days of the Lord. Or you can watch the feast days of the Lord here on this channel.

Okay, all right, so back to the text here. Paul is giving gravity to the feast days by celebrating them and having a strong desire to do that. Nothing of Christ dying on the cross changed God's calendar or His prophetic calendar of His Son coming the first time and the second time. Paul knows that the feast days are interwoven into his DNA—not because he's Jewish; it's because God gave them to His people. So if you consider yourself part of God's people, then these are for you, because they're not Jewish; they are God's. He says, "These are the feast days of the Lord."

All right, so now, here we go in **verse 7**: ***"<sup>7</sup> Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. <sup>8</sup> There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. <sup>9</sup> And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep, and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. <sup>10</sup> But Paul went down, fell on him, embraced him, and said, 'Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.' <sup>11</sup> Now, when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. <sup>12</sup> And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted."***

Okay, so let's talk about this for a little bit. First of all, this is an exciting passage to show from the original Hebraic perspective *when* the first day of the week was that they had, or *when*, I should say, did they have, quote, what we call "church service."

When did the *ecclesia* meet? When did the assembly meet? Was it on Sunday morning, like it is so proclaimed today, that we have church on Sunday today because of this passage—on the first day of the week they met? So everybody knows the first day of the week is Sunday. That's an undebatable fact, right? What is debatable is when did they meet on the first day of the week?

Because if we look at it from a Gregorian, modern-day perspective, we would say the first day of the week is Sunday, and we think of Sunday as the daytime. But in the biblical time period, we know this from Josephus in the first century. He says, agreeing with Genesis and the very first chapter of the Bible, that the days begin at evening, evening to evening. So when the sun sets on Friday night, that begins the seventh day of the week; it ends on Saturday night at sunset. So the Sabbath begins Friday night at sunset and ends Saturday night at sunset. At sunset on Saturday, that began the first day of the week.

This is when Eutychus falls out of the window. It's actually what we would consider Saturday night. How do we know that? Because if it's Sunday night, after 6 p.m., they would have considered that the second day of the week. So we know for a fact, one, the text says that they were meeting on the first day of the week. So we know it's sometime Saturday at sunset to Sunday at sunset. We know that.

How do we know if it's Saturday night or Sunday night? Well, it's very simple. Eutychus falls out of the window at midnight, and it's still considered the first day of the week. If it's midnight and it's considered the first day of the week, it has to be Saturday night. There's no other explanation. So it's very simple, and we know this from the Hebraic context of the first century, that everybody, including Paul, like we see all throughout the Book of Acts, he's going to the synagogue services. He's going to what we call church on Saturday afternoon. That's when they had their synagogue services, where all the unbelieving Jews, all the believing Jews, all the proselytes, the Gentiles that are seeking God, they are meeting together in the synagogue in the afternoon. That lasts for hours and hours and hours—most of the day.

At the end of that synagogue service, then the early disciples and the converts, the Christian converts, would meet together in someone's home that evening to discuss the Torah portion that was discussed by the rabbis earlier in the afternoon. And then they would put their Yeshua bent on it. So the Yeshua movement was started out of the synagogue in the afternoon, and then they would continue their own services that evening.

So all of what would be called the Messianic Jews, or the Messianic believers, those that believed that Yeshua (Jesus) was the Messiah, they would meet on Saturday night. It was on this type of Saturday night. It was on this Saturday night in **Acts chapter 20**, where Paul is preaching a little bit long. Eutychus fell asleep, falls out of the window. Paul, I would imagine, gets a little embarrassed, goes out there, lays hands on him, raises him from the dead. Saturday night, at midnight, is when this happened.

Right off the bat, one of the things that we can dispel in modern Christianity is the idea that Christian churches were meeting on Sunday morning or Sunday in the afternoon, at any time. They just weren't. Sunday was a workday in Jewish culture for a very long time, even after Christ. These were all Jews and just a few Gentiles that were getting saved, and even the Gentiles that were coming in—Sunday was a workday, period, for any of these Jewish believers. The seven days of the week, only six were workdays, and the only day that was the day of rest was Saturday, the seventh day of the week. That's why the next day Paul leaves town, because it's not the Sabbath anymore. It's the first day of the week.

All right, so now that we've kind of beat that whole thing and exposed a lie that has been unintentionally, I believe, spread throughout all of Christianity for ages, we now know when Christians were really meeting in the church. They were meeting Saturday night.

