



## ACTS 22:1-16

Making the most of the opportunity to share the gospel

# A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY TURNS TO FAVOR (21:37-40)

*<sup>37</sup> As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? <sup>38</sup> Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?”*

- Paul asks the tribune permission to speak
- Hearing Paul speaking Greek took the tribune by surprise
- He now thinks Paul may be a Greek-speaking Egyptian fugitive that led a failed uprising in Jerusalem and then retreated to the wilderness with four thousand men

*<sup>39</sup> Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.” <sup>40</sup> And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:*

- Paul informs the tribune that he is mistaken
- Paul is not an Egyptian, but a Jew from the prominent and refined Roman city of Tarsus in the region of Cilicia
- Respectfully, Paul requests the opportunity to address the mob
- Shocked by the turn of events that Paul is no longer being treated as a common criminal, when they see that Paul is preparing to speak to them, they are silent

# A HISTORY OF PASSION FOR JUDAISM CONNECTS PAUL WITH THE JEWS (22:1-5)

<sup>1</sup> *“Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”*

- Paul speaks to those who just brutalized him, respectfully addressing them as his contemporaries and seniors
- He lets them know of his intention to explain the transformation of his life

<sup>2</sup> *And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet.*

- Paul spoke to them in Hebrew
- Hearing him use the language of the Jews grabbed their attention

*And he said:*<sup>3</sup> *“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.*

- His family apparently was well connected with the Jewish community of Tarsus
- His parents arranged for their son to go to Jerusalem to be a student of Gamaliel, one of the most respected Rabbis in Jerusalem at the time
- Paul was brought up to be a Pharisee, a conservative and legalistic sect of Judaism
- Paul can relate to the thoughts and feelings of the defenders of Judaism gathered in Jerusalem on that day

# A HISTORY OF PASSION FOR JUDAISM CONNECTS PAUL WITH THE JEWS (22:1-5)

*<sup>4</sup> I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, <sup>5</sup> as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.*

- Paul now unpacks his fervent opposition to Jews who became followers of Jesus (“*this Way*”)
  - His resistance to Christians is so intense that he had some of them killed (“*I persecuted this Way to the death*”)
  - For both men and women who became Christians, for whom he couldn’t justify capital punishment, he would arrest and imprison
  - Paul’s persecution of Christians was known and approved by the high priest and Jewish leaders
- Paul initiates his response to them from a position of humble remembrance of the sinful condition of his heart when the Lord met him
- Paul does not feel superior to them, but can relate to their thought process

# AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING (22:6-11)

<sup>6</sup> “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. <sup>7</sup> And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ <sup>8</sup> And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’

- Paul journeys to Damascus to continue his dastardly deeds of persecuting Christian Jews
- At the brightest time of the day (“*about noon*”), the shekinah of the Lord makes the light of the sun seem dim
- He is questioned by a voice from heaven saying, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*”
- Baffled by the inquiry, Paul respectfully asks who is talking to him (“*Who are you, Lord?*”)
- Jesus identifies with His people and charges Paul with persecuting Him
  - Saying, “*I am Jesus of Nazareth,*” the Lord may be utilizing a phrase Paul used when condemning those claiming faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior
  - Connecting the Messiah to Nazareth seemed to Jews to be deplorable
  - The Lord of Glory openly identifies with Nazareth and forces Paul to realize it
  - We all should be careful about claiming more than we know



# AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING (22:6-11)

<sup>9</sup> Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup> And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' <sup>11</sup> And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

- What happened that day was specifically directed to Paul (Saul)
- His traveling companions witnessed the shekinah but were not able to understand the voice of the Lord speaking to Paul
- When Paul asks, "What shall I do, Lord?" he is addressing the divine authority of Jesus that Paul now recognizes
  - Submission to the divine authority of Jesus indicates obedience
  - Luke 6:46
  - Romans 10:9–10
- Jesus instructs Paul to go to Damascus to be informed about the commission the Lord is giving to him
- Paul came to Damascus with the authority of Jewish leaders to persecute Christians
- Paul leaves Damascus with the authority of Jesus to make disciples of Jesus in all nations

## AN EXPLANATION IS GIVEN OF PAUL'S COMMISSION FOR MINISTRY AND BAPTISM (22:12-16)

<sup>12</sup> “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,  
<sup>13</sup> came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. <sup>14</sup> And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; <sup>15</sup> for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.

- The Jews living in Damascus held Ananias in high regard as an obedient Jew
- Ananias came to know Jesus as Lord and Savior and he was directed by the Lord to go to Saul
- Ananias will pray for the healing of Saul's blindness, affirm the will of the Lord in Saul's salvation, acknowledge that Saul was to see and hear his ascended Lord and Savior, and confirm Saul will share the gospel with everyone (meaning Jews and Gentiles)
- Saul acknowledges his commission, takes it to heart, and walks obediently

# AN EXPLANATION IS GIVEN OF PAUL'S COMMISSION FOR MINISTRY AND BAPTISM (22:12-16)

*<sup>16</sup> And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'*

- Ananias encourages Paul not to delay getting baptized as a public affirmation of his acceptance and dependence on Jesus as his Lord and Savior
- Baptism, prayer, confession, and repentance do not save
  - Only the work of Jesus saves
  - These actions are the fruit of salvation
  - Ephesians 2:8–10
- But baptism is an important experience for every born-again child of God
  - It is a personal and public declaration of the gospel work of Jesus Christ, made personal by the Holy Spirit
  - It is an open display that the old man is crucified with Christ and the condemnation of sin is cleansed by trust in Jesus
  - It proclaims a new life with a new direction and that this new man lives by the resurrection power of Jesus
  - It publicly affirms that Jesus is with us now and forevermore
- The same question can be asked of everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior –  
*“And now why do you wait?”*



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What needs to happen for you to start making the most of opportunities to share the gospel?
- How does humbly remembering your pre-conversion life help you to relate to those you are hoping God will call out of darkness into His marvelous light?
- What are some notable changes encountering your Lord Jesus in salvation has made?
- Can you give a definition and description of baptism, explaining why we don't baptize babies?



## ACTS 22:1-16

Making the most of the opportunity to share the gospel