

## **ACTS CHAPTER 22 -** The sermon to the mob in Jerusalem

Remember the context from Acts 21:27-32;

Paul's audience for this sermon had just tried to kill him, thinking that he had profaned the temple by sneaking a Gentile in past the Court of the Gentiles.

Once the crowd knew that Paul was in Roman protection, and once Paul began to address them in Hebrew (Aramaic), they became quiet and ready to listen (21:40).

First of five sermons.

### **THE DEFENCE OF EXPERIENCE**

#### **Acts 22:1-10**

*"Men, brethren and fathers, listen to the defence which I now make to you." When they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they gave him still more quietness. So he said, 'I am a Jew; I was born in Tarsus; I was brought up in this city; I was thoroughly trained at the feet of Gamaliel in the Law of our fathers; I was zealous for God, just as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to death, fettering both men and women and delivering them to prison, as the high priest and the body of the elders bear me witness. I received letters from them and I went to the brethren at Damascus to bring those who were there in chains to Jerusalem that they might be punished. As I was on my way, when I was coming near Damascus, about midday, suddenly it happened to me that a great light from heaven shone around me. I fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' And the voice said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' Those who were with me saw the light but they did not hear the voice of the person who was speaking to me. I said, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Stand up and go to Damascus, and there you will be told about all the things that have been assigned to you to do.'"*

Paul's defence to the mob who are out for his blood is not to argue but to relate a personal experience; and a personal experience is the most unanswerable argument on earth.

#### **Paul states his Jewish credentials**

**1) "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." 2) When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.**

**3) Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4) I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, 5) as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.**

Paul begins his defense the same way Stephen did:

**Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; ...**

The Greek word translated 'defense' is 'apologia' from which we get our word 'apologetics'.

'apologetics' means defending the faith

— giving reason and rationale for the things we believe.

Paul's defense is in essence a paradox:

(i) It stresses Paul's identity with the people to whom he is speaking.

— He notes that though he was born outside of the Promised Land, he was a Jew and that he never forgot it.

**2 Cor. 11:22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.**

**Philip. 3:4-5 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: [5] Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;**

Paul is speaking as a Jew to Jews; he is careful to lay the common ground between them.

— He was a man of Tarsus and Tarsus was no mean city.

It was one of the great ports of the Mediterranean, standing at the mouth of the River Cydnus and being the terminus of a road which came all across Asia Minor from the far-off Euphrates.

It was one of the greatest university cities of the ancient world.

— He was a rabbi, trained at the feet of Gamaliel who had been "the glory of the Law," and who had died only about five years before.

He was brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most prestigious rabbis of the day.

Paul's sister lived in Jerusalem, and may have reared her young brother.

**Acts 5:34** *Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;*

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.

— He had been a persecutor in his zeal for the ancestral ways.

Paul reminds the crowd of his credentials as a persecutor of this Way (an early manner of referring to Christianity),

Persecution severe enough to carry on his campaign of persecution beyond Judea, into Syria and the city of Damascus.

On all these points Paul was entirely at one with the audience to which he was speaking.

(ii) It stresses the difference between Paul and his audience.

The root difference was that he saw Christ as the Saviour of all men and God as the lover of all men.

His audience saw God as the lover only of the Jews.

They sought to hug the privileges of God to themselves and regarded the man who would spread them abroad as a blasphemer.

The difference was that Paul had met Christ face to face.

In one sense Paul was identified with the men to whom he spoke; in another he was separated from them.

Paul still served the God of his fathers;

He had not rejected Judaism;

Judaism had rejected God in Jesus Christ.

## Paul describes his supernatural experience on the way to Damascus

**Acts 22:6)** *"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7) I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'*

**Act 9:3** As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

**Act 26:12** "While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. 14 "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

**Acts 22: 8)** " 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. 9) " 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 10) " 'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.

**Act 9:5** And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." 7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

**Act 26:15** "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may

**receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'**

**Acts 22:11) " 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.**

**Act 9:8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.**

The events from Chap 9,22 and 26 accounts. → Paul was sought; he did not seek Christ

Every time the Lord calls a man or a woman, every time He wants to bless someone, He does it by encouraging them to take a step of faith.

Many times we miss out on years, or even a lifetime, of being in God's will because we don't act on the singular instruction He gives us.

We must obey the thing the Lord has made known to us whether through His Word, through times of prayer, or through the desires He has placed within our hearts.

It wouldn't be faith: you wouldn't need confidence in God

- If we knew how it was going to work.
- If we knew where the supplies would come from.
- If we had it all mapped out.
- If we knew how it was going to work out...

Faith confidently says, 'OK, Lord. Like Abraham I don't know exactly how it's all going to work out — but here we go!'

