



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Acts 21-22
- Acts 6:1-8:1
- II Samuel 11-12

FORGIVEN... YET LIABLE

- Accusation
- Defense
- Consequences

If you are born-again, you will not be held accountable for your sins on judgment day; Y'shua has all of them covered. However, that does not blot out the consequences of your sinful behavior here on earth. Simply put, "You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin's earthly ramifications." Said another way, "You may not be punished for your sins, but you will be punished by your sins!" words that represent both a sigh of relief and sober warning. And let's be clear; there can be no relief without Christ. Absent a contrite heart and genuine repentance, your sins destine you to eternal condemnation and earthly suffering.

So, what is the subtle nuance here? When one comes to Christ, the born-again encounter is a result of a heart-change inspired by the gift of grace through faith and evidenced by

repentance and confession. A contrite heart is proof of true repentance and God's promise to all those in Christ—you are forgiven! He covers all the eternal consequences of your transgressions and you are permitted to live with God forever! In other words, "You will no longer be punished for your sins."

However, you are not relieved of the potential devastating consequences that sin causes in this life, even when you are forgiven by God. Think of it this way; in God's economy there are no small sins and no big sins. Any sin not covered by the blood of Y'shua will land you in eternal damnation. However, here on earth, the more serious the sin, the more serious the consequences. And here's the rub. This is true even if those sins have been erased into eternity because you've repented and been forgiven.

On earth your sins have a cost. Steal bubble gum and you are condemned to hell without Christ, but here on earth, nothing will happen. Commit adultery, repent through Christ, experience His forgiveness, and your marriage is still devastated. Plus, you just might bring a child into a very damaged situation. The sin itself is the consequence. In other words, "You are punished by your sins."

Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that in Christ your sins are forgiven, He also wants you to be horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin. And if you are a Christian, don't

see the consequences of sin on earth as God's condemnation, nor is it necessary to carry the burden of those sins for which you have been forgiven. That is not the point! It's best to rest in God's forgiveness, even when sin has caused difficulties and struggles and turmoil on this side of eternity, and rather see this as a sobering warning of sin's consequences! As a Christian, you will not be punished by God for your sins, but here on earth, your sin itself is the punishment!

PROPHETIC SEED:

“They also set up **false witnesses** who said, “This man [Stephen] does not cease to speak **blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;**” Acts 6:13 NKJV

“...they **cast him** [Stephen] **out of the city and stoned him.** And **the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.**” Acts 7:57-58 NKJV

“Now **Saul was consenting to his death.** At that time a **great persecution arose against the church** which was at Jerusalem...” Acts 8:1 NKJV

“**And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death,** and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.” Acts 22:20 NKJV

PROPHETIC FRUIT:

“...**he took Paul’s belt**, bound his own hands and feet, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘**So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.**’ ”” Acts 21:11 NKJV

...“You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; **but they have been informed about you that you teach** all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought **not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.**”

Acts 21:20-21 NKJV

“Men of Israel, help! **This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place;** and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”” Acts 21:28 NKJV

Let’s Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

Introduction

Last week in [Lessons on Salvation!](#) Paul began his third missionary journey and, on the front end, spent two years in Ephesus. The first thing he did was to introduce the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as it seemed they still didn’t understand, even though

Aquila and Priscilla had stayed behind in Ephesus on the last trip and introduced the idea to Apollos. As usual, those in the synagogue, who refused the truth, caused problems and spoke evil of the Way and Paul needed to spend most of his time teaching outside the synagogue, gathering at the school of Tyrannus. There was such an anointing on Paul's life that even garments that he touched carried the grace of God to heal the sick and deliver people from demonic influence.

At some point, a traveling circus show of exorcists arrived in Ephesus and they attempted to invoke the name of Jesus to cast out a demon, but as they were not true believers, they did so by referring to Christ as the one Paul knows. The demon used the possessed man to beat these seven pseudo-exorcists to a pulp. They were actually seven brothers, sons of a Jewish priest, and they were caused to run out of the house naked and humiliated. The entire episode served as an amazing witness and it caused those in the area dabbling in witchcraft to collect all their magic books and to burn them in a massive blaze. It was an extremely expensive sacrifice and God's word spread powerfully in Ephesus as it prevailed over the darkness of witchcraft.

After the radical transformation of those once embroiled with the occult and the book burning, Paul had an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. "From Ephesus, I will go up through Macedonia, down

into Greece, and then I will head back to Jerusalem. And from there I will head to Rome.” A commotion then erupted in Ephesus because the silver craftsmen became aware that the more Paul led people away from their paganism, the more money they lost on their lucrative idol worship business, specializing in the goddess Diana (Artemis) whose temple was “protected” in the city. They basically conducted a kangaroo court in the main theater of the city until the city clerk put an end to it. He was very concerned they had not followed proper legal protocols and that if Rome got wind of it, they would have no defense for their actions. He encouraged those with a grievance to bring the matter before the courts and have it settled in a civilized manner. Plus he assured them that they had nothing to worry about; it was indisputable that Diana (Artemis) was the great goddess, the gift of Zeus.

When the riot and madness had ended, Paul warmly and generously acknowledged the tenacity of his disciples and left for Macedonia, where he moved through the region bringing words of encouragement to God’s people. Then he headed to Greece where he remained for three months. He left Greece for Macedonia and then left Philippi (in Macedonia) for Troas after the Days of Unleavened Bread. Troas was where Paul preached late into the night and a young man sitting in the window fell out after he dozed

off. He died but was resuscitated by Paul who went right on teaching until morning.

Paul then strategically made his way from Troas to Miletus, bypassing Ephesus on his return trip to Jerusalem. From Troas he summoned the Church leadership in Ephesus and delivered a sobering and persuasive message as he bid them a final farewell, revealing that he would not see them again in this life. He reviewed how his entire life was a witness to his faith and how he held nothing back. He emphasized how he considered his physical life unimportant, and that his priority was to finish the work he'd been assigned, and to be joyful no matter what happens along the way. Paul then gave them leadership advice about being faithful shepherds and left them with a few sobering warnings. "Don't draw people unto yourself and don't be in ministry for reasons of personal gain. Depend on God for everything and recognize how I worked to support myself and the others with me, so no one could claim I was in it for the money. I supported the others with me to teach you another important lesson. Take care of those in need!" It was an emotional time filled with tears and kisses, mostly because Paul had told them that this was it; they would not see him again.

This week Paul is ready to head back to Jerusalem. He is warned not to go; it will be too dangerous. But, he is intent on going, even if it will cost him his life. We see what Paul is really

made of as he testifies to his friends. “You’re compassion touches my heart, but you must know this about me. I am ready to be locked up again for Christ and die for Christ if I must!”

Paul arrives in Jerusalem and is welcomed as he testifies about the fruit of his ministry. He meets with James and the other elders and reports the testimonies of what God did with the Gentiles. That is when Paul hears he is being accused of teaching Jews against Circumcision and the Law! James makes Paul an offer that will prove otherwise. James explains that Jewish believers remain fervent about obeying God’s laws, even after they have come to faith in Y’shua, and they want to know Paul’s stance on this issue. James also reminds Paul, who was there at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, that there were even Torah commands that Gentiles must adhere to once they come to faith: no idolatry, no unclean foods, no sexual immorality! Ironically, Paul was actually the one charged with sharing the ruling of that Council among the Gentiles on his following mission trip. Paul accepts James’ offer and his choice tells the whole world this one thing: the accusations against him are not true and that he actually still keeps the law himself.

However, his claim does not matter to the unbelieving Jews who continue to accuse him of teaching men everywhere things contrary to the Jews, contrary to the temple, and contrary to the law. Obviously that is not true, but one other accusation they make

is true: he brought Greeks into the temple, which would be perfectly fine if those Greeks were God-fearers who were in various stages of conversion to Judaism. But, these Greeks were not; they were Gentiles who had encounters with God via a born-again experience with Christ, and Jewish tradition had no protocols in place for that. But let's be clear. Even though Paul did do that, he violated no Torah command, only Jewish tradition. And as we know from much past experience in the Gospels and in Acts, religious Jews are easily moved to violence when you mess with their tradition. And that is precisely what happens.

They arrest Paul. The mob-like crowd of unbelieving Jews literally want to kill him, but the local Roman military commander [Claudius Lysias] got wind of the what was happening and he takes some soldiers and intercepts the mob as they are beating Paul. The commander has Paul chained and then inquires about the charges. The crowd could give no coherent answers, so he takes Paul into the nearby outpost headquarters to question him. The crowd is so invasive that the soldiers must carry Paul away.