All right, let's continue on. Let's move down to verse—end of **verse 15**—and it says this: ***"15 The next day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would***

***not have to spend time in Asia."*** He got run out of every Asian town, so I can understand that, ***"for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem."***

Why, <sup>16</sup> "If possible, on the day of Pentecost?" Again, ladies and gentlemen, Paul is telling us he just finished Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, which are seven. So it's Passover, then there are seven days of Unleavened Bread. Inside the seven days of Unleavened Bread is the Feast of First Fruits, when Yeshua rose from the dead. And now it's 50 days later, sometime during between First Fruits and Pentecost, which in Hebrew would have been called *Shavuot*, which simply means the Feast of Weeks. He is bypassing Ephesus because he wants to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost. Why? It's commanded in the Torah. That in this time period, every male needed to show up in Jerusalem three times a year: for Passover, for Pentecost, and for the Feast of Tabernacles. This is important to Paul. His value system is built around God's calendar, and our value system should be built around the same calendar and the same value system that Paul had.

What I find interesting as a Bible teacher and student is that when I look at the biblical context in just the book of Acts, much less the entire New Testament, what I find is the style of New Covenant living that the early disciples lived, and the gravity and the weight of the things that they put gravity and weight on are almost nonexistent in Christianity today at large. They put huge emphasis on understanding the Hebrew Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament. Even Paul says to Timothy, *"All scripture is worthy of doctrine, reproof, proof, and correction, the ways of righteousness."* And the only scripture that existed in that time period was what we call the Old Testament; there was no New Testament that existed. So when he says *all scripture*, he meant that, and he meant it as the Old Testament is worthy for doctrine.

We do not believe that today. At large, most denominations do not believe that the Old Testament should be used for doctrine and the ways of correction and righteous living. They don't believe that. And the feast days were *highly*, highly valuable to them. The Sabbath was super important to them—not important in Christianity today.

So could it be? Can I ask a question? Could it be that we don't see the power of God today in large part of what we really should see it? Is it because we're discounting the things that were valuable to the disciples and the early believers, and we've exchanged them for things that are valuable to us, things that can be radically traced right back through the ancient Roman Church, the Roman Catholic Church, which finds its root in paganism? So that's the question that we have.

All right, let's go back to the text. In **verse 17**, ***"<sup>17</sup> From Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup> And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, <sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; <sup>20</sup> how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you and taught you publicly from house to house, <sup>21</sup> testifying to Jews***

**and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**<sup>22</sup>And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem."**

This is going to be a very critical phrase, ladies and gentlemen, our phrase, I should say, in the future. He is **"bound in the spirit to go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup>except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. <sup>24</sup>But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."**

What do we have right here? We've got Paul saying, "Look, I have done nothing but minister to you, bless you guys." And he says, "I'm bound to go to Jerusalem, and even though I know that it's going to end in chains, I don't care. I just don't care."

So, you know what this teaches us? This teaches us, ladies and gentlemen, we should never be motivated by fear. He has prophets coming to him, he's got the Holy Spirit coming to him, saying, "Hey, just want you to know you're going to be in chains. There's going to be beatings. You're going to end up in jail." Paul says, "I don't care. I count it all a loss for Christ. I have nothing to gain in this world." That's what he says.

"That's why he says, 'I'm crucified with Christ,' in Galatians. Nevertheless, it's not I who live, but Christ in me, and whatever I've gained in the flesh, he considers it loss for Christ. It's nothing. Why? Because this gentleman was on the way to arrest and kill Christians in Damascus. He gets blown off his horse by the wind, the breath of God, and light from above, and a massive voice, and he has an encounter with the Holy Spirit like none other, ladies and gentlemen—the personal relationship.

Listen carefully: if you want to know the secret to getting rid of sin in your life, getting rid of greed and all the things that so easily beset us in the flesh, this is your answer—the personal relationship that Paul had with his God. That moment gave him the ability and the strength to put to death the deeds of the flesh. By what? By the Spirit, says the Lord.

So if you struggle in any kind of sin, I can assure you, it goes back to the root of the lack of personal intimacy that you have with God. Because I can almost promise you that if you had a personal, intimate angel show up in your living room, bedroom, wake you up, tap you on the shoulder, and the voice of God comes out of that mouth—you see a burning fire, and He says, 'Take your doggone shoes off; you're standing on holy ground'—you're never going to be the same again. Nothing will matter. Your job won't matter. Like, if finding, you know, money for this, that, and the other won't matter. Just serving God will matter.

