

QUESTION #65

This is the beginning of the teaching of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 1:2-19 Isaiah here called on the people of his time by saying this and this in (v - 12 who ask you to bring me animal sacrifice and here he condemned Sabbath keeping here too but in verse 18 the lord says come now lets settle the matter. The apostle Paul offered a sacrifice in this place Acts 21:26 G. N. B. He even performed ceremony of purification and every body quotes him when they wish it to go the other way around. (1 Timothy 1:1 It's the same Paul speaking here and please explain this Acts 24:17-18 G. N. B. Verse 17 of Acts 21 this is where I would love to understand because here the ones I will call the living witness say to brother Paul verse 21 G. N. B., **HERE PAUL OFFERED SACRIFICE OR WHAT IS THIS appeal?**

The first issue to clarify in answering your question is the scripture referred to in **Isa. 1** where you say that God condemned Sabbath-keeping. ***You need to realize that He did not condemn Sabbath-keeping -- He condemned the attitude of the people. Sabbath-keeping is a commandment-- it should be observed -- but in the proper attitude or spirit.***

Now, we will look at the scriptures that you mentioned which are found in **Acts 24:17-18** and **Acts 21:17, 21. Acts 24:10-21** gives the account of Paul's defense before Felix in 58 A. D. who was Procurator of Judea while Paul was on his fifth trip to Jerusalem. Paul is speaking in vs. 17-18: **17. "Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, 18. "in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult."** (NKJV unless otherwise noted).

Note: *These were the offerings mentioned in Rom. 15:25-26, 1 Cor. 16:1-4, and 2 Cor. 8:1-4 which Paul was very careful to collect from the churches in Macedonia and Greece for the poor Jewish brethren (and unbelieving Jews) in Jerusalem as well as those offerings associated with his own Jewish vow.*

To further clarify, let's look at **Acts 24:17-18** as they appear in *The Amplified Bible*: **17. Now after several years I came up [to Jerusalem] to bring to my people contributions of charity and offerings. 18. While I was engaged in presenting these, they found me [occupied in the rites of purification] in the temple, without any crowd or uproar. But some Jews from [the province of] Asia [were there].**

Note: Paul had been accused of sedition by some Asian Jews who were not even there to present their side of the case.

The other scriptures that you had asked about are **Acts 21:17, 21**. Luke writes:

17. And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. For clarity, let's look at the context.

18. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

19. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20. 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;

21. "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."

From *The Amplified Bible*:

17. When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received *and* welcomed us gladly.

18. On the next day Paul went in with us to [see] James, and all the elders of the church were present [also].

19. After saluting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20. And upon hearing it, they adored *and* exalted *and* praised *and* thanked God. And they said to [Paul], You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and all of them are enthusiastic upholders of the [Mosaic] Law.

21. Now they have been informed about you that you continually teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn back from *and* forsake Moses, advising them not to circumcise their children or pay any

attention to the observance of the [Mosaic] customs.

Note: A rumor had circulated that Paul had discouraged or forbidden Jewish converts who were living among Gentiles not to observe the Torah (the law of Moses). James and the elders had realized that this was not true since earlier in 51 A. D.(?) at the renowned Jerusalem Council on Paul's third visit to Jerusalem, James, the church leader in Jerusalem, with the consent of the church leaders had decided that Gentile believers were obligated to observe four conditions: to **abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. (Acts 15:29)**. If they observed these restrictions, they were considered to be brethren. Jewish believers, on the other hand, **were not forbidden to keep the Law of Moses**. Paul was a life-long Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee (**Acts 23:6**), "**concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**" (**Phil. 3:6**). Paul kept the Mosaic Law perfectly. **Acts 21:21 is/was that Jews and Gentiles who believed in Jesus were not commanded to observe Jewish customs that had been instituted by the Jewish fathers and had been attached to the law of Moses. Our present and future focus should be to emulate Christ in our hearts and minds -- to seek mercy and not sacrifice.**

Answered by: Tommy West (Wake Forest, North Carolina)

Darwin Lee writes:

If our focus is to emulate Christ in our hearts and minds, we then will actually perform in our actions according to the laws of God. (Deut. 5:29, Ezek. 36:26-27) Christ in us will lead us to want to "do them" to the fullest extent of His Law, there by truly emulating Christ in our actions or conduct. We will live as Christ lived, which was to keep and do the commandments because that was His focus in His heart and mind. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15:10)