Paul eventually speaks to the commander and then he addresses the entire raucous crowd in Hebrew and he tells his whole road-to-Damascus-conversion-experience. But when he gets to the end of his testimony and tells them that in his early days of believing, the Jews in Jerusalem gave him a hard time and he left

Jerusalem to go to the Gentiles, it made them wild with anger. They respond like savages, tearing their own cloths and throwing dirt in the air! The commander is forced to bring Paul back inside to question him and decides that if he does so while whipping him, it will extract the truth. Paul has been here before and he is just not up for another scourging, so he reveals something to the soldier, who is about to whip him, that alters the entire situation. "I am a Roman citizen." This halts the whole process because punishing a Roman, before proper legal proceedings are conducted, is illegal! So, instead of beating him, he is released to the Jewish courts! The chief priests and all their council appear as Paul sits in hot seat. Let the trial begin!

Acts 21

Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-14)

1. Ready to Die: Paul is intent on going to Jerusalem, even if it will cost him his life.
 - (a) Paul departs Miletus and heads back to Jerusalem.
 - (b) He stops at the islands of Cos and the next day Rhodes.
 - (c) From there he lands on the coast of the mainland in Patara (in Lycia).
 - (d) That is where he finds a ship heading over to Phoenicia.

- (e) They sail to the south of Cyprus toward Syria, and land at Tyre (in Phoenicia).
- (f) He stayed with some disciples there for seven days and they warn Paul, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem.
- (g) Paul and his company depart anyway and as they leave Tyre they pray on the shore before boarding another ship to Ptolemais a little further south on the coast, where they stay for one day.
- (h) The next day they arrive by boat in Caesarea (further south) and go to Philip's house (he had four virgin daughters who had the gift of prophecy).
- (i) They stay with Philip for many days and this is where Agabus (a prophet from Judea) took Paul's belt, wraps it around his own hands and prophesies by the Holy Spirit... "The man who owns this belt will be delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles."
- (j) This caused those with Paul to beg him not to go to Jerusalem and this is where we see what Paul is really made of. His response: "You're compassion touches my heart, but you must know this about me. I am ready to be locked up again for Christ and die for Christ if I must!"
- (k) Nothing they said could convince Paul otherwise, so they submit to whatever would be "the will of the Lord!"

Paul meets with James and other church leaders in Jerusalem...

(Acts 21:15-19)

2. Paul is welcomed to Jerusalem and he testifies about the fruit of his ministry among the Gentiles.
 - (a) Paul travels with many disciples who will board together.
 - (b) At first, Paul is welcomed by the local Church.
 - (c) The next day he meets with James and other elders to report the testimonies of what God did with the Gentiles through his ministry.

It's Time to Set the Record Straight! (Acts 21:20-25)

3. Paul is accused of teaching against Circumcision and the Law!
 - (a) Paul is made an offer for what he can do to ensure EVERYONE that he is NOT teaching that coming to Christ gives Jews permission to forsake God's laws!
 - (b) Everyone seem happy to hear Paul's testimonies.
 - (c) But, they've also heard other things about Paul and they want to know if they are true.
 - (d) Paul is accused of teaching that circumcision and the law are unnecessary for Jews after they "become Christians."
 - (e) James explains that Jewish believers remain fervent about obeying God's laws, even after they have come to faith in Y'shua, and they want to know Paul's stance on this issue.

- (f) James assures Paul that the assembly will certainly come together to determine if these accusations about him are true.
- (g) James offers Paul a way to make a public declaration to clear up any doubt about what he believes on the topic.
- (h) He offers Paul the option to take what seems to be a Nazarite Vow with four other men who are prepared to do so.
- (i) Not only does James ask him to take the vow, according to the Torah, as a public declaration that he is NOT teaching against Circumcision or the Law, but to pay the costs of such a vow for the other four men, in addition to his own costs.
- (j) Do this Paul, so everyone will know that the accusations against you are not true and that you actually still keep the law yourself.
- (k) Then James reminds Paul, who was there at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, that there were even Torah commands that Gentiles must adhere to once they come to faith: no idolatry, no unclean foods, no sexual immorality!
- (l) Paul was the one charged with sharing the ruling of that Council among the Gentiles on his following mission trip.
- (m) Paul is to take this vow to prove one thing; he is not teaching against circumcision or the law.
- (n) What does he do? His decision will reverberate throughout history!

Paul makes a definitive statement! (Acts 21:26)

4. I am not teaching that coming to Christ gives you permission to forsake God's laws!
 - (a) Paul takes the vow! Paul walks through all the steps of the Nazarite Vow and also pays the expenses of the other men!
 - (b) His statement is clear. The accusations against him are false.
 - (c) This should end the controversy, but does it?

Four Accusations against Paul (Acts 21:27-29)

5. Even after Paul's definitive statement, some unbelieving Jews still continue to accuse him! And one of those accusations is actually TRUE!
 - (a) When Paul appeared in the temple to complete the obligations of the vow it triggered some hard-headed unbelieving Jews.
 - (b) Paul just made the public declaration that he is not teaching against circumcision and the law, yet they still accuse him.
 - (c) He is teaching men everywhere things contrary to the Jews, contrary to the temple, and contrary to the law!
 - (d) And he also defiled the temple by bringing Greeks inside.

Paul is Arrested in the Temple (Acts 21:30-36)

6. Apprehended and dragged into Custody
 - (a) Jerusalem was in an uproar...
 - (b) Paul is arrested and forced out of the temple.

- (c) The mob-like crowd of unbelieving Jews want to kill him, but the local Roman military commander [Claudius Lysias] got wind of the what was happening and he takes some soldiers and intercepts the mob as they are beating Paul.
- (d) The commander has Paul chained and then inquires about the charges.
- (e) The crowd could give no coherent answers so he took Paul into the nearby outpost headquarters to question him.
- (f) The crowd is so invasive that soldiers must carry Paul away.

Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (Acts 21:37-40)

7. Paul asks to address the commander and then the people.
 - (a) I am not who you think I am. May I address the people?
 - (b) At the headquarters, when things are a bit quieter and calmer, in Paul's now beaten state, he gets permission to speak first to the commander.
 - (c) The commander assumes Paul is the Egyptian man who led a large army of 4000 rebels and asks Paul if he can communicate in the Greek language.
 - (d) Paul corrects his assumption and reveals his origin as a citizen of Tarsus and asks if he can address the mob.
 - (e) He is permitted to do so and the crowd becomes silenced as he begins to address them in Hebrew.
 - (f) This is what he said!

Acts 22

Paul's Opening Arguments (Acts 22:1-21)

8. "Hear my defense!"
 - (a) Paul has been accused of propagating teachings against the Jewish people, against the temple and against God's laws. Plus he brought Greeks into the temple!
 - (b) He addresses the people in the Hebrew language, which commands their attention (the mob is made up of Jews).
 - (c) I'm a Jew (I am one of you!) who was born in Tarsus.
 - (d) I was trained by Gamaliel under the strictest guidelines of the Law (I am one of you!).
 - (e) I am as zealous toward God as you are (I am one of you!).
 - (f) I was the chief persecutor of the church (I was one of you!).
 - (g) I was the one who got formal permission from the high priest to go after them.
 - (h) But, I had a radical encounter with Y'shua on the road to Damascus.
9. Paul tells every detail of his encounter that took place in Acts 9.
 - (a) I was knocked to the ground by a blinding light.
 - (b) Y'shua asked me why I was persecuting Him.
 - (c) I inquired who was speaking and He revealed Himself.
 - (d) The men with me could see the light, but heard nothing.
 - (e) I inquired what He wanted me to do and He instructed me.

- (f) I was told to go into Damascus to await further instructions, but when I got off the ground I was blind, so the men who were with me had to lead me by the hand.
- (g) In Damascus I met Ananias, a devout man by the law's standards. He had a great reputation among the Jews.
- (h) He was used by God to restore my sight and give me my next instructions.
- (i) He told me that God chose me to know His will, to recognize the long-awaited Messiah, to hear His voice.
- (j) I was to be Y'shua's witness.
- (k) At that point I was baptized and cleansed of all my sins, as I called on the name of Y'shua.
- (l) After I returned to Jerusalem, while in prayer in the temple, I received a prophetic word that I should leave the city.
- (m) I understood that this was because few people would believe my conversion was authentic because of all the harm I caused to God's people in the past, including how I presided over Stephen's murder.
- (n) God told me to leave Jerusalem, "*Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.*" and go to the Gentiles!

