

Paul on Trial - Part 04 – Acts 23

The Trial in Jerusalem

1. Jerusalem's Response (22:22-25)

- a. In Acts Paul ministers to Israel. Paul's message doesn't change, only the audience
- b. Romans is a mid-Acts book written with Jews in mind – Rom 1:16, 2:9-10
- c. Rom 15 is written to assuage the reaction in Acts 22:22-23 (see Rom 15:8-16)
- d. Israel is fallen, they are blinded (Rom 11:25)
- e. Truth is fallen in the street, Israel is Isa 59:1-4(sinful), 6-10(blind), 14-15(unjust)

2. Paul, the Roman (22:26-30)

- a. Roman citizens, along with respect, had the right to trial and appeal.
- b. 12 apostles were chosen because there were twelve tribes – Matt 19:28, Rev 21:14
- c. Paul was chosen because he was both Jew and Roman as the Eph 2:15 one man
- d. Paul was not one of the twelve, nor another apostle – he could not be – Acts 1:21
- e. He is a chosen vessel preaching the mystery union with Christ in one new man
- f. How do we apply this? Speak to gain a hearing with your audience, not a fight
 - i. Be clear, not vague; be honest, not deceptive; bear burdens, don't be one
 - ii. Harsh rebukes are not always for the recipient, but for others – 1 Tim 5:20
- g. *"I became as a Jew"* – 1 Co 9:20 – reflects his changing audience, not message
 - i. He knows where he stands, but puts himself in their shoes... for what?
 - ii. That he might by all means (not any message) save some – 1 Cor 9:22
 - iii. Speak the truth in their language and from where they are at – Titus 3:3

3. The Hearing in Jerusalem (23:1-11)

- a. The hearing is organized by command of Lysias b/c Paul was a Roman
- b. Paul starts as in his public defense with his history of obedience – Acts 22, 2Ti 1:3
- c. He is smote in 23:2 - *"Thou that judgest doest the same things"* - Rom 2:1-2, 17-24
- d. The prosecution would've used this as evidence of his sedition, but... Acts 23:5
- e. To those under the law, Paul exhibits the holiness of the law – Rom 7:1, 12
- f. Paul perceives the audience and decides not to start with the new creature.
- g. *"I am a Pharisee"* – believes in judgment, resurrection, and rewards
- h. This is why we start with the gospel, and Paul's gospel starts here 1 Cor 15
- i. If there is no resurrection, then there is no Christ, and no salvation – 2 Tim 2:8
- j. 23:9 is the same response as Gamaliel in Acts 4, but in unbelief.
- k. We preach Jesus Christ, not just the mystery; Paul exhibits this in his testimony.

4. The Conspiracy and Move to Caesarea (23:12-35)

- a. 23:12-22 - 40 Jews make a conspiracy to shed innocent blood without trial.
- b. Luke records this information as useful to defend Paul against false accusations
- c. Lysias' letter has some changes, but is a strong defense of Paul's innocence.
- d. Paul's mystery message does not change; it is the audience that changes.

Paul's Means of Ministry

*“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself
servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”*

– 1 Corinthians 9:19

When you address an audience unfriendly to your message, how do you approach them? With a spirit of debate and argument or with a hope to understand where they stand, and how they see where you are at?

1. To Jews he used their scripture, circumcised Tim, went to the temple – Acts 16:3, 21:26
2. To those under law he exhibited the holiness of the law – Rom 7:1, 12
3. To Gentiles he eats with them, and recalls their poets and vain idols – Rom 3-5, Acts 17
4. To those not under law he exhibits his freedom (in goodness) – Gal 2-5
5. To the weak he explains the strength of God – Col 2:10-16
6. To the strong he explains the humility of God – 1 Cor 8, Rom 14