

Acts Chapter 22

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[0 : 00] Well, if you will take your sheet, we will back up just a little bit. We are on page 592, down in the lower left-hand corner. And we would remind you that the Apostle Paul has completed his third missionary journey, and he has returned to Jerusalem in time to be there for the Passover.

And having arrived at the temple site, he was spotted by some who were familiar with his missionary journey into Asia.

And they are there in Jerusalem to keep the feast, and they see Paul the Apostle there in the court, and they start a huge rhubarb.

They point out that, hey, everybody, look, it's that guy that was there in Asia Minor when we were there, and he preached this gospel that was against the law of Moses.

And people said, what? Get him! And they converge on Paul, and he, of course, is virtually defenseless. They confront him, and they bodily engage him, and they are ready to tear him limb from limb, simply because the accusation has been made that he has been teaching against the law of Moses.

[1 : 25] Well, of course, you can't think of anything that would incite a group of fervent Jews in the first century more than that. And they converge upon him, and they are ready to tear him limb from limb.

And located up in the corner, off in the distance from this area, is the Fortress Antonia, that is a Roman army barracks.

And they look down on the courtyard of the Jews, and they see that things are getting restless, that there is a melee taking place down there. And the captain of the guard immediately dispatches troops to go down to that area of the Temple Mount, where all of this rhubarb is taking place, and establish order.

And when they do, they arrive on the scene, and they see that the Jews are just about ready to tear Paul the Apostle limb from limb. And the Roman soldiers wade in, and they grab Paul from them, because they have no idea what's taking place, but they want to get to the bottom of this.

And there is a big melee that is breaking out, and they take Paul from their clutches. The commanding officer takes him aside, and he, first of all, has a case of mistaken identity.

[2 : 43] He thinks he's somebody else, and Paul says, no, no, you got it all wrong. I am a man of which I'm a Jew. I am from the city of Tarsus, no mean city, and I have nothing to do with the guy you think I am.

This is a case of mistaken identity. And the Jews begin crying out for his blood. And the Roman army officer says to his men, take him into the barracks.

And they get him out of the way of the crowd, extricate him from the crowd, take him into the fortress Antonia, where they can examine him in privacy. And there they begin questioning Paul as to what this rhubarb is all about.

Who are you, anyway? What have you done to get these people so upset and excited? And he begins explaining to them that he isn't who they think he is. They think he's a rabble rouser from an earlier incident.

And Paul says, no, no, you got it all wrong. I'm Paul the apostle. I was born in Tarsus. I am a Jew, and so on. And then Paul says, look, I can explain this whole thing if you'll just give me an opportunity to address the crowd.

[3 : 48] Things have quieted down now a little bit. And let me talk to them, and I think I can explain this whole thing. And this Roman army officer, who is the equivalent of a rank of a colonel, says, all right, all right, you can have your say.

So Paul stands on the steps, looks down on this crowd that's got blood in their eye, and they just can't wait to get their hands on this guy.

And the only reason they can't is because these Roman soldiers are protecting him. And the only reason they're protecting him is because they don't know what's going on, but they just know that he is the center of attraction, and they want to get to the bottom of it.

So Paul stands on the steps, and he motions like this, and all the Jews are down there. We don't know how many there are, but there could easily be a few thousand.

This is the Temple Mount, remember, and it is the Feast of Passover, and there's a lot of people there. And Paul motions to them with a hand, please, please, quiet down, let me address you.

[4 : 56] And finally, they simmer down, and Paul begins to speak to them in the Hebrew tongue. And when he starts speaking in Hebrew, they at least suspect that he really is one of theirs.

So they start paying attention to what he has to say, and what he does is he gives his testimony. He tells them all about the Damascus Road experience.

He refers back to the incident that is recorded in chapter 9. He talks about the great light from heaven, about Jesus speaking to him audibly and confronting him there on the road to Damascus.

And then he goes into the city of Damascus, and Ananias comes, lays hands on him, etc. He gives them the whole story, and we are picking up on page 592.

And in verse 18, page 592, Christ was saying to Paul, saw him saying to me, Paul, make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem.

[6 : 09] And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment, or held the clothes of those who were slaying Stephen.