## **PAUL CONTINUES HIS LIFE STORY**

### **Acts 22:11-21**

**"Because I was not able to see because of the glory of that light, I came into Damascus led by the hand by those who were with me. And Ananias, a pious man as regards the Law, a man to whose character all the Jews who live there bear witness, came to me and stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight again'; and I, in that same hour, recovered my sight, and looked up at him.**

**He said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear the voice of his mouth, because you will be a witness for him to all men of the things you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise; be baptized; and wash away your sins, calling upon his name.' When I had returned to Jerusalem, and when I was praying in the Temple, it so happened that I was in a trance and I heard him saying to me, 'Hurry; depart speedily from Jerusalem because they will not receive your testimony about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they know that it was I who, throughout the synagogues, used to throw into prison and scourge those who believe in you; and when the blood of Stephen, your witness, was shed, I too was standing by and I was agreeing to it all; and I was guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' And he said to me, 'Get on your way for I will send you far off to the Gentiles.'"**

## **Paul describes his response to the supernatural experience in Damascus**

**12) "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13) He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.**

**14) "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15) You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16) And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'**

"Chosen" = proxeirisato = "appointed" (3x in NT) implies foreknowledge, predestinated...

## **The Righteous One – Jesus Christ**

- "The Just one" appears 7x in Scripture:
- "The Just One" Acts 22:14
- Pilate's wife "have nothing to do" Matt 27:19
- Pilate, washing his hands Matt 27:24
- Centurian at the cross Luke 23:46-47
- Peter's sermon Acts 3:14
- Stephen before the council Acts 7:51-52
- Peter's letter: just for unjust 1 Pet 3:18

When he reached Damascus, the man who instructed him was Ananias, a devotee of the Law whom the Jews knew to be a good man; a good Jew who received him into the faith that is in Christ.

Once again Paul is stressing his identity with his audience.

Paul is stressing the fact that he had not come to destroy the ancestral faith but to fulfill it.

But, as with his Master, Paul's own would not receive him.

**John 1:11** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

Paul is literally saying, "I had a priceless gift for you but you would not take it; so it was offered to the Gentiles."

When we read along with this, Ac.9, and Gal.1, we find that it was really three years afterwards that Paul went up to Jerusalem, after his visit to Arabia and his witnessing in Damascus.

In Ac.9 we were told that he left Jerusalem because he was in danger of his life from the enraged Jews; here we are told he left because of a vision.

Paul did not want to leave the Jews.

When God told him to do so, Paul argued.

He said that his previous record would be bound to make his change all the more impressive to the Jews; but God said that the Jews would never listen to him and to the Gentiles he must go.

In Paul's speech, we see that both he and Ananias are both simply acting like good Jews - they are not resisting God nor denying their heritage.

Ac.22:14 is a summary not only of the life of Paul but also of the Christian life. There are three items in it:

(i) To know the will of God.

It is the aim of every Christian to know God's will and to obey it.

(ii) To see the Just One.

It is the aim of every Christian to walk daily in the presence of the Risen Lord.

(iii) To hear God's voice.

It was said of a great preacher that in his preaching he paused ever and again as if listening for a voice.

The Christian is ever listening for the voice of God above the voices of the world to tell him where to go and what to do.

The duty of every one before God:

- to know His will,
- to see the Just One (Jesus), and
- to hear the voice of His mouth (His word).

**Paul describes his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion**

**17) "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance 18) and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'**

Trace: Veiled reference to **2 Cor 12:1-4**.

**2 Cor. 12:1-4** *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. [2] I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. [3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) [4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

**19) " 'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. 20) And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'**

**21) "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "**

When Paul was touched by God in Damascus, he was told then of his call to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), so the words of Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem were not new to him.

**Acts 9:15** *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

We can see that in his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, it would have been easy for Paul to long so much for the conversion of

Israel that he would want to concentrate on that - that's why Jesus gave him the reminder in the temple.

Paul made it clear that it wasn't his idea to preach to the Gentiles; this was God's plan, not his.

***Romans 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:***

## THE EMBITTERED OPPOSITION

***Acts 22:22-30***

***"Up to this statement they listened to him, and then they cried,***

***'Destroy such a fellow from the earth, for it is not proper for him to live.' While they were shouting and waving their garments and throwing dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks. He ordered him to be examined by scourging to find out why they shouted like this against him. And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, 'Is it right for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?' When the centurion heard this he went to the commander and reported it. He said, 'What are you going to do? This man is a Roman citizen.' The commander came to him and said, 'Are you a Roman citizen?' He said, 'Yes.' The commander answered, 'I obtained this citizenship at a great price.' But Paul said, 'I was born a citizen,' So at once the men who had been about to examine him stood away from him; and the commander was afraid when he realized that he was a Roman citizen and that he had fettered him. On the next day, wishing to know the truth about the accusation made by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin to assemble; and he brought Paul down and set him before them."***

**The crowd's reaction: a riot erupts**

***22) The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"***

***23) As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,***

It was the mention of Gentiles which set the mob ablaze again. A riot erupts over the utterance of one word: Gentiles;

the Jews were incensed that the gospel could be given freely to the Gentiles.