If you have any kind of pit that you're in, I'm telling you, the answer is personal relationship, walking in intimacy with God. It's intimacy. Stop focusing on everybody else and all their problems and everybody else that's bothering you, and focus on your own personal walk with God. I'm telling you, ignore as if nothing else exists, and just hone in on your walk with God. I'm

telling you, it will transform everything in your life. Because when you have an encounter with the Holy Spirit, you have an encounter with the living God, Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And it's intimate, and it's deep, and it's powerful. You can never go back. You'll see everybody from a different viewpoint. You'll have the mind and the eyes and emotions and the will of God. You'll see things through the eyes of Christ, and you'll never be the same.

All right, so if that ministered to you, would you please put something in the comments? Say, "I need more intimacy with Him." "I'm committing to spending more time with Him." If you're complaining about others and pointing the finger, say, "I'm going to stop pointing the finger, and I'm going to focus on my side of the street." Make the commitment, make the oath, and make Him honorable in your life again by *only* focusing on your relationship—that you're going to feed your spirit man, so that the deeds of the flesh will go down. Amen.

Let's go back to the text. So in **verse 28**, it says, ***"<sup>28</sup> Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. <sup>29</sup> For I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup> Also from among yourselves, men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."*** That's exactly what we see happens.

***"<sup>31</sup> Therefore, watch and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."*** Over and over again, Paul says they're coming. The wolves are coming. They're going to try to take advantage of you. They're going to tear down the gospel, and they're going to create a new gospel. He warned them over and over, and it happened. The entire book of Galatians is all about that.

So now, **verse 32**: ***"<sup>32</sup> Brethren, I commend you to God, to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup> I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. <sup>34</sup> Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities and for those who are with me. <sup>35</sup> I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"***

Can I just ask you a question? What do you do more of in your life, in relationships? Do you take more from people, or do you give more to people? "If people would define you on a scale of one to 10, would they define you as a 10, meaning that you're a tremendous giver, or a one, meaning you're a taker? I want you to be honest right now. Put it in the comments. Are you more of a giver on the 10 side, or are you more of a taker on the one side? What does God need to do in your life to get you to a place where you're more of a giver? Does it show up in your finances? Do you give to charity? Do you give to the kingdom of God, or do you take more than you give?

So moving on to **verse 36**, he says, ***"<sup>36</sup> And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. <sup>37</sup> Then they all wept freely, fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,***

**sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke,"** which is basically that he has to leave, and they're very upset that he's leaving. So he's ministering to them, he's laboring among them, and he is saying, "Look, you've got to give to the weak." And the weak are the least of these. And by the way, the least of these are those that don't know this message. So people that are hearing this type of message for the very first time—they are weak in understanding. It doesn't mean that they're weak people; it just means that they are weak in understanding. They've not been taught the Hebraic foundation of their faith. I wasn't taught 25 years ago, and neither were most of you. And so we're all in this same boat together, walking through the journey of our spiritual lives, trying to learn to do Bible things in Bible ways, and in all humility, we're trying to do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names.

Okay, all right, let's go over to the next chapter. We are now in **chapter 21**, so let's start moving through that. Now, **"<sup>3</sup> When they sighted Cyprus"**—so he's moving along in his ship here—they sighted Cyprus, **"We passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload her cargo. <sup>4</sup> And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul, through the Spirit, not to go up to Jerusalem."**

Okay, time out. Flag on the play. What's going on? Paul literally just said up here that the Holy Spirit bound him—literally bound him—to go to Jerusalem. Right here, we see it in **verse 22**: he's bound in the Spirit, the Spirit of God. It's telling him to go to Jerusalem. So then how in the world, when we get down here in chapter 21, it says in verse four that these disciples are telling Paul, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem. Which is it? Is he supposed to go, or is he not supposed to go? Because as we move forward, we're going to discover a few more things.

So, before we answer that, let's keep going. **"<sup>7</sup> And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. <sup>8</sup> On the next day, we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> Now, this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied."** So—and by the way, Philip, when it says 'one of the seven,' that's from Acts chapter six. He's one of the seven deacons that were chosen to take care of the widows and the orphans. Okay.

