

Paul's Defense

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Acts 22:1-21

Luke has portrayed the Apostle Paul on the offensive, taking bold action following the leadership of the Spirit to evangelize and spread the message of the gospel. But now, with his arrival in Jerusalem, everything changes! He was assaulted, arrested, bound and brought to trial. He found himself on the defensive. F.F. Bruce in his commentary on Acts, notes that after three epic missionary journeys that the Author of Acts, Luke details five trials he had to endure.

1. The Jewish crowd at the north-west corner of the temple area (22:1ff)
2. The second was before the supreme Jewish council in Jerusalem (23:1ff)
3. The third before Felix in Caesarea (24:1ff)
4. The fourth before Festus in Caesarea (23:1).
5. The fifth before King Herod Agrippa II in Caesarea (26:1)

In Acts 21-23, Luke depicts the reaction to the gospel of the Jews (who were increasingly hostile to it) and the Romans (who were consistently friendly to it).

Paul's testimony of conversion is recounted three times by Luke in the book of Acts (**9:1-9; 22:1-21; 26:12-23**). Unashamed of the gospel, Paul boldly, consistently, and clearly presented his testimony and its life-changing impact on him.

II. Paul's Life before his Conversion (22:1-5) (Romans 3:10-23)

- A. He was born a Jew – right nation
- B. He was raised in Jerusalem – right city
- C. He was educated by Gamaliel – right teacher
- D. He was a member of the strictest sect – right credentials
- E. He was zealous for God in works – right works
- F. He was an over achiever – right attitude
 1. A person may “**religiously**” have everything in order, but “**relationally**” with Christ be unknown.
 2. **John 1:12–13**, *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
 3. **Matthew 7:13–14**, *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*
 4. **James 1:22–25**, *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

III. Paul's Conversion Experience (22:6-11)

- A. Conversion necessitates an encounter with the holiness of God (6).
 1. The example of Saul/Paul (**Acts 9:3–7**, *Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” 5 And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.*)
 2. The example of Moses (**Exodus 3:5–6**, *Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” 6 And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*)
 3. The example of Isaiah (**Isaiah 6:1-5**, *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet,*

and with two he flew. **3** And one called to another and said: **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”** **4** And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. **5** And I said: **“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”**)

- B. Conversion necessitates an admittance of sin (7) *“sin is lawlessness [open defiance to the law; living by our own rules; living my truth]”* (**1 John 3:4**) **2 Corinthians 7:10**, *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*)
 - 1. The confrontation with God’s holiness leads us to the admittance of personal sin.
 - 2. The admittance of personal sin leads us to a *“godly grief.”* (**Matthew 5:3-4**)
 - 3. *“Godly grief” produces a* [puts in effect entirely or thoroughly] *repentance* .
 - 4. Repentance leads to salvation without regret. The warning of worldly grief...
- C. Conversion necessitates a faith in the resurrected Christ (8) *“Who are you, Lord?”* Which is He? Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?
 - 1. Who are you?
 - 2. What is your name?
- D. Conversion necessitates an obedience to God’s plan (10-11)
 - 1. Faith produces obedience to the Word, works never produce faith.
 - 2. **Matthew 7:24**, *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*
 - 3. **Luke 6:46**, *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”*
 - 4. **John 8:31**, *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,*

IV. Paul’s Journey to Spiritual Maturity (22:12-21)

- A. Spiritual Growth is a team sport (12-13)
 - 1. Spiritual appetites are a result of spiritual life (Word, Worship, Work)
- B. Spiritual Growth is a designated destination (14-15)
- C. Spiritual Growth is a action oriented result (16)
- D. Spiritual Growth involves a commission to service (17-21)

V. The Light for our Path

- A. Paul was prepared to speak for Christ without regard to his life (**21:31, 36; 22:22**)
- B. Paul accepted the shift in ministry from establishing churches and discipleship to witnessing through trials.
- C. Paul’s actions remind us that our first responsibility is the share the gospel.
- D. Paul demonstrates an effective way of sharing the gospel is simply telling your story.
 - 1. Who you were before Christ (**Acts 22:1-5**)
 - 2. How Christ changed your life (**Acts 22:6-11**)
 - 3. What has happened since you came to faith in Christ (**Acts 22:12-21**)