

ACTS 21:30 - 22:23

Introduction:

1. An uproar from the Ephesian Jews, about Paul being in the temple, breaks out. The crowd grabs Paul, taking him out a door so he supposedly wouldn't pollute the temple any further. Of course, their intentions were to **kill** Paul - but not in the temple.

II Kings 11:15 - But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

2. The religious Jews' zeal was inflamed by the false accusations about Paul. They believed them to be true and this infuriated the hyped-**up** crowd. They began to savagely beat Paul. They were so eager

to kill Paul that they don't even take him **out** of the city to stone him (like Stephen). They immediately began to try to beat him to death on the spot!

They would have succeeded, but **God intervened to protect his servant.

A.

Acts 21:30-36 - And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. Acts 21:31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Acts 21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. Acts 21:33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. Acts 21:34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. Acts 21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. Acts 21:36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

1. While the mob was trying to beat Paul to death, word about this commotion came unto the Roman commander, Lysias (23:26). He runs to where Paul was, taking about **200** soldiers with him to put down this uprising.

*When the Jewish crowd (beaters) **saw** the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. They didn't want to be arrested.

2. The commander thought Paul had evidently done something **wrong** and had him bound in chains (fulfilling Agabus' prophecy in vs. 10-11). Because of all the confusion he couldn't get a clear answer, so he orders Paul to be taken to the barracks. The Romans had to **carry** Paul to the barracks' stairs. This was because of Paul's condition and the mindless fury of the crowd, crying out "away with him". Where have we heard that **before**?

B.

Acts 21:37-40 - And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Acts 21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? Acts 21:39 But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. Acts 21:40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

1. The captain had assumed Paul was responsible for some **previous** trouble, even as a terrorist or Egyptian assassin. Paul spoke in **Greek** and that surprised the captain. Greek was the language of **cultured and educated** men, **not** spoken by common criminals as he assumed Paul to be.
2. The captain's next question reveals his **wrong** assumption. He thought Paul might be part of an Egyptian (Jewish) **gang** - who were murderers. But since Paul spoke Greek, it showed he was not a troublemaker or part of the Egyptian group.
3. Paul shows his **calmness** here as he shares with the captain that he is a citizen of Tarsus (a highly favored, honored **city** by the Roman government). Paul respectfully (he has just been beaten!) requests if the captain would allow Paul to speak to this furious crowd. Paul is **amazing!**
4. As the crowd is made to be silent, Paul gestures with his hand to get them to listen to him. Paul, who had spoken in Greek to the captain, now speaks to the people in **Hebrew**. Doing this allowed the Jewish people to understand him (probably not the captain). Paul is now ready to give his **defense** of his past, his conversion, and his commission.

C.

Acts 22:1-5 - Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you. Acts 22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) Acts 22:3 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. Acts 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. Acts 22:5 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.

1. Paul uses Hebrew and it causes a moving silence to listen to him. Paul addresses them in a **respectful** manner, claiming kinship with them.
****He is not yelling or **mad** at them, even though he had been beaten by them.**
2. Paul tells them of his own Jewish credentials. He was born a Jew, a native of Tarsus, brought up in Jerusalem, trained by Gamaliel, a follower of the law, a zealous persecutor of Jesus' followers, and a representative of the **Sanhedrin**. (He was more Jew than any of **them**.) **Remember** how Paul gave this testimony to the Gentiles?

Galatians 1:12-15 - For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Gal. 1:13 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: Gal. 1:14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. Gal. 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

3. By saying this, Paul is saying he understands perfectly their outburst and zeal for God and His law. Actually, Paul had **outdone** them in his own determination to stamp out what he thought/considered to be **heresy**. Paul had been where they were now.

4. Telling them he was taught by Gamaliel gives a hint that he had been a **Phar**isee (Phil. 3:5). Paul doesn't mention this because of the Sadducees that were present. They didn't believe in resurrection as the Pharisees did. It could cause another **uproar**.
5. His receiving of "letters" to go and persecute followers of Christ showed that the Jewish authorities had **confidence** in him to stand up for Judaism. By Paul revealing all of this, they could clearly see Paul was **not** anti-Semitic!

Note: Of course, all this was before Paul met Christ. But, it refuted the false allegations that he was an enemy of Judaism. Paul had **ad**vanced Judaism beyond any of them (B.C.).

D.

Acts 22:6-10 - 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. Acts 22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Acts 22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. Acts 22:9 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. Acts 22:10 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.

(Paul's Conversion)

1. Paul tells how he was on the road to Damascus when he was suddenly knocked to the ground by a **light** that was strong enough to outshine the noonday sun!

****No** doubt these Jews listening, who looked for signs, were fascinated with Paul's miraculous testimony. Of course, this light is that glory of the glorified, exalted, and **risen** Jesus Christ.
2. As Paul's been humbled to his knees, he alone hears and **under**stands a voice asking why he was persecuting the followers of Jesus. To his **shock**, the voice said, "me" - it was the voice of Jesus.