So he stayed with them. This man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. Can you imagine that? Having daughters that prophesy! **"<sup>10</sup> And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup> When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound Paul's hands and feet with it, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man'—talking about Paul—'who owns this belt,' that was owned by Paul, 'and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' <sup>12</sup> Now, when they heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of our Lord Yeshua.' <sup>14</sup> So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.'"**

Guys, I want to just bring this up and talk about this for just a minute. So we've got Paul saying in chapter 20 that he was bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. Then we've got these disciples saying that they, by the Spirit, told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Then we have the prophecies of Philip's four daughters saying the same thing. And Agabus is saying, "Hey, if you go to Jerusalem, you're going to be bound."

So what is going on here? Did Paul disobey the Holy Spirit by going to Jerusalem? Because we know in the future, that's exactly what he does. The answer is actually quite simple. You have to go back to what is clear. So, the verse about the disciples that told him, through the Spirit, not to go up to Jerusalem—that is in chapter 21, verse four. Right here, they told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. That is an ambiguous verse, so we have to go back to the absolutely clear verse in chapter 20, where Paul says he was bound by the Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit told him personally that he was to go to Jerusalem. So that's the fact: the Holy Spirit told him personally.

So what about this? Is this a contradiction? Nope. What this is, is that these disciples heard in the Spirit and learned in the Spirit that if he goes to Jerusalem, he's going to be bound. This is what Agabus said. These are the daughters, the four daughters of Philip. What they said—everybody has seen this: if you go to Jerusalem, you're going to be bound. Then they made the mistake of interpreting this because they didn't want him to go. That's why it says down here that they told him not to go to Jerusalem. They pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Who's pleading with him? The very people that just told him in the Spirit that he was going to be in chains. So they're pleading with him not to go because they prophetically learned he was going to go in chains.

So, the Scripture up here, or this—they told him through the Spirit—is not quite a fullness of accuracy of what really happened. What the writer should have said was something to the effect of: they learned in the Spirit that Paul was going to be in chains, and they told him not to go. These are two different things. So you cannot have these disciples contradicting the Holy Spirit himself, who told Paul. So we know for sure the Holy Spirit wants him to go. As a matter of fact, Paul says in chapter 20 that in every city, the Holy Spirit tells him and testifies that he's going to be in chains. This is no different: "I'm going to be in chains when I go to Jerusalem. So what? I'm used to it; it's happened in almost every city I've gone to. Get out of my way; I will die if it takes."

We learn from this: again, fear is not a motivator in our lives under any circumstances. Fear is used by the enemy to move us where we're not supposed to *not* go, but the power of love and a sound mind—God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. *That's* what we're supposed to have. What I tell people is, when you're afraid to go in that direction, or fear seems to be part of the situation, you need to go in that direction because there's a 99% chance that's exactly the direction that God wants you to go. Why? Because the enemy's trying to make you afraid. He's afraid of you going in that direction. He wants to move you away from your destiny. Amen.



All right, let's get back to the Scriptures. Here in **Acts 21**, let's pick up in **verse 17**. Here we go: <sup>17</sup>"And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. <sup>18</sup>On the following day, Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup>When we had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry." Through his ministry—Paul's ministry. <sup>20</sup>"And when they had heard it, they glorified the Lord and said to him,"—listen carefully to this next verse. This is a verse you're not likely going to hear taught from your pastor in traditional Christian pulpits. Nobody wants to talk about this verse, but we're here to learn the original culture, language, and the original intent. Let's get to it.

Here we go. **Verse 20**, back half, says, ***"You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed in Yeshua, and they are all zealous for the law."*** Now, I've got to come back to me on this and preach about this for just a minute. I want to unpack this for you. We have been told throughout traditional Western Christianity that Paul is against the law, that the apostles, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, did away with the law of God, and it had no more value in the life of a believer—that it was Old Covenant. We've been taught Old Covenant is law, New Covenant is grace. Yet all we've seen throughout this entire ministry of Peter and Paul through the Book of Acts is that they are totally zealous for going to Shabbat. They're going to the synagogue on Saturday. They are celebrating the Sabbath. They are celebrating the feast days, and they're zealous for God's law—it's written all over the place.

And this is incredible proof, because James, okay, is at the top of the food chain here, the brother of Christ. He is the pastor—what we would call a pastor, a bishop—over the entire early Messianic church of Yeshua in the first century. And he says, "Look, this is incredible. All these people that you're leading to Christ, Paul—there are so many that are coming to Christ, and they're all zealous for the law." And he's saying that as if it's a good thing. How in the world could Paul, under the early disciples, be against the law?

