

Acts 21:12: *'And when we (Luke, Timothy and all the rest) heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁴ And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.'*

Paul was ready for all that would come but the Christians were not; they feared being left without Paul. Every generation is the same; we hate to lose leadership but God always raises up His men for that time... always!

Verse 15: *'And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.'*

When we hear 'carriage,' we think of something in which we would ride, something which would carry us: a carry-age but this means, rather, the things we would carry: our baggage; they packed up all their stuff and began to carry it off to Jerusalem: our bag-age, our carry-age; we packed up and headed to Jerusalem.

Verse 16: *'There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.'*

Paul has been joined by many Gentiles from churches along the way; he is almost to the end of his 3rd and final missionary journey; God is about to close out this long and fruitful time of his life and ministry but it won't be the end, by any means; after this, Paul's ministry will be to write down, for all of us, the things which he had been taught, personally, from the Lord Jesus Christ when he had been taken up into Heaven those many years before. He would explain and teach the Truth of Salvation, the gift of God by His Grace.

It seems that Mnason, from Cyprus, now lived in Jerusalem but had gone up to Caesarea to meet Paul and company but now, in Jerusalem, they will all stay with him in his Jerusalem home.

Verse 17: *'And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸ And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.'*

The Christians of Jerusalem received Paul gladly; why? because Paul had been collecting moneys all along the way, love offerings from the more prosperous Gentile churches to be given to the poorer Jerusalem church and, so, of course they were received gladly! Regarding these offerings, Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

'Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. ² Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. ³ And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. ⁴ And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.' 1Cor 16:1

In addition, Paul was so thankful to all the believers who faithfully supported him in the ministry to which God had called him.

We, too, are always so appreciative of those upon whose hearts God has moved to support the ministry to which God has called us, Hearts of Love; it's only natural; we know some of how Paul feels toward these Gentile believers; Paul tells the Philippian church how precious they are to him in their desire to support his ministry, telling them that great reward awaits:

'But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. ¹⁴ Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. ¹⁵ Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷ Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. ¹⁸ But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.' Philippians 4:10

Luke says that Paul and these many Gentile Believers who were bringing offerings from their own churches for the Jerusalem Believers, *met with James and all the elders.*

Notice: James and all the elders... not James and the other Apostles... from the beginning, from the birth of the True Church, the Apostles were faithful to allow God to raise up faithful men as elders in all the churches beginning with the seven, among whom were Stephen and Philip. Then, they all *'went out into all the World to preach the Gospel.'* We know some of their travels through *'tradition'* apart from Scriptural verification:

Thomas to Parthia; **Andrew** to Scythia; **John** to Asia, dying in Ephesus; **Peter** preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia and then supposedly crucified in Rome; **James** the brother of John: Scripture does tell us that he was killed by Herod, Acts 12:1; **Paul** was killed during New Testament times, likely in Rome; **Bartholomew** was flayed alive and then beheaded; **Philip** was thought to have been killed in Hierapolis/Turkey; **Matthew**: even *'tradition'* misses his demise; **Simon/Jude** was killed with his companion, **Jude/Thaddeus**; John is the only one to have lived into old age; while exiled to the Island of Patmos, he was given *'The Revelation of Jesus Christ'* which was meant to be studied and understood, *through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*, by every believer until the Lord Jesus Christ returns for His Bride in the Rapture.

A true leader is always faithful to prepare, to his ability and with the leading of God's Holy Spirit, a faithful man, an elder, to replace him when the time comes. The Apostles did so; again, we don't know with certainty, but we can know that Jesus carefully selected all of His Apostles, training them for more than 3 years, to replace Him in Preaching, in Teaching, in establishing new churches and helping to raise up faithful men to lead each church after their own departures, when they would leave and walk to the next town or city.

Isn't it amazing, the hatred, the vitriol poured out upon every Apostle, just like they did upon Jesus and we've been warned by Jesus, Himself: *'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that ye love one another. ¹⁸ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

²⁰ Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. ²³ He that hateth me hateth my Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. ²⁶ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: ²⁷ And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.' John 15:16

They hated and killed the Lord Jesus Christ; they hated and killed His disciples and the disciples who followed His disciples and never forget: *'they' hate us; they would kill us if they could 'get away with it' and that time is fast approaching: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. ² They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ³ And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.'* John 16:1

They shall put you out of the modern-day apostatizing churches as well...

