

***Politeuma* Privileges for Romans; Paul's Use of His *Politeuma* Privileges: Roman Citizenship & Its Confirmation, Acts 21:10-11; 22:24-29**

7. *Politeuma* Privileges for Romans:

1. Following this second battle, Philippi was made a Roman colony with the title *Colonia Augusta Iulia Philippensis*. Many of the Antony and Octavian's soldiers retired from service and remained in the city.
2. Octavian conferred on the colony the special privilege of the *ius Italicum*: Italian Law, which means its citizens enjoyed the same rights and privileges enjoyed by the citizens of Rome. This citizenship and what it implied was called *politeuma*.
3. *Politeuma* indicated great freedoms and privileges that non citizens did not enjoy. The resident of Philippi possessed the same standing under Roman law as did the residents of Rome itself.
4. The purpose of this was not only to reward the citizens of Philippi but also to demonstrate in the frontier the superior quality of Roman life to the people of the provinces.
5. The privileges enjoyed and possessed by the citizens of the Philippian colony are implied by the word *politeuma* and include the following:
 - 1) *Politeuma* maintained Roman culture in terms of food, housing, dress, language, religion, and lifestyle.
 - 2) Philippians were not required to pay taxes and all items purchased in trade came to them at half price.
 - 3) Roman citizenship allowed exemption from all degrading punishments such as scourging with rods or whips and especially crucifixion.
 - 4) In all legal cases following a sentence, *politeuma* gave the citizen the right of appeal to the emperor.
 - 5) If charged with a capital offense, the citizen had the right to be taken to Rome for a trial before Caesar.
 - 6) Only a citizen of Rome could hold public office.
 - 7) *Politeuma* granted the right to free travel and the guarantee of protection wherever a person went within the Empire.
 - 8) *Politeuma* exempted all Roman citizens from any local laws without his consent.
 - 9) The citizen was governed only by the laws of Rome and thus granted access to Roman courts anywhere in the Empire.

8. Paul's Use of His *Politeuma* Privileges:

Acts 21:10 - As we [Paul and his missionary team] were staying there [Caesarea at the house of Philip the evangelist] for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

v. 11 - And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

1. Paul is warned not to go to Jerusalem but disobeys the divine mandate. He is obsessed with delivering a donation given by the Gentile churches to the base church in Jerusalem.
2. Paul is open to direction from men but rejects that given to him through the Holy Spirit. His disobedience puts him into reversionism.
3. After Paul's arrival in Jerusalem he is influenced to make a public demonstration of his continued loyalty to the Mosaic Law.
4. The Jerusalem church was made up of Messianic Jews who although saved, did not want to give up the rituals required by the Torah.
5. Paul, however, had been teaching the Gentiles that the ritual plan of God was passé and the grace plan required no action on the part of the believer to be saved.
6. From these Gentile believers Paul brings a big contribution. If members of the Jerusalem church accept it, they will imply that the two groups are in theological agreement. There was no such harmony.
7. To try and demonstrate that they *are* in agreement on these issues, the Jerusalem church convinces Paul to participate in certain rituals at the temple to show his willingness to adhere to the Mosaic Law.
8. This is not flexibility but compromise. Those evangelized by a compromised gospel are not saved and those saved who are taught error cannot advance. To water down the gospel and doctrine is to do disservice to the One who called us.

1 Thessalonians 2:2 - After we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

v. 3 - For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

v. 4 - but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our souls.

9. Where Paul refused to compromise the gospel in Philippi and in Thessalonica, he now agrees to do it in Jerusalem.

10. In a human-viewpoint effort to appease the legalism of the Jewish population, Paul allows himself to be seen carrying out Jewish rituals at the temple.
11. Regardless, a rumor was spread that Paul had taken the Gentile, Trophimus \trof'-i-mus\, into the Holy Place of the temple which according to the Mosaic Law was a crime punishable by death.
12. As a result the whole city was aroused; a mob of Jews seized Paul and tried to kill him. The attack was reported to the *chiliarchos* (χιλίαρχος; Claudius Lysias \klô'-di-as lis'-i-as\ (Acts 23:46; 24:7, 22), the commander of a Roman cohort of about 1,000 men, who with a detachment rushed to the scene and arrested Paul.
13. Since the Jews could not make clear to the *Chiliarchos* Lysias what crime Paul had committed, he took the apostle back to the Fortress of Antonia, or Fort Marc Antony, built next-door to the temple by Herod for the purpose of quelling such uprisings. The interrogation begins in:

Acts 22:24 - The *chiliarchos* [**Claudius Lysias**] ordered Paul to be brought into the fortress, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

v. 25 - But when they stretched him out for the thongs [**ἰμάς, himas: the lash**], Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to lash a Roman citizen without a proper trial?"

v. 26 - When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander [**Lysias**] and told him, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman."

v. 27 - Lysias came and said to Paul, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."

v. 28 - Lysias answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born a citizen [**πολιτεία, politeia**]."

v. 29 - Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him, and Lysias also was afraid when he found out that Paul was a Roman, and because he had tied him up.

14. Paul's assertion that he was a Roman citizen spared him further abuse from the centurion. Paul was a citizen by birth but this was not the only way a person achieved citizenship; there were others:
 - 1) By birth to parents who were Roman citizens (e.g., Paul).
 - 2) By legislative extension, i.e., the emperor granting citizenship to certain provinces or colonies (e.g., Philippi).
 - 3) By twenty-five years of service in the Roman army.
 - 4) By manumission from slavery; the ceremony called *vindicta* where the slave was touched by the lictor's rod.

- 5) By purchase, i.e., one could buy his citizenship (e.g., Lysias).
 - 6) By grant to those who performed some special service to the empire.
 - 7) By adoption by a Roman citizen.
15. Even though Paul claimed he possessed Roman citizenship, why would Claudius Lysias believe him? There were several ways to confirm Paul's claim and capital punishment awaited anyone doing so falsely:
- 1) New citizens received a *diploma*, a document which conferred the privileges of Roman citizenship.
 - 2) The person's name was recorded on one of the thirty-five tribal lists at Rome as well as the local municipal register.
 - 3) Succeeding generations of a citizen's family possessed a *professio*, a registration of birth that verified his status.
 - 4) The *toga*, a white woolen upper garment, was the official dress of the Roman citizen although it was worn only on special occasions. Non-Romans could not wear the *toga*.
 - 5) Papers which validated a person's citizenship were kept in the family archives and were not usually carried on one's person.
 - 6) Consequently, the verbal claim of Roman citizenship was accepted at face value.
 - 7) The penalty for falsifying documents or making false claims of citizenship were exceedingly stiff, but according to Epictetus's *Dissertations* and Suetonius's *Life of Claudius*, those falsely claiming Roman citizenship were put to death. The form of capital punishment for a citizen was decapitation.
16. Lysias believed Paul's claim since its validity would be verified during the legal process.
17. Since Paul was a Roman citizen, before charges could be sent to Rome, the commander had to know the nature of the charges against him.