

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

December 13, 2023

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

Paul's Arrest at Jerusalem

Text – Acts 22

Introduction

Third Journey



Introduction

When we last left the Apostle Paul, he was apprehended in the Temple after a riot had broken out caused by some of the citizens of Jerusalem that falsely accused Paul of bringing Gentiles into the Temple. He was rescued by the chief captain, Claudius Lysius; and was granted permission to speak to the people that were trying to execute him. Beginning in chapter 22, we hear what Paul had to say.

Remember, this is the opportunity Paul had been waiting for. He wanted the opportunity to address the Jewish people and confront them with their need for a Saviour. He believed that they would listen to him because it was well known that he at one time had been a zealous enemy of the Christians.

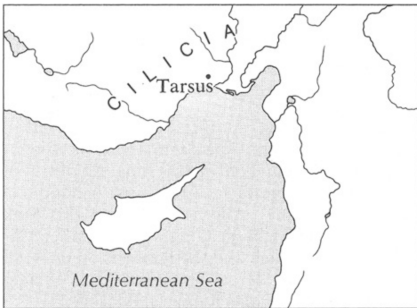
"Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence (ἀπολογία - ä-po-lo-gē'-ä) which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)" (Acts 22:1-2)

You will notice as we examine this speech that Paul makes, that he does not answer the charges leveled against him at all.

What does he do instead?

I. Paul Rehearses His Testimony (vs. 3 – 16)

In Paul's testimony we can see the ingredients for all good testimonies.



A. He Tells Them Who He Was (vs. 3 – 5)

"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." (Acts 22:3)

Paul was a Jew by birth but was also a Roman citizen born in the City of Tarsus, which was located in Cilicia, in the southeastern region of Asia Minor. His Roman citizenship will play an important role in the treatment he receives later from the chief captain.

Paul was reared, however, in the City of Jerusalem, and was trained "under the feet" of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was a well-respected Rabbi in Jerusalem who apparently was responsible for educating the Apostle Paul.

"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;" (Acts 5:34)

Paul wanted these Jews to know that he identified with them, and that they could identify with him. A good ambassador can identify with both his sender, and those who he is sent to.

He was a Jew; he was trained by the best; he was zealous for the Law; and at one time he hated Christians just as much as they did. (See Acts 7:58; 8:1 – 3; 9:1 – 2)

"And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 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." (Acts 22:4-5)

Other Passages which speak of Paul's background as a Pharisee and enemy of Christians:

"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; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:5-6)

"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." (Galatians 1:13-14)

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts 26:9-11)

B. He Tells Them What Happened to Him (vs. 6 – 13)

"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. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 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. 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. 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. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him." (Acts 22:6-13)

The Bible account of Paul's testimony is found in Acts 9:3 – 19. Paul rehearses his testimony here and again in Acts 26.

C. He Tells Them What God Has Called Him to Do (vs. 14 – 16)

"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. For thou shalt be his witness

unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:14-16)

You will notice that the bulk of Paul's testimony was focused on what the Lord did for him.

Note on v. 16 – water baptism does not wash away sins, but it is a picture of salvation, which does wash away sins.

II. Paul Remembers the Trance (vs. 17 – 23)

"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; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 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. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. 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. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,"
(Acts 22:17-23)

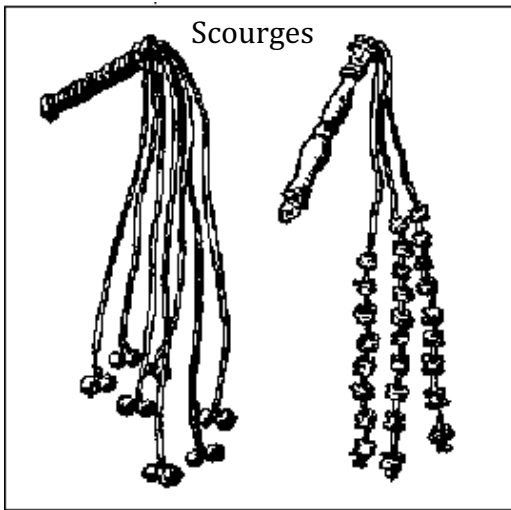
Paul recalls in this section a vision that he received in the temple. In this vision the Lord appeared to him and told him to get out of Jerusalem because the Jews would not receive his testimony. The question is, when did Paul have this vision. Most believe that it happened way back in Acts 9:26 – 30, but the vision is not mentioned here, though he was in the temple in Jerusalem at that time and did have to leave because of the danger he faced. Even if it did happen before the trip to Jerusalem mentioned here in chapter 22, it does not change the fact that the Lord told him to leave Jerusalem, because the people there would not receive him; and there is no indication anywhere in the Scripture that the Lord gave Paul new instructions to return.

The crowd was listening attentively until Paul mentioned his being sent to the Gentiles. "Gentiles" was the key word that drove the Jews out of their minds.

Notice in v. 23 that they cast off their clothes – perhaps because they were getting ready to stone him.

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their

clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:57-59)



III. Paul Reveals His True Citizenship (vs. 24 – 30)

"The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle (παρεμβολή - parembolē – meaning camp, barracks, or fortress – one time translated armies), and bade that he should be examined by scourging (see slide); that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. And as they bound him with thongs (ἱμάς - himas – leather strap), Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief

captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 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. 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." (Acts 22:24-30)

The chief captain had to get back involved in the matter because the crowd was beginning to riot again. He still did not find out what Paul had done to incite this mob of people, so he determined to interrogate him with scourging so that he could find out. He could do this, or so he thought, because these Jews from Jerusalem didn't have the same rights as the Roman citizens. However, Paul reveals to the guard that he was, in fact, a Roman citizen, and as such, the Roman law protected him. He could not be bound or scourged without probable cause (See Acts 16:35 – 39). It is not known for certain how Paul's family received citizenship. It is believed by some that the city of Tarsus was granted freedom in the years prior to the birth of Saul, and thus every person born in it was automatically granted citizenship.

This meant that Claudius Lysius would have to have a trial with all parties present to obtain the information that he desired.

In Acts 23, Paul will have yet another opportunity to present the gospel before his people.