

## Acts 22: 1-30 (#36) 1.24.2021 (21007)

### Calm Courage

I. We are here to worship, pray, and listen for the Lord's word. The message of the gospel is the only Truth that gives an eternal stability in a faltering and chaotic world. Jn.16:33. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Acts, specifically chapters 21-22 where Paul demonstrates calm, clarity, and courage amid chaos and violence...

**II. Background.** Paul in the Spring of 57 AD, after his third long ministry among the Gentiles ...

A. Paul had taken the gospel of Christ to the world:

1. All over the Empire, the buzz is that Gentiles are coming into God's kingdom without converting to Judaism. Conversion to the Jewish Messiah without converting to Temple Judaism.

B. In the process, he promoted love and unity between Jew and Gentile in Christ.

1. Which is why he is in Jerusalem during Pentecost in late May of 57 AD.

2. He brought a large financial gift to the church from the Gentile churches in Asia, Macedonia, Achaia.

3. He complied with James' request to keep a Jewish vow at temple with 4 Christian Jewish brothers. (21:17-26)

C. But he was widely misrepresented and controversial. (21:21ff)

1. The Jewish Christians have heard false rumors about Paul that he had rejected Jewish customs for Jews. 21:21

2. The Jewish nationalists hate Paul, based on supposition about his consorting with Greeks and denouncing Judaism. 21:28

D. Which caused a riot in the temple when he went there to pray. 21:27-40

1. Recognized by Asian Christians (Ephesus) he is almost killed in the temple.

2. But he takes a key opportunity to tell his testimony ...

**III. Which he uses as an opportunity to bear witness of Christ!**

A. **The personal testimony. 21:37-22:21**

1. His Credentials as a Jew: 1-5 (Gal.1:11-14)

a) Well educated in Judaism. Gamaliel was his doctoral supervisor.

b) Extremely "zealous for God." Violently opposed to the Way (Christ Jesus)

2. His Conversion to the risen Christ. 6-16

a) Confronted by the Lord. Who He is and what He has done.

b) Baptized.

3. His Commission to the World (Gentiles). 17-21

a) The universal nature of the grace of God in Christ is what offended the Jews. Acts.1:8

B. **The violent reaction. 22-29**

1. Jews freak out because of mention of Gentiles in God's work.

2. The idea that God is saving people totally unlike them had never occurred to them.

C. **The legal recourse. 25-29**

1. Paul finally points out that he is a Roman citizen. *Why didn't he do this earlier?*

2. *Because his goal was to reach the Jews and relying on his Roman citizenship in the temple area would have obliterated his credibility with the Jews.*

3. *He cared more for his witness to the Jews than his physical protection.*

D. From now through the end of Acts Paul remains in Roman custody, but it allows him to preach to Jews and Gentiles in person and letters, to all kinds of leaders, kings, magistrates, and lay people (Phil.1:12-13).

And the Roman government protects him through this period.

#### IV. How can Paul be so Calm in this situation? Three things we see in this passage:

##### A. A radical conversion. How can you tell if you're converted? 5 questions:

1. Do I understand that Jesus is the risen Lord and Messiah? (Rom.10:9-10)
  - a) God's real Son, who died, was resurrected, and ascended as the Lord of the universe.
2. Have I personally turned (repented) and received Him? John 1:12-13
  - a) Turning is what Paul did on the road.
  - b) Trusting is what Paul did when he received his sight.
  - c) Just knowing who Jesus is only qualifies you to be a demon. Jas.2:19
3. Have I given up trusting any other means of entering God's kingdom? Jn.14:6; Rom.3:27-28
  - a) No religion, philosophy, spiritism, etc.
4. Do I intend with all my heart to obey Him? Luke 6:46
  - a) He is your true Lord and His mission and worldview has become yours. Matt. 6:9-14
5. Have I been or am I intending to be baptized? Acts 22:16; Matt.28:20
  - a) Baptism doesn't save you *by itself*, but *faith does* and it is expressed in baptism.

##### B. Which produces counterintuitive courage. Acts 20:22-24; 21:12-14

1. The Spirit's constraint brings a unique courage. 20:22
  - a) Constraint = to be compelled, bound.
  - b) From the beginning he knew it was a hard road. Acts 9:16
2. Courage for what? To obey and represent Jesus Christ in the life that God has mapped out for us. Eph. 2:8-10. 2 Tim.1:7
  - a) Note: things appointed for him. Specifically suffering. Acts 22:10; 9:16.
  - b) *You will have the courage to do what God calls you to do. It will just seem like the right thing to do at the time.*
  - c) *You will not have the courage to do what somebody else is called to do.*
3. Does the Spirit send us into difficult things sometimes? Of course! Matt.4:1
  - a) The idea that we can discern God's will by always pursuing the easiest path is not true.
  - b) Sometimes it will not be seen by our friends. 21:13-14
    - (1) Normally, consensus among wise spiritual friends is one of the ingredients in discerning God's direction in life...but not always.
    - (2) Sometimes our friends are more concerned for our comfort than for our obedience.
    - (3) Good spiritual direction often must step back and let a person do what they believe the Lord is leading them to do, even if you might think it a mistake (not a sin).
4. *Paul had profound faith that the Lord would be with him no matter what hard things happened to him. Fear and Anger were absent from him. These are not the fruit of the Spirit. (2 Tim.1:7)*

##### C. And results in a clear witness. 21

1. Clarity is the point, *not measurable results*.
  - a) Clarity doesn't always result in an altar call! Clarity is just clarity. 20:26, 31
2. Clarity starts with our own testimony.
  - a) This is one spiritual thing about which you are the most qualified expert.
3. Faith prays and communicates the gospel, but it leaves the destiny of others in God's hands. Acts 20:32.

#### V. Would you like to be a calm Christian?

- A. Be sure you are really converted to Christ. Born again. Jn.3:1-15; Rom.10:9-10; 2 Cor.13:5
- B. Grasp the courage that comes with trusting God in Christ alone. 2 Tim1:7
- C. Focus on a clear witness in thought, word, deed. Matt.6:9-14; Acts 1:8