****Note:** Can we comprehend, or even imagine, Paul's thoughts at **that** moment? All that he had ruthlessly done that was so horrible to the Jewish believers in Christ and all that he had blasphemously said about Christ - that He was a charlatan, a blasphemer, a false Messiah - when He was in truth the Lord of glory! Not only that, but also Jesus had resurrected and was **alive**!
3. Paul, showing he was overwhelmed by meeting a risen Jesus, repents and believes. Paul had to change his mind, his way of thinking, completely. Jesus was **the** Christ - alive, and Paul had to **sub**-mit to Christ's control of him. Here, Paul has an **in**stant conversion experience. To him, Christ ceased to be an enemy and became his Lord and Savior.

E.

Acts 22:11-15 - 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. Acts 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*, Acts 22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. Acts 22:14 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. Acts 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

(Paul's Commission)

1. Paul, having been blinded by the light, is led by the hand into Damascus. By mentioning Ananias, a devout Jew of the law and respected by the Jews, Paul tactfully assures them Ananias would not have fellowshiped with him if he were **what** they were accusing him of being (don't be afraid of me).
2. Interestingly, Paul does not mention here Ananias' faith in Christ. Paul recalls how Ananias had called him **bro**ther and declared [the God of our fathers have chosen thee...].
 - a. *In Paul's defense, now is his time to explain that he was the **cho**sen vessel to bear witness of God's ushering in a **new** dispensation.

Time Past

But Now

Ages To Come

- b. Paul was being **care**ful here. The ones he would mainly bear witness to of what he had seen and heard were the Gentiles. The religious Jews hated the Gentiles, so Paul says [unto all men].

- F. 1. Remember, water baptism was **nec**essary in the Jewish kingdom gospel. Paul continues to show his

Acts 22:16 - And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Jewish roots so the crowd would listen to his complete testimony. Paul was **hoping** they would listen to the heart of his message (Acts 13:38-39) by laying these Jewish building blocks.

2. This verse gives us the purpose of Paul's baptism to Ananias. It was to be baptized to "wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord".
 - a. **This is evidence that water baptism was never understood as a burial or a watery **grave**. It was a washing-cleansing ceremony.
 - b. We know that physical water **cannot** actually wash away the guilt and defilement of sin, any more than the blood of an animal sacrifice. But under the Moses-Messianic economy (dispensation), their ceremonies were **required** as an expression of their faith in what God said at that time. If they would not do the requirement (blood sacrifices or baptism), it showed they did **not** believe!
3. We know that Paul was **tot**ally converted on the road to Damascus. Ananias, being a good Jew, followed the Jewish way (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
 - a. Also Paul, being saved by grace in the D.B.R. of Jesus Christ in Acts 9, had not been told **yet** about the mystery gospel of grace. (Acts 22 is telling what happened to him in Acts 9). So as a good Jewish man, he accepted water baptism. It is not **until** he gets on the backside of the desert (Sinai) that this dispensation's revelation began to be **reve**aled to him.
 - b. But here in Acts 22, God had already given Paul revelation of the mystery. This is some **20+** years later. To these Jews in Acts 22, Paul is giving his testimony of his Jewish understanding of water baptism for the remission of sins that he had in Acts 9. Later, God would reveal to Paul (after Acts 9) what **truly** happened to him by grace.

F. Acts 22:17-20 - 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; Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Acts 22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: Acts 22:20 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.

(Paul's Commission)

1. Paul's testimony of his conversion concludes. He now begins to cautiously share God's commission to him. After explaining his Jewishness, Paul had hoped they would listen to what he had to say about God's **new** dispensation given to him as its apostle.
****Remember, all their life the Jewish people and Judaism had been favored by God and had been the only way of salvation. What Paul is about to say would be tough for them to hear and comprehend.**
2. Paul recounts that after his conversion he went to the temple in Jerusalem. There, as he prayed, God put him into a trance and told him to immediately **leave** Jerusalem because the religious leaders would not receive him, let alone believe him. It was even dangerous and harm could happen to him.
3. Paul, at this time (Acts 9), was hoping that the Jews would not turn on him. Look at what he had **done** at Jerusalem. Paul had persecuted the **so**-called heretics and even had played a role in helping to have Stephen stoned to death (Acts 7)!

G. Acts 22:21-23 - And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. Acts 22:22 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. Acts 22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

1. Paul now drops his ministry **bomb** on these listening Jews. He tells them that God had told him to leave Jerusalem (Acts 9) and go far away to minister to the **Gentiles**. This Jewish mob had been contented in listening to Paul, but now they **explode** when Paul mentions the Gentiles. They then interrupt his message.
2. Paul had deferred mentioning the Gentiles until he first had demonstrated how he **loved** them, and that only after being **divinely**/supernaturally called by God Himself would he ever have left them to go to the Gentiles.
3. These temple Jews should have been in favor of winning the Gentiles to faith (Gen. 12:1-3, 22:18; Isaiah 56:6-8). But their national **pride** blinded them to all else the apostle wanted to say. They even wanted Paul dead.
****They had gotten so far away from God and His true Word. They followed their greed for power and gain. They obeyed traditions and fence laws.**
4. Now, in their minds, Paul was an **apostate** from the law - a **traitor** of his nation and its people. They could not comprehend truth, nor Paul's defense of his ministry to Gentile **dogs**. He must be put to **death**!
 - a. ****The Little Flock kept the offerings from the Gentiles! Why didn't the believing Jews stand up for Paul?**
 - b. ****God was providentially instructing Paul to leave them to their fate.**