

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Paul's Personal Testimony to the Jews
Acts 22

Last time...James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem proposed to Paul that he show himself “a good Jew” because his reputation has preceded him (Ch 21:21-24)
Walking in the Law of Love to not stumble others weaker in the faith, he does so.
But, as anticipated, he was recognized...and a riot erupted

This time...given his heart's desire, Paul shares his personal testimony with the Jews
We are in Acts 22

v1 Standing on the stairs leading up to the Antonia Fortress, Paul beckons for the attention of his kinsmen...and a miracle happens – the tumultuous mob becomes silent (Ch 21:40)

Paul, bound in the Spirit to come here to Jerusalem, is given the desire of his heart... an opportunity to witness of Jesus Christ to the Jews, for whom he has

- great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart
(Rom 9:2)
- a willingness to be accursed from Christ so they could be saved
(Rom 9:3, Rom 10:1)
- a great love for them, who are zealously embracing self-righteousness of “keeping the Law” and ignorantly rejecting the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all who believe, Jew or Gentile
(Rom 10:2-4, Rom 3:22, Rom 1:16-17)

And standing on the LORD as his defence and the rock of his refuge (Ps 94:22), Paul addresses them:

1. Men: because from the stairs he is looking down on Temple Mount and Jewish mob in the Court of the Men
No women are present; they are restricted to the Court of the Women
(Temple courts increasingly restrictive)
2. brethren, because he is a Jew, too
3. fathers, because he is giving honor unto the elders

v2 Hearing Paul speak in Hebrew the mob becomes still
 The miracle grows – the Lord is closing mouths and opening ears for this
 appointment

By speaking to the Jews in Hebrew, Paul

- speaks “the language of God” to God’s people
 According to rabbinic tradition,
 - because it is the language of sacred texts, Hebrew itself was considered sacred, referred to as the holy language.
 - Hebrew was often thought to be the language of the angels, and indeed, of God, the language that God used to create the world.
 - Hebrew was the original language of humanity, spoken by all of humankind prior to the dispersion at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11)
 [*The Origin of Speeches*]
- connects with them...he is one of them
- excludes the Roman soldiers...and the Jews know it

Note: Paul spoke in Hebrew, the inspired account is recorded in Greek

v3 No need to introduce himself by name...they know his name...so Paul
 “presents his credentials”

- a Jew
- born in Tarsus of the Roman province of Cilicia
 (SW Med coast of modern day Turkey)
- raised here in Jerusalem
- at the feet of Gamaliel
 - Pharisee, the strictest Jewish sect
 - a leading and highly esteemed doctor/Rabbinic authority on the Law of Moses (Acts 5:34-40a)
 - taught the exactness of the Law...no better education in the Law could be had by a Jewish student than at Gamaliel’s feet
- zealous toward God
- as ye all are this day...as they are this day, so was he
 “I know where you are coming from; so was I.”

What follows is Paul’s personal testimony

Our most powerful witness of Jesus Christ is our personal testimony,
not a theological lecture

A theology can be argued, debated, and rejected...but our testimony of the good
and radical change Jesus Christ has done in us cannot be!

v4 Evidence of his zealousness toward God, as are they?
After Acts 5, he persecuted this “Way”
as followers of Jesus Christ (John 14:6) were known until they began to be
called “Christians” in Antioch

Note: no need to elaborate on “the way” because that is the crux of their
problem with Paul

unto death

Acts 8 made havoc of the Church
Acts 9 breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the
disciples of the Lord

binding and delivering into prison anyone who called on that Name

Gal 1:13-14 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the
Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the
church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews'
religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being
more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

written to Jewish believers in Jesus Christ who had leanings back
toward the Law and works vs grace
(a different gospel, the gospel of the Judaizers)

v5 His rabid zealousness toward God, as theirs is this day, could be attested to by the
High Priest and the Sanhedrin (70 leaders), who sanctioned/commissioned Saul to
go to Damascus and round up those blasphemers there

Armed with the authority of the High Priest and the Sanhedrin, Saul marched to
Damascus with rage flowing thru his veins

v6 Then, almost to Damascus...a miracle!