And yet James, who is the head honcho over *all* of them, including Paul, is saying that it is fantastic news, guys, that all of them are coming to Christ, and they're excited to keep God's law. Why is that? Because before Christ, they didn't want anything really to do with it, because the Pharisees and the Sadducees had bogged it down and made it like a mire, like quicksand. It made it impossible to keep. Now that it's been stripped of the traditions and doctrines of men, they saw through the law of God to its beautiful, crystal-clear inside, where the heart of Yeshua, the heart of God Himself, is found.

It's not by coincidence that the word "heart" is *lev* in Hebrew, which is two Hebrew letters, *lamed* and *beit*. It's not by coincidence that if you take the first letter of the Torah, of the Bible, which is *beit*, and you take the very last letter in the Torah, which is *lamed*, and you put them together, it literally spells "heart." **The heart of God is the Torah.** The heart of God is His instruction manual. The heart of God is His word. That's why His word came and dwelt among us—**John 1:14**—became flesh and died. It's his heart that was struck with sin; it was in the garden. It was the heart of God that was broken in two. That's why the commandments, my friends, were

broken—because his heart was the Ten Commandments, and Moses broke them, representative of the people of God breaking God's heart.

That's why He sent his only begotten Son, to take on the sin that would take the heart of God, the Word of God, right? The first five books of Moses, the first five books of the Bible, the very Word of God, the very center of the heart of God. All of the Bible is the heart of God, but the center of it is the Torah. It's the instruction manual. That's why Paul says all Scripture is worthy of doctrine. He's talking about that center part of God's heart. This is where the instruction manual is. And we've been taught in Western Christianity that it doesn't matter, that we don't have to do that anymore. But all the disciples are zealous for the very thing we say is bondage. How can this be? May it never be!

Paul says in **Romans 3:31**, just because Christ came, just because faith came, does that mean that the law of God is done away with? He says, "May it never be! Never!" He says, "I uphold the law of God," right? In **Romans 7**, he says the very thing that he wants to do, he doesn't do. What's the very thing he wants to do? Keep God's law. He says, "With my mind, I'm a slave to God's law, but with my flesh, I find another law that's present inside of me, the law of sin and death. May it never be." He says, "I want to submit myself to God's law." How can the very Paul that is zealous for God's law, that wants to submit to God's law, that says that's the very thing he wants to do, be the one apostle that everybody quotes to say that Paul is against the law of God? We have a schizophrenic apostle if that's the case.

There's so much more to this, ladies and gentlemen, it's not even funny. That's why I'm in the process of finishing up a book and a video series, a commentary on the Book of Galatians alone, because it's so misunderstood, because we don't know the Hebrew Jewish background of the New Testament and all of these expressions, and even understanding that there are two different laws—three, really. There's the law of sin and death, there's the law of God, and then there's the law of the Pharisees, they consider the Oral Law, or the tradition of the elders, and the written law, which is called the Torah. They consider all of this all the law of God. And if you don't know that, you're going to read right into the Scriptures something that the author didn't intend.

So, all that being said, let's go back to this Scripture here, and let's see how James deals with Paul. He says, Not only, Paul, are there many myriads of Jews who have believed and are all zealous for the law, but here's the problem, Paul. **<sup>21</sup> They've been informed about you—that there is a false rumor spreading about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying they ought not to circumcise their children nor walk according to the customs.** It's false, is what he's saying—that there is literally a false accusation against you, that you're teaching all of the new converts to Christ to forsake Moses, to not circumcise their children.

All right, **<sup>22</sup> What then? The assembly must certainly meet.** In other words, When they find out, Paul, that you're here, they're going to meet, and there's going to be a problem, **<sup>23</sup> For they will hear that you've come. Therefore, do what we tell you. We have four men who have**

***taken a vow. <sup>24</sup> Take them and be purified with them, pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are false—are nothing—but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.***"

Now, before we finish this chapter out, let's talk about this for a minute. So James is saying that there is a false accusation against you, Paul. People are saying that you're teaching against the law of Moses and against circumcision. That's what's happening. I know it's false, you know it's false, and we're going to prove that it's false by you entering into this covenant that comes out of the Torah, this vow, this Nazirite vow. You're going to—you're going to pay their expenses, and everyone's going to find out that you paid the expenses and you did this, and it's going to put it all to rest because they're going to see that you keep the law of God.