Paul's Roman Citizenship (Acts 22:22-29)

10. When Paul testifies of revelation that he was sent to the Gentiles, it triggered the unbelieving Jews...

- (a) The non-believing Jews tracked with Paul until he mentions the idea that the Messiah was for the Gentiles; that caused them to go off the rails.
- (b) Someone who believes this has no right to live!
- (c) They act like savages, tearing their own cloths and throwing dirt in the air!
- (d) The commander [Claudius Lysias] brings Paul back inside to question him. He intends to do while whipping Paul. (He believes this should extract the truth from Paul).
- (e) Paul has been here before and he is just not up for another scourging, so he reveals something to the soldier, who is about to whip him, which alters the entire situation.
- (f) "I am a Roman citizen and I am sure that punishing a Roman, before proper legal proceedings are conducted, is illegal!"
- (g) The centurion, who was about to scourge Paul, warns the commander that Paul is a Roman citizen before he commenced with the beating.
- (h) Claudius Lysias then confirms this himself, impressed as such, also telling Paul what a great cost it was to him to obtain his own Roman citizenship.
- (i) Paul contrasts that with how he was born a citizen.

(j) Those who were about to whip him backed off and the commander himself became worried over how this would look to Rome!

(k) Instead of beating him, he releases him to the Jewish courts!

The Divided Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30)

11. Coming next: Face-to-Face with his Accusers

(a) Claudius Lysias still wants to know the nature of the accusations, so he brings in the Jewish leadership.

(b) The chief priests and council appear with Paul in the hot seat.

(c) Let the trial begin!

ACCUSATION

1. Paul is Falsely Accused

A. Paul knows what calamity awaits and he is willing...

(1) Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-14)

(a) Ready to Die

1. “Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to

unload her cargo. **And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.** When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. **And we knelt down on the shore and prayed.** When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home. And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 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. **Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.** And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place **pleaded**

with him not to go up to Jerusalem. 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 the Lord Jesus.”** So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, **“The will of the Lord be done.”**” Acts 21:1-14 NKJV

2. Paul is intent on going to Jerusalem, even if it will cost him his life.
 - a) Paul departs Miletus and heads back to Jerusalem.
 - b) From Miletus he said... ***“the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.”*** Acts 20:23 NKJV
 - c) He stops at the islands of Cos and the next day Rhodes.
 - d) From there he lands on the coast of the mainland in Patara (in Lycia).
 - e) That is where he finds a ship heading over to Phoenicia.
 - f) They sail to the south of Cyprus toward Syria, and land at Tyre (in Phoenicia).

- g) He stayed with some disciples for seven days and they warn Paul, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem.
- h) Paul and his company depart anyway and as they leave Tyre they pray on the shore before boarding another ship to Ptolemais a little further south on the coast, where they stay for one day.
- i) The next day they arrive by boat in Caesarea (further south) and go to Philip's house (he had four virgin daughters with the gift of prophecy).
- j) They stay with Philip for many days and this is where Agabus (a prophet from Judea) took Paul's belt, wraps it around his own hands and prophesies by the Holy Spirit... *"The man who owns this belt will be delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles."*
- k) This caused those with Paul to beg him not to go to Jerusalem and this is where we see what Paul is really made of.
- l) His response: *"You're compassion touches my heart, but you must know this about me. I am ready to be locked up again for Christ and die for Christ if I must!"*

m) Nothing they say can convince Paul otherwise, so they submit to whatever would ultimately be *“the will of the Lord!”*

(2) Paul meets with James and other church leaders in Jerusalem... **(Acts 21:15-19)**

(a) Paul is welcomed to Jerusalem and he testifies about the fruit of his ministry among the Gentiles.

1. “And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. **And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.** On the following day **Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.** When he had greeted them, **he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.**” Acts 21:15-19 NKJV

2. Paul arrives in Jerusalem

a) Paul traveled with many other disciples who will all board together.

b) At first, Paul is welcomed by the local Church.

c) The next day he visits James and the other elders and reports the testimonies of what God did with the Gentiles through his ministry.

(3) It's Time to Set the Record Straight! (**Acts 21:20-25**)

(a) Paul is accused that he has been teaching against circumcision and the law!

1. **“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.**

And they said to him, “You see, brother, **how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then?** The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. **Therefore do what we tell you:** We have four men who have **taken a vow**. Take them and **be purified with them, and 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 nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.** 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.**"" Acts 21:20-25 NKJV

2. Paul is made an offer for what he can do to ensure EVERYONE that he is NOT teaching that coming to Christ gives Jews permission to forsake God's laws!
 - a) Everyone seem happy to hear Paul's testimonies.
 - b) But, they've also heard other things about Paul and they want to know if they are true.
 - c) Paul is accused of teaching that circumcision and the law are unnecessary for Jews after they "become Christians."
 - 1) Remember, in Acts 15 there were religious Jews who claimed that circumcision and obedience to God's laws are REQUIRED for someone to be born-again, and Paul was vehemently opposed to that bad doctrine.
 - 2) He had run into this type of teaching on his journeys and he and others headed to Jerusalem to get a clear determination from Church leaders (James and others) on this matter.

- 3) This question inspired the convening of what came to be known as the Jerusalem Council, which produced the official ruling on such matters.
 - 4) See [A Schism in the Making](#), but in short, the bad doctrine is quashed and official letters are issued settling the controversy.
 - 5) Nothing is required other than grace through faith to become a Christian.
 - 6) However, AFTER Gentiles are converted, they must begin to obey God's laws, starting with removing idols from their lives, eating no unclean foods, and abstaining from sexually immoral practices (as we see reiterated by James shortly in this passage).
- d) James explains that Jewish believers remain fervent about obeying God's laws, even after they have come to faith in Y'shua, and they want to know Paul's stance on this issue, as they've heard he's teaching against such.
- 1) This brings into focus the idea of "false accusations." We will see details about such in Section 3, but just for reference, consider how

Paul was involved with the execution of Stephen in Acts 7:57-58 and Acts 8:1.

- 2) And of what was Stephen falsely accused?
Speaking blasphemous words against Moses, God, the temple, and the law?
 - 3) And of what was Paul falsely accused of here?
Teaching to forsake Moses, not to circumcise, nor to walk according to Jewish customs. Teaching against the Jews, the law, and the temple.
 - 4) What happened to Stephen? ***“They stoned Stephen*** *as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”*” Acts 7:59 NKJV
 - 5) What happened to Paul? ***“...they stoned Paul*** *[in Lystra] and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”* Acts 14:19 NKJV
- e) James assures Paul that the assembly will certainly come together to determine if these accusations about him are true.
- 1) Just like the Jerusalem Council convened to settle an important issue in Acts 15, we must do so again!

- f) James offers Paul a way to make a public declaration to clear up any doubt about what he believes on the topic.
- g) He offers Paul the opportunity to take what seems to be a Nazarite Vow [Numbers 6] with four other men who are prepared to do so.
- h) Not only does James ask him to take the vow, according to the Torah, as a public declaration that he is NOT teaching against circumcision or the law, but to pay the costs of such a vow for the other four men, in addition to his own costs.
- i) Do this Paul so everyone will know that the accusations against you are not true and that you actually still keep the law yourself.
- j) Then James reminds Paul, who was there at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, that there were even Torah commands that Gentiles must adhere to once they come to faith: no idolatry, no unclean foods, no sexual immorality!
- 1) This was the starting point for the Gentiles and they would learn more Torah each week in the synagogues (see Acts 15:19-21).

- k) Ironically, Paul was actually the one charged with sharing the ruling of that Council among the Gentiles on his following mission trip.
- l) Paul was asked to take this vow to prove this one thing: he **IS NOT** teaching against circumcision or the law.
- m) So what does he do? His decision will reverberate throughout history!

(4) Paul makes a definitive statement! (**Acts 21:26**)

- (a) I am not teaching that coming to Christ gives you permission to forsake God's laws!

1. "Then Paul took the men, and the next day, **having been purified with them,** entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them." Acts 21:26 NKJV

2. Paul takes the vow!

- a) Paul walks through all the steps of the Nazarite Vow and also pays the expenses of the other men!
- b) His statement is clear. The accusations against him are false.
- c) This should end the controversy, but does it?

(5) Four Accusations against Paul (**Acts 21:27-29**)

- (a) Even after Paul's definitive statement, some unbelieving Jews still continue to accuse him! And one of those accusations is actually TRUE!
1. "Now **when the seven days were almost ended**, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, **stirred up the whole crowd** and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! **This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.**" (For they had **previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian** with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had **brought into the temple.**)" Acts 21:27-29
 2. When Paul appeared in the temple to complete the obligations of the vow, it triggered some hard-headed unbelieving Jews.
 - a) Paul just made the public declaration that he is not teaching against circumcision and the law, and what is he accused of anyway?
 - b) He teaches men everywhere things contrary to the Jews, contrary to the temple, and contrary to the law!