And Christ in this vision said to me, we are in verse 21 now at the top of the page, and he said to me, depart, for I will send thee, Paul, far hence unto the Gentiles.

And everything was going okay, and they were listening to what he said until he uttered that magic buzzword, Gentiles. And that was just like lighting a bomb, a fuse to a bomb.

And the whole thing erupted when he said it, because you've got to appreciate the incredible distinction between Jew and Gentile and how they regarded one another.

And the fact that he is being called to the Gentiles is just more than they can handle. And he says that the text says they gave him audience. They were willing to listen to him until he said that.

[7 : 36] And when he said that, all hell broke loose. That's exactly what we've got taking place here. And then they lifted up their voices and said, away with such a fellow from the earth.

It is not fit that he should live. Look at how some of the others have translated it. The 20th century New Testament says, kill him! A fellow like this ought not to have been allowed to live.

Kill him! Get him out of the world. A creature like that ought not to be allowed to live. It is a disgrace that he should live. And so on and so on. All because he said, God is sending me to the Gentiles.

Well, the Gentiles by the dogs were looked upon as Jews. Scum! The dregs of the earth. And it can't be possible that God wants to do anything for the Gentiles.

A typical Jewish prayer that would be offered by a faithful Jew in the morning upon rising was, O God, I thank thee that thou hast not made me a slave or a woman or a Gentile.

[8 : 47] Now, how's that for arrogance? How's that for arrogance? How's that for a superiority attitude? And yet, that is an accurate reflection of the way many of the Jews looked upon those who were not Jews of that day.

And, of course, that widened the gap between themselves and everybody else. So, we've got a volatile situation here. And be reminded of this also.

All of those Roman soldiers who were occupying troops there in Jerusalem, what were they? They were all Gentiles. All of them were Gentiles.

And, of course, that meant they were automatically hated by the Jews, not only because they were Gentiles, but because they were foreign intruders occupying their country. So, they hated them doubly so.

And that's the kind of situation, the volatile political situation that existed in Jerusalem at that time. So, we go from page 593 to 594.

[9 : 51] Let's flip the page here, if we may. And they cried out, verse 23, and they cast off their clothes. They threw off their garments.

Now, that doesn't mean they stripped naked. Okay? It means, excuse me, they all wore outer garments. The outer garment was the robe. It could also suffice at night for a blanket. It was a heavy robe. And the undergarment was called a tunic. And it was like a combination of a t-shirt and a pair of shorts together. So, they took off this outer garment. And they do so because that, the taking off of the garment is an expression of anger, of grief, of animosity. It's a war-like kind of expression. So, they cast off their clothes and threw dust into the air. Well, what in the world has that got to do with anything? That, too, is just an expression of extreme anger, revulsion, hatred, whatever.

[10 : 58] And sometimes, it was an expression of extreme grief. But in this case, it was all of these wrapped together. So, they reached down, grab a handful of dirt, throw it up in the air.

Well, now, that solves a lot of problems, doesn't it? But what we've got here is an example of extreme emotion trying to find some kind of an outlet, venting. And it was not unusual for them to tear their garments, to just take the garment and just rip it from the top. That, too, is an expression of extreme grief or anger. And sometimes, they would pull their hair out or pluck their beard by the roots. And you've got to be pretty desperate in order to do something like that. But this was an emotional way that they had of expressing deep, deep anger, grief, sorrow, revenge, whatever the case may be.

[11 : 58] And if you know anything about the Mediterranean-type people, they can be extremely emotional. This is the way they're wired. I remember my late wife Barbara telling me about when her grandfather died.

And they were from the old country, came over from Italy. And she was 17 and he was 19. And they came through Ellis Island and everything, came over to this country. And when her grandfather Sam passed away, her grandmother started pulling at her hair.

And, of course, the younger generation had no idea. They thought that mom had gone crazy, you know. But she was just reflecting back on this Mediterranean thing, started pulling some of her hair out by the roots. And she ran around the house, went outside and ran around the house screaming. What in the world is this all about? The neighbors probably were thinking, is this woman going nuts or what? Well, this was their way of expressing deep, deep sorrow.

Her husband had just died and she was just beside herself. Berserk. And if you look into the Gospels, you will see that there were some occasions there where people hired professional mourners.

