

Acts 22 - Paul's Defense Before Mob at Jerusalem; Paul Recounts His Conversion; Paul's Defense Before Chief Captain; Paul's Defense Before Sanhedrin

III. Outreach to the remote parts of the earth (Acts 13:1—28:31)

(5) Paul's journey to Rome (21:17—28:31)

(A) Paul in Jerusalem (21:17—23:22)

(b) Paul's defense before the Jewish multitude (22:1-30)

Acts 22

(b) Paul's defense before the Jewish multitude (22:1-30)

1 "Brothers and fathers, hear my defense *which I now offer* to you."

1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now *offer* to you."

1 "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I am now making before you."

1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

- Paul addressed his audience warmly and respectfully, in the same terms Stephen had used

- Previous speeches in Acts were delivered for the purpose of making people change their minds and lives in view of the future. Here on in Acts, the speeches are designed mainly for defensive and apologetic purposes.

— Paul needed to defend himself against the (false) charge that he had been disloyal to his people, the Mosaic Law, and the temple (Cf. 21:28). His devout Jewish audience was especially skeptical of Paul because he fraternized with Gentiles.

— This is an excellent example of the Holy Spirit giving Paul the words to say on the spur of the moment, as Jesus promised He would do (Matt 10:16-20; Mark 13:9-11). All of Paul's speeches from here on in Acts concern his defense.

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became *even* more quiet; and he **said*,

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he **said*,

2 When they heard him speaking to them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet, and he continued:

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

- Using the Aramaic language had the desired effect...the Jews paid even closer attention

3 "I am a Jew, born in **Tarsus** of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under **Gamaliel**, strictly according to the Law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia but raised in this city and educated at the feet of Gamaliel in the strict ways of our ancestral Law. I am as zealous for God as all of you are today.

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

- "...Tarsus" - Tarsus was actually the center of Greek learning of that day. The finest Greek university in Paul's day was in Tarsus, not in Athens or Corinth, which had passed their zeniths.

— Tarsus was a thriving Greek city and an educational center. Paul's sister lived in Jerusalem, and may have reared her young brother (Acts 5).

- "...Gamaliel" - Rabban Gamaliel I, president of the council after the death of his own father, Rabban Simeon, son of Hillel. Paul's master, 35th receiver of the traditions.

— Paul emphasized his orthodox background and education under the most respected Jewish teacher of his day (Cf. 5:34)

4 I persecuted **this Way** to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

4 I persecuted this Way, even executing people, and kept tying up both men and women and putting them in prison,

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

- His zeal for God was clear in that he persecuted Christians "to the death"

- "...this Way" - another phrase to describe "The Way," a precursor name for Christianity

— He doesn't mention the church or the followers of Christ or Christians. He uses the term which they and he understand.

5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brothers, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. I also received letters from them to the brothers in Damascus, and I was going there to tie up those who were there and bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

- He had previously persecuted Christians as an agent of the Sanhedrin, which gave him authority to pursue Christian Jews as far away as Damascus

— What Paul had done previously, the Jews were trying to do to him now

6 "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus at about noon, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

6 "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

6 "But while I was on my way and approaching Damascus about noon, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around me.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

- Paul relates the events of his conversion, stressing the supernatural revelation God had given him. This revelation accounted for the radical change in his life.

7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'

7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'

7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?'

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

- Paul is stressing that his encounter with God was an event that God initiated, not something that he had sought

8 And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'

8 And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'

8 "I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' "He told me, 'I'm Jesus from Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

- Paul confirmed that it was Jesus who reached out to him; therefore, Jesus was not only the Messiah, but He was and is the risen Messiah

9 And those who were with me saw the light, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

9 And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

9 The men who were with me saw the light but didn't understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

- This follows the 9:3-19 and 26:12-18 accounts. Paul was sought; he did not seek Christ. [There is no contradiction to 9:7 at all: the men heard a voice—they heard the sound, but they did not understand what the voice said.]

— On this occasion, as well as Acts 26, Paul emphasized features that would have been especially significant to his audience. Here, his listeners were Jewish; in Acts 26, they were Romans.

10 And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything that has been appointed for you to do.'

10 And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'

10 "Then I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' "The Lord told me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you are destined to do.'

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

- As a good Jew, Paul wanted to obey divine revelation

11 But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I came into Damascus being led by the hand by those who were with me.

11 But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

11 Since I could not see because of the brightness of the light, the men who were with me took me by the hand and led me into Damascus.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

- He allowed others to lead him to Damascus, where he would receive further instruction

12 "Now a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law *and* well spoken of by all the Jews who lived *there*,

12 "A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, *and* well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

12 "A certain Ananias, who was a devout man with respect to the Law and who was highly regarded by all the Jews living there,

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 came to me, and standing nearby he said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I looked up at him.

13 came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him.

13 came to me. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' At that moment I could see him.

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

- Paul sought to impress his hearers with the fact that a pious Jew had communicated God's mission to him. Ananias even called Paul his "brother."