At noon...when the sun it at its brightest and at its highest peak
suddenly...and unexpectedly
a great light from heaven/eternity...

Is 57:15 the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name
is Holy

Is 66:1a Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the
earth *is* my footstool

Ps 104:2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment
shone all around Paul...this raging zealot was suddenly the target of a
“spotlight from heaven”

Status of the audience: So far so good!

v7-8 Fallen to his face in the presence of God, Paul heard a Voice speaking to him
Saul, Saul...repeated for emphasis
why do you persecute Me?

Saul was the point of the spear of a prophesy Jesus gave His disciples
John 16:2-3 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time
cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth
God service. And these things will they do unto you,
because they have not known the Father, nor me.

Paul responded to the Voice of God speaking to him from heaven (His Throne)
Who are you, Lord...*kurios*, "God"

But remember, he is speaking in Hebrew...

Lord = *Adoni*, a proper name used **only** of the Living God

Paul addressed the Living God, Maker of heaven and earth, the God of Israel

The Voice of the Living God, Maker of heaven and earth, the God of Israel, speaking to
him from heaven/eternity identifies Himself:

I am Jesus of Nazareth...the Name above every other name,
a lightning rod name to the Jews

Whom you persecute

in v4..."this Way" = followers of Jesus Christ
the Body of Christ
the Bride of Christ
the Head of the Church
those one with Jesus Christ
Gen 2:24 with Eph 5:25
John 17:21-23a

The persecution of the Church is taken Personally by the
Head of the Body, the Bridegroom of the Bride

Status of the audience: So far so good!

v9 Paul testifies that those who accompanied him from Jerusalem to Damascus
saw the light and were afraid (also) but heard not the Voice speaking to Saul

Acts 9:7...a contradiction?

No

They heard the audible sound of a voice

but they did not understand what the voice was saying (the language)

Acts 26:14 i.e. Hebrew

All on the road to Damascus heard a voice, but Jesus' understanding audience,
His personal conversation was with only Saul of Tarsus

- v10 Paul rationally responded to Jesus speaking to him from heaven in the Hebrew language
What shall I do, Lord...*kurios*, "God", *Adoni*?
("I know You are not speaking to me to hear Yourself talk or to ask me
how my wife is doing...")

Reading carefully and thinking clearly, Paul's words to the Jews on Temple Mount this
Feast of Pentecost, testifying of the personal conversation he had with Jesus of
Nazareth:

The Lord...*kurios*, "God", *Adoni*

- Jesus is Lord, Jesus is the Living God, the God of Israel
- Jesus of Nazareth is the God of AI&J
- Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord who spoke with Moses and gave him the
Law

indicating Saul had a genuine conversion, born-again experience

1 Cor 12:3b no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the
Holy Ghost.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of
darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light
of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of
Jesus Christ.

Status of the audience: So far so good!

said to me, Arise and go...the Lord Jesus told Paul to do one thing,
to take one step of faith;
other steps of faith would be revealed to him once he took that one step

Taking one step of faith is how we also walk with the Lord

A "walk" of faith is taking one step at a time, the one step directed by the
Lord

After which another step will be revealed, then another, then another, etc

We do not get any more than what Paul got – one step

We may want to know all the steps before we "step out", but if we did we
most likely would not step out!

In our personal walks, the Lord knows and appoints all of the steps

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto
good works, which God hath before ordained that we
should walk in them.

but we follow Him by taking them by faith, one at a time

As a fellowship, the Lord Jesus Christ has humbled Himself to let us be a part of what He is doing in Egypt in these last of the last days...
an altar (place of worship) and pillar (witness) in the time of a revival
(Is 19:19-25)

It started with us hearing a testimony in 2008

Then, the Voice said, "Go see."

