

"Paul's Chains in Jerusalem"

Part 5

Acts 22

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we looked at Paul closing remarks of his defense in Acts 22. In the closing remarks we considered how it is that we can know the will of God for our lives. Now as we move on, we are going to follow along as Paul is on a path that will eventually bring him to Rome.

➤ **The Response to Paul's Defense**

Notice Acts 22:20-23

The Jews listened closely to his words until he spoke of being sent to the Gentiles. This statement sent to crowds into a rage. It was not Paul's preaching to the Gentiles that angered the Jews because even the religious leaders preached to the Gentiles.

Matthew 23:15

The problem that they had was Paul's message made the Jews and the Gentiles equal without the Law of Moses. They did not understand what Jesus had done.

Ephesians 2:11-15

¹¹ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

¹⁵ *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

Ephesians 3:3-6

³ *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

⁴ *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

⁵ *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

⁶ *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

There is something in the reaction of the Jews that we need to stop and consider. It was Satan who motivated these Jews to burn with rage toward the Apostle Paul. Keep in mind that he was on a path to Rome and therefore the potential was great that he would reach many sinners with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Satan hated the thought of the church growing and he was doing all he could to stop Paul and, in this scene, Satan revealed his true character because these Jews desired to kill Paul.

Application:

Let us understand that as we serve the Lord and allow ourselves to be used of God then we can certainly expect that we are going to face some harsh opposition. We need to also understand that Satan will use whatever he can to oppose us. It may not be an attack as Paul faced but it can just be problems in the family or problems in our everyday lives. It can be certain words that people speak to you or against you that become fiery darts that stick and you just have a tough time shaking them loose. Like Elijah the words can bring about spiritual depression in an attempt to get us to give up and repeat the words of Elijah, "IT IS ENOUGH!"

2 Timothy 3:12-13

¹² *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

¹³ *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

Paul makes it clear to timothy that evil men would increase over time. We can see in Revelation how this will be fulfilled.

Revelation 6:9-11

⁹ *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:*

¹⁰ *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

¹¹ *And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

Revelation 11:3, 7-10

³ *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

⁷ *And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*

⁸ *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

⁹ *And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*

¹⁰ *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

Notice Acts 22:23 again.

In this verse we see the people cast off their clothes and cast dust in the air. The casting off of the clothes here may reveal something that would be easy to miss.

Acts 7:57-58

⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

⁵⁸ And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

When Stephen was stoned, they laid their clothes at the feet of Paul. But here in Acts 22 they do not lay down their coats but cast them off in a fit of rage because they are planning to stone Paul. When they cast stones, they removed the outer garment so that they had more freedom to cast the stones. Some say they cast the dirt because there were no stones in the place where they were. In their state of rage, they had lost their minds. Much like we see today.

Notice Acts 22:24

They took Paul into the castle so that they could examine him by scourging. This scourging was not the same as the flogging which the Jews would administer. This scourging was far worse. Many times, the scourging would end the life of the individual. The scourging was done with a wooden handle to which were attached leather thongs tipped with bits of metal and bone. The victim could die of blood loss or infection. The scourging would completely shred the flesh on the back. Our Lord endured this so that we could be forgiven.

John 19:1

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

This was one reason He could not carry His cross the entire way to Calvary. Think of the pain when He was crucified and His back rubbed against the rugged wooden cross.

Notice Acts 22:25a

They bound Paul with thongs to prepare him to be scourged. This means they stretched him out so that the skin on the back was tight. This made sure that the scourging was able to do the greatest damage. Why did they attempt to do this to Paul?

Notice Acts 22:24 again.

It was to get him to confess to them what he had done. Keep in mind that in verse 2 of this chapter we are told that Paul delivered his defense in the Hebrew tongue and therefore the Romans did not understand. They then wanted to know what he had done that would have caused this reaction from the Jews. So, to get him to confess they would torture him by scourging him.

Notice Acts 22:25

Here in this verse Paul claims his rights as a Roman citizen and under Roman law they were not permitted to scourge him without a trial that would find him guilty. When we read of Paul claiming his rights as a Roman citizen there is a question that comes up. Remember what happened to Paul and Silas in Philippi?

Acts 16:16-23

¹⁶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

¹⁹ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

²² And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

²³ And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

Paul did not mention here that he was a Roman citizen. He did when they decided to release them, however.

Acts 16:35-38

³⁵ *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.*

³⁶ *And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.*

³⁷ *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.*

³⁸ *And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.*

The question is, "Why didn't Paul claim his citizenship in Acts 16? The truth is we do not know. Notice the words of John Phillips.

"There are times for a believer to claim his civil rights. A believer should be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ, but there is no virtue in suffering merely for suffering's sake."

Conclusion:

Possibly Paul claimed his rights in Acts 22 because God impressed upon him to do so. He was on his way to Rome and after the attempted scourging he would go to hearings that would eventually land him in Rome.

Acts 19:21

²¹ *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.*

Acts 23:11

¹¹ *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

All things work together for good. Whether it be suffering or freedom, it is all part of God's plan for us.