Now we're going to see false christians, Judaizers, who will seek Paul's death again...

Verse 19: *'And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:'*

Notice what Paul says: *'...what things **God had wrought** among the Gentiles by his ministry.'* See Paul's humility; he doesn't take any credit; he gives it all to God and he did it in such a way that, *'...when they heard it, **they glorified the Lord...**'*

Paul reported that 'God did all this!' He didn't say, 'see what I've accomplished and, so, they didn't then say, 'Way to go Paul; you are the greatest!' Again... so unlike so many today! so unlike me sometimes...but I am trying... some say I'm very trying, indeed!

The word Luke uses for, '*how many thousands*' is *myrias*/moo-ree'-as, from which we get: myriad: a huge number: 10,000x10,000: in other words, very, very many people; they are Jews but he says that, '*they are all zealous of the law!*'

Some of these are sincere believers to whom all of the trappings of Judaism have been drilled into them from birth! Paul is not concerned with their desire to continue on in Mosaic traditions as long as they do not believe that those things save them or cause God to more readily accept them. But some of these are Judaizers, those who teach that for Gentiles to be saved, they must first become Jews which is antithetical to what James had judged regarding Gentile believers: '*And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved... But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses... And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. ⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; ⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they...' James then wrote: '*We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. ²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; ²⁹ That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.'*' Acts 15*

Here is, however, a problem with all these Jewish believers... in my opinion, James has not been faithful to clearly teach them in this regard; he has not taught and trained the many elders who are tasked with teaching these myriad Christians the clear truth of Salvation by Faith alone in Christ alone through His Word alone! In fact, it is James who will write something which will cause much misunderstanding in the Church throughout the coming centuries: '*And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. ²⁴ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. ²⁵ Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.'*' James 2:16

James may not have clearly understood the Truth of Salvation by Faith alone which was given to Paul to lay out for the Church. Just because the 12 are Apostles, it doesn't mean they do or understand everything perfectly. Remember, Paul had to chastise Peter for his duplicity toward the Gentiles.

Now it is true that genuine saving faith will certainly result in good works; Paul will write: '*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.'*' Ephesians 2:8

Do you see... we are born again, a new creation but it is only God's gracious work through the gift of faith

which He gives us. Then, as His new creations we are created unto good works, not by or through good works. Now, rather than saying that the Book of James should not have been included in the Canon of Scripture, as some throughout history have, my solution to his puzzle is simply: I'm not fully understanding this very deep conundrum.

One aspect is that James and Paul were writing to different audiences: Paul is writing primarily to Gentiles while James, Peter and the writer of Hebrews are writing primarily to Jews.

But, surely, we don't have time or space to really examine this but perhaps sometime we shall.

Verse 21: *'And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. ²² What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.'*

Now James is reporting what the false Judaizers were spreading about Paul; we've seen them, along with unbelieving Jews throughout every part of Paul's journeys; it is so surprising that he is able to keep going, never stopping or slowing down, faithfully fulfilling the ministry to which God has ordained him. So James says:

Verse 23: *'Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; ²⁴ Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. ²⁵ As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them'*

We have these 4 men who've taken a vow; (probably a Nazirite Vow) Purify yourself with them; pay their offering and for the animals for their sacrifices.

Paul did all of this; he did not have a problem with any of it; he never taught the doing away with Moses which was/is very important to Jews; it is their heritage, their identity.

The Nazirite Vow is found in Num. 6:1-12; it required a person to separate from the world and dedicate themselves to specifically serving God for a set time. The requirements were to abstain from alcohol, to not cut the hair and to avoid contact with the dead. When the time of the vow is completed, the 'Nazirite' would shave their head, offer a sacrifice and burn the hair. Some examples of Nazirites were: Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist.

Paul explains how it is that he could be a Christian and still participate in/observe Jewish traditions:

'For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ²⁰ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ²¹ To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²² To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' 1Cor 9:19

Verse 27: *'And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,'*

The Jews which were of Asia... these disgusting people! It sounds like the same ones who've followed Paul, seeking to destroy him throughout all the years of his ministry. Once more stirring up all the people and laying hands on him! I would not want to be among that group come time to stand before Jesus Christ!

Verse 28: (Judaizers) *'Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.'* Lies upon lies, ever trying to destroy the Work of God through Paul...