

Calvary Chapel on the Horizon
January 9, 2022
Acts 22-23 "Paul's Testimony"

I. Introduction

Read: Col 1:21-29

- † **In Acts chapter 21, Paul is back in Jerusalem and had just been rescued from a riot because the people incorrectly believed he was teaching against the law...**
 - † **Paul's ministry philosophy comes from 1Co 9:19-22** For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
 - † **And so, we remind ourselves of where we left off in Act 21:37-40** And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, **Canst thou speak Greek?** 38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?
 - † **According to the Jewish historian Josephus...these Egyptian guys were known to be ruthless killers...they assonate in the middle of crowds by walking by the person to be killed and stabbing him with a knife and then walking on before anyone knew what was happening.**
- 39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. 40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, *{chapter ended here}*
- † **Paul turned this into a "Ministry opportunity" ...he would later write in 2Ti 4:2** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

II. Sharing the Truth

Act 22:1-2 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) **(Realize this is a Holy Spirit "thing" - we find here a MAJOR rioting crowd that is completely silenced!)**

Act 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. **(By speaking of his citizenship in Tarsus – he just captured**

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the hearts of the Jews who lived abroad...and by speaking of Gamaliel, he won over the hearts of the Israeli Jews. As well, by sharing that he had studied under Gamaliel, he's, in effect saying he has a PhD from Harvard or Yale or some other highly prestigious institution and should be listened to!)

Act 22:4-23 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. **(he's now convinced them of his zealouslyness)** 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell onto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, "What shall I do, Lord?" And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. 17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles". **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. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

† **Paul said the "G" word...GENTILE. When a devout Jew male would wake up in the morning, he would thank God that he wasn't a gentile, a woman or a dog! The Jews hated the gentiles!**

† **1Co 1:18, 22-24** For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

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III. Free Born

Act 22:24-30 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle **{which was the Antonio Fortress}**, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 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? 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”. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, with a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 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. 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.

† **They were planning the Scourging for confession...{explain} but it was illegal to scourge a Roman Citizen!**

† **It was also illegal to claim to be a Roman citizen and not be one – under penalty of death.**

IV. Addressing the Council

A. A Good Conscience

Act 23:1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

† **Conscience is our moral perception of “Right and Wrong”. It is by no means accurately aligned with God’s truth – the Bible.**

† **We’re called to walk by faith, and NOT BY SIGHT. If we walked in the simplicity of our conscience, we would not necessarily be walking in God’s will.**

† **God’s Word is always the truth for our lives! It must be “THE PRIORITY” in our lives as our guiding influence.**

B. Paul’s Flesh

Act 23:2-3 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

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† {**Paul, appearing to be in his flesh a bit...**} **Rom 7:18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Act 23:4-5 And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?" 5 Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT SPEAK EVIL OF A RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE.'"

† **But Paul then made it right...remembering the scripture.**

C. The Resurrection

Act 23:6-10 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!" 7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection--and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God." 10 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

† **Paul understood his audience...**

† **Pharisees believed in the entire Bible (OT Only), believed in Angels and in the Resurrection.**

† **Sadducees only believed in the Torah (1st five books), did not believe in Angels and most certainly did NOT believe in the Resurrection.**

† **Paul played off this major difference when he said, "...of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"**

† **The result:** **Act 23:7-10** And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection--and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God." 10 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

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D. The Lord's Comfort

Act 23:11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

† **At this point, Paul may have been discouraged...but Jesus came to encourage and comfort Paul!**

† **Rom 8:34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

† **So, Jesus encouraged Paul with the news that he would also bear witness of Him at Rome!**

V. A Conspiracy Against Paul

Act 23:12-22 And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. 14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near." 16 So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him." 18 So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you." 19 Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" 20 And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. 21 But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you." 22 So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

† **God used the natural (the nephew) to circumvent the 40 who vowed to kill Paul ...**

† **Chuck Smith:** "...a person who is keenly attuned to spiritual things will learn to see God and recognize the hand of God in very natural circumstances. And we must not look for God only in some kind of spectacular phenomena, but begin to look for Him in the very natural things. For God works His supernatural works in very natural ways."

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VI. Bringing Paul to Felix

Act 23:23-35 And he called for two centurions, saying, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; 24 and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor." 25 He wrote a letter in the following manner: 26 Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. 29 I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. 30 And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell. 31 Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. 33 When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

† **God gives Paul quite the escort...470 soldiers!**

† **Paul was housed in Herod's Praetorium...or judgment hall. It was a "cushy" place to be in jail.**

† **When God buys, we eat steak! Even in jail...**

VII. Conclusion

How do you look at God? As a servant to a Master, or as a child to a Father?

The servant is accepted on the basis of what he does; the child on the basis of who he is.

The servant starts the day anxious & worried, wondering if his work will really please his master; the child rests in the secure love of his family.

The servant is accepted because of his workmanship; the son or daughter because of a relationship.