

"Paul's Chains in Jerusalem"

Part 3

Acts 22

Introduction: Last week when we stopped our study in Acts, we were listening as Paul gave his defense to those who desired to have him put to death. He reminded those who he was speaking to that he had been as they were. They desired to kill him because they believed that he was against the Mosaic Law.

Acts 21:21

²¹ And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

These were some of the lies that had been spread concerning Paul. Then when he was seen in the Temple it was believed that he had brought a Gentile beyond the Gentile courtyard. For this reason, they attacked him. So, in his defense that he gives in chapter 22 he is explaining to them how he used to persecute people of "THE WAY" and that he had been given letters to get the Christians that were in Damascus. But as he was going on Damascus Road, he met the Lord and his life was forever changed.

Notice Acts 22:6-11

It was when Paul met the Lord that his life changed forever. He was truly humbled, which is seen as he falls into the dust of the earth.

Application:

This is what happens when a person is truly saved. They are deeply humbled as they come to understand the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Someone whose life has not changed has never met the Saviour. We are people of pride, self-righteousness, and self-confidence. A sinner may not be deep into an immoral lifestyle to see a drastic change but

the change certainly does affect the self-righteousness, the self-confidence, and the pride. The sinner is humbled when they meet the Lord.

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 the words of Calvin.

"Again, it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself. For we always seem to ourselves righteous and upright and wise and holy—this pride is innate in all of us—unless by clear proofs we stand convinced of our own unrighteousness, foulness, folly, and impurity. Moreover, we are not thus convinced if we look merely to ourselves and not also to the Lord, who is the sole standard by which this judgment must be measured."

Notice Acts 22:12

Now Paul tells them about Ananias and tells them that he was a devout man according to the Law and had a good report among the Jews. Do not miss what Paul is doing here. He is letting his listeners know that Christianity was not something that had been made up by the Gentiles. Here was Ananias who was also a Jew and was also of "THE WAY." It was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they knew to be Jewish, that spoke to him. It was Ananias who was a devout Jew, who was involved. So far, the whole thing is Jewish.

Notice Acts 22:13

Notice that Ananias calls Paul "Brother" to show that this devout Jew had no animosity toward Paul but considered him to now be family.

Notice Acts 22:14

Now Paul does something here that puts his listeners on the spot. He tells them that Ananias the devout Jew told him that the God of our fathers had chosen him to be an

Apostle. When Paul mentions God, he is letting his listeners know that if they reject him, they are rejecting God.

Notice Acts 22:14 again.

God had chosen Paul to be an Apostle and he arranged for Paul to see Jesus on the Damascus Road. Keep in mind that one of the requirements for an Apostle was to be an eyewitness of Jesus after the resurrection.

Application: Paul was chosen by God to be an Apostle before he was ever saved.

Galatians 1:15

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

Let us notice what God said concerning Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

⁵ Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Paul was separated to be an Apostle and Jeremiah was separated to be a prophet. Both men were ordained for these positions before they were ever saved or even born. What can we learn from this?

God has a plan for every single person who is conceived. There are many reasons why abortion is so wrong and one reason is because each baby that is conceived has been given specific work to carry out in this world. So, in all the abortions we can only wonder how many pastors, missionaries, or evangelists have never had a chance to fulfill what God gave them to do. How many were to be doctors or nurses or solid leaders that would have made a great difference? How many would have been scientists that may have found the cure for cancer or some other terminal illness?

What about us? If God had a purpose for Paul and Jeremiah, I can assure you that He also has a purpose for each of us. We are here for a reason at this time.

Esther 4:13-14

¹³ *Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.*

¹⁴ *For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

Notice Acts 22:14 again.

We can see in this verse a capsule of what God desires for each of us.

- 1. We are to serve Him where we are appointed.**

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.*

- 2. We are to seek and find His will.**

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- 3. We are to keep our eyes on our Lord.**

Hebrews 12:1-2

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

4. We are to hear His voice and walk in obedience to His Word.

John 10:27-28

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

²⁸ *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

Notice Acts 22:15-16

Paul was now called to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins. Does this mean that baptism is required for salvation? Absolutely NOT! If that is what is being taught as many want you to believe then this teaching would contradict many verses in the Bible.

John 3:14-18

¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Acts 16:29-31

²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Conclusion:

Ananias is calling on Paul to be baptized because baptism was a picture of what God had already done in his life. Therefore, the baptism was a public identification with Jesus Christ. Ananias puts the baptism immediately after Paul was saved because in the early church people were baptized when they were saved. The thought of an unbaptized believer in the early church was a foreign thought to the Apostles. Believers were all baptized immediately after salvation because it is and was the first step in obedience to the Lord.

Let me leave you with the 4 points of God's desire for each of us.

- ✓ We are to serve Him where we are appointed.
- ✓ We are to seek and find His will.
- ✓ We are to keep our eyes on our Lord.
- ✓ We are to hear His voice and walk in obedience to His Word.