Now, my friends, think about this *theologically*, inside of Western Christianity, we've been taught by our Roman predecessors all the way back to the fourth century, who were anti-Semitic and couldn't read Hebrew if their life depended on it. They certainly didn't know the culture and hated the culture. We are taught that Paul, the apostle to the "Gentiles," who's going into synagogues, wants to keep the feast days, and is keeping a vow right out of the Torah, proving that it's a false accusation. And we're actually the ones today accusing him of the same false accusation that existed in the first century. The majority—if you go to your pastor right now and say, "Is Paul teaching against the law of God? Does Paul believe that nobody should keep the law of God, that we should forsake the law of Moses?"—they're going to say yes. The traditional Christian theology says yes, Paul teaches that we don't have to keep the law of God anymore. That was the same false accusation that was laid on him in the first century that James says *is false*.

How is it that we are actually finding ourselves in the same seat as the Pharisees in traditional Christianity that is laying an accusation against Paul that is false—so false that Paul proves that it's a false accusation? So it doesn't matter. Okay, let me teach you something about biblical interpretation; it's called hermeneutics, the art of biblical interpretation. One of the biggest laws and rules of interpretation is that you always interpret the unclear by the clear, okay? This is one of those scriptures that are abundantly clear. There's no way to interpret this any other way. James says it's a false accusation that Paul is teaching against the law of God. Paul agrees with that so much that he goes along with it, thinks it's a great idea, and begins to keep the law of God in this area. That's a big deal to prove to all the Jews that are frustrated with this rumor that it's false. He's trying to keep him from going to jail. And absolutely, James is right; this accusation against Paul was false. Okay.

So, I wanted to point out that right now in traditional Christianity, we've got a giant problem on our hands, because this is clear. Which means any other verse that someone brings up out of Galatians, Hebrews, you name it—wherever it might be, Colossians, Ephesians—and they say, "Oh, Paul is teaching this over here in the Book of Romans," you have to lay it... it has to come in alignment with Paul's own words out of **Romans 3:31**, or **Romans 7**, or even right here in the

Book of Acts, where Paul says, "I am not against God's law, and I'm going to prove it. I'm going to put my money—literally money—where my mouth is," okay?

If we believe that Paul is teaching against God's law in different books of the Bible, of the New Testament, then we've got a very big problem on our hands because that would contradict his own voice in multiple books, much less James. We'd have to throw out all of the Book of James.

So now let's go to **verse 25** and pick up a difficult verse, and we'll interpret this using the Bible. Here we go. We're almost done. All right, let's go back to **verse 24**, where he says, "Hey, take them, purify them. Do all these things. Prove that this is a false accusation, that you yourself walk according to the law and keep it." <sup>25</sup> ***But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.*** Okay?"

Now, on the outside, this seems to say that, "Hey, we want you to prove that you keep the law, but as far as the Gentiles are concerned, we gave no such order that they keep the law. They only need to do these four things"—until you find out that there's almost no other version that even has that phrase in there, "observe no such thing," because it's not there. It's not in the original language. In the Greek, every other version has it right. It says literally, "But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided," and then it skips that phrase because it's not in the original Greek, "written and decided that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

Now, why is the apostle—why is James saying this to begin with? Why is he even bringing up the Gentiles? This is where it gets incredibly important that you understand the debate, the different denominations in Judaism, and what they believed. For instance, the Sadducees didn't believe in a resurrection; the Pharisees did. If you don't know that, you're going to miss big chunks of conversation that are in the Gospels.

In this regard, all right, this instruction, this judgment, I should say, that James is making—he's referring back to **Acts chapter 15**. But before we go there, I want to go to **Exodus, chapter 12, verse 49**, and I want to show you how it is not possible for James to be saying that the Jews need to keep the Torah, but the Gentiles don't need to keep the Torah. He would be breaking the very Torah that he's talking about. Why? Because God already gave an instruction on this, which happens to be in the Torah. Let's go look at it. **Exodus, chapter 12, verse 49**, says this:

In talking about Moses, he goes to God and says, "Hey, God, we got a problem here. What are we going to do about all these Egyptians that are coming out of the Exodus and they want to be a part of Israel? What do we do? Do we tell them to go back to Egypt? Do we let them assimilate? What do we do?" God says, "Look, let them come near and keep the Passover. Let them be circumcised, and they shall be as a native of the land." So the moment they become circumcised, they keep the Passover; they are now part of Israel. They are like native, okay? That's the whole point of the Passover.

