

Acts Chapter 22 Continued

Verses 21-22

The Jews listen with some restraint to Paul's account of God's dealing in his life.

But when Paul speaks one word, "Gentiles" These Jews break into a frenzy.

They cannot believe that God would "send" him to the Gentiles.

Compare the similar reaction of the Jews in Rome (28:25-29).

They viewed the teaching that Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jewish proselytes (thus granting them equal status with the Jewish people before God), as intolerable blasphemy.

Acts 22:21 "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

Now Paul has said an unforgivable thing to these Jews.

He has classed the Gentiles with the Jews in importance to God, and they will not ever believe that is from God.

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."

The fact that the Gentiles would be allowed to be part of the family of God, was something they would never accept.

Their pride in being God's chosen family would not allow them to believe God would have anyone else.

They wanted to do away with Paul for even suggesting such a thing.

Acts 22:23 "And as they cried out, and cast off [their] clothes, and threw dust into the air,"

"Cast off their clothes":

They did this in preparation to stone Paul, in horror at his "blasphemy" (see note on 14:14), or in uncontrollable rage, or most likely, for all 3 reasons.

With their passions inflamed by racial pride, the members of the crowd lost any semblance of self-control.

"Threw dust":

A sign of intense emotion (2 Sam. 16:13; Job 2:12; Rev. 18:19).

This casting off their clothes showed their wild fury against Paul.

The throwing dust in the air was their way of saying that their great anger was of God.

Acts 22:24 "The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him."

"The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle":

Lysias realized he would have to interrogate Paul privately.

He ordered his soldiers to bring the prisoner into Fort Antonia, away from the angry mob.

"That he should be examined by scourging":

A brutal Roman interrogation method.

Prisoners frequently died after being flogged with the Roman flagellum (metal tipped leather trone attached to a wooden handle).

The captain saw that there was no chance of a fair trial with this mob, so he brings Paul on into the castle.

Acts 22:25 "And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

"Bound him with thongs":

This was done in preparation for his examination by scourging.

Stretching Paul taut would magnify the effects of the flagellum on his body.

"Centurion":

See notes on 10:1; Matt. 8:5.

There would have been 10 centurions in the 1000-man Roman garrison in Jerusalem.

"That is a Roman":

Roman citizens were exempted (by both the Valerian and Porcian laws), from such brutal methods of interrogation.

Paul now exerted his rights as a Roman citizen.

His claim would not have been questioned, because the penalty for falsely claiming Roman citizenship was death.

They possibly had already bound him to beat him, when Paul told them he was a Roman citizen.

Many times, this type of scourging caused people to die.

Paul of course, would try anything to keep from being beaten so severely.

He did not lie; he was a Roman citizen.

It was against the law to scourge a Roman citizen without a trial and conviction.

Paul was wise to inform them that he was a Roman.

Acts 22:26 "When the centurion heard [that], he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman."

“Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman”:

The centurion informed his commander of Paul’s citizenship, cautioning him against an act that could have ended Lysias’ military career, or even cost him his life.

This was the proper thing for this centurion to do.

The captain certainly would not want to cause a problem with his superiors for scourging a Roman citizen without a trial.

He probably enjoys being captain and does not want to endanger his job.

Acts 22:27 "Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea."

Yes, he is a Roman.

Yes, he is a Jew.

Yes, he is a Pharisee.

Yes, he is a Christian.

Paul, in his own words, says that he was all things to all people that by all means he might therefore save some.

To this captain who had great respect for Roman citizens, he was a Roman citizen.

Acts 22:28 "And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was [free] born."

“With a great sum”:

Roman citizenship was officially not for sale, but could sometimes be obtained by bribing corrupt officials.

You see, this captain wanted Roman citizenship so much that he raised a large sum of money to purchase his citizenship with.

You can imagine his amazement when Paul tells him that he was a Roman by birth.

The marvelous thing is that until God is through with Paul on this earth, no one can destroy him.

If he needed to be a Roman, God had made him to be one from birth.

It was through Paul's father; he was a Roman.

Acts 22:29 "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."

A Roman citizen was greatly feared, as well as being respected in Jerusalem in these days, because Rome was very powerful at the time.

To anger Rome, could cost this captain his station in life of chief captain and perhaps, even his head as well.

This so called prisoner, Paul, really had the chief captain afraid that he had already over-stepped the limits.

The eloquence of Paul as a speaker when he brought his own defense verified to this captain that he was no ordinary man.

A man of that day that could speak two languages and had been taught in the school by Gamaliel certainly was no ordinary citizen.

Paul also had been an officer when he led his men in capturing the Christians.

We see that, not the prisoner here is afraid, but his captor.

It seems this chief captain had no idea what to do with him, so they (the examiners), left and there was nothing more to do, but to take these chains off his hands and legs.

Verses 22:30 – 23:10

Paul's second of 6 defenses. (see Verses 1-21; 24:10-21; 25:1-12; 26:1-29; 28:17-29).

Acts 22:30 "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."

“Chief priests and all their council”:

He convened an unofficial meeting of the Sanhedrin (see notes on 4:15, 23).

The mob has been disbanded, and the beating of Paul was stopped, and even the chains have been removed.

This chief captain sends for the rulers of the temple to come and tell him exactly what charges they have against Paul.

This chief captain wants to quickly get this out of his hands.

The scene is set. Paul is before them to be questioned.

Let us go back now and review what these charges are, before we get into chapter 23.

The only charges they have brought against him is that they say he has taught both Jew and Gentile that they are not to keep the law of Moses anymore, and that circumcision of the men is no longer to be done.

Paul has been teaching that Christianity does not require these outward shows of faith.

Perhaps, one confusing thing to them, and to us, is if Paul teaches this, why is he observing feasts, circumcising Peter, taking a Nazarite vow, and sacrificing in the temple?

The only explanation is that he is doing these outward things to satisfy the Jews, so they will allow him to teach in the temple and in the synagogues.

Acts Chapter 22 Continued Questions

1. Who spoke in defense of Paul?
2. What did he expound on?
3. When had Paul stopped persecuting the Christians?

4. Why did these Jews not like Paul's message?
5. What did they cry out after his speech?
6. What one word describes these Jews' problem?
7. In verse 23, what things did they do to show their displeasure?
8. Where did the chief captain command Paul to be brought?
9. What did he tell the men to do with Paul?
10. How did they bind Paul?
11. What did Paul say to the centurion?
12. When the centurion heard this, what did he do?
13. What did the captain ask Paul?
14. What was the difference in Paul's citizenship?
15. How was Paul a Roman?
16. What did the examiners do, when they found out that Paul was a Roman?
17. Why was the chief captain afraid?
18. What were some of the things that should have told the captain that Paul was no ordinary citizen?
19. Why did the captain call the high priest and counsel to come and talk to Paul?
20. What had the captain done to show more respect for Paul than at the beginning?
21. Really, what were the charges against Paul?
22. What was probably confusing to them, as well as to us, about Paul?
23. Why do you suppose Paul still sacrificed?