

Acts 22:1 ¶ Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make now unto you.*

Acts 22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

Acts 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.

Acts 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Acts 22:5 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.

Paul began to make his defense; and the fact that he was speaking in Hebrew seemed to contribute to their attentiveness. It is interesting to note that the Greek for “defence” is “apologia,” the root word from which we get the word apologetics, the term we use to describe the study of learning how to defend the truth of God’s word.

He identified himself as a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia; yet he spent his formative years studying with Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Accordingly, he was well instructed as to every detail of the law, the Torah, and very zealous in his service to God—just as zealous as those listening to him. Paul emphasized that he too had persecuted and killed those that were followers of “this way” (followers of Jesus), and he had sent many men and women to prison for doing so. He noted that even the high priest and others of the ruling authorities could testify to that truth because they had given him the letters of authorization to go to Damascus and take prisoners of those he found there that followed Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem for punishment.

In other words, this should weigh heavily in your consideration of what I am about to say. I too once thought as you; I understand your anger. I am a well-educated Pharisee—not a man to be easily swayed by false teaching.

Note: According to Easton’s Dictionary, Gamaliel was the grandson of the famous rabbi Hillel; he was Pharisee and was president of the Sanhedrim during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Other sources identify him as one of the top seven rabbis of all time.

Acts 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.

Acts 22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Acts 22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

Acts 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.

Paul then told the people about his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus. He explained that as he neared Damascus around noon, a great light from heaven surrounded him. It caused him to fall to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him saying, "Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Paul answered by asking the speaker to identify Himself, and the speaker declared that He was Jesus of Nazareth. His traveling companions saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Jesus.

Principle: It takes a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus to bring a person to saving faith.

Acts 22:10 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.

Acts 22:11 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.

Paul said that he then asked the Lord what He wanted him to do, and the Lord told him to go on into Damascus; he would then be told what to do. When the light disappeared, Paul was blind and had to be led into the city by his companions.

Acts 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

Acts 22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

A man by the name of Ananias, a man well known as one who carefully kept the law, came to Saul and performed a miracle; he restored Saul's sight.

Acts 22:14 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.

Acts 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Ananias then told Saul (now Paul) that "the God of our fathers" had specifically chosen him to be a witness to all men of all that he would see and hear. He would serve according to God's will and would receive personal instruction from "that Just One," an obvious reference to "Jesus of Nazareth" who had confronted him in the great light on the road to the city.

Ananias then instructed Saul to go and be baptized in repentance for his sins and asking God's forgiveness in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 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;

Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

Acts 22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

Acts 22:20 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.

Acts 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Paul goes on to relate that when he returned to Jerusalem, he went to the temple to pray and fell into a trance. He saw Jesus telling him to hurry and get out of Jerusalem because the people there would not believe his testimony. Saul argued that he was known for persecuting and imprisoning those that had placed their faith in the Lord Jesus. He had consented to and witnessed the stoning of Stephen, and had even held the clothes of those who threw the stones. Saul evidently felt that his background would cause the people to listen to his testimony with respect.

Jesus did not change His command; He told Saul to leave because his primary ministry would be to the Gentiles in distant lands.

Acts 22:22 ¶ 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.

Acts 22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

Evidently, the people had listened quietly until this point. At those last words, however, they rose up again with their cry for him to be crucified. They were “screaming, waving their clothes and throwing dust in the air” (CJB).

The Jews could not accept the possibility of Gentiles being able to establish a relationship with God without converting to Judaism.

Acts 22:24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

Acts 22:25 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?

The commander ordered Paul be brought into the barracks and ordered that he be questioned with scourging in hopes that he could get to the truth. (Note: This was the same tactic Pilate had used with Jesus.) As they were binding Paul, he asked the centurion that was supervising the process if it was lawful to scourge a man that is a Roman citizen that hasn't even been accorded the benefit of a trial.

Acts 22:26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

Acts 22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

Acts 22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

The centurion immediately went to inform the commander that Paul was a Roman citizen. The commander then came to Paul and asked him to verify that he was a citizen. Paul affirmed that fact. The commander noted that it had cost him a great sum of money to buy his freedom. Paul responded that he was a citizen by birth; this placed him in an elite category of citizens.

Acts 22:29 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.

Acts 22:30 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.

Those that were about to flog Paul immediately stepped away from him in fear. Even the commander was afraid because it was against the law for him to have had Paul bound. He released Paul from his bonds, but kept him in custody until he could meet with the Jewish authorities the next day to identify their specific charge against him. So the next morning he brought Paul before a command audience of the Jewish authorities, the Sanhedrin.