This is the gospel, ladies and gentlemen, right here in Exodus, chapter 12: that when someone today takes on the path, the circumcised heart of Christ, and keeps the Passover—which is realizing that there is a real death to the firstborn and to the sinner—and you accept Yeshua, Jesus, as the Lamb of God in your life, over your heart, you are like a native of the land. You are immediately grafted in to the olive tree, and you become one with the olive tree. That's when you are crucified with Christ. "Nevertheless, it is not I; it's Christ in me." So that's why there's no male, no female, there is no Jew, no Gentile, no slave, nor free. It's literally Israel. You're—that's what he means—you become a native of the land.

So look at this. Read with me. He says, "For no uncircumcised person shall eat of it," which is really referring, gospel-wise, to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the marriage supper of the Lamb. <sup>"49</sup> **One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.**" Ladies and gentlemen, did you hear that? He says, "One law." One law shall be for the native-born and for the sojourner. There are not two different laws; there's one law for everyone. And once you keep the Passover, once you believe in the blood of Christ, once you absorb that on the doorpost of your hearts, you are saved. You are part of the native-born, and he calls that Israel—which, by the way, in Hebrew, what **Israel means is "to struggle with God,"** like Jacob, whose name was changed from Jacob to Israel, one who struggles with God, rules with God.

You must struggle with God. And if you're in a place right now where you're struggling with God, then you are absolutely in the right place. Struggle with God. Never let go. Don't deny. Absolutely, you can struggle; you can wrestle. At the end of the day, you'll probably get a displaced hip, but you will be a better servant because of it. You will be in the Israel heritage because we are the people of God that struggle with God. It's frustrating with God. It's just as frustrating—as more frustrating—for him than it is for us. But we are struggling with God, and we don't let go of His tallit. We don't let go of the tzitzit. It's like the woman with the issue of blood; we go through the crowd. We don't care if we're going to go to jail. We don't care if they're going to stone us. We just know, "If I touch the hem of his garment, I'm going to struggle. I'm going to struggle. I'm gonna struggle because I know at the end of the day, it will be worth it. I will be healed."

So going back to Acts, chapter 21, we know for a fact that James can't be saying that there's two different laws, because he would be breaking the Torah right here. God already said there's not two different laws. There's one, and it's for everybody. And if you want to be my people, then call by my name; that is what you're going to have to do. You're going to have to have one single law.

All right, so now let's go back to this here. And you can see in **Acts, chapter 21, verse 25**, when he says, <sup>"25</sup> **But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we've written and decided that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.**" Where is this coming from? All right, so here we go. So over here in **Acts, chapter 15, verse 20**, James makes the final judgment. And he says, <sup>"20</sup>

But that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood." And then he goes on in **verse 21**, in the most powerful verse that no one reads about this subject: ***"21 For Moses has throughout every generation those who preach him in every synagogue in every city, being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."***

In other words, the whole debate in **Acts, chapter 15**, is not about Christian living. It's not whether or not they should keep the Torah. It's about what does it take to be saved? That's why it says—it starts off the whole chapter in chapter 15—what's it say? Read it right here with me. ***"1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"*** The whole debate is whether or not Gentiles could be saved if they weren't circumcised. Paul gives his evidence and his perspective, the Pharisees give theirs, and James makes the final ruling and says, "The Gentiles do not have to keep the Law of Moses or be circumcised or keep our customs *for* salvation." This is not about Christian living or salvation; they just need to not do these four things if they want to maintain connection with us.

So now that we understand that, and if you've never heard that and that just went over your head, I encourage you to go back and watch my Acts, chapter 15. You can click the link right now or in the description and go back and watch that. I spend almost an hour detailing Acts 15, what it really means, and how different it is from your normal, uh, traditional Christian interpretation.

All right, so let's go back now to **Acts, chapter 21**, and let's see this in **verse 25**. It'll make way more sense. So if you go up to the top here, it says, ***"20 You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews have believed, and they're zealous for the law, 21 but they've been informed about you that you're teaching the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, specifically by saying they ought not to circumcise their children or walk according to customs."*** The very thing we just read in Acts 15—it's the same debate—is that the Pharisees that accepted Christ are bringing an accusation against Paul in Acts, chapter 15, saying that Paul is teaching against the law because they believe that the law is required for salvation, and that's what the debate was in Acts 15. It's the same thing here. That's why James, the same person, is reiterating it in verse 25. He's not saying that the Jews need to do this, but the Gentiles don't need to keep the law. They only need to not do these four things.

