

Acts 22

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[0 : 00] Hallelujah! And thank you for tuning into this message by David Entry at Karis Church.! As we journey in this season of great awakening, may God pour fresh life into you through his word! And align you more deeply with his purpose. Acts chapter 22, I will just read from verse 1 to 5.

Verse 1. Men, brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I make now unto you. And when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence.

And he said, I am verily a man which I'm a Jew born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in the city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of our fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day. I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering unto prison both men and women, as also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estates 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. Here ends the reading of God's word. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the privilege of being together to hear your word.

To hear your word. We pray that as we get into your word, you'll get into us, and reveal Christ to us. Heal our hearts. Heal us.

Turn our hearts to you. Draw us closer to yourself, and impact us with your wisdom, with your power, and your glory. In Jesus' name.

[2 : 04] Amen. Amen. Thank you, Jesus. Last week, we spoke about how we saw Paul.

He was so bent on going to Jerusalem, and the reasons why he wanted to go to Jerusalem. And he successfully, in Acts chapter 21, verse 17, he successfully got to Jerusalem.

So, his dream of getting to Jerusalem had been fulfilled. Now, the mission in Jerusalem. So, he went to greet the brethren, because Paul believed in the brethren life.

He believed that wherever you find yourself, look for believers, and have fellowship with them.

Because that is the normal Christian life. It's abnormal to be living a Christian life without being in fellowship with other believers.

When you become a Christian, one of the things that happens to you, once you believe in Jesus, is you stay in fellowship with the one and others, others who have believed in Jesus.

[3 : 21] And it becomes the foundation of your community life. It even influences who you choose to marry.

It influences the names you give to your children. It influences to those who are very serious in their work with Christ. It influences your choice of place of location.

If you even want to relocate, you begin to look out for how is it going to help my fellowship life. You don't do that purely based on economic purposes.

You do that when you're a serious Christian, fundamentally first, based on your spiritual journey.

When you're a believer, you even make marital commitment, not purely because of your feelings, even though it matters, but as well because of your spiritual understanding and your vision and mission.

So, as soon as Paul arrived, he began to look for fellowship. But the Bible says the next day, say the next day. There are a few next days or the day following in the scriptures.

[4 : 36] The next day, the day following, he went to James, and I explained why James and who James was at that time. But it's very significant, the position James occupied in the church of Jerusalem, which was the source or the place where the church was born, the body of Christ, started Jerusalem.

And James had become the leader of the church of Jerusalem. And it's interesting because in Galatians, the Bible says that certain brethren came from James.

Galatians chapter 2 from verse 11, Peter played the hypocrisy because there was nothing really wrong as long as God's purpose was concerned in fellowshiping with people of different races, different ethnicities.

Once your person is in Christ, the Bible says there's no Jew or Greek. There's no male nor female. But Christ is all and in all.

Colossians 3, 11. When it comes to Christianity, there are no racial boundaries, segregation. There are no gender boundaries.

[5 : 51] There are no even age boundaries. We are all, once we are in Christ, we are all one. It says that there's no social class boundaries because of my class.

I can't fellowship with this kind of people. When it comes to Christianity, no, it says that, but Christ is all and in all. Peter knew it.

And so he was fellowship with the Gentiles in Galatia. Galatians chapter 2, please. Peter played the hypocrisy until some brethren came, certain men came from James.

Verse 12 said, before they came, he would eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew himself and separated himself, fearing those who were the... There was a problem with the James territory.

You have something. Everything was okay until certain people came from James. James town. James town. Yeah, I like that.

[6 : 51] James town. That's a good one. Now, James was the head, as I explained, of the church in Jerusalem. He was a prominent...

In fact, Bible calls them, in verse 8 and verse 9 of the same chapter, Bible calls them those who seem to be peerless. Verse 9 says that, for when James and Cephas and John, who seem to be peerless, that's the way in Jerusalem.

These are big guys. So, people came from James. James was not really traveling. He was based there. And Peter, as soon as Peter saw the brothers have come from James, he knew there are Jewish or Judaistic expectations.

You are not supposed to have fellowship with Gentiles. Even though that problem was solved in Acts chapter 15, when the Jewish believers, those of the circumcision, who came from Jerusalem, the problem was in Jerusalem.

I'm telling you. He says that, certain men came from Judea, that's Jerusalem, and taught brethren in Antioch that except you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses.

[8 : 00] Custom. That's what I say, custom. Custom. You cannot be saved. Where is this coming from? So, they had to go back to Jerusalem to meet the elders, verse 2.

They went and met the elders and they