

Acts 22 Paul's Defense before the Jews

Brothers and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you.”² And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said, ³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the Law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

⁵ as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brothers, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished. ⁶ But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus at about noon, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

⁷ and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ ⁸ And I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’ ⁹ And those who were with me saw the light, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything that has been appointed for you to do.’ ¹¹ But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I came into Damascus being led by the hand by those who were with me.

¹² “Now a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law and well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³ came to me, and standing nearby he said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I looked up at him. ¹⁴ And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear a message from His mouth. ¹⁵ For you will be a witness for Him to all people of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins by calling on His name.

It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, ¹⁸ and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’ ¹⁹ And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.

²⁰ And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing nearby and approving, and watching over the cloaks of those who were killing him.’ ²¹ And He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”²² They listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a man from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!” ²³ And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

²⁴ the commander ordered that he be brought into the barracks, saying that he was to be interrogated by flogging so that he would find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way. ²⁵ But when they stretched him out with straps, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a

Roman and uncondemned?”

26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.” 27 The commander came and said to Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, “Yes.” 28 The commander answered, “I acquired this citizenship for a large sum of money.” And Paul said, “But I was actually born a citizen.”

29 Therefore, those who were about to interrogate him immediately backed away from him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

30 Now on the next day, wanting to know for certain why Paul had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and he brought Paul down and placed him before them.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Pauls Questions and comments

1. Paul starts speaking and gets their undivided attention because he spoke to them in Hebrew. Why do you think this made a difference?
2. Paul declares ‘I am a Jew’, he is not ashamed of who he is or where he came from. What about you?
3. He was proud of the educational investment that Gamaliel had given to him, as it identified the roots of his doctrine.
4. Learning to use your life story to help share the gospel can be very powerful as it helps you connect.
5. What is it to be zealous for God?
6. Paul said ‘he persecuted this way’, that’s the new way to connect to God through the gospel of faith in Jesus as Saviour.
7. Everyone knows how dedicated I was to wipe out this breakaway group of Jews.
8. I had a plan to destroy this sect.
9. Something happened to me on a road that completely changed my understanding of this message of faith in Jesus Christ.
10. I saw a light, I heard a voice. I was asked a question ‘why was I persecuting Jesus Christ’?
11. At first I never realised who it was that was speaking to me, so I asked ‘who are you Lord?’
12. The voice said ‘I am Jesus, why are you persecuting me?’
13. In Pauls tone, responding to the voice, Paul is saying I made a big mistake.
14. My companions saw the light by they failed to understand the voice.
15. You can see that Paul is truly sorry and asks what should I do to rectify my mistake?
16. Jesus instructs Paul what to do next in regards to his future ministry.
17. The effects of the bright light caused Paul not to be able to see, so he was led into Damascus by hand.

18. Paul explains that a man named Ananias came under the instruction of the Lord, to restore Paul's sight, by speaking out what God had said to him.
19. Receive your sight.
20. At once Paul was able to see, so he looked up at Ananias to hear further instruction regarding the calling on his life and his future ministry in sharing the gospel.
21. Paul is baptised and cleansed, he fell into a trance in Jerusalem.
22. What is a trance?
23. In this trance Paul is warned to escape Jerusalem as a mob would avenge his message to them.
24. Paul tries to negotiate with the Lord, saying 'surely they all know what my plans are in destroying this sect'?
25. Paul adds his involvement in the death of Stephen as further information.
26. The Lord was having nothing of it but said to Paul 'go to the gentiles far off'.
27. At this word, the mob listening to Paul, erupt with declarations like 'kill him'.
28. The mob became fanatical, so the commander brought Paul into the barracks to interrogate him through torture.
29. As a Roman citizen, a Roman could not be scourged before a trial, they had the protection of the state.
30. You could buy citizenship or you were born with it, Paul was born with it.
31. See the confirmation that it was the Roman commander that put Paul in chains.
32. Paul is released to present his defense to the Jews in an audible way.