[13 : 21] Can you imagine that? You pay somebody to mourn. The family pays somebody to mourn at the death of a loved one. And this was a cultural thing.

And before we think too badly of it and criticize it, let's just be reminded that their culture was here long before ours was. This was an outlet.

This was a way of expressing an emotional outlet. And it was venting. So that's what came natural to them. Larry? I heard a story about Woody Hayes that he would tear the bill off of his cat to show how angry he was.

But I also heard that he would kind of at least cut it a little bit to begin with. Yeah. So it would be easier. Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. And Bobby Knight, he threw chairs.

So these are all expressions of deep anger. And people have different ways of venting. But this was very common to the Mediterranean. So they tore off their clothes, threw dust into the air.

[14 : 29] The chief captain would be actually like the rank of a colonel, commanded him, that is Paul, to be brought into the castle. And the castle is not a good word here. It's a Roman military barracks.

That's what it is. It's the hangout where the Roman guard slept and ate and where they kept tabs on what was going on on the temple site. And he says, bring him in to the castle.

And he bade that he should be examined by scourging that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. And the idea was this.

We don't know exactly what's taking place here or what's going on. But there is one sure way that we can find out. Bring him over here and we will scourge him.

That's nothing more than saying we will beat the truth out of him. Because when you take a Roman scourge and lay it to the back of a man, he no longer sees the advantage to lying.

[15 : 34] He will be very truthful when he knows that his answers are not being received and he's going to get another application of the lash.

So bring him over here and we will scourge him. And it won't be long until we'll get to the bottom of this. Because when the cat of nine tails is being laid to a man's back, he forgets all about lying. He's going to tell the truth. So they bound him with thongs, verse 25. And Paul said unto the centurion that stood by. Here they are tying him with these leather thongs, tying his hands up to something like so.

And opened his back, tore his shirt off, and they're ready to lay lashes on him. And Paul just casually turns to the guy who is preparing him for scourging.

And he says to him, tell me, does the law permit you to scourge a man that is a Roman? And this guy jaw drops and he says, you're a Roman?

[16 : 40] Paul said, yes, I am a Roman. Now, we don't really grasp the significance of that. But in the Mediterranean world, and particularly in places like Italy, where Rome, of course, held forth more than any place else, more than 50% of the population were slaves.

If you were a Roman citizen, you were of the elite, the intelligentsia. You were afforded certain privileges and benefits that no other person was afforded.

And one of them was, you could not be scourged nor crucified. You were entitled, as a Roman citizen, you were entitled to actually stand before the Caesar of Rome and plead your case.

You had an automatic entree into these avenues of justice just because you were a Roman. Now, if you weren't a Roman, you were almost considered non-human.

I mean, they could do anything they wanted to with you. If you were a slave, they could kill you. You were just trash as far as they were concerned. But if you were a Roman, wow, that's really something.

[18 : 03] So, Paul is here pleading his case on behalf of being a Roman citizen. Dan? How do they know he wasn't lying? I mean, did he have proof? I don't know what kind of proof he had, but I know one thing.

He said, if you claimed to be a Roman citizen and they found out that you were not, that was subject to the death penalty. Right there. So, that wasn't something that you were likely to lie about either.

And I don't know how they authenticated it. I don't know that they carried any particular papers or anything like that with them. But if you made the claim that you were a Roman citizen and you weren't, you just imperiled your life.

So, is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned? That means I haven't had my day in court. Roman law, from which we get many of our laws, has a presumption of innocence until you are proven guilty.

Now, if you know anything about Napoleonic law that was instituted in France in the 1700s, Napoleonic law says you are assumed guilty until proven innocent.

[19 : 24] Wow! And who has to prove their innocence? You have to prove your own innocence. Man, that would be a hard way to go. So, we enjoy a tremendous constitutional right here that we are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

And that's a hangover from the Roman law. Well, and verse 26 says, When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, in other words, they immediately suspended the order to chastise this man by scourging.

And he said, Oh, I've got to talk to the colonel about this. So, he goes over and he approaches the colonel. Well, the centurion heard that. The centurion has a hundred men under his control.

But the chief captain has several hundred men under his control. And we would equate him with a colonel as opposed to a captain. And the centurion heard that. He went to the chief captain or the colonel and said, Sir, you better really be careful what you do with this guy.

