

Acts 21:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple—Paul's voluntary participation in Jewish purification rites (καθαρισμός, katharismos) demonstrates his missionary flexibility: 'to the Jews I became as a Jew' (1 Corinthians 9:20). The seven-day Nazirite vow completion involved ritual purification and temple offerings (Numbers 6:13-20). This was not compromise but contextualization—Paul observed ceremonial law to maintain witness among Jewish believers, though he knew such rituals held no saving power.

To signify the accomplishment of the days of purification—The Greek διαγέλλω (announce, declare) indicates Paul formally notified temple authorities of the vow's completion date, when prescribed offerings would be made. This public act showed Paul's respect for Jewish sensibilities despite his doctrine of freedom from the law for salvation.

Historical Context

This occurred around AD 57-58 during Paul's final visit to Jerusalem. James and the elders suggested this action to counter rumors that Paul taught Jews in the

Diaspora to abandon Moses (Acts 21:21). The purification costs for four men demonstrated Paul's financial support and solidarity with the Jerusalem church.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you balance theological conviction with cultural sensitivity in your witness to different groups?
2. What does Paul's participation in Jewish ritual teach about Christian liberty and the limits of contextualization?

Interlinear Text

τότε ὁ Παῦλος παραλαβὼν τοὺς ἄνδρας τῇ ἔχομένῃ
Then G3588 Paul took G3588 the men G3588 and the next
G5119 G3972 G3880 G435 G2192

ἡμερῶν σὺν αὐτῶν ἀγνισθεὶς εἰσῆι εἰς τὸ ιερόν
day with of them purifying himself entered into G3588 the temple
G2250 G4862 G846 G48 G1524 G1519 G2411

διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ
to signify G3588 the accomplishment G3588 day G3588
G1229 G1604 G2250

ἀγνισμοῦ ἔως οὖ προσηνέχθη ὑπὲρ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου
of purification until that should be offered for one every
G49 G2193 G3739 G4374 G5228 G1520 G1538

αὐτῶν ἡ προσφορά
of them G3588 an offering
G846 G4376

Additional Cross-References

Acts 24:18 (Temple): Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

Acts 21:24 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Corinthians 9:20 (Parallel theme): 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;