14 And he said, 'The God of our fathers has **appointed you** to know His will and to see **the Righteous One** and to hear a message from His mouth.

14 And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.

14 "Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear his own voice,

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

- Ananias explained to Paul that it was "the God of our fathers" who had appeared to Paul (Cf. 3:14). This title for God is distinctly Jewish.

- "...appointed you" - *proexeiristato*, "appointed" (3x in NT) implies foreknowledge, predestinated...

- God wanted Paul to know His will, to see the Righteous One, and to receive direct revelation from Him

— Ananias also said that God had told him that Paul was to be a witness "to all men" of what Paul had seen and heard

— This revelation vindicated Paul's ministry to the Gentiles

- "...the Righteous One" - appears 7x in Scripture; a title for Messiah

15 For you will be a witness for Him **to all people** of what you have seen and heard.

15 For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

15 because you will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

- "...to all people" - in Acts, Paul is not the apostle to the Gentiles. He was originally sent "to all persons," which means both Jews and Gentiles.

— He is the one through whom the Lord has chosen to realize the divine purpose of including both groups in salvation, as announced already in Luke 2:30-32; 3:6.

16 Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins by **calling on** His name.'

16 Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

16 So now, what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away as you call on his name.'

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

- The KJV version conveys the impression that it was necessary for Saul to be baptized in order to be saved, but that was not the case

- "...calling on" - *epikalesamenos*, an aorist participle meaning "having called on"

— Saul washed away his sins by "calling on the Lord" (Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13)

— Kenneth Wuest translates Acts 22:16: "Having arisen, be baptized and wash away your sins, having previously called upon His name."

— In the Greek, it is not a present participle ("calling"), but an aorist participle ("having called"). His calling on the Lord preceded his baptism.

Water Baptism Needed for Salvation?

Acts 22:16 has been a problem to some readers since it could be understood to be saying that water baptism washes away sins. Scripture presents water baptism not as the agent of spiritual cleansing, but as the illustration (symbol) of spiritual cleansing that has already taken place (1 Cor 6:11; 1 Peter 3:21).

The agent of spiritual cleansing is faith in Christ. Paul referred to faith in this verse as "calling on His name" (Cf. Joel 2:32). Paul evidently experienced regeneration on the Damascus road; he believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the divine Messiah predicted in the OT (v10; Cf. Gal 1:11-12; Acts 9:17-18). He experienced baptism in water several days after he had called on the Lord for salvation. The Lord *already* washed Paul's sins away when he had called on the Lord. Then *later* Paul arose and received baptism.

Baptism symbolizes the *method* of salvation (identification with Christ), and the washing symbolizes the *result* (cleansing from sin).

Paul's Preparation for Ministry (Cf. Acts 9:19-30; Gal 1:15-19)

17 "It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

17 "It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

17 Then I returned to Jerusalem. While I was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

- Next, Paul related his mission from God and included some new things not included in Acts 9

- "...into a trance" - veiled reference to his "out of body experience"? (2 Cor 12:1-4).

Evidently, Ananias conveyed to Paul God's commission to go to the Gentiles (9:15-16).

— In Jerusalem, God confirmed this mission to Paul by special revelation, as he "prayed in the temple" following his return from Damascus (9:26-29; Gal 1:18-19)

— The fact that Paul was praying in the temple when God gave him this revelation would've impressed the Jewish crowd

18 and I saw Him saying to me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

18 and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

18 and saw the Lord saying to me, 'Hurry up and get out of Jerusalem at once, because the people won't accept your testimony about me.'

18 And saw him saying unto me, **Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.**

- In Paul's vision, the risen and exalted Jesus instructed Paul to leave Jerusalem

— Jerusalem was God's originally intended place of witness, and the temple had been His place of revelation

19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.

19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.

19 "I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I kept imprisoning and beating those who believe in you.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

- Paul needed to leave Jerusalem because the Jews there would "not receive" his testimony about Jesus, even though Paul had formerly persecuted Jesus' disciples.

20 And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing nearby and approving, and watching over the cloaks of those who were killing him.'

20 And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.'

20 Even when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I was standing there, approving it and guarding the coats of those who were killing him.'

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And He said to me, **'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'**

21 And He said to me, **'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'**

21 "Then he told me, **'Go, because I'll send you far away to the gentiles.'**

21 And he said unto me, **Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.**

- Jesus revealed to Paul that he was to go to the Gentiles because the Jews would not accept his witness

— Specifically, the Lord directed him to "go...to the Gentiles, who were 'far away,'" meaning Gentiles who had no relationship with Judaism (Cf. 2:39)

- "...Gentiles" - the mob was listening carefully and intently until Paul uttered the word "Gentiles." It was that word that infuriated them and drove them to ask for his execution.