We went and He showed us

On the plane ride home, He shared a vision

Now, after hundreds of one-at-a-time steps,

- a barley harvest, a greater blessing than expected...double
"you guys are blessed" from the harvester
- from healed waters of a salty, brackish well
- we go to again in 2 weeks to take the next step

v11 Fallen to the ground...humbled before the Living God of AI&J, Paul was

- blinded by the glory of the Light of the world (John 8:12)
- led by the hand to Damascus...helpless and in need of help

Gone is his driving self-righteous anger...that works not the righteousness of God
(James 1:20)

Gone is his religious pride...that the Lord hates

v12-13 Now Paul brings into his testimony one "as ye all are this day"

- a devout Jew, according to the Law
- of good report/testimony of all the Jews in Damascus

This "good Jew"

(also directed personally by the Lord Jesus Christ to take a step of faith, Acts 9)
came to Paul and said,

Brother Saul...of the same family, the Family of God
Receive your sight.

And in the same hour/"instant" Paul's sight was restored!

A miracle of God!

Status of the audience: So far so good!

- v14 The God of our fathers...the God of AI&J, the God of Moses
has chosen you...a Divine plan is upon Paul's life (as there is upon ours too!)
to
- know His will...be given Divine revelation
 - see that Just One...the Messiah promised to ASNSAIJJD and unmistakably testified of by Peter to another crowd of Jews on Temple Mount
Acts 3:13-15 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.
 - hear the voice of His mouth...v7-10
 - Jesus is Lord God, *Adoni*
 - Jesus is the Messiah sent by the God of AI&J

Status of the audience: So far so good!

- v15 Thru His servant Ananias comes God's calling upon Paul's life:
to be God's witness...just as he is right now on the stairs to Antonia Fortress!
to **all** men...all = Jew + Gentile
of what he has seen and heard...the Lord God Jesus Christ and Him glorified

Status of the audience: So far so good!

- v16 Now, the next step of faith for Paul, having been faithful to take the previous step
of going to Damascus

What are you waiting for?

Do not hesitate!

Go now!

- be baptized...John the Baptist's baptism for the remission of sins,
not the Jewish ceremonial washing before entering the Temple
- wash away your sins...cleansed of sin, sin removed not merely covered
- by calling on/invoking the name (authority) of the Lord/*Adoni/kurios*
 - Jesus (v8, 10)
 - Who being God has the authority/power to remove sin
(just as He had said Personally in Mark 2:10)

Status of the audience: So far so good!

v17-18 Later, after

Gal 1:16b-18 immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years (a student of the Author of the Law, not just a mere man) I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Paul was praying in the Temple...he was NOT against the Temple, the house of God in a trance...a state of ecstatic joy in the presence of Jesus seeing and hearing Jesus telling him to hurriedly leave Jerusalem because the Jews would not receive/believe his testimony of Him – Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord, God’s Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God

It is time to leave “Sodom and Egypt”, time to keep moving to “all men”

As Jesus had taught His disciples

Matt 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Matt 10:14-18 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Status of the audience: So far so good!

v19-20 To which Paul...argued, push back against

To Jesus, Paul said,

Lord...*kurios*, “God”, *Adoni*
they...the Jews here in Jerusalem
know...

- I persecuted those who believed on You
- I approved of and was gratified by the death/murder of Your martyr (“witness” in v15) Stephen
- I watched over the coats of those throwing the stones at Stephen

i.e. they will believe my report, they will see the radical change in me and believe in You!

Status of the audience: So far so good!

v21 Jesus summarily dismissed Paul's argument/appeal, emphatically condensing v18 to one word: Depart

The Lord Jesus Christ is sending His witness unto all men of what he has seen and heard (v15) to the Gentiles

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

At this moment in Acts 22, having been given the desire of his heart to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ to his kinsman, you know Paul was just getting warmed up! He had so much Good News to tell them, he was probably bursting at the seams! The star student of the most esteemed teacher of the Law had learned the breadth and depth of the Truth of God's Word from God Himself...and was going to tell them!

Gen 3:15 with Is 7:14 and Is 9:6

Gen 12:3

Gen 22

Ps 22

Is 53

etc etc etc

Status of the audience?

v22 The Jewish mob was silent and paying very close attention to everything Paul said... until he said "Gentiles"

Then they lost their minds and the riot erupted anew

There would be no revival this day!

