

Acts Chapter 22

- When the Jews from Asia recognized Paul as the Christian evangelist they stirred up the crowd against him, the mob subsequently threw him out of the Temple, they closed the doors, and began to beat him to death.
- The Romans got wind of the riot that was ensuing and took a couple of hundred soldiers down to put down the riot and in the process ended up rescuing Paul.
- Most of the people involved didn't even know why they were rioting so when the Romans asked them what Paul had done, none of them really knew.
- As the Romans had taken custody of Paul and were taking him into the Antonia fortress, Paul speaking Greek asked the Roman commander (Claudius Lysias) if he could address the Jewish crowd. The commander gave his permission and Paul beckoned the crowd to listen at which time they fell silent, giving him their attention, which seems somewhat miraculous considering the overall circumstances.
- From the moment Paul had gotten saved his desire was to share the truth with Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is his big chance.

V: 1-2 Paul is being very tactful in how he addresses the crowd / mob that was beating him to death.

Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words / a harsh word stirs up anger.”

- “Men” - something they can all relate to, “brethren” - fellow Jews, family, “fathers” giving deference, respect, authority figures.
- This is how the Holy Spirit led Stephen in his defense to the Sanhedrin just before his stoning.

“... *hear ye my defence*...”

- The word for defense is “apologia” from which we get the word “apologetics.” Theologically, “apologetics” means defending the faith—giving the reasons or the rationale for the things we believe.

So Paul is doing what Peter wrote about:

1 Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

- Part of the crowd probably gave their attention to Paul in part because they were curious what this was all about too - they'd gotten wrapped up in the mob mentality and really didn't know what was going on. Others may have recognized Paul as one who had been a notable Pharisee and wondered what he had to say for himself.
- The fact that he was speaking in Hebrew, the language of the educated Jews caused them all the more to be silent and listen, initially at least. It also had the effect of keeping the Romans from knowing what was going on.

V: 3 Paul begins to identify himself and give his qualifications. He's a Jew, educated, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a well known and respected Rabbi; instructed "according to the perfect manner of the law" - zealous towards God - just like all of you. Paul is being conciliatory in his approach, trying not to offend them.

Paul would later describe his Jewish brethren:

Romans 10:2 "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

- Paul now has that same zeal, if not more, but his is based on a fuller understanding of scriptures because now he knows the Risen Lord, the One who is the focus and fulfillment of all the scriptures.

V: 4-8 Paul doesn't begin with a theological treatise, he begins with his personal testimony. They might be able to debate the scriptures, or nullify his view of them - but they, no one can deny or refute a personal testimony because it's their experience, this is what happened to me.

- Sharing the changes and the impact of what God has done in your life personally.
- Paul testifies that he was a persecutor of the church - probably a well known fact in Jerusalem.

He described himself:

1 Timothy 1:13 "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious..."

- Paul describes the church before they were known as Christians / Antioch - they were described as "The way" - probably a reference to **John 14:6**.
- Paul describes that he was on the way to Damascus with letters or warrants from the High Priest to arrest and bring back any Jews who turned away from Judaism and followed Jesus.
- (Acts 9) He was on the way nearing Damascus when a great light from heaven made him fall off of his horse and had a personal encounter with Jesus, whom he immediately recognized as God.

- Paul was being polite, not trying to offend, but at the same time he didn't hold back from identifying Jesus as his Lord.
- As Paul describes having seen Jesus, and that Jesus spoke to him, he is affirming that Jesus is alive, that His resurrection is real!
- Paul was blind for 3 days until Jesus sent His servant Ananias to pray for him. Paul started preaching right away, and just as quick found himself on the other side of things - now he was being persecuted.

V: 9-10 Paul points out that there were witnesses to these events, even though they didn't hear Jesus' voice, they observed everything else.

- The Greek word used hear for "heard" is "phonei" from which we get our word "phonics" which means they heard the sounds but didn't understand what they meant.
- The same thing happens to us at times, God, Jesus speaks to us, but the people around us don't hear, don't get it - they just see you change course and wonder why.

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

- Paul's first words are of acknowledging Jesus as Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:3 "... no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

- Paul's conversion is genuine, as he recognizes Jesus as his Lord, the first thing he asks isn't for himself, but it's what can I do for you, what would you have me to do?
- In an instant Paul moved from being an enemy of Christ to a bondservant of Christ!
- "*What would you have me do Lord?*" Jesus responds: get up and go to Damascus and wait for further instructions.
- We're not saved by works, but after we're saved, serving and working is a way of life, it's what we were made for.