- 1) We just learned that he is definitely NOT teaching any such doctrine.
 - 2) So, here we are again, back to Paul reaping the consequences of what he sowed against Stephen (false accusations)!
 - 3) Why would a man pay the consequences for his sins, even after he has been forgiven of those sins? (More on this main topic in Section 3.)
- c) And Paul is also accused of bringing Greeks into the temple, which supposedly defiled its holiness.
- d) They presented proof that he did this and they name the names of the Greeks who he brought into the temple.
- 1) It is TRUE that he did this, and of itself it would not be unusual for Greeks, or any other Gentile to come into the temple (and synagogues), **IF** they were in the process of conversion to Judaism.
 - 2) Those would-be converts were known as God-fearers and were permitted, by tradition, to enter into certain parts of the temple.
 - 3) *“So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the **Gentiles begged that these words might be***

*preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and **devout proselytes** followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” Acts 13:42-43 NKJV*

- 4) *“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together **to the synagogue of the Jews**, and so spoke that a great multitude **both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.**” Acts 14:1 NKJV*
- 5) But, in this case, Paul had brought those who converted from Gentiles, without any processes of moving toward Judaism, because they had become born-again Christians, and there were no protocols in place, nor provisions for such, to enter the temple other than the steps they had laid out previously.
- 6) But let’s be clear, there is no Torah command against such, just tradition. So they are mad he has broken with tradition, not broken the law.

(6) Paul is Arrested in the Temple (**Acts 21:30-36**)

- (a) Apprehended and dragged into Custody

1. “And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, **seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.** Now as they were **seeking to kill him, news came to the commander** of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And **when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.** 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. And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So **when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks.** When he reached the stairs, he **had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob.** For **the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, “Away with him!”**” Acts 21:30-36 NKJV

2. Jerusalem was in an uproar...

- a) Paul is arrested and forced out of the temple.
- b) The mob-like crowd of unbelieving Jews want to kill him, but the local Roman military commander

- [Claudius Lysias is named in Acts 23] got wind of what was happening, and he takes some soldiers and intercepts the mob as they are beating Paul.
- c) Claudius Lysias has Paul chained and then inquires about the charges. (Like Holy Spirit told him would happen in Miletus in Acts 20:23)
 - d) The crowd could give no coherent answers, so he took Paul into the nearby outpost headquarters to question him.
 - e) The crowd is so invasive that the soldiers must carry Paul away.

DEFENSE

2. Paul Defends His Beliefs

A. Even with the perfect defense, false accusations prevail...

(1) Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (**Acts 21:37-40**)

- (a) Paul asks for a moment to address the commander [Claudius Lysias] and then the people.

1. “Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, **“May I speak to you?”** He replied, **“Can you speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian** who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the

wilderness?” But Paul said, **“I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.”** So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. **And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying,”** Acts 21:37-40 NKJV

2. Commander, “I am not who you think I am. And may I also address the people?”
 - a) At the headquarters, when things are a bit quieter and calmer, in Paul’s now beaten state, he gets permission to speak first to the commander.
 - b) Claudius Lysias assumes Paul is the Egyptian man who led a large army of 4000 rebels and asks Paul if he can communicate in the Greek language.
 - c) Paul corrects his assumption and reveals his origin as a citizen of Tarsus and asks if he can now address the mob.
 - d) He is permitted to do so and the crowd becomes silent as he begins to address them in Hebrew.
 - e) This is what he said!

(2) Paul’s Opening Arguments (**Acts 22:1-21**)

- (a) “Hear my defense!”

1. ““Brethren and fathers, **hear my defense** before you now.” And **when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent.** Then he said: “**I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,** as also the high priest bears me witness, and **all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters** to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished. “Now it happened, **as I journeyed** and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly **a great light from heaven shone around me.** And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**’ So I answered, ‘**Who are You, Lord?**’ And He said to me, ‘**I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.**’ “And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me.

So I said, **'What shall I do, Lord?'** And the Lord said to me, **'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.'** And **since I could not see for the glory of that light,** being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus. **"Then a certain Ananias,** a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me; and he stood and said to me, **'Brother Saul, receive your sight.'** And at that same hour I looked up at him. Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. **For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting?** Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' "Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that **I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.'** So I said, **'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And**

when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

Then He said to me, **'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'** "" Acts 22:1-21 NKJV

2. Paul has been accused of propagating teachings against the Jewish people, against the temple and against God's laws. Plus he brought Greeks into the temple! What does he have to say?
 - a) He addresses the people in the Hebrew language, which commands their attention (because the mob is made up of Jews).
 - b) I'm a Jew (I am one of you!) who was born in Tarsus.
 - c) I was trained by Gamaliel under the strictest guidelines of the law (I am one of you!).
 - 1) Gamaliel is the one who had the sober mind at Peter's (and the other apostles) trial.
 - 2) It is certainly possible, as Gamaliel's protege, that Paul was there at the trial. *"Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the*

apostles outside for a little while.” Acts 5:34

NKJV (See [Disruptive Technology](#))

- d) I am as zealous toward God as you are (I am one of you!).
 - e) I was the greatest persecutor of the church (I was one of you!).
 - f) I was the one who got formal permission from the high priest to go after them.
 - g) But I had a radical encounter with Y’shua on the road to Damascus.
3. Then Paul tells all the details of that encounter that took place in Acts 9. (See [Instant](#))
- a) I was knocked to the ground by a blinding light.
 - b) Y’shua asked me why I was persecuting Him.
 - c) I inquired who was speaking and He revealed Himself.
 - d) The men with me could see the light, but they could hear no voice.
 - e) I inquired what He wanted me to do and He instructed me.
 - f) I was told to go into Damascus to await further instructions, but when I got off the ground I was blind, so the men with me had to guide me.

- g) In Damascus I met Ananias, by the law's standards, a devout man of great reputation among the Jews.
- h) He was used by God to restore my sight and give me my next instructions.
- i) He told me that God chose me to know His will, to recognize the long-awaited Messiah, and to hear the Messiah's voice. I was to be His witness.
- j) At that point I was baptized and cleansed of all my sins as I called on the name of Y'shua.
- k) After I returned to Jerusalem, while in prayer in the temple, I received a prophetic word that I should leave the city.
- l) I understood that this was because few people would believe my conversion was authentic because of all the harm I caused to God's people in the past, including how I presided over Stephen's murder. (See [All Used Up for God](#))
- a) Later I was even stoned just as Stephen had been stoned! *"Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there [Lystra]; and having persuaded the multitudes, **they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.**"* Acts 14:19 NKJV

m) During my short post-conversion trip to Jerusalem, God told me to leave and go to the Gentiles!

(3) Paul's Roman Citizenship (**Acts 22:22-29**)

(a) *"Depart, for I will send you to the Gentiles."* This very concept triggers the unbelieving Jews...

1. "And they **listened to him until this word**, and then they raised their voices and said, **"Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!"** Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that **he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.** And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, **"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"** When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, **"Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."** Then the commander came and said to him, **"Tell me, are you a Roman?"** He said, "Yes." The commander answered, **"With a large sum I obtained this citizenship."** And Paul said, **"But I was born a citizen."** Then immediately those who were

about to examine him withdrew from him; and **the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.**"

Acts 22:22-29 NKJV

2. The non-believing Jews tracked with Paul until he mentions the idea that the Messiah was for the Gentiles; that caused them to go off the rails.
 - a) Someone who believes this has no right to live!
 - b) They act like savages, tearing their own cloths and throwing dirt in the air!
 - c) The commander brings Paul back inside to question him while he is being whipped (a scourging should extract the truth from Paul).
 - d) Paul has been here before and he is just not up for another scourging, so he reveals something to the soldier, who is about to whip him, that alters the entire situation.
 - e) *"I am a Roman citizen and I am sure that punishing a Roman, before proper legal proceedings are conducted, is illegal!"*
 - 1) And this shifts the direction of the rest of Paul's life! He will now go from trial to trial defending

these false accusations as a Roman citizen (see Subsection B below).

- f) Before he commenced with the beating, the centurion, who was about to scourge Paul, warns the commander that Paul is a Roman citizen.
 - g) The commander then confirmed this himself, impressed as such, also telling Paul what a great cost it was for him to obtain his own Roman citizenship.
 - h) Paul contrasts that with how he was born a citizen.
 - i) Those who were about to whip him backed off and the commander himself became worried over how this would look to Rome!
 - j) Instead of beating him, he releases him to the Jewish courts!
- 1) This is a similar warning that the City Clerk issued after the riots in Ephesus in Acts 19. We do not want to break Roman protocols, as we will have no excuse to offer if we are held accountable.
 - 2) *“For we are in danger of **being called in question** for today’s uproar, there being **no reason which we may give to account** for this disorderly gathering.”* Acts 19:40 NKJV

3) See notes for [Lessons on Salvation!](#)

(4) The Divided Sanhedrin (**Acts 22:30**)

(a) Coming next: Face-to-Face with his Accusers

1. “The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, **he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear**, and brought Paul down and set him before them.” Acts 22:30 NKJV
2. Claudius Lysias still wants to know the nature of the accusations, so he brings in the Jewish leadership.
 - a) The chief priests and all their council appear as Paul sits in the hot seat.
 - b) Let the trial begin!

