

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 22:4-30 | Session 63 | Paul's Defense Before the Believing Jews | A.D. 60

Standing on the brink of death due to false accusations, Paul was rescued from the Jewish *believers*, by the Roman *Gentiles* as prophesied by Agabus in 21:11. Mistaken as an Egyptian murderer by the *chief captain* of the Roman guard, Paul requested he be able to speak to the Jewish believers who had just attempted to kill him. Amazed that Paul can speak Greek, something an Egyptian would not do, Paul is granted permission to speak to the crowd, and he does so by speaking to them in the Hebrew dialect, and then by presenting his Jewish credentials to the mob.

Verse 4—

Nearly 30 years prior, Paul had persecuted *this way*. The term is used of the Jews who believed that Jesus, the one they killed, was their Messiah. They heeded Peter's gospel of the Kingdom, "repent and be baptized" which we have pointed out all along the past 63 weeks of our study in Acts. Paul makes it clear that he had those believers put **unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women**. This is a good example for us that no matter how devious or sinful our background, we can put it behind us and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 5—

The **high priest** can testify that what Paul is telling this crowd is true, since the high priest himself had signed the **letters** giving Paul permission to carry out his punishment of *the way*. The phrase, **all the estate of the elders**, is one word in Greek, *presbuterion*, meaning all the Jewish elders. In other words, everyone was in on it.

Verse 6-8—

Paul recounts the journey to Damascus and what happened to him along the way. We read this first in chapter 9. 1) There was a light that **shone from heaven**. 2) Paul **fell to the ground**. 3) He **heard a voice**. 4) He **answered** the voice. 5) The **voice** identified himself as **Jesus of Nazareth**.

Verse 9—

And they that were with me...heard not the voice. In chapter 9:7, the men with him **stood speechless, hearing a voice by seeing no man**. This seems like a contradiction. The solution is that in chapter 22, we are receiving more information. The word **heard** in Greek is *akouo* which can mean to *understand what is heard*. In chapter nine we only have part of the story; they heard, but in 22, they heard the voice *without* understanding it.

Verses 10-13—

Paul recounts his arrival into Damascus, blind **because of the glory (doxa) of the light**. Paul is under arrest at this moment because the Jews are accusing him of *teaching against the Law of Moses and disrespecting the Temple itself* (Acts 21:28), but here Paul tells of **Ananias, a devout man according to the Law, having a good report of all the Jews**, in other words, Paul began his ministry aligning himself with the Law, and showing us that at the time of his conversion, the dispensation of grace had not begun. He was not guilty of what the Jews accused him of. Paul never forsook the Law of Moses.

Verses 14-16—

He continues to show his Jewishness by describing what Ananias told him, **The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One...for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard**. This cannot be referring to the grace message of salvation by grace through faith and not of the law, since that revelation had not been given to Paul yet. Paul then recounts that he was told to **be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord**. We should by now, recognize this as being the Kingdom Gospel that required of all Jews if they wanted to enter into the Kingdom. We are not saved today by baptism (1 Cor. 1:17). Today, sin is not imputed (assigned to us) when there is no law (Romans 5:13).

Verse 17—

When I was come again to Jerusalem. Even after several years (at least three) since he had met Jesus Christ and had his life changed, Paul went into the Temple to pray. He never gave up his Jewishness. **I was in a trance**, does not mean he was like a zombie, rather the word he used was *ekstasis*. We use the word today, *ecstasy*; *stasis* means standing and *ek* means out of; *out of standing*. Today we might say "I was beside myself!" Or, I was *amazed!* Do not make a doctrine out of an historic event—i.e., don't try putting yourself in a trance!

Verse 18-21—

While in the Temple praying, the Lord appeared to Paul again, giving him a command to **make haste** and get out of **Jerusalem for the Jews will not receive thy testimony concerning me...depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles**.

Verse 22, 23—

At this point, no matter what evidence Paul presented in favor of his Jewish adherence to the Law of Moses, when the crowd heard he was going **unto the Gentiles**, it was more than they could bear. In a frenzy now, **they cried out, and cast off** (Greek, *ripto*) **their clothes, and threw dust in the air** (traditional expression of disgust). They wanted Paul dead.

Verse 24—

The chief captain, most likely thoroughly confused, not understanding why this crowd was so violent against Paul, and thinking there must be more to the story, decides to appease the riotous crowd by having him **examined by scourging** (whipped).

Verses 25-30—

Earlier we saw that Paul had not told anyone he was a Roman citizen. Now he does. The **chief captain** is concerned that he was about to beat a citizen without a trial. There was rule of law in the Roman empire which is why there was order. Some Roman citizens **obtained** their citizenship by paying a **great sum** of money. Paul, however, was **free born** as a citizen. He was **loosed from his bands**, and the next day he would appear before the Jewish leaders and Paul will give his defense before the Pharisees and the Sadducees of the Sanhedrin (The Jewish Council).