

Paul at Jerusalem - Part II
Paul Speaks to the Jews
(Acts 22:1-30)

Introduction:

1. It became clear to Lysias that Paul was not a member of the group known as the “Assassins” and posed no real threat to the Roman authorities.
2. Paul’s request to speak to the crowd (primarily Jewish) seemed to be welcomed by Lysias; perhaps in the hopes that it would calm down a potential explosive situation.
 - Paul spoke in what Luke calls a “Hebrew dialect” (NASB) which was probably _____.
 - 1) This became the predominate language of the Jews in _____ after the Babylonian and Persian Empires dominated the region.
 - 2) This also became the common language used in the Talmud (oral Law, customs, and writings of the Rabbi’s).
 - 3) This was also the primary language spoken by Jesus
 - 4) This became the primary language of that region of the Middle East for many centuries but for the most part it has now been lost.
 - Paul will now defend both his motives and his actions by declaring that Jesus completely changed his life and he was personally commissioned by God to declare that to all Jews and Gentiles!

Paul's Life before Meeting Christ (Acts 22:1-5)

1. Paul declares himself to be a _____
 - This statement alone was proof that he did not oppose the Jewish people.
 - His birthplace was Tarsus of Cilicia which was home to many Hellenistic Jews who settled there after years of turmoil resulting from persecution of the Jews in Palestine by the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties.
 - Paul was even trained and educated in _____.
 - 1) One of his primary mentors was _____ who was probably the most revered rabbi's of that era.
 - 2) Paul claims to have been raised; "strictly according to the law of our fathers". This would have included the Old Testament law, as well as all rabbinical traditions.
 - 3) Paul himself was a _____ (Philippians 3:5-6)
2. Paul claims to have been _____ for God (Acts 22:3-5)
 - He showed his sincerity and devotion to God by attempting to _____ out Christianity.
 - 1) He _____ those of "the Way"
 - 2) He put many followers of Christ to death and may have even been responsible for the death of _____.
 - He believed that Christianity was in such error that he was determined to destroy it until he was supernaturally stopped. It was on the road to Damascus that his life was forever changed by God Himself and the world has not been the same since!

Paul's Testimony of Salvation and Commission by God (Acts 22:6-21)

1. Paul went from being a persecutor of Christians to one of its primary promoters!
2. Paul recounts the events of his conversion with a little more commentary than what is recorded in Acts 9:
 - He was on his way to Damascus to round up some of the rebellious people known as followers of “the Way”:
 - 1) The hour was noon which would have meant the sun was already out and plenty bright.
 - 2) He sees another “very bright light” that was even brighter than the sun (Acts 26:13) and it was shining all around him!
 - 3) This “very bright light” was none other than _____! Let the modern secular scientists and skeptics chew on that one!!
 - Take note of a few things regarding Paul’s encounter with this “bright light”:
 - 1) What was Paul’s initial response?
 - 2) Upon hearing Jesus say; “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me” – how does Paul acknowledge Him?
 - 3) What connection does Jesus make to Himself and those whom Paul is persecuting? What is the significance of this?

- Paul supports his testimony with corroborating witnesses (Acts 22:9)
 - 1) They themselves only saw the light but they were unable to discern who it was that was speaking....why was that the case?
 - 2) Was there any significance to the fact that this event was witnessed by others?

- Paul immediately _____ by saying; “What shall I do Lord”; which showed a willingness to _____ himself. In an act of _____, he did specifically as the Lord instructed and went to the house of Ananias.
 - 1) What is so significant about these actions that Paul took?
 - 2) How did Paul describe Ananias (Acts 22:12)? Is there any significance to this?

3. The affirmation of Paul's conversion and calling (Acts 22:14-21)

- It was God who called Paul to Himself for Ananias says; “The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and see the Righteous One”.
 - 1) This shows that God is _____ in salvation. John 6:44, Ephesians 1:4, Colossians 3:12, I Peter 1:1-2)
 - 2) Who is the “Righteous One”?
 - 3) Was there any significance to Paul seeing the risen Lord? (I Corinthians 9:1, 15:8)
- The instruction by Ananias for Paul to “arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16) has caused grief for some:
 - 1) Salvation is always by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - 2) The means by which we are saved is always through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 10:9-10)
 - 3) The result of our faith in Christ is the “washing away of our sins” – something we are completely incapable of doing on our own. (Romans 5:6-8)
 - 4) The fact that Ananias instructs Paul to “Get up and be baptized” is simply a natural response of obedience and something all Christians should do after they are saved – for Jesus commanded it. (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - 5) The only thing that should hinder someone from being baptized is the fact that they never believed in Jesus Christ to begin with thus making baptism ineffective.

- Most of the events between Paul's conversion (Acts 9) and his eventual commission by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3) are left out of Paul's testimony. Paul instead chooses to focus on those things that were applicable to their accusations:
 - 1) He already described his encounter with Jesus Christ – corroborated by other witnesses.
 - 2) He already testified of a fellow Jew named Ananias who did not reject Paul but instead embraced and affirmed his testimony of faith.
 - 3) He already described his faith in the "Righteous One" as being ordained by God – "the God of our fathers", and further it was Paul's task to declare that message to all men.
 - 4) His further actions of praying in the temple while in Jerusalem (Acts 22:17) further corroborate his testimony that he was not anti Jewish.
 - 5) Everything appeared to be going pretty well until Paul says; "And He said to me, Go for I will send you far way to the Gentiles". It was this volatile statement (though completely true) that enrages the crowd and begin a downward spiral that leads to the crowd crying for Paul to be killed.
- Since Paul's conversion and commission were unmistakable evidence of the sovereign acts of God – how then could the crowd condemn Paul?

The Response of the People (Acts 22:22-23)

1. Take note in how they responded; “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....”
2. What was it that made them so angry?
 - They interpreted Paul’s words to mean that Jews and Gentiles were equal without the Law of Moses!
 - 1) They could in no way accept the notion that Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jewish proselytes.....this was the cornerstone of the Judaizers heresy!
 - 2) They were well aware of Paul’s teaching that it was the shed blood of Jesus Christ that atoned for sin and thus reconciled man to God (Ephesians 2:11-22, 3:2-6, Galatians 3:28) – but they completely rejected that idea!
 - To teach that Gentiles can be saved through any other means than the keeping of the Law was in their minds a blasphemous act and required death to the one who proclaimed such a thing!
3. **The rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ by the Jews in Jerusalem in many ways seals their fate.**
 - In A.D. 70 the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed and the Jews will once again be scattered throughout the world. (Matt. 24:1-2)
 - The gospel will continue to spread throughout the world and scores of Gentiles will come to faith in Christ. Although Paul will face further persecution and eventual death– the spread of the gospel continues even into our day and will continue until Christ come!

The Response of the Roman Official (Acts 22:24-30)

1. The Roman commander (still in charge of the situation) takes Paul back to the barracks intending to further interrogate him even if it meant using the extreme measures of a Roman flogging.
 - Paul had been beat and whipped by others because he preached the gospel. (Acts 16:22-23, II Corinthians 11:24-25)
 - This scourging that Paul was about to face by the Roman centurion would have been even more extreme than what he had faced before.
 - 1) The Romans used shorter whips with pieces of metal and bone attached to a short wooden handle and it would often permanently cripple a man or kill him.
 - 2) This was the type of flogging used on Jesus (Matthew 27:26) and probably the reason He was unable to carry the cross.
2. There was one big problem – Roman law did not permit a Roman citizen to be flogged until they were proven guilty of a crime.
 - Paul's alleged crime was blasphemy against the Jewish Law and customs – and Paul brilliantly refuted their accusations.
 - There had been no violation of Roman law at least none that was proven and certainly no trial that revealed any guilt.
 - Paul (a Roman citizen) would have known this fact and he chooses to reveal his Roman citizenship and just the right moment as the centurion was about to begin the flogging. (Acts 22:25)
 - This claim by Paul that he is a Roman citizen; puts an immediate halt to the scourging and causes the centurion to follow the chain of command and inform the commander of Paul's claim.

3. Take note of how Lysias responded (Acts 22:27-30)

- He immediately asked Paul if he was indeed a Roman citizen
 - 1) He was well aware that it was completely unlawful to flog a Roman citizen without a proper trial that proved the person guilty.
 - 2) The fact that no trial had been conducted put Lysias' job at risk had Paul pushed the issue.
 - 3) It would be unlikely that Paul's claim was false because had that been proven then he would have been liable for the death penalty.
- Lysias reveals that he had purchased his Roman citizenship (probably through bribery) but Paul declares that his citizenship was by birth. (Acts 22:28)
 - 1) This put an immediate halt to the proceedings
 - 2) Lysias was nervous that he even put Paul in chains without a preliminary hearing.
 - 3) Although Lysias may have felt that he had done something that was completely wrong; the fact remains that all of these events were allowed to happen in the providence of God's plan. Who knows maybe Lysias came to faith in Christ at a later time due to Paul's testimony of faith.
- Lysias will then turn Paul over to the Sanhedrin to determine if he was guilty of any wrong doing. If he is found innocent he could then be released, but if there was some validity to the charges then the Roman governor would have jurisdiction over the matter which is precisely what will eventually take place.....stay tuned!

Closing Remarks:

1. What a great example Paul provides through this entire ordeal:
 - He accepts the situation as _____ by God
 - He sees the circumstances as an _____ as opposed to a problem.
 - He being one who promoted peace and harmony among the brethren showed great _____ and a **conciliatory spirit** toward his persecutors.
 - His _____ continued to be on God
 - His attitude continued to be like Christ, an attitude of _____ love so that Jesus Christ (and not Paul) would be glorified. (Philippians 2:1-11)
2. These very principles listed above is how Paul lived his life and it is what he taught others to follow as well.....in other words he practiced what he preached.
3. How about you.....when you are faced with false accusations and perhaps even persecution; how do you respond?