B. Preview: the rest of the story...

(1) From the time of the first false accusations against him (Acts 21:21), and his claim of Roman citizenship as a defense (Acts 22:25), Paul spends the rest of his life defending himself against false accusations.

(a) To Felix

1. “For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. **He even tried to profane the temple**, and we seized him,

and **wanted to judge him according to our law.**" Acts 24:5-6 NKJV

2. Defense: Acts 24:10-21
3. Left bound for two years (Acts 24:22-27)

(b) To Porcius Festus

1. "When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and **laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove,** while he answered for himself, "**Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple,** nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.'" Acts 25:7-8 NKJV
2. Defense: Acts 25:9-12 (Appeals to Caesar Augustus)
3. "*For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but **if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.***" Acts 25:11 NKJV

(c) To King Agrippa

1. "And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me,

both at Jerusalem and here, **crying out that he was not fit to live any longer.**" Acts 25:24 NKJV

2. Defense: Acts 26:1-32

(d) Arrives in Rome (Acts 28:11-30)

1. Defense: "And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: **"Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers,** yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans," Acts 28:17 NKJV

CONSEQUENCES

3. **As a believer, you will not be punished by God for your sins, but here on earth, your sin itself is the punishment!**

A. False Accusations

(1) False Accusations against Y'shua

(a) They sought false testimony...

1. "Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council **sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,** but found none. **Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.** But at last **two false witnesses came forward** and said, "This

fellow said, 'I am able to **destroy the temple** of God and to build it in three days.' "" Matthew 26:59-61 NKJV

- a) With Y'shua, it is quite fascinating that many false witnesses came forward to tell lies about Him, but at first, no one believed any of them.
- b) Then two false witnesses came forward whose testimony the hypocritical religious leaders used to condemn Him.
- c) Notice that disparaging the ***temple** is involved. It's a common theme we will see with accusations later against Stephen and Paul.
- d) There is no mention that Paul was at these hearings, but we know his mentor Gamaliel was with the same religious leaders later at the apostles' trials. As his protégé, it is altogether feasible that Paul was present wherever Gamaliel was serving.
- e) This raises the suspicion that Paul had been tainted by false witness testimony in the past when later he is clearly present for the trial involving Stephen!

(2) False Accusations against Stephen

- (a) They secretly induced false testimony...

1. “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then **they secretly induced men to say**, “We have heard him speak **blasphemous words against Moses and God.**” And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up **false witnesses** who said, “**This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;**” Acts 6:10-13 NKJV

- a) Again, the first thing we notice is that the accusations are a lie.
- b) Then, recognize what are those false accusations: Stephen is speaking against the ***temple** and the law!

(3) False Accusations against Paul

(a) Someone has informed the church leaders in Jerusalem that Paul is teaching false doctrine? Is it true?

1. “And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been **informed about you** that you **teach all the Jews** who

are among the Gentiles **to forsake Moses**, saying that they **ought not to circumcise** their children nor to walk according to the customs." Acts 21:20-21 NKJV

2. "crying out, "Men of Israel, help! **This is the man who teaches all men everywhere** against **the people, the law**, and ***this place**; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."" Acts 21:28 NKJV

- a) We do not see false witnesses here, but is what they are saying false?
- b) And notice the specific allegations: Paul is teaching Jews to forsake circumcision, the whole law, his own people, and "this place" (the ***temple**).
- c) **Obvious inconsistency:** We saw earlier that Paul carried the letters from the Jerusalem Council to inform the churches about the **legal obligations for Gentiles**. They were not even exempt from the whole law, so how could he possibly be teaching Jews that they are exempt?
- d) That alone should clue us in to these accusations coming from false testimony.

- e) Paul is essentially being falsely accused of the same thing they falsely accused Y'shua and Stephen. Is this starting to make sense?
- f) *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**”*
Galatians 6:7 NKJV

B. Forgiven but still consequences

(1) Paul

(a) Stephen was stoned to death based on false accusations

1. “Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city **and stoned him**. And the witnesses laid down their clothes **at the feet of a young man named Saul.**” Acts 7:57-58 NKJV
2. “**Now Saul was consenting to his death.** At that time a **great persecution arose against the church** which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” Acts 8:1 NKJV
 - a) Paul was the religious leader overseeing that execution.
 - b) And here in Acts 22, Paul acknowledges why he is being accused of such lies... *“And when the blood*

*of Your martyr Stephen was shed, **I also was standing by consenting to his death**, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’” Acts 22:20 NKJV*

c) *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**” Galatians 6:7 NKJV*

(b) Like Stephen, Paul was also stoned!

1. “Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, **they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.**” Acts 14:19 NKJV

a) Think about it. At Paul’s conversion in Acts 9, he is forgiven. He is now...

- 1) Not Condemned, but still responsible.
- 2) Relieved, but still accountable.
- 3) Born-again, but still subject to consequences.
- 4) Released from guilt, but still culpable.
- 5) Forgiven... yet Liable
- 6) Liable: likely to experience (something undesirable), responsible, legally responsible, accountable, answerable, chargeable,

blameworthy, at fault, culpable, subject, guilty,
faulty!

(c) Paul faced constant persecution...

1. "When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, '**So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt**, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' "" Acts 21:11 NKJV
2. "...For **I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die** at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."" Acts 21:13 NKJV
3. "...seeing him in the temple, **stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,**" Acts 21:27 NKJV
4. "Now as they were **seeking to kill him...** And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, **they stopped beating Paul.**" Acts 21:31-32 NKJV
5. "**Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!**" Acts 22:22 NKJV

(d) The consequences of past sin!

1. "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.***"
Galatians 6:7 NKJV

- a) You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin's earthly ramifications.
- b) As a Christian, you will not be punished by God **for your sins**, but here on earth, **your sin itself is the punishment!**
- c) Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven**, He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**

(2) Woman Accused of Adultery (John 8)

(a) Go and sin no more!

1. "Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a **woman caught in adultery**. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "**Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned.** But what do You say?" John 8:3-5 NKJV
 - a) Accusation: Caught in adultery
 - b) Punishment due: Stoned to death
2. "When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "**Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned**

you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."" John 8:10-11 NKJV

- a) Accusation ceases: condemnation lifted
- b) Now what! **Go and sin no more!**
- c) God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven.**
- d) He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**

(3) David's Fiasco

(a) David and Bathsheba

- 1. II Samuel 11:1-5 (the dirty deed, Sin)
- 2. II Samuel 11:6-11 (first attempted cover-up)
- 3. II Samuel 11:12-13 (second attempted cover-up)
- 4. II Samuel 11:14-27 (third attempted cover-up) The coverup is worse than the crime. Two people die!
- 5. II Samuel 12:1-9 (the sin is exposed)

(b) The Sin

- 1. "Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? **You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife**

to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.” II Samuel 12:9 NKJV

- a) David committed adultery by taking another man’s wife (note: David too was already married).
- b) David murdered an innocent man.
- c) David took the dead man’s wife as his own.

(c) The Consequences

- 1. “Now therefore, **the sword shall never depart from your house**, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ **Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house;** and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. **For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’ ”** II Samuel 12:10-12 NKJV

- a) David will always have violence and difficulties in his household.
- b) His secret sin will be exposed to the world.

(d) Repented, Forgiven, yet still Liable

- 1. “So David said to Nathan, **“I have sinned against the Lord.”** And Nathan said to David, **“The Lord also has**

put away your sin; you shall not die. **However,**
because by this deed you have given great occasion
to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, **the child**
also who is born to you shall surely die.” II Samuel
12:13-14 NKJV

- a) David acknowledges his sin.
 - b) David repents!
 - c) God forgives his sin.
 - d) However—there are still earthly consequences!
- (e) The Psalm David wrote about his authentic repentance!
1. “Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, **Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned,** And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.” Psalms 51:1-4 NKJV (see Psalms 51:1-19)
- a) David was a man after God’s own heart.
 - b) One way this was demonstrated was by his contrite heart.

c) He was truly sorry for his sin! Yet, there were still...

(f) Consequences for past sin!