Paul had his audience all up until this point.

In their minds, they didn't mind all this talk about Jesus, but they could not stand the idea that God might save Jews and Gentiles alike and in the same way.

Jews did not have a problem with Gentiles becoming Jews.

But they were incredibly offended at the thought of Gentiles becoming Christians just as Jews became Christians,

It implied that Jews and Gentiles were equal, having to come to God on the same terms.

It was not that the Jews objected to the preaching to the Gentiles; what they objected to was that the Gentiles were being offered privileges before they first accepted circumcision and the Law.

If Paul had preached the yoke of Judaism to the Gentiles all would have been well;

It was because he preached the grace of Christianity to them that the Jews were enraged.

They took the common way of showing their disapproval; they shouted and waved their garments and threw dust in the air, in the fashion of the east.

Many people today are offended that "good people" must be saved the same way "sinners" are;

Many want a gospel that will keep them separate from the "riff-raff" of society.

**Paul in Roman custody: The commander demands an explanation of why the riot erupted again**

***24) the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this.***

It must have been a strange sight to the Roman centurion:

to see Paul passionately addressing this huge crowd in a language unknown to the Roman commander;

to see the crowd in rapt attention,

until suddenly, they erupt into a riot.

The Centurion probably did not understand Aramaic.

When it was explained to him, he must have thought it absurd and offensive:

all this rioting springing out of the hatred of Gentiles,  
people just like the commander himself.

One thing he did understand -- he must not allow a riot and must deal at once with any man likely to cause a riot.

If a riot damaged property, he could be held responsible.

If he were proven neglectful, he could lose his post.

So he determined to examine Paul under scourging.

This was quite different from being beaten with a rod or a normal whip (which Paul had experienced);

men often died or were crippled for life after a scourging.

To be examined under scourging may seem brutal, [waterboarding is tame by comparison] but was customary in that time.

- but it could only be used on people who were not Roman citizens.

This was not a punishment; it was simply the most effective way of extracting either the truth or a confession.

The scourge was a leather whip studded at intervals with sharp pieces of bone and lead.

Few men survived it in their right senses and many died under it.

### **Paul reveals his Roman citizenship**

**25) As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"**

**26) When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."**

**27) The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"**

**"Yes, I am," he answered.**

**28) Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship."**

***"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.***

***29) Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.***

"One who would have examined him," means flogging him.

As Paul was being readied for a brutal beating that would not stop until he had confessed to the crimes he was suspected.

Paul knew the pain and suffering of being flogged.

***2 Cor. 11:24-25 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. [25] Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;***

Paul announces his Roman citizenship.

Paul was rather uncommon; an educated, intelligent, devout Jew who was also a Roman citizen.

The verbal claim to Roman citizenship was accepted at face value;

The penalties for falsifying documents and making false claims of citizenship could be death.

An edict of Caesar Augustus stipulated that all Roman citizens were to be exempted from flogging, and that, prior to any trial before magistrate, a formal charge had to be made against them.

Any official permitting such floggings was publicly executed!

It was a grievous, career ending wrong to even bind a Roman citizen without due process

They had already violated Paul's rights by binding him in 21:33.

Paul reveals that he was born a citizen;

Because of all the commotion and the beating Paul had received, he probably wasn't a very impressive spectacle.

The Roman commander mutters that his citizenship cost him dearly.

Roman citizenship could not be bought for a fee; only for a bribe.

Normally, it was only granted only by right or reward.

In 171 B.C., when Tarsus became a free city, many of its prominent citizens were awarded citizenship.

His parents (or grandparents) must have been awarded the rights of citizenship for some good done on behalf of Rome.

How Paul's parents (or grandparents) gained Roman citizenship is not known but since they were Roman citizens, their descendants were Roman citizens by inheritance.

**The Roman commander arranges a hearing of the charges against Paul before the Jewish council (Sanhedrin)**

***30) The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.***

The commander knew that he had been on the verge of doing something which would have involved certainly his dismissal and not improbably his execution.

So he loosed Paul and determined to confront him with the Sanhedrin in order to get to the bottom of this trouble.

There were times when Paul was ready to stand on his dignity; but it was never for his own sake.

He knew his task was not yet done; gladly he would one day die for Christ but he was too wise a man to throw his life away just yet.