The Jews would simply not hear about salvation coming to the Gentiles...

even if the Lord their God, the God of AI&J, said it!!!

They believed

- it was IMPOSSIBLE for a Gentile to be saved
- God created Gentiles to fuel the fires of hell

The mob immediately resumes its demand that Paul be killed

v23-24 A demand emphasized by

- volume of words
- the tearing of clothing
- throwing of dust into the air

prompting the chief captain,
who did not understand a single word Paul had spoken to the Jews,
to haul Paul into Antonia Fortress to be scourged, Rome's favorite way of "learning the truth" from trouble-makers

v25 As Paul, already chained to 2 Roman soldiers,
is being bound with thongs, leather straps to restrain the one being scourged,
he calmly asks a question to a centurion about the legality (per Roman Law) of scourging

- a Roman citizen (Nope!)
- without a fair trial (Nope!)

Doing so would be an offense worthy of death to those who did

Feisty Paul, for the second time in his ministry to the Gentiles ([Acts 16:37](#)) plays his
"Roman card"

Did the Lord know what He was doing when He chose Paul to be His witness and
12th Apostle?!

v26-28 Paul easily got the centurion's rapt attention, who quickly went to tell his boss to
be very careful...and Paul now has the chief captain's rapt attention also

The chief captain purchased his freedom/citizenship, meaning he had been a...slave
But Paul was born free, born a citizen...a higher class citizen in the Roman Empire
Julius Caesar had granted full rights of citizenship to all the residents of Tarsus
hence why Paul said (Ch 21:39)

v29 This very important piece of information regarding Paul had an immediate effect –
the scourgers, 2nd class citizens of Rome, backed off out of fear of reprisals for
their treatment of him (they are the Roman Law breakers!)

v30 This Jewish uprising was still very much a threat to the career and life of the chief captain
so the next day he summons the parties involved to learn what the hubbub was

Application

1. Our most powerful witness of Jesus Christ is our personal testimony, not a theological lecture i.e. how much of the Bible you know or have memorized
A theology can be argued, debated, and rejected...but our testimony of the good and radical change Jesus Christ has done in us cannot be argued!

Radical change brought on by the love and grace of God
Rom 5:8, Eph 2:8-9

The anatomy of a personal testimony

- who I was
- who I am now because of Jesus Christ

ala John 9:25b one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.
being very careful to not glorify my sin but to glorify Jesus Christ Who removed
my sin

A personal testimony must bear witness of God's testimony of His Son

John 1:4

John 3:16

1 John 5:11:12

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life,
and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life;
and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

To whom must we give our personal testimony?

- unbelievers who do not believe the testimony of God: to warn and to invite

even unbelievers that carry the name of Jesus Christ

A new study shows that, since the COVID-19 pandemic, 44% of Americans who identify as born-again Christians believe that Jesus lived a sinless life when He walked the earth 2,000 years ago, the Christian Post reports. Published in the American Worldview Inventory 2023, the study was carried out by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University under the supervision of pollster George Barna.

Those do not believe that Jesus lived a sinless life are not among the redeemed

1 Peter 1:18-25

unless they

- confess their sin (unbelief)
 - repent of their sin
 - call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - receive by faith the grace and forgiveness they most desperately need
- believers that do believe the testimony of God: to encourage and edify

Be liberal (in the Bible that means “generous”) with your personal testimony!!

And guard/protect your personal testimony!

Given its power, the devil is intent on destroying it by tempting us, distracting us, and discouraging us.

2. Our walk with Jesus Christ is a continual series of individual steps of faith

When we are obedient by faith to take the one step the Lord has directed us to take,
He then gives us the next step and so on

If we do not by faith obey to take the one step the Lord has directed,
we will be standing still

As we faithfully take the one step at a time, we continue to write and share our
testimony to all men, who in these momentous days need desperately to see and
hear Jesus Christ