1. *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**”*

Galatians 6:7 NKJV

- a) You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin’s earthly ramifications.
- b) As a Christian, you will not be punished by God **for your sins**, but here on earth, **your sin itself is the punishment!**
- c) Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven**, He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**

(4) Contrast David’s repentance from Saul’s bleating sheep—

(a) Saul is ANYTHING but truly repentant!

1. “Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, “I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and **has not performed My commandments.**” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night. So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul,

it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he **set up a monument for himself**; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! **I have performed the commandment of the Lord.**" But Samuel said, "**What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?**" And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for **the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.**" I Samuel 15:10-15 NKJV

2. "And Saul said to Samuel, "**But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.**" I Samuel 15:20-21 NKJV
 - a) This is quite the opposite of genuine repentance!
 - b) Saul disobeys God's orders.

- c) Saul sets up a tribute to himself.
- d) Saul claims he did obey the Lord.
- e) Saul gets busted.
- f) Saul blames his disobedience on others and says they did it for God.
- g) Saul testifies that he went on a mission for God while simultaneously showing his blatant rebellion.
 - 1) *“I have utterly destroyed what God told be to utterly destroy, other than what I did not utterly destroy of the things I should have been utterly destroyed, so I could sacrifice those things to God that He previously told me to have utterly destroyed!”*
 - 2) This is anything but repentant!

C. God’s forgiveness does not free us to keep on sinning!

- (1) That is why grace is not an excuse
 - (a) Forgiven... through Y’shua
 - 1. **“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”**
Romans 7:24-25 NKJV

- a) You are delivered from sin and eternal death and now you are empowered to obey God (not sin)!
- (b) No condemnation... with Y'shua
 - 1. "There is therefore now **no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me **free from the law of sin and death.**" Romans 8:1-2 NKJV
 - a) You are no longer condemned for or bound by your sin.
- (c) Grace triumphs over sin!
 - 1. "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But **where sin abounded, grace abounded much more**, so that as **sin reigned in death**, even so **grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:20-21 NKJV
 - a) The greater the sin, the greater God's grace.
 - b) The greater the temptation to sin, the greater God's grace to overcome sin!
- (d) Do we keep sinning, so grace becomes more evident?
 - 1. "What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we**

who died to sin live any longer in it?" Romans 6:1-2
NKJV

- a) No, how can those empowered by God keep sinning on purpose!
- (e) Coming to faith does not redefine sin!
 - 1. "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and **sin is lawlessness.**" I John 3:4 NKJV
 - 2. "Do **we then make void the law through faith?** Certainly not! **On the contrary, we establish the law.**" Romans 3:31 NKJV
 - a) The law defines sin...
 - b) The law does not become obsolete because of faith; to the contrary, the law is obeyed by faith.

D. Don't sin!

- (1) You have power over sin!
 - (a) Do not sin!
 - 1. ""Be angry, and **do not sin**: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil." Ephesians 4:26-27 NKJV
 - 2. "Awake to righteousness, and **do not sin**; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame." I Corinthians 15:34 NKJV
 - (b) Be perfect!

1. “Therefore you shall **be perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48 NKJV

(c) Do not let sin reign in your life!

1. “Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as **instruments of unrighteousness to sin**, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:12-13 NKJV

(d) Whoever is born-again and abides in God does not sin —cannot sin!

1. “Whoever has been born of God **does not sin**, for His seed remains in him; and he **cannot sin**, because he has been born of God.” I John 3:9 NKJV

2. “**Whoever abides in Him does not sin.** Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” I John 3:6-7 NKJV

(e) Abide in God’s love by obeying God

1. “**If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you**, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; **abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love,** just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." John 15:7-10 NKJV

(f) The consequences of past sin!

1. *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**"*

Galatians 6:7 NKJV

a) You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin's earthly ramifications.

b) As a Christian, you will not be punished by God **for your sins**, but here on earth, **your sin itself is the punishment!**

c) Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven**, He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**

(g) And never ever forget you were forgiven!

1. “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and **has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.**” II Peter 1:9 NKJV

Summary: ACCUSATION

1. Paul is Falsely Accused

A. Paul knows what calamity awaits and he is willing...

(1) Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem (**Acts 21:1-14**)

(a) Ready to Die

1. Paul is intent on going to Jerusalem, even if it will cost him his life.
 - a) Paul departs Miletus and heads back to Jerusalem.
 - b) He stops at the islands of Cos and the next day Rhodes.
 - c) From there he lands on the coast of the mainland in Patara (in Lycia).
 - d) That is where he finds a ship heading over to Phoenicia.
 - e) They sail to the south of Cyprus toward Syria, and land at Tyre (in Phoenicia).
 - f) He stayed with some disciples for seven days and they warn Paul, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem.

- g) Paul and his company depart anyway and as they leave Tyre they pray on the shore before boarding another ship to Ptolemais a little further south on the coast, where they stay for one day.
- h) The next day they arrive by boat in Caesarea (further south) and go to Philip's house (he had four virgin daughters with the gift of prophecy).
- i) They stay with Philip for many days and this is where Agabus (a prophet from Judea) took Paul's belt, wraps it around his own hands and prophesies by the Holy Spirit... *"The man who owns this belt will be delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles."*
- j) This caused those with Paul to beg him not to go to Jerusalem and this is where we see what Paul is really made of.
- k) His response: *"You're compassion touches my heart, but you must know this about me. I am ready to be locked up again for Christ and die for Christ if I must!"*
- l) Nothing they say can convince Paul otherwise, so they submit to whatever would ultimately be *"the will of the Lord!"*

- (2) Paul meets with James and other church leaders in Jerusalem... **(Acts 21:15-19)**
- (a) Paul is welcomed to Jerusalem and he testifies about the fruit of his ministry among the Gentiles.
 - 1. Paul arrives in Jerusalem
 - a) Paul traveled with many other disciples who will all board together.
 - b) At first, Paul is welcomed by the local Church.
 - c) The next day he visits James and the other elders and reports the testimonies of what God did with the Gentiles through his ministry.
- (3) It's Time to Set the Record Straight! **(Acts 21:20-25)**
- (a) Paul is accused that he has been teaching against circumcision and the law!
 - 1. Paul is made an offer for what he can do to ensure EVERYONE that he is NOT teaching that coming to Christ gives Jews permission to forsake God's laws!
 - a) Everyone seem happy to hear Paul's testimonies.
 - b) But, they've also heard other things about Paul and they want to know if they are true.
 - c) Paul is accused of teaching that circumcision and the law are unnecessary for Jews after they "become Christians."

- 1) Remember, in Acts 15 there were religious Jews who claimed that circumcision and obedience to God's laws are REQUIRED for someone to be born-again, and Paul was vehemently opposed to that bad doctrine.
- 2) He had run into this type of teaching on his journeys and he and others headed to Jerusalem to get a clear determination from Church leaders (James and others) on this matter.
- 3) This question inspired the convening of what came to be known as the Jerusalem Council, which produced the official ruling on such matters.
- 4) See [A Schism in the Making](#), but in short, the bad doctrine is quashed and official letters are issued settling the controversy.
- 5) Nothing is required other than grace through faith to become a Christian.
- 6) However, AFTER Gentiles are converted, they must begin to obey God's laws, starting with removing idols from their lives, eating no unclean foods, and abstaining from sexually

immoral practices (as we see reiterated by James shortly in this passage).

d) James explains that Jewish believers remain fervent about obeying God's laws, even after they have come to faith in Y'shua, and they want to know Paul's stance on this issue, as they've heard he's teaching against such.

1) This brings into focus the idea of "false accusations." We will see details about such in Section 3, but just for reference, consider how Paul was involved with the execution of Stephen in Acts 7:57-58 and Acts 8:1.

2) And of what was Stephen falsely accused?
Speaking blasphemous words against Moses, God, the temple, and the law?

3) And of what was Paul falsely accused of here?
Teaching to forsake Moses, not to circumcise, nor to walk according to Jewish customs. Teaching against the Jews, the law, and the temple.

4) What happened to Stephen? "**They stoned Stephen.**

5) What happened to Paul? "...**they stoned Paul.**

- e) James assures Paul that the assembly will certainly come together to determine if these accusations about him are true.
 - 1) Just like the Jerusalem Council convened to settle an important issue in Acts 15, we must do so again!
- f) James offers Paul a way to make a public declaration to clear up any doubt about what he believes on the topic.
- g) He offers Paul the opportunity to take what seems to be a Nazarite Vow [Numbers 6] with four other men who are prepared to do so.
- h) Not only does James ask him to take the vow, according to the Torah, as a public declaration that he is NOT teaching against circumcision or the law, but to pay the costs of such a vow for the other four men, in addition to his own costs.
- i) Do this Paul so everyone will know that the accusations against you are not true and that you actually still keep the law yourself.
- j) Then James reminds Paul, who was there at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, that there were even Torah commands that Gentiles must adhere to

once they come to faith: no idolatry, no unclean foods, no sexual immorality!

