

Part 54 Paul Arrested

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2016

† Acts 21:33-40; 22:1-21:

Last Wednesday we looked at verses 15 through 33. We covered Paul's time in Jerusalem. Then we saw how the Jews from Asia turned on him and wanted him killed and a riot broke out. Tonight we have several verses to cover Lord willing we will finish up chapter 21 and then most of chapter 22. I know that is a lot of verses but I believe we can get through it.

Last Wednesday night we saw that all the city was an uproar and they brought Paul out and tried to kill him. Luckily someone informed the chief captain of the guard and he and his men came out and rescued Paul. He then took Paul and placed him under arrest and that is where we pick up the story from tonight

Act 21:33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

One of the things that the Romans wanted to make sure of was that nothing got back to their superiors. They were always concerned that they were going to get in trouble if there was civil unrest in their province. So, the Romans kept very strict law and order.

Here again we see that Agabus' prophecy came true when they bound Paul and arrested him.

Act 21:34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

Things were so out of hand that the soldiers were even confused. So they had Paul brought into the castle so they can question him and peace.

Act 21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

As they're leading Paul up the stairs to the castle, the Jews continue the tumult on the stairs. So Paul is stopped momentarily. Most likely these Roman soldiers did not understand their Hebrew language and so they didn't know what was being said by anyone.

Act 21:37 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?

Paul is a man of many surprises. There is no telling how many languages that Paul could speak. He was a very educated man. He probably knew Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin, and possibly other languages that we don't know of. We will see in the next chapter that this chief captain is not a native Roman. He says that he bought his freedom. So he probably is not very versed in the Latin language that the Romans used, but rather he spoke Greek language.

Act 21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

The Romans think that Paul is this Egyptian that tried to lead a revolt against the Romans. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us about this man who convinced a lot

of Jews to follow him and said that he could bring down the walls of the city and help them destroy the Romans. He was an Egyptian man and he fled after they failed in their attempt. This chief captain believes that Paul is this man.

Act 21:39 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.

Paul wants to try to get this crowd to settle down by telling his conversion story and all the things that have happened to him. So he asked this chief captain if he would allow him to speak to them from the stairway.

Act 21:40 And when he had given him licence, 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,

Now Paul goes from speaking in Greek to the Chief-captain, to speaking in Hebrew to the Jewish people.

Well this is an unfortunate chapter break that was added in right there. Of course the original Greek and Hebrew texts were not divided as such. A man named Robert Estienne also known as Stephanus is said to be the first to print the Bible divided into standard numbered verses and chapters. He did this in a Bible he printed back in 1551 and that is the same numbering system we use today. Sometimes the verses and chapters are divided in places that seem sort of strange. Rumour has it that he was in a hurry to meet printing deadlines and was riding on horseback trying to make verse divisions and whenever the horse would stumble he would sometimes inadvertently place a mark, causing a strange place to divide verses... now whether that is true or not I don't know but he is said to be the one that divided the verses as we have them now. But that's okay, we will just continue on with the thought on into chapter 22:

Act 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

Of course hearing their native Hebrew tongue makes them stop and pay attention to what Paul is saying. For a while the crowd is quiet and listening. Next Paul begins giving his testimony of where he came from, what he used to be, and how the Lord Jesus saved him and made him a preacher unto the Gentiles. We have already covered all of this in previous studies so we aren't going to go into indepth detail on the next 20 verses but rather just kind of hit the high points.

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.

He starts out by informing them of where he was born and makes sure they know that he is a Jew. He also informs them of his education in Rabbi School under the teaching of the most respected Rabbi of the day, Gamaliel. Paul would have been in this school from the age of 13 until his mid 20's studying Jewish law and history, which would make Paul a lawyer. It is believed that he served on the Sanhedrin court which was made up of 71 Jewish lawyers, they were the Supreme Court of the Jews. Paul mentions that he is very zealous toward God the same as all of those listening to him were.

Act 22:4 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.

Then he gives the account from Acts 9 where he received papers that gave him the authority to travel to Damascus to persecute Christians. Notice that Paul admits to persecuting Christians to death and putting them in prison. There is no telling how many Christians he was responsible for killing.

Act 22:6 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 unto 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.

Then he goes into how he met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. We have studied, taught, and preached on this well over a 100 times in the past. We know this story very well. But let's not let our familiarity with the story get in the way of appreciating how powerful Saul's conversion was. If God can take a prosecutor like Saul of Tarsus and transform into Paul the Apostle of Grace, just think of what he can do we someone like you are me!

Act 22:9 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.

We see how quickly Saul's life changed from being this self-absorbed, hate filled, anti-Christian to asking the Lord Jesus, "What shall I do Lord?" He immediately turns to a life of servitude.

I also don't want you to miss the fact that Saul's conversion is a personal conversion. The other men that were there did not hear the Lord's voice, only Saul did. And that is still how salvation happens today. Salvation is a one on one experience between you and the Lord, not someone else.

Act 22:12 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.

Now, I'm not going to spend a lot of time focusing on this tonight because I've preached on this before and I also have another sermon that I've been building upon for several weeks that goes into detail on baptism, but I want you to be very clear tonight that you understand that getting baptized does not save you. Some of those that teach baptismal regeneration claim this verse as their proof text. They will state; "see there, the Bible clearly says to be saved you get baptized and it washing your sins away." Hold on a minute, is that what it says? No, it doesn't say that. Look at it again closer. Look at verse 14, Ananias told Saul that God had **chosen him to hear his voice and to be his witness**. Saul was already saved at that point. He got saved

on that road to Damascus. How could God choose Saul to be a witness if he wasn't saved?

Not only that, immediately after Saul's conversion the Lord appeared to Ananias and said this: **Acts 9:10-12: And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.**

Saul in his new found faith was already praying and receiving vision from the Lord.

So, since Saul was saved, Ananias told him **arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord**. Can water wash your sins away? Is there any power in water? If water washes sins away then everyone that took a shower today had their sins washed away and nobody would need to repent because their sins all got washed down the drain. No, there is no saving power in water. Saul was baptized as his outward sign that he had been saved. It was his public acknowledgement that the old man was buried and the new man now lived. What you must do is stop connecting the baptism part to the washing sins away part. Look at it the way the sentence is structured; "and wash away they sin, calling on the name of the Lord." It is the calling on the name of the Lord that washes sins away, not water.

I like what John MacArthur said in his sermon that I listened to: *"Paul never made water baptism any part of his gospel presentations. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul gives a concise summary of the gospel message he preached. There is no mention of baptism. In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul states that Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel," thus clearly differentiating the gospel from baptism. If baptism were part of the gospel itself, necessary for salvation, what good would it have done Paul to preach the gospel, but not baptize? No one would have been saved. Paul clearly understood water baptism to be separate from the gospel, and hence in no way efficacious for salvation.*"ⁱⁱ

Act 22:17 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.

Then Paul relays his story of 3-yers after he was saved and spent time in the Arabian dessert and afterwards he went to Jerusalem and was paying in the Temple and the Lord spoke to him. Then he tells them about the Lord making him a preacher unto the Gentiles and that is what sets them off again, which we will cover in our next lesson on Wednesday Lord willing.

ⁱ All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible

ⁱⁱ Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation? – John MacArthur, Grace to You