

"Paul's Chains in Jerusalem"

Acts 22

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we started into Acts 22 and as this chapter opens Paul begins to give his defense to the Jews who desired to kill him in Jerusalem.

Notice Acts 22:1

In this defense Paul explained to the Jews that he had been just like they were. They were full of zeal but their zeal was without knowledge. Paul also had been zealous for God and in his zeal, he persecuted those who were "of the way" which were followers of Jesus Christ.

Notice Acts 22:2-5

Paul was the temple representative doing all he could to protect Judaism and to destroy Christianity. Paul then goes on to explain to his listeners Who it was that changed him.

➤ **The Meeting on the Damascus Road**

Notice Acts 22:6-8

We looked at these verses briefly last week and it was here on the Damascus Road that all the Pharisaism fell away from Paul's life. It was at this point that Paul realized that everything he had given his life to accomplish was wrong. It had no spiritual value with God. It was all a waste.

Application:

This is something that many believers have come to understand when they began to understand the Truth concerning who Jesus is. But there are many who have and who will come to know this after it is too late. These are the people that have and will die in their sins. At the very moment of death they will know that their lives were completely spent upon things that had no spiritual value. Notice the following words of a few atheists on their death beds.

SIR FRANCIS NEWPORT—Head of an English Atheist club, to those gathered around his deathbed: "You need not tell me there is no God, for I know there is one, and that I am in his presence! You need not tell me there is no hell. I feel myself already slipping.

Wretches, cease your idle talk about there being hope for me! I know I am lost forever! Oh, that fire! Oh, the insufferable pangs of hell! Oh, that I could lie for a thousand years upon the fire that is never quenched, to purchase the favor of God and be united to Him again. But it is a fruitless wish. Millions and millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my torments than one poor hour. Oh, eternity, eternity forever and forever! Oh, the insufferable pangs of Hell!"

CHARLES IX—The French king. Urged on by his mother, he gave the order for the massacre of the French Huguenots, in which 15,000 souls were slaughtered in Paris alone and 100,000 in other sections of France, for no other reason than that they loved Christ. The guilty king suffered miserably for years after that event. He finally died, bathed in blood bursting from his veins. To his physicians, he said in his last hours: "Asleep or awake, I see the mangled forms of the Huguenots passing before me. They drop with blood. They point at their open wounds. Oh! That I had spared at least the little infants at the bosom! What blood! I know not where I am. How will all this end? What shall I do? I am lost forever! I know it. Oh, I have done wrong."

DAVID STRAUSS—Leading representative of German rationalism, after spending a lifetime erasing belief in God from the minds of others: "My philosophy leaves me utterly forlorn! I feel like one caught in the merciless jaws of an automatic machine, not knowing at what time one of its great hammers may crush me!"

JOSEF STALIN—Soviet Georgian revolutionary and politician. In a Newsweek interview with Svetlana Stalin, the daughter of Josef Stalin, she told of her father's death: "My father died a difficult and terrible death. . .God grants an easy death only to the just. At what seemed the very last moment, he suddenly opened his eyes and cast a glance over everyone in the room. It was a terrible glance, insane or perhaps angry. His left hand was raised, as though he was pointing to something above and bringing down a curse on us all. The gesture was full of menace. . .the next moment he was dead."

ANTON LEVEY—Author of the Satanic Bible and high priest of the religion dedicated to the worship of Satan. One of his famous quotes was: "There is a beast in man that needs

to be exercised, not exorcised." His dying words were: "Oh my, oh my, what have I done, there is something very wrong. . . there is something very wrong."

Notice Acts 22:9

Paul now points to the group that was traveling with him. It is as if he is saying, "If you do not believe me, then find these men and ask them what happened." The interesting point to be seen in this verse is that these men with Paul did not hear the voice of the Lord. Let me show you what Luke recorded in Acts 9.

Acts 9:7

⁷ And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

The idea in this verse is the same. The better translation would be that they did NOT hear the voice of the Lord. Why would it be that Paul would hear the Lord's voice but the others would not? The answer has to do with how the Holy Spirit was working in his life. Paul had heard the Words of Stephen as well as others who testified about Jesus and he was under conviction. God works with every person in different ways and at different times. But every person MUST be born again as they put their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Let us just consider the men with Paul for a moment. They were permitted to see the supernatural Light and they watched as the leader of the persecution fell into the dust of the earth and would then be changed forever. But we are never told of their conversions. It was as though the entire experience never impacted their lives. Possibly it was that their hearts were so hardened that it never shook them.

Application:

There is an important point to be made here. It is not miracles that bring people to Jesus Christ. Many over the years have been exposed to the works of God and His miracles and they just continued on the same path of rebellion. I think of Pharoah, the religious leaders of Jesus day and the thousands who followed after Jesus at times. Through all that they were exposed to many were never saved.

Exodus 7:9-13

⁹ *When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.*

¹⁰ *And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.*

¹¹ *Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.*

¹² *For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.*

¹³ *And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Getting back to the men with Paul, they saw "a" light but they did not see "THE" Light of the World. There are many people today who claim to be Christians because of some experience which they have had. Notice the words from the Watchman Examiner.

"A recent book by researcher Wade Roof, Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion, argues that today's "born-again" Christians are united by emotions and experiences, not by shared doctrines or moral beliefs. One-third of America's 77 million baby boomers identify themselves as born-again Christians, but only 5 percent of those have any link to a conservative Protestant denomination. Half say that religions other than Christianity are "equally good and true." One-third believe in reincarnation and astrology. Nearly half support abortion."

To be born again is to be changed as the Holy Spirit indwells us. The New Birth takes place as we hear the Truth of the Bible for the Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. From the moment of the New Birth, we are no longer the same person.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Notice Acts 22:10

This verse has very important applications for our lives. The most important question we can ask after we are saved is, "What shall I do Lord?" Jesus response to Paul was that it would be revealed to him that which was APPOINTED for him to do. Notice that before it was revealed Paul would need to arise and go to Damascus.

Application:

It is so important that we follow the steps that God has commanded for us to take. When we are walking in the steps He has for us He will reveal His will for our lives. Then we must realize that there are things for us to do that have been APPOINTED to us.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

There is service for each of us to do. Now for those who make the choice to not be involved we must understand that someone can do what was appointed to them but when that happens it hinders the entire body of Jesus Christ. Not only is the body hindered but the person who makes the choice not to get involved is missing out on great blessings. God has equipped each of us for the work that is appointed and there are many blessings that are given to those who make the choice to step up and to be involved.

Ephesians 4:7

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

You have been given grace to exercise the gift or gifts given to you.

Matthew 25:14-19

¹⁴ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

¹⁵ And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

¹⁶ Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

¹⁷ And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

¹⁸ But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Notice Acts 22:11

Paul was blinded by the glory of the Lord and had to be led by the hand to Damascus. What a change! The man who took the believers by the hand and led them to their death now himself must be led by the hand.

Conclusion/Application:

In this there is a picture of what happens when a sinner comes to Jesus Christ. Our vision of this world grows dim and we are then given spiritual sight. The scales fall from the eyes and the things that were once important in our lives no longer look the same and we begin to see things in a different light with a Biblical perspective.

2 Corinthians 4:18

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free.*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*