1) This was the starting point for the Gentiles and they would learn more Torah each week in the synagogues (see Acts 15:19-21).

k) Ironically, Paul was actually the one charged with sharing the ruling of that Council among the Gentiles on his following mission trip.

l) Paul was asked to take this vow to prove this one thing: he **IS NOT** teaching against circumcision or the law.

m) So what does he do? His decision will reverberate throughout history!

(4) Paul makes a definitive statement! (**Acts 21:26**)

(a) I am not teaching that coming to Christ gives you permission to forsake God's laws!

1. Paul takes the vow!

a) Paul walks through all the steps of the Nazarite Vow and also pays the expenses of the other men!

b) His statement is clear. The accusations against him are false.

c) This should end the controversy, but does it?

(5) Four Accusations against Paul (**Acts 21:27-29**)

- (a) Even after Paul's definitive statement, some unbelieving Jews still continue to accuse him! And one of those accusations is actually TRUE!
 - 1. When Paul appeared in the temple to complete the obligations of the vow, it triggered some hard-headed unbelieving Jews.
 - a) Paul just made the public declaration that he is not teaching against circumcision and the law, and what is he accused of anyway?
 - b) He teaches men everywhere things contrary to the Jews, contrary to the temple, and contrary to the law!
 - 1) We just learned that he is definitely NOT teaching any such doctrine.
 - 2) So, here we are again, back to Paul reaping the consequences of what he sowed against Stephen (false accusations)!
 - 3) Why would a man pay the consequences for his sins, even after he has been forgiven of those sins? (More on this main topic in Section 3.)
 - c) And Paul is also accused of bringing Greeks into the temple, which supposedly defiled its holiness.

- d) They presented proof that he did this and they name the names of the Greeks who he brought into the temple.
 - 1) It is TRUE that he did this, and of itself it would not be unusual for Greeks, or any other Gentile to come into the temple (and synagogues), **IF** they were in the process of conversion to Judaism.
 - 2) Those would-be converts were known as God-fearers and were permitted, by tradition, to enter into certain parts of the temple.
 - 3) But, in this case, Paul had brought those who converted from Gentiles, without any processes of moving toward Judaism, because they had become born-again Christians, and there were no protocols in place, nor provisions for such, to enter the temple other than the steps they had laid out previously.
 - 4) But let's be clear, there is no Torah command against such, just tradition. So they are mad he has broken with tradition, not broken the law.

(6) Paul is Arrested in the Temple (**Acts 21:30-36**)

- (a) Apprehended and dragged into Custody

1. Jerusalem was in an uproar...
 - a) Paul is arrested and forced out of the temple.
 - b) The mob-like crowd of unbelieving Jews want to kill him, but the local Roman military commander [Claudius Lysias is named in Acts 23] got wind of what was happening, and he takes some soldiers and intercepts the mob as they are beating Paul.
 - c) Claudius Lysias has Paul chained and then inquires about the charges.
 - d) The crowd could give no coherent answers, so he took Paul into the nearby outpost headquarters to question him.
 - e) The crowd is so invasive that the soldiers must carry Paul away.

Summary: DEFENSE

2. Paul Defends His Beliefs

A. Even with the perfect defense, false accusations prevail...

(1) Addressing the Jerusalem Mob (**Acts 21:37-40**)

- (a) Paul asks for a moment to address the commander [Claudius Lysias] and then the people.

1. Commander, "I am not who you think I am. And may I also address the people?"

- a) At the headquarters, when things are a bit quieter and calmer, in Paul's now beaten state, he gets permission to speak first to the commander.
- b) Claudius Lysias assumes Paul is the Egyptian man who led a large army of 4000 rebels and asks Paul if he can communicate in the Greek language.
- c) Paul corrects his assumption and reveals his origin as a citizen of Tarsus and asks if he can now address the mob.
- d) He is permitted to do so and the crowd becomes silent as he begins to address them in Hebrew.
- e) This is what he said!

(2) Paul's Opening Arguments (**Acts 22:1-21**)

(a) "Hear my defense!"

1. Paul has been accused of propagating teachings against the Jewish people, against the temple and against God's laws. Plus he brought Greeks into the temple! What does he have to say?
 - a) He addresses the people in the Hebrew language, which commands their attention (because the mob is made up of Jews).
 - b) I'm a Jew (I am one of you!) who was born in Tarsus.

- c) I was trained by Gamaliel under the strictest guidelines of the law (I am one of you!).
 - 1) Gamaliel is the one who had the sober mind at Peter's (and the other apostles) trial.
 - 2) It is certainly possible, as Gamaliel's protege, that Paul was there at the trial. (See [Disruptive Technology](#))
 - d) I am as zealous toward God as you are (I am one of you!).
 - e) I was the greatest persecutor of the church (I was one of you!).
 - f) I was the one who got formal permission from the high priest to go after them.
 - g) But I had a radical encounter with Y'shua on the road to Damascus.
2. Then Paul tells all the details of that encounter that took place in Acts 9. (See [Instant](#))
- a) I was knocked to the ground by a blinding light.
 - b) Y'shua asked me why I was persecuting Him.
 - c) I inquired who was speaking and He revealed Himself.
 - d) The men with me could see the light, but they could hear no voice.

- e) I inquired what He wanted me to do and He instructed me.
- f) I was told to go into Damascus to await further instructions, but when I got off the ground I was blind, so the men with me had to guide me.
- g) In Damascus I met Ananias, by the law's standards, a devout man of great reputation among the Jews.
- h) He was used by God to restore my sight and give me my next instructions.
- i) He told me that God chose me to know His will, to recognize the long-awaited Messiah, and to hear the Messiah's voice. I was to be His witness.
- j) At that point I was baptized and cleansed of all my sins as I called on the name of Y'shua.
- k) After I returned to Jerusalem, while in prayer in the temple, I received a prophetic word that I should leave the city.
- l) I understood that this was because few people would believe my conversion was authentic because of all the harm I caused to God's people in the past, including how I presided over Stephen's murder. (See [All Used Up for God](#))

a) Later I was even stoned just as Stephen had been stoned!

m) During my short post-conversion trip to Jerusalem, God told me to leave and go to the Gentiles!

(3) Paul's Roman Citizenship (**Acts 22:22-29**)

(a) *"Depart, for I will send you to the Gentiles."* This very concept triggers the unbelieving Jews...

1. The non-believing Jews tracked with Paul until he mentions the idea that the Messiah was for the Gentiles; that caused them to go off the rails.

a) Someone who believes this has no right to live!

b) They act like savages, tearing their own cloths and throwing dirt in the air!

c) The commander brings Paul back inside to question him while he is being whipped (a scourging should extract the truth from Paul).

d) Paul has been here before and he is just not up for another scourging, so he reveals something to the soldier, who is about to whip him, that alters the entire situation.

e) *"I am a Roman citizen and I am sure that punishing a Roman, before proper legal proceedings are conducted, is illegal!"*

- 1) And this shifts the direction of the rest of Paul's life! He will now go from trial to trial defending these false accusations as a Roman citizen (see Subsection B below).
- f) Before he commenced with the beating, the centurion, who was about to scourge Paul, warns the commander that Paul is a Roman citizen.
- g) The commander then confirmed this himself, impressed as such, also telling Paul what a great cost it was for him to obtain his own Roman citizenship.
- h) Paul contrasts that with how he was born a citizen.
- i) Those who were about to whip him backed off and the commander himself became worried over how this would look to Rome!
- j) Instead of beating him, he releases him to the Jewish courts!
- 1) This is a similar warning that the City Clerk issued after the riots in Ephesus in Acts 19. We do not want to break Roman protocols, as we will have no excuse to offer if we are held accountable.
- 2) See notes for [Lessons on Salvation!](#)

(4) The Divided Sanhedrin (**Acts 22:30**)

- (a) Coming next: Face-to-Face with his Accusers
 - 1. Claudius Lysias still wants to know the nature of the accusations, so he brings in the Jewish leadership.
 - a) The chief priests and all their council appear as Paul sits in the hot seat.
 - b) Let the trial begin!

B. Preview: the rest of the story...

- (1) From the time of the first false accusations against him (Acts 21:21), and his claim of Roman citizenship as a defense (Acts 22:25), Paul spends the rest of his life defending himself against false accusations.
 - (a) To Felix (Acts 24)
 - (b) To Porcius Festus (Acts 25)
 - (c) To King Agrippa (Acts 25-26)
 - (d) Arrives in Rome (Acts 28)

Summary: CONSEQUENCES

3. As a believer, you will not be punished by God for your sins, but here on earth, your sin itself is the punishment!

A. False Accusations

- (1) False Accusations against Y'shua
 - (a) They sought false testimony...