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

- Often times people miss the purposes that God has for their existence because they get caught up in the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, seeking after self.
- God has a plan and a purpose for each of us.

Paul wrote:

Philippians 3:12 “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ.”

- His plan and purpose for each of us is usually revealed one step at a time, and a choice to be obedient or not, but as we are, the next step is revealed, and so on.

V: 11 Jesus called Paul to do something that seems easy but in actuality was probably difficult. Go to Damascus, but now he's blind he can't just walk on in - now he's been humbled because he will need to be led by the hand like a child.

V:12-16 As Paul is obedient to the first part, God gives him the second part.

- God sent a devout believer to minister to Paul, who prayed for Paul, and Paul received his sight and got baptized.
- Ananias confirmed to Paul that he was a chosen vessel to take His message to the people, to declare what he'd seen and heard.
- Paul is careful to quote Ananias saying "... the God of your fathers" distinguishing Him from the many false gods that people worshipped.

¹⁴The God of your fathers has chosen you.”

Jesus told His disciples:

John 15:16 “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.”

- The fact that Jesus has chosen you, picked you, should be very pleasing to each one or us.
- ¹⁵Paul was chosen for a purpose, to be a witness - and he's doing that.
- Some have tried to use verse 16 as a pretext for baptismal regeneration, but that is not true.

1 Peter 3:21 “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”

- Paul was saved back on the road when he put his trust, his faith in Jesus. His subsequent baptism was simply a public profession or statement of what had already occurred in his heart.

Ephesians 2:8-9 “⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Jesus said:

Mark 16:16 “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

- Notice that he didn't say “*He who does not believe and is not baptized will be damned.*”
- It's in the believing that we're either saved or lost, not in the baptizing or not.
- Examining **Acts Ch. 9** you'll see that Paul first confessed that Jesus was Lord, then he was filled with the Spirit, then he was baptized, meaning he was born again of the Spirit, then baptized, all in that order.
- I've seen some that were baptized who've gone on to be ruled by the flesh, their baptism was a hypocritical experience. Baptism is intended to be an affirmation of what has already taken place.

V: 17- 23 Continuing his testimony, Paul describes coming back to Jerusalem and the Lord Jesus speaking to him about how the Jews will not receive his testimony.

- Paul's response was that they would remember how he'd persecuted the church so fervently, how he stood by at Stephen's martyrdom, how he “consented”, to his death, meaning as part of the Sanhedrin he voted for his death.
- But now he's converted to the same thing that Stephen died for, that should say something.
- But as he goes on to describe how Jesus commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles - that's the spark that ignites the powder keg and the riot starts all over again.
- They listened right up until that point. Then they were calling for his death.

V: 24-26 From the Roman commander's point of view it looked like everything was going just fine, he didn't know what was being said as the speech was happening in Hebrew. Then all of a sudden once again pandemonium breaks out again.

- The commander quickly brings Paul into the fortress and the situation is diffused.
- The commander still wants to know what was happening and why so he prepared to interrogate or examine the prisoner by scourging.
- The Romans didn't consider scourging a punishment in and of itself, it was simply a very effective method of interrogation, men would quickly confess, tell the truth about events, if not they would die in the process. It was terrifying and thus all the more effective at obtaining the information they desires.
- Crucifixion was the punishment.
- Paul seeing what was about to happen, and knowing that what they were about to do was illegal, he asked them about it. As soon as the centurion realized that Paul was a Roman citizen he intervened and informed the Commander.
- Paul was not opposed to taking advantage of the legal rights afforded him by the governing powers.

V: 27-30 The Roman commander came and confirmed that Paul was indeed a Roman citizen and loosed him from his bonds, he also immediately dismissed the scourging team.

- The commander still needed to get to the bottom of these riotous events so he hung on to Paul and commanded the chief priests and all their council, meaning the Sanhedrin to appear before him so he could question them as well.
- With the chapter breaks we're left at a cliff hanger, you'll just have to come back next week to see what happens.
- Bottom line: Claudius Lysias wanted to know the truth: Jesus is the truth!