And we've got a hot potato here because this man is a Roman. And the chief captain came, came over to where Paul was and said to him, Tell me, are you a Roman?

[20 : 48] And Paul said, Yay! Oh, that changes everything. He's a Roman.

And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. What does he mean? He means, I am a Roman citizen also.

And it cost me plenty for my citizenship. Because you could either earn or buy citizenship from Rome.

If you earned it, it was usually on the field of battle or doing some great exploit on behalf of Rome. And you would be rewarded with citizenship, which afforded you all kinds of privileges that the average person didn't have.

Or you could come up with enough money to actually purchase your citizenship. And the money, of course, was paid into the coffers of Rome.

[21 : 51] Government hasn't changed too much, has it? I mean, there was corruption back then, and we still have corruption with it. You could actually, it would be like the equivalent of buying citizenship. Paying the right person for your Roman citizenship.

And he says, This cost me plenty. And Paul said, Yeah, well, I was free born. In other words, I was born a Roman citizen. And we don't know exactly how he came by that, but in all likelihood it would seem to necessitate that his father would have been a Roman citizen.

And he being born to this man who was a Roman citizen automatically made him a Roman citizen. We aren't told exactly how Paul came by it, but he was free born. He was born a Roman citizen.

And he was in a very, very unique situation because here was this one who was born a Roman citizen that opened a lot of doors for him. And at the same time, he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin.

Mother was a Jew. Father was a Jew. Yet he had this Roman citizen. And I am convinced this is one of the reasons why Christ selected him to be this apostle to the Gentiles that he did because he had credentials that most people did not have.

[23 : 08] And verse 29 says, Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him. That is, they immediately drew back.

This guy, I'm sure, untied him. Took his thongs and untied him. And dropped the lash that he was going to lay on Paul's back. And said, After they knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him, And on the morrow, the next day, Because he would have known the certainty whereof he was accused of the Jews, This is talking about the Roman captain.

He loosed him from his bands and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear.

Now he's going to put the religious crowd on the carpet. He is actually holding Paul in protective custody. Now that he knows he is a Roman, that changes everything.

And what's taking place now is this Roman army officer is saying, You know what? Since this guy is a Roman, And we dare not scourge him without his having a day in court and all the rest, It really ticks me off that these Jews were treating him the way they were.

[24 : 34] He's a Roman. He's one of us. Now it's time to question the Jews. So he brings these chief priests on board, And he commands them to appear.

And you've got to remember, We've got two different hierarchies here. We've got the Roman government, That politically is over everything.

And we've got the Jewish religious government, That chafes under the authority of the Roman government. But the Romans give a certain amount of latitude to the Jews, In the area of religion. But sometimes their religious fervor and causes can spill over into the political arena, And then this involves the Romans.

So the Romans tried to take hands off of the Jews, In so far as their religion was concerned, And the practice of it. And they didn't want to get involved in that at all.

[25 : 35] But, When and if the Jews, Through their behavior, Got involved in something political, Then Rome was necessarily interested.

And that's what we've got here. We've got these two different factions. And they commanded the chief priests, And all their council to appear. And they brought Paul down, And set him before them. And let's go to page 596 now. Flip over if you will. And Paul, We're at chapter 23 at the top. And Paul, Earnestly beholding the council, Looking steadfastly on the council, Fixing his eyes upon the council.

Here's all these Jews. They are not just Jews. They are Jews of leadership. They are the chief priests. They are the shakers and movers, Religiously, In the Jewish community.

And they're all assembled there together. And Paul, Before he opens his mouth, He makes eye contact with them. He goes around and he looks, At all of these men, Gathered there.

[26 : 44] And it gets really quiet. And Paul says, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God Until this day.

And the high priest Ananias Commanded them That stood by him To smite him on the mouth. Now what's this all about?

Here, He's just given an opportunity To address this august body Of religious leaders. And all he does Is make a statement, An opening statement, Saying, I have lived in all good conscience Before God until this day.

And this chief priest Nods his head Just To one of the guys Who's standing there by Paul Who is also a Jew.