1. With Y'shua, it is quite fascinating that many false witnesses came forward to tell lies about Him, but at first, no one believed any of them.
 - a) Then two false witnesses came forward whose testimony the hypocritical religious leaders used to condemn Him.
 - b) Notice that disparaging the ***temple** is involved. It's a common theme we will see with accusations later against Stephen and Paul.
 - c) There is no mention that Paul was at these hearings, but we know his mentor Gamaliel was with the same religious leaders later at the apostles' trials. As his protégé, it is altogether feasible that Paul was present wherever Gamaliel was serving.
 - d) This raises the suspicion that Paul had been tainted by false witness testimony in the past when later he is clearly present for the trial involving Stephen!

(2) False Accusations against Stephen

(a) They secretly induced false testimony...

1. We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.

- a) Again, the first thing we notice is that the accusations are a lie.
- b) Then, recognize what are those false accusations: Stephen is speaking against the ***temple** and the law!

(3) False Accusations against Paul

- (a) Someone has informed the church leaders in Jerusalem that Paul is teaching false doctrine?

1. Is it true?

- a) We do not see false witnesses here, but is what they are saying false?
- b) And notice the specific allegations: Paul is teaching Jews to forsake circumcision, the whole law, his own people, and “this place” (the ***temple**).
- c) **Obvious inconsistency:** We saw earlier that Paul carried the letters from the Jerusalem Council to inform the churches about the **legal obligations for Gentiles**. They were not even exempt from the whole law, so how could he possibly be teaching Jews that they are exempt?
- d) That alone should clue us in to these accusations coming from false testimony.

- e) Paul is essentially being falsely accused of the same thing they falsely accused Y'shua and Stephen. Is this starting to make sense?

B. Forgiven but still consequences

(1) Paul

(a) Stephen was stoned to death based on false accusations

1. Paul was the religious leader overseeing that execution.

a) And here in Acts 22, Paul acknowledges why he is being accused of such lies...

(b) Like Stephen, Paul was also stoned!

1. Think about it. At Paul's conversion in Acts 9, he is forgiven.

a) He is now...

1) Not Condemned, but still responsible.

2) Relieved, but still accountable.

3) Born-again, but still subject to consequences.

4) Released from guilt, but still culpable.

5) Forgiven... yet Liable

6) Liable: likely to experience (something undesirable), responsible, legally responsible, accountable, answerable, chargeable,

blameworthy, at fault, culpable, subject, guilty, faulty!

(c) Paul faced constant persecution...

(d) The consequences of past sin!

1. You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin's earthly ramifications.
2. As a Christian, you will not be punished by God **for your sins**, but here on earth, **your sin itself is the punishment!**
3. Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven**, He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**

(2) Woman Accused of Adultery (John 8)

(a) Go and sin no more!

1. Accusation: Caught in adultery
2. Punishment due: Stoned to death
3. Accusation ceases: condemnation lifted
4. Now what! **Go and sin no more!**
5. God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven.**

6. He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**

(3) David's Fiasco

(a) David and Bathsheba

1. II Samuel 11:1-5 (the dirty deed, Sin)
2. II Samuel 11:6-11 (first attempted cover-up)
3. II Samuel 11:12-13 (second attempted cover-up)
4. II Samuel 11:14-27 (third attempted cover-up) The coverup is worse than the crime. Two people die!
5. II Samuel 12:1-9 (the sin is exposed)

(b) The Sin

1. David committed adultery by taking another man's wife (note: David too was already married).
2. David murdered an innocent man.
3. David took the dead man's wife as his own.

(c) The Consequences

1. David will always have violence and difficulties in his household.
2. His secret sin will be exposed to the world.

(d) Repented, Forgiven, yet still Liable

1. David acknowledges his sin.
2. David repents!
3. God forgives his sin.

4. However—there are still earthly consequences!
- (e) The Psalm David wrote about his authentic repentance!
1. See Psalms 51:1-19
 - a) David was a man after God’s own heart.
 - b) One way this was demonstrated was by his contrite heart.
 - c) He was truly sorry for his sin! Yet, there were still...
- (f) Consequences for past sin!
1. You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin’s earthly ramifications.
 2. As a Christian, you will not be punished by God **for your sins**, but here on earth, **your sin itself is the punishment!**
 3. Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven**, He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin..**
- (4) Contrast David’s repentance from Saul’s bleating sheep—
- (a) Saul is ANYTHING but truly repentant!
 1. This is quite the opposite of genuine repentance!
 - a) Saul disobeys God’s orders.
 - b) Saul sets up a tribute to himself.

- c) Saul claims he did obey the Lord.
- d) Saul gets busted.
- e) Saul blames his disobedience on others and says they did it for God.
- f) Saul testifies that he went on a mission for God while simultaneously showing his blatant rebellion.
 - 1) *“I have utterly destroyed what God told me to utterly destroy, other than what I did not utterly destroy of the things I should have been utterly destroyed, so I could sacrifice those things to God that He previously told me to have utterly destroyed!”*
 - 2) This is anything but repentant!

C. God’s forgiveness does not free us to keep on sinning!

- (1) That is why grace is not an excuse
 - (a) Forgiven... through Y’shua
 - 1. You are delivered from sin and eternal death and now you are empowered to obey God (not sin)!
 - (b) No condemnation... with Y’shua
 - 1. You are no longer condemned for or bound by your sin.
 - (c) Grace triumphs over sin!

1. The greater the sin, the greater God's grace.
 2. The greater the temptation to sin, the greater God's grace to overcome sin!
- (d) Do we keep sinning, so grace becomes more evident?
1. No, how can those empowered by God keep sinning on purpose!
- (e) Coming to faith does not redefine sin!
1. The law defines sin...
 2. The law does not become obsolete because of faith; to the contrary, the law is obeyed by faith.

D. Don't sin!

- (1) You have power over sin!
 - (a) Do not sin!
 - (b) Be perfect!
 - (c) Do not let sin reign in your life!
 - (d) Whoever is born-again and abides in God does not sin —cannot sin!
 - (e) Abide in God's love by obeying God
 - (f) The consequences of past sin!
 1. You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin's earthly ramifications.

2. As a Christian, you will not be punished by God **for your sins**, but here on earth, **your sin itself is the punishment!**
 3. Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that **in Christ your sins are forgiven**, He also wants you to be **horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin.**
- (g) And never ever forget you were forgiven!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. Acts 21:1-14 reveals Paul's true colors...

- A. What is the prophecy over Paul's life and what is his response?

2. Paul meets with Church leadership in Jerusalem in Acts 21:15-25.

- A. What does he share with them?
- B. What is he accused of?
- C. What is he asked to do to prove the accusations are false?
- D. What does he decide to do and what historical statement does it make?
- E. What does James believe this will say about Paul?

- F. What does Paul do in Acts 21:26?
- 3. Even after Paul gives a definitive answer to the accusations, he is again accused in Acts 21:27-29.**
- A. What four things is he accused of?
- B. Which one of the four is actually true and why would Paul have done so?
- 4. In Acts 21:30-36 Paul is arrested...**
- A. Describe the events leading to his arrest and what happens to him?
- B. How does the Roman commander play a role in Paul's incarceration?
- 5. In Acts 21:37-40, Paul begins to mount his defense...**
- A. What is the first thing he does?
- B. Describe his entire defense in Acts 22:1-21.
- C. What triggers the religious Jews in Acts 22:22-29?
- D. What does Paul do to prevent being scourged?
- 6. Galatians 6:7 says whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**
- A. How does that play out in Paul's life (in Acts 21:20-28) considering his involvement in the execution of Stephen?
(See Acts 6:10-13; Acts 6:10-13; 8:1; Acts 14:19)
- 7. Describe why it is true to say that even though you are forgiven in Christ for all your sins, there remains earthly consequences.**

- A. How is this demonstrated in King David's life? (See II Samuel 11- 12)
- B. What makes you confident that King David was truly repentant? (See II Samuel 12:13-14 and Psalm 51)
- C. What makes you confident that King Saul was not? (See I Samuel 15:10-21)

8. Read the following passages in Romans (7:24-25; 8:1-2; 5:20-21; 6:1-2; 3:31)

- A. Describe how sin, forgiveness, condemnation, grace, law and faith all work together.

9. Read the following scriptures to defend the idea that Christians should not sin, even though the sin could not threaten their eternal security.

- A. Ephesians 4:26-27; I Corinthians 15:34; Matthew 5:48; Romans 6:12-13; I John 3:6-9; John 15:7-10.