— Had Paul compromised with the Jews and stopped ministering to Gentiles, he could have been spared a great deal of suffering

— It is doubtful that Paul's revelation that he, as a Jew, took messages from God to the Gentiles is what made the mob angry. Rather, it was that Paul was approaching Gentiles directly about the Messiah without first introducing them to Judaism and its institutions. This was equivalent to placing Gentiles on the same footing before God as Jews, and this was the height of apostasy to the traditional Jewish mind. This is why Paul's hearers reacted so violently and allowed him to say no more.

The Jews' Response

22 They listened to him up to this statement, and *then* they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a man from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!"

22 They listened to him up to this statement, and *then* they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!"

22 Up to this point they listened to him, but then they began to shout, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! He's not fit to go on living!"

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

- That ended the accommodation of the mob: they will hear him no longer

- The Jews had taken messages from God to Gentiles many times in Israel's past (i.e. Jonah, the Pharisees, Matt 23:15). This couldn't have been what infuriated Paul's audience.

— What upset them was that Paul was approaching Gentiles directly about the Messiah—without first introducing them to Judaism and its institutions

— This was placing Gentiles on the same footing before God as Jews, which was the height of apostasy to the traditional Jewish mind

Paul's Defense Before Claudius Lysias

23 And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

23 And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

23 While they were yelling, tossing their coats around, and throwing dirt into the air,

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 the commander ordered that he be brought into the barracks, saying that he was to be interrogated by flogging so that he would find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

24 the tribune ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks and told the soldiers to beat and question him in order to find out why the people were yelling at him like this.

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

- Claudius Lysias couldn't understand why the Jews reacted as they did

- He could not tolerate a riot, because if property was damaged, he could be held responsible. If he were proven neglectful, he could lose his post.

- So Claudius decided to get the truth from Paul by threatening him and, if necessary, beating him

- This type of beating ("scourging") was a bloody, violent whipping with strips of leather embedded with scraps of bone or metal

- It usually resulted in death or permanent crippling

- This was the weapon the Roman soldiers used to punish Jesus, after Pilate declared Him innocent (Matt 27:26; John 18:38–19:1)

- This would've been the worst beating Paul ever experienced (Cf. 16:22–23; 2 Cor 11:24–25)

- Paul is being misunderstood all the way around:

- The Jews thought he had brought Trophimus into the temple, but he didn't

- The captain thought he was an Egyptian riot leader, but he wasn't

25 But when they stretched him out with straps, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"

25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"

25 But when they had tied him up with the straps, Paul asked the centurion who was standing there, "Is it legal for you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't been condemned?"

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

- An edict of Caesar Augustus stipulated that all Roman citizens were to be exempted from flogging, and that, prior to any trial before the magistrate, a formal charge had to be made against them. Even if they were found guilty, they still could not be flogged.

- Any official permitting such floggings was publicly executed (Cf. 2 Cor 11:24–25)

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

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

26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and told him, "What are you doing? This man is a Roman citizen!"

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 The commander came and said to Paul, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."

27 The commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."

27 So the tribune went and asked Paul, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes," he said.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship for a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born a *citizen*."

28 The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born a *citizen*."

28 Then the tribune replied, "I paid a lot of money for this citizenship of mine." Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

- During that time, it was possible to obtain Roman citizenship for a high price. Claudius Lysias, purchased his citizenship. However, this process for citizenship was not always possible. Earlier, the government conferred citizenship for rendering valuable service to a Roman general or high official. This is probably how Paul's father or grandfather received his citizenship, and Paul, as the son of a Roman citizen, *inherited* this status.

- Claudius was an ex-slave. He had saved his money or somehow got the money to buy his freedom. He had advanced in the Roman army so that now he is a captain. He is amazed that he has a prisoner who is a Roman citizen who was born free. Paul's parents had been Roman citizens, and it became inherent right of descendants. In 171 BC, when Tarsus became a free city, many of its prominent citizens were awarded citizenship.

29 Therefore, those who were about to interrogate him immediately backed away from him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

29 Immediately those who were about to examine him stepped back, and the tribune was afraid when he found out that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had tied him up.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had

bound him.

- The captain took the action that was safest for him, which was accepting Paul's claim of citizenship and released him from being bound (before being formally charged), but kept him in custody

- He decided that the Sanhedrin should discover why the Jews were accusing Paul, since he himself could not figure this out

30 Now on the next day, wanting to know for certain why *Paul* had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and he brought Paul down and placed him before them.

30 But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

30 The next day, since the tribune wanted to find out exactly what Paul was being accused of by the Jews, he released him and ordered the high priests and the entire Council to meet. Then he brought Paul down and had him stand before them.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

- This was at least the sixth time the Sanhedrin had to evaluate the claims of Christ:

- (1) Met to consider claims about Jesus (John 11:47-53)

- (2) Jesus' trial (Matt 26:57-68; 27:1-2; Mark 14:53-65; 15:1; Luke 22:66-71)

- (3) Trial of Peter and John (4:5-22)

- (4) Trial of the Twelve (5:21-40)

- (5) Stephen's Trial (6:12-7:60)