And this guy reaches over And Smacks Paul Right across the mouth. Just on the basis of His making that statement. Which they considered, Of course, To be a blasphemous kind of statement. [27 : 51] Because they are convinced Of his guilt already. So far as the Jews are concerned. They're convinced of his guilt already. And he smites him on the mouth.

And Paul turns and says to him, God shall smite thee, Thou whited wall. Which is, Of course, Of course, Not a very complimentary thing.

You whited sepulcher. A whitewashed wall. You painted pigeon. You hypocrite. All of these are different renderings Of the same thing. And he says, For sittest thou To judge me After the law And commandest me To be smitten Contrary to the law.

Now what Paul is saying here is, Listen. The law of Moses Requires you To exact No punishment Upon the accused Until He is found guilty.

I haven't been found guilty Of anything. Where do you get off Ordering me to be Smitten across the mouth? By what authority Do you do that? What Paul is doing Is calling him up short And saying, Listen.

[29 : 04] You are so hot To trot for the law Of Moses And you just violated it. You're not allowed To do that. And he calls the chief priest A whited wall. Which is not a complimentary term. And they that stood by said, Revileest thou God's high priest?

In other words, How dare you talk like that To God's high priest? And then said Paul, Well, I didn't know That he was the high priest.

I guess I stand corrected here Because it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil Of the ruler of thy people. What's Paul doing here?

He's apologizing. He's apologizing. What he's saying is, Yeah, I called him A whited wall. I didn't know who he was.

I'm sorry. I apologize For having addressed him that way. Because I want to be observant Of the law. And the law says, Thou shalt not speak evil Of the ruler of thy people.

[30 : 13] And this man Is the ruler of the people. And here's a little lesson for us. We are to respect those who are in authority Because of the office they fulfill.

And sometimes it becomes very, Very difficult to separate the man from the office. Someone has said that When you have a commanding officer That you do not respect As a man, You salute him anyway Because you are saluting the rank And the position Even though you detest the person Who's wearing the rank.

And that's something That we need to keep in mind. And this is exactly What Paul is doing here. Dana? Is he a little bit sarcastic here? Perhaps saying that You're not acting like the chief priest So therefore I didn't recognize you As the chief priest.

Well, You got a point there. Yeah. Actually, Because the chief priest Was really violating the law. And he ought to be the expert On the law. And here he's violating it Right up front.

And you're right. It's exactly Maybe what he's inferring Is how was I to know That you are the chief priest Because you certainly Aren't acting like a chief priest. That may have been An undertone there. And they may have picked up on it.

[31 : 26] And then we read in verse 6 But when Paul perceived That the one part was Sadducees And the other Pharisees Ooh That is significant.

Now, fellas, Keep in mind This is the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was made up Of 70 Jews Actually I think it was 71 And the High priest Presided He was the president Of the council And this council Was made up Of Sadducees And Pharisees The Sadducees Were the liberals The Pharisees Were the conservatives The Sadducees The Sadducees Didn't even endorse The idea Of the resurrection Of the body Or the existence Of angelic beings And they were The principal Chief priests Of the whole group So they had The religious clout And the Pharisees Were actually A lay movement Many people Don't understand that But as you read The Old Testament You don't find

Any Pharisees Anywhere They're not

In the Old Testament And all of a sudden You open the New Testament And begin reading In Matthew And you've got These Pharisees Where did they come from? Well, they surfaced During the intertestamental period Which was 400 years Between the Old And the New Testament And the Pharisees Surfaced during That 400 years So we find them In the New Testament Then And now Paul looks out On his group And he says to himself Well, there's so and so And so and so They're Sadducees But over here Is so and so and so And these guys Are Pharisees And the Sadducees And the Pharisees Often disputed Among themselves There was no love Lost between them Each one Considered the other Out of line And now Paul sees An opening And he's going To take advantage Of it As the old Philosophy Of divide And conquer Comes into play And what he's going To do Is issue Some statements That will get

The Pharisees Saying to the Sadducees Well, I don't know About that That's not so bad And the Sadducees Are going to say What? You've got to be kidding And the next thing You know These guys are arguing Among themselves Over the positions That Paul is taking And we'll have to Take up on that Next time So you can see We're trying to cover A lot of material Because this is Narrative Rather than doctrine And we'll resume here Where we left off And we'll endar Mae niveau■cl
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