That'd be horrible advice, because if those are the only four things they have to not do, then they don't have to do anything, because he doesn't give them any other instructions. That's why he says in verse 21 in Acts 15, "Hey, look, these four things they can't do. And don't worry, they'll learn the rest of the Torah because Moses," meaning the Torah, "is being taught in every synagogue every Sabbath." Again, proving early Christians were learning the Torah in every synagogue on every Shabbat, every week, which is why Paul went there. James has no problem saying, "These are the only four things; they'll learn the rest over time." Okay, no different than a Christian pastor might say, "Hey, they need to only do these two things right now. They'll learn the rest as they come to church every week." Not that they only need to not

do those two things. The pastor's heart is, "Look, these are the most priority things. They can't do these things." And that's what's going on with James. He's giving the high priority.

So toward the end of chapter 21, when he says this, he says, "Look, concerning the Gentiles, we've already given our judgment. If they want to have fellowship, they can't do these four things." That's what's going on in chapter 21. I hope you see that a little more clearly. I hope I didn't muddy it up by going to different scriptures. If I did, go back and re-watch this again. It will make sense as you watch this again, if you keep it in light of the actual debate that's happening in Acts 15. We cannot change the debate because he's quoting his own judgment from Acts 15.

And this is a big thing that we do as Christians—we get it wrong. We change the context and the original point that the author is trying to state based on what we believe. So we read into it, and then most people don't even look up in verse 25 if they're using the King James version. That phrase isn't even in the Greek, which radically, radically makes you think something completely different than what the author is stating. So one of the few times I do not like the King James, and that is one of them, right there.

All right, let's finish out this chapter real quick. So, in the end, ***"<sup>26</sup> Paul takes those men, and the next day, having purified with them, enters the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them."*** Okay? So they're ending this oath. ***"<sup>27</sup> Now, when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia,"*** okay? These are the same Jews that found him and kicked him out of Asia. They saw him in the temple, got an entire crowd to go up against him, and they bring him all again. They bring the entire city against him.

***Verse 30: "<sup>30</sup> All the city was disturbed, and the people ran together, seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. <sup>31</sup> And as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all of Jerusalem was in an uproar. <sup>32</sup> Immediately, he took the soldiers, the centurions ran down to them, and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. <sup>33</sup> Then the commander came near and took him and commanded him to be bound with two chains, and he asked who he was and what he had done. <sup>34</sup> And some among the multitude cried one thing, and some cried another thing,"*** and on and on it goes. This mob, this great tumultuous mob, comes up, and they just want to kill him because of this false accusation from other brethren, not brethren, other Jews that came from different cities that just so happened to be there and recognized Paul.

So, bottom line at the end here, Paul is being bound, okay, by chains, by Roman chains now, because there's this great mob, the police basically get called. All the Roman police get called. They arrest him. They don't even know why they're arresting him, but something's going on. And I find it very ironic that Paul's the one being beat down, and they arrest Paul. That's a strange thing, but that's what's going on. And Paul is about to address this entire group of people like he always does. He knows what he wants to say. He's ready to do it. We'll pick that up in the next Acts broadcast as we move into **Acts chapter 22**.

In the meantime, ladies and gentlemen, I want to encourage you to understand the power of the first-century context. As we read through the Scriptures, we want to know why we believe what we believe. It's important that we know some of these details, or we will misconstrue the entire Word of God, and when we do that, we create a different belief system, and we do what we believe.

So, guys, thank you so much for hanging on this long in this broadcast. I thank you for hanging on this long in this entire series of Acts. I encourage you, if you've not watched any others, start with the very first one. Move your way through the book of Acts. You will learn a ton about yourself, about God, about the early church, and ultimately, about how to get back to the power of the living Christ in us. That's the hope of God, my friends.

Thank you so much for spending some time with us. Check out our website at [passionfortruth.com](http://passionfortruth.com). I encourage you to go back through here, watch this again, ask the Holy Spirit to open up your eyes to anything that you might need to see. And ultimately, thank you so much for praying for us in this ministry, and thank you for those of you that have partnered with us to pay it forward and financially connect with us. Go to [passionfortruth.com](http://passionfortruth.com). Right now, would you say thank you in that way? [Pay it forward](#) for someone else. Be, like Paul said, a giver. It's better to give than to receive, and it certainly goes to your own good. Thank you for letting us serve you in this way. I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries, and I'll see you in the next video.

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