

Acts Chapter Twenty-Two

Acts 22:1-5

“Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now *offer* to you.” And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said, “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. “And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, 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.

- Brethren and fathers—they regard Paul with contempt—he regards them with respect
- My defense—apologia=apology—a formal defense of one's past life or actions
- He begins by sharing an identification with them—he responds to them in a sympathetic manner—he has been in their place before.
- Hebrew dialect—Aramaic
- Paul tells his story: in Acts 22: to persuade Jews—In Acts 26: to persuade gentiles—in Phil 3: for theological understanding—in I Tim 1: to give encouragement.
- Paul spoke as a Jew to Jews
- Tarsus—was a center for Greek learning—with a Greek university—his birthplace
- Educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel—one of the most prestigious rabbis of his day.
- In chapter 5—Gamaliel calls Sanhedrin to back away from attacking the Christians in case they might be up against God Himself (what Jesus accused Paul of doing when He confronts him on the Damascus road).
- Refers to the church as—The Way
- Being zealous for God—Phil 3—a Hebrew of Hebrews/ concerning the Law—a Pharisee
- Paul gives similar biographical details in Gal 1:13-14 and Phil 3:5-6

Acts 22:6-10

“And it came about that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are

you persecuting Me?’ ‘And I answered, ‘Who art Thou, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’ ‘And those who were with me beheld the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. ‘And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go on into Damascus; and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’

- The course of his life is interrupted by an encounter with the Living Jesus
- A light that is brighter than noonday
- Paul is blinded by light—in the spiritual he had been blind up until now

Acts 22:11-16

“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. “And 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, came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. “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. ‘For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. ‘And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

- Paul stresses how devout/orthodox Ananias was—a man with credentials as a good Jew received and prayed for him.
- Acts 22:14—could/should be true for all believers
- The Righteous One—tzaddik—a revered title

Acts 22:17-21

“And it came about when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’ “And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in Thee. ‘And when the blood of Thy witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the cloaks of those who were slaying him.’ “And He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

- Make haste—get out of Jerusalem—takes place after he has been following Jesus for 2-3 years (this is the only time Paul shares this vision)
- Paul never forgot he had been present at the stoning of Stephen
- Paul mentions the gentiles—because this will explain the next part of his story—but this brings about a violent response.
- Romans 10:1-11,21
- Romans 11:4
- The Lord tells Saul to go—but he makes a defense for staying—to the Lord.
- He think his earlier persecution of Christians will give him a favorable hearing among the Jews.
- For his own safety—at that time—the Lord tells him to depart Jerusalem.
- When Saul was touched by God in Damascus—told to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15)

Acts 22:22-25

And 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!” And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air, 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. And 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?”

- Jews of that day did not have an issue with gentiles becoming Jews—but offended when gentiles could become Christians apart from the Law—and stand equal before God.
- Hatred is expressed through rage—but could also be expressed as indifference.
- It is illegal to take action like this against a Roman citizen
- From now—until the end of the Book of Acts—Paul will remain in Roman custody.
- Scourge (different than a rod or normal whip)—by a Roman flagellum
- Not permissible to do to a Roman citizen
- Claim to be a Roman was not disputed.

Acts 22:26-30

And 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." And the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes." And the commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born *a citizen*." 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.

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.

- Some Jews in Tarsus had been given Roman citizenship 100 years before Saul was born—he came into citizenship through inheritance.
- Captain was an ex-slave—bought his freedom. He has advanced in the Roman army—now a captain.
- He is amazed to be holding Paul—a Roman citizen—one who was born free.
- Captain arranges for a hearing with the chief priests/council
- Paul's Roman citizenship will open the door for him to visit Rome
- Commander wants to know why Paul is being accused

Acts Chapter Twenty-two—Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Re-read Paul's conversion story in Acts 9

Dig:

- 1) How does he honor his audience when he begins to make his defense?
- 2) How does Paul's use of Jewish-Aramaic influence his listeners?
- 3) How does he identify with his listeners (what scores points)?
- 4) Do we learn anything in this account of Paul's Damascus Road encounter, that we did not know previously? (chapter 9)
- 5) How does Paul describe Ananias?
- 6) What is the point of offense as Paul shares his testimony?
- 7) How does the commander choose to examine Paul? What does This involve for Paul?
- 8) What does the Roman commander do when he finds out that Paul is a Roman citizen?
- 9) What 3 cultures does Paul take into account in this chapter?

10) How does the response of the Jews in chapters 21-22 fulfill the warnings Paul received?

Discuss:

- 1) Should the church ever remain silent on an issue to maintain peace/avoid conflict? When? Why?

- 2) Are you able to turn a conflict or trial into an opportunity for ministry? What do we learn about this by observing Paul?

Point of Prayer:

Pray for someone who has wronged you.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Do you speak or understand another language? Do you have opportunities to use it?

- 2) Were you raised in the church? What is your spiritual pedigree?

- 3) If you were in a similar situation to Paul—would you share your testimony or argue your innocence?

- 4) Have you been baptized? When? Where?

- 5) As a Christian, is there any situation where you wish you could have a "do over"?

- 6) How well do you handle physical pain? What lengths will you go to in order to avoid it?

- 7) Have you ever had to fight to preserve your rights? When should a Christian stand up for their rights and when should they yield?