

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE PHARISEE (ACTS 22:1-5) THE DEFENSE

While a bloody and beaten Paul speaks to the mob in their native language, they become silent and listen to what he has to say. Paul was accused of being anti-Jew, but he was going to prove that he was a devout Jew who saw the revelation of Jesus.

- Paul was **on trial for the gospel**, and Luke devotes the rest of Acts to this.

HERE'S MY RESUME

Paul began with his birthplace, Tarsus, where he was raised until serving and learning under the great Jewish Pharisee Gamaliel.

- Paul was an outsider as a young man that worked diligently to become a good Jew and even a scholar in Judaism.

PAUL EVEN PERSECUTED THE CHRISTIANS

Paul told the mob what we already know; he was not only a devout Jew, but he actively fought against people who believed in Jesus. He did this so much, he was responsible for the first martyr, Stephen.

- Paul's heritage, education, and religious zeal surpassed anyone in the mob!

BUT THESE THINGS FELL FLAT

Paul tried to explain that **heritage, education, and religious zeal did not save his soul**. His pursuit of those things over a relationship with God only brought him to hatred.

- **We are reminded again that religion and human "goodness" do not save us, only faith in Christ can.**

THE BELIEVER (ACTS 22:6-13)

PAUL'S CONVERSION STORY

As Paul retold his story of becoming a believer in Jesus as the Messiah, he gives us some details unknown until this chapter.

- The most interesting may be the detail of the light. He says, "about noon an intense light flashed around me." A light at night is bright, but one that out-shined the midday sun is extraordinary!

SOME SLIGHT DIFFERENCES IN ACCOUNT

Luke's account in chapter 9 is slightly different than Paul's in chapter 22. This is not a textual problem, but a different emphasis placed on different parts of the story because of the audiences.

THE REAL POINT WAS THE CONVERSION

Paul's main objective was to show that he was a devout Jew, zealous for the culture of the Jews, who had a revelation of Christ that was confirmed by the Jewish scriptures.

- Paul wanted to communicate that **Jesus was not only mentioned in OT scripture, but was in fact the God of OT scripture.**

ANANIAS IS FURTHER PROOF

Paul mentions that the first person he came in contact with after his revelation was another Jewish man who had also converted to following Jesus.

- Paul wanted the mob to know that he was not the only one getting revelations from Jesus. Jesus had a plan, and many people were involved.

THE COMMUNICATOR (ACTS 22:14-21)

A STRONG CONNECTION TO THE PAST

When explaining his conversion, Paul uses very strong OT imagery to show the connection of Jesus to the Jewish scriptures. Words like "God of our ancestors" and "Righteous One" further show that Jesus and the OT God are One.

ANOTHER PIECE OF NEW INFORMATION

Paul mentions that he went "to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple," "fell into a trance," and heard Jesus telling him to "get out of Jerusalem quickly because they will not accept your testimony about Me."

- This happened about 3 years after his conversion. More importantly it shows that Paul still honored the temple.

HONOR WITHOUT SHACKLES

We aren't saved by religion or man-made traditions. Though this is true; it is foolish to completely discard the traditions, heritage, or achievements of those that came before us.

- **We have an honor issue in the modern church. We aren't saved by human ability, but we are still called to honor others for what they've done.**

WE ALSO SEE THAT PAUL CONVERSED WITH GOD

The vision Paul received in the temple was a two-way conversation. Like Moses and Isaiah, Paul reminds God (interesting) that he is inadequate to do the ministry.

- **We should speak AND listen to God when we pray. We should also know that if God has called us, He will equip us to achieve His plan!**

UP TO THIS POINT THE MOB WAS ON BOARD

The vision Paul received in the temple was a two-way conversation. Like Moses and Isaiah, Paul reminds God (interesting) that he is inadequate to do the ministry.

- The crowd listens respectfully to Paul's testimony until one little detail sets them ablaze with anger. They seemed to have little difficulty believing the vision, the light on the road, or even that Jesus was connected to the OT. The word that set them off was **Gentiles**.

AN OFTEN UNADDRESSED PROBLEM

Racism of the 1st century Jews was so deep that they couldn't believe God would have concern or love for anyone other than them. Their love of culture and country overshadowed their love of people.

- **Have we become exclusive? Do we fear or hate people not like us? Do we feel superior to others?**

THE PRISONER (ACTS 22:22-30)

"THEY LISTENED TO HIM UP TO THIS POINT."

With the word Gentiles, the speech came to a screeching halt. The quiet audience now reverted back to a vicious mob that began to yell "Wipe this man off the face of the earth! He should not be allowed to live!"

- **The word tells us to be slow to anger (James 1:19) and not to sin in anger (Ephesians 4:26).**

COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL

There is no conclusion as to why they flung their coats into the air and stirred up dust. It was simply anger to the point of chaos and murder. The mob was so far gone that the commander ordered Paul be taken to the barracks to be beaten and interrogated.

THE ROMANS KNEW HOW TO TORTURE

Paul had been beaten 5 times with 39 lashes by Jewish authorities and 3 other times by Roman magistrates, but the *flagellum* to get a prisoner to talk was far more brutal.

- This is the treatment Jesus received during the crucifixion. The Romans had made an art form out of torture and pain.

ONE MORE THING BEFORE YOU BEAT ME...

As the soldiers stretched Paul out to be beaten, Paul addresses the centurion in front of the crowd. Paul asks a rhetorical question, "Is it legal to scourge a Roman citizen that is uncondemned?"

- The centurion was shocked to learn of Paul's citizenry and immediately contacted his superior.

THE TABLES WERE TURNED

Not only was an injustice done by arresting and planning to beat Paul, but the Roman soldiers actually broke laws themselves! Claudius Lysias now finds himself in a bind."

- Claudius had purchased his citizenship for a "large amount." Paul had been born into Roman citizenship because of an ancestor's service to the general.

LYSIAS THOUGHT ABOUT IT OVERNIGHT

The next day the commander went to the Sanhedrin to find out exactly what Paul was accused of and to get advice from the Jewish council.

- This is the same group that put the apostles on trial (4:15, 5:21), heard Stephen give a history lesson (ch. 7) and now Paul.

AND NOW THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

As Paul faces the Sanhedrin, we start to see the beginning of the end for Paul. The rest of Acts is dedicated to the last 4 years of Paul's life.

- All of the teaching Paul did, all the encouragement he gave, all the ideas he had would now be tested by the fire of the people that hated him.

WHEN WE FACE ADVERSITY

- A true relationship with Jesus is **transformative** and we learn that our achievements fall flat in our pursuit of contentment.
- As we grow closer to God, we put His ideals above all other ideals and we do our best to **communicate** that with others.
- And though we love and honor others, we often don't get reciprocation of that love and respect. In fact, **we will be strongly challenged and even hated for our conversion.**
- **In that time, how do we respond?** With compromise? Anger? Fear? Or a willingness to lose it all for our faith?

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field." Matthew 13:44 CSB.