

## Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Session 21

### Acts 21-22

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Keener, Acts, Session 21, Acts 21-22, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Craig Keener's lecture** on Acts 21-22 focuses on Paul's journey to Jerusalem, highlighting the historical and geographical context of his travels. **The lecture emphasizes** the significance of Paul's interactions with various Christian communities, showcasing the spread of Christianity among Gentiles. **Keener also explores** the prophecies warning Paul against going to Jerusalem, contrasting them with Paul's own conviction and understanding of his calling. **Furthermore**, the lecture examines the riot in the Jerusalem temple, Paul's arrest, and his assertion of Roman citizenship, emphasizing the clash between Jewish and Gentile believers and the broader socio-political context of the time. Finally, **the lecture connects** these events to Paul's later teachings on the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

**2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Acts, Session 21 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels – Acts → Acts).**



**Keener\_Acts\_Session  
n21.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

#### Briefing Document: Acts 21-22 Lecture by Dr. Craig Keener

##### Main Themes:

- **Spread of the Gospel:** The lecture emphasizes the spread of the gospel, particularly among Gentiles, and highlights the growth of the church in various locations like Tyre, Ptolemaeus, and Caesarea.
- **Hospitality and Ethnic Reconciliation:** Keener emphasizes the importance of hospitality within the Christian community, drawing on examples of Paul receiving support from believers in different cities. This hospitality transcends ethnic divides, reflecting the unity of believers in Christ.
- **Prophecy and Divine Guidance:** The lecture explores the role of prophecy and the challenges of interpreting divine guidance. Keener analyzes the prophecies warning Paul against going to Jerusalem, highlighting that even genuine prophecies can be partial and require discernment within the broader context of one's calling.
- **Paul's Defense of the Gospel:** A significant portion focuses on Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, his defense of his ministry, and the accusations against him. This section emphasizes Paul's commitment to contextualizing the gospel while upholding its core principles.
- **Theological Significance of the Temple:** Keener discusses the symbolic significance of the temple, particularly in light of Paul's teaching about a new temple in Christ. He contrasts the inclusivity of the Old Testament temple with the segregating practices of Herod's temple, highlighting Jesus's role in breaking down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile.

##### Important Ideas and Facts:

- **Travel accounts were popular in the ancient world:** Luke's detailed account of Paul's travels would have resonated with his audience who were familiar with many of the locations mentioned.
- **Paul's ministry among Gentiles:** Paul's work among Gentiles, supported by the decision of the Jerusalem council, demonstrates the growth of the early church beyond Jewish circles.

- **Interpreting Prophecy:** Keener suggests that the prophecies warning Paul of danger in Jerusalem were accurate but did not negate his calling to go there.
- **Paul's commitment to Jewish customs:** Despite his ministry to Gentiles, Paul demonstrates his respect for Jewish customs by participating in the Nazarite vow, showing his willingness to identify with his Jewish heritage.
- **False Accusations and Exaggerations:** Paul faced false accusations from Jewish opponents who exaggerated his teachings to incite hostility against him.
- **Paul's understanding of the New Temple:** Paul's concept of a new temple in Christ, built on unity between Jews and Gentiles, directly challenged the existing divisions within Herod's temple.
- **The Dividing Wall in the Temple:** The dividing wall in the temple, separating Gentiles from the inner courts, serves as a powerful symbol of the ethnic and religious divisions that Christ came to abolish.
- **Paul's Roman Citizenship:** Paul's Roman citizenship becomes a crucial element in his defense and ensures certain legal protections against mistreatment.
- **Importance of Apologetics:** The detailed account of Paul's legal proceedings demonstrates the value of apologetics, both legal and historical, in defending the faith and answering objections.

#### Key Quotes:

- **On hospitality and ethnic reconciliation:** "Ethnic strife, ethnic rivalry is not what the kingdom is about. But when we're brothers and sisters, wherever we go, we find brothers and sisters in Christ and we should be able to expect hospitality and grace."
- **On the limitations of prophecy:** "We know in part, we prophesy in part. That covers our teaching and it covers our prophecy. We may be right in what we know, but that doesn't mean we know everything."
- **On Paul's adaptation to different cultures:** "Paul becomes all things to all people, under the law to those who are under the law. He becomes Jew to the Jew, which would have been easy for him, Greek to the Greek."
- **On Paul's teaching on the new temple:** "In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul declares that this dividing wall of partition has been shattered by Jesus Christ. Ephesians

2:14, he himself is our peace...who has made the two one, both Jew and Gentile one in context."

- **On Paul's arrest and the purpose of Acts:** "Acts is written partly, I'm not saying this is the only reason for Acts, but Acts is written partly to vindicate Paul. That is, just like Jesus in the narrative about the crucifixion...Those who were really in charge of finding guilt didn't find any."

This briefing document summarizes the main themes, key ideas, and supporting quotes from Dr. Keener's lecture on Acts 21-22. It provides a comprehensive overview of the key points and arguments presented, highlighting the theological and historical significance of these chapters.

## 4. Acts Study Guide: Session 21, Acts 21-22

### Acts 21-22 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why was Luke's detailed account of Paul's travels significant for his original audience?
2. What evidence is there in Acts 21-22 that the early Christian movement had spread beyond Jerusalem?
3. Why were some believers urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem, even though they were speaking through the Spirit?
4. How did Paul demonstrate his willingness to identify with his Jewish heritage, despite his mission to the Gentiles?
5. What were the rumors circulating about Paul's teachings, and were they accurate?
6. Describe the events that led to the riot in the temple, and who was responsible for initiating it?
7. What is significant about Paul's speech in the temple in terms of his message and the languages he uses?
8. Why did the Roman tribune, Claudius Lysias, initially mistake Paul for an Egyptian false prophet or a Sicarii assassin?
9. What key details about Paul's upbringing and education are revealed in his conversation with Claudius Lysias?
10. What is the apologetic purpose of the final quarter of Acts, particularly in relation to Paul's imprisonment?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Ancient audiences were generally interested in travel accounts, and Luke's audience, likely educated urban dwellers, would have been familiar with many of the locations mentioned, adding depth to their understanding.

2. The presence of believers in Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea, and Jerusalem, some of whom were Gentiles, demonstrates the geographical reach of the early Christian movement.
3. These believers, including Philip's daughters and Agabus, prophesied about the trouble Paul would face in Jerusalem. While they spoke through the Spirit, their message reflected a partial understanding, focused on Paul's safety rather than his divinely ordained mission.
4. Paul agreed to support Nazarite vows, signifying his respect for Jewish customs and demonstrating his willingness to participate in Temple rituals.
5. Rumors claimed Paul taught Jews in the diaspora to abandon the law, which was inaccurate. Paul advocated against imposing Jewish customs on Gentiles but upheld the freedom of Jewish believers to follow the law.
6. Ephesian Jews who had previous conflicts with Paul saw him with Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, and falsely accused him of bringing Trophimus into the temple, igniting a riot fueled by pre-existing tensions and prejudices.
7. Paul's speech highlighted common ground with his Jewish audience, emphasizing his Jewish upbringing and zeal for the law. His use of Aramaic, the common language, further fostered connection. However, his mention of his mission to the Gentiles reignited tensions, revealing the deep polarization within the community.
8. The tribune, unfamiliar with Paul, was influenced by the chaotic situation and pre-existing anxieties about figures like the Egyptian false prophet who led a rebellion and the Sicarii assassins known for their violent tactics.
9. Paul revealed he was born in Tarsus, a prominent city, but raised in Jerusalem, explaining his fluency in both Greek and Aramaic. He also boasted about his education under Gamaliel, a highly respected Pharisee, emphasizing his strong Jewish background and knowledge of the law.
10. The detailed account of Paul's legal proceedings aims to vindicate him against accusations and demonstrate his innocence. It serves to counter the shame associated with his imprisonment and affirm the legitimacy of his mission to the Gentiles, which was under scrutiny by some.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of prophecy in Acts 21-22, considering the roles of Agabus, Philip's daughters, and the believers who warned Paul. How do their prophecies contribute to the narrative and theological themes of Acts?
2. Examine the role of cultural identity and ethnic tension in Acts 21-22. How does Paul navigate these dynamics, and what implications do his actions and teachings have for the unity of the early Christian community?
3. Explore the theme of reconciliation in Acts 21-22, focusing on Paul's efforts to bridge the gap between Jewish and Gentile believers. What challenges does he face, and how does his message of unity in Christ address these issues?
4. Discuss the significance of the temple in Acts 21-22. How do different characters and groups view the temple, and what does the riot and Paul's subsequent arrest reveal about the shifting religious landscape of the time?
5. Analyze the character of Claudius Lysias in Acts 21-22. How does his interaction with Paul evolve, and what do his actions reveal about the complexities of Roman authority and its relationship with the Jewish community?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Nazarite:** A person who takes a vow to abstain from certain things, such as wine and cutting their hair, as a sign of dedication to God.
- **Diaspora:** The dispersion of Jewish people outside of their traditional homeland, Judea.
- **Gentile:** A person who is not Jewish.
- **Tribune (Chiliarch):** A Roman military officer, typically commanding a cohort of soldiers.
- **Sanhedrin:** The highest Jewish council in Jerusalem, responsible for religious and legal matters.
- **Coercitio:** A legal term referring to the use of torture or coercion to extract information or a confession.
- **Manumission:** The act of freeing a slave.
- **Aramaic:** A Semitic language spoken in Judea during the time of Jesus and the early church.
- **Gamaliel:** A highly respected Pharisee and teacher of Jewish law, known for his wisdom and moderation. Paul was one of his students.
- **Zealot:** A member of a Jewish political movement advocating for armed resistance against Roman rule.
- **Sicarii:** A radical Jewish group known for their use of concealed daggers to assassinate Roman officials and Jewish collaborators.
- **Fortress Antonia:** A Roman military fortress located on the northwest corner of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
- **Apologetic:** A branch of theology concerned with defending Christian beliefs and practices against criticism.



## **5. FAQs on Keener, Acts, Session 21, Acts 21-22, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **FAQ about Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21-22)**

#### **1. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem despite warnings from the Spirit?**

While several believers, including Philip's daughters and the prophet Agabus, warned Paul through the Spirit about the dangers awaiting him in Jerusalem, Paul felt a divine calling to proceed. This apparent contradiction highlights the partial nature of human understanding of God's will. Like Elisha who possessed a fuller understanding of Elijah's departure than the other prophets, Paul, guided by a personal revelation and compelled by a mission of reconciliation, understood his calling differed from the warnings he received. He acknowledged the risks but prioritized fulfilling his mission, trusting God to guide him through the difficulties.

#### **2. What were the rumors about Paul circulating in Jerusalem?**

The Jewish believers in Jerusalem, led by James, were zealous for the law and concerned about rumors that Paul was teaching Jewish people in the diaspora to abandon the Torah. These rumors, likely spread by Paul's opponents, misrepresented his stance. Paul, while advocating against imposing Jewish customs on Gentile believers, did not oppose Jewish people adhering to the law.

#### **3. What sparked the riot against Paul in the temple?**

The riot was instigated by some Ephesian Jews who had previously clashed with Paul. They saw Paul in Jerusalem with Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, and falsely accused Paul of bringing him into the temple, a space forbidden to Gentiles. This accusation ignited a riot, fueled by pre-existing animosity and heightened tensions between Jews and Gentiles.

#### **4. How is the dividing wall of the temple symbolic of the conflict between Jews and Gentiles?**

The dividing wall in Herod's temple, physically separating Gentiles from the inner courts, became a potent symbol of the ethnic and religious division. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, uses this image to highlight how Christ's sacrifice breaks down this barrier, creating one new temple in himself where both Jews and Gentiles are unified. His arrest near this wall underscores the continued struggle for reconciliation.

### **5. Why was Paul's call to the Gentiles so controversial in Jerusalem?**

Paul's mission to the Gentiles was controversial because of the prevailing socio-political climate. Growing Judean nationalism and resentment against Roman rule led to increased polarization. Many Jews perceived the inclusion of Gentiles as a threat to their identity and traditions. Paul's unwavering commitment to his mission, despite the backlash, underlined his conviction that love for Christ necessitates transcending ethnic boundaries.

### **6. Why did the Roman soldiers intervene and rescue Paul?**

Stationed in the Fortress Antonia overlooking the temple, Roman soldiers, commanded by the Tribune Claudius Lysias, witnessed the riot and intervened to quell the disturbance. Initially mistaking Paul for a dangerous criminal, they arrested him to restore order. Their intervention, though unintended, ultimately saved Paul from the mob's fury.

### **7. How did Paul's Roman citizenship impact his treatment by the authorities?**

When Paul revealed his Roman citizenship, the Tribune realized the severity of mistreating him without due process. Roman law strictly prohibited the torture of Roman citizens, and the Tribune, fearing repercussions, became more cautious and respectful in his handling of Paul. This incident highlights the legal protections afforded by Roman citizenship, a privilege Paul would leverage throughout his trials.

### **8. What is the significance of the final quarter of Acts focusing on Paul in custody?**

The detailed account of Paul's imprisonment in the final quarter of Acts serves several purposes. It provides a firsthand account from Luke, who was present throughout these events. It also offers an apologetic defense of Paul, countering accusations and demonstrating his innocence before both Roman and Jewish authorities. The narrative emphasizes that Paul's arrest was unjust, driven by political machinations and false accusations rather than legitimate legal grounds. This vindication of Paul, the "father of the Gentile mission," indirectly defends the legitimacy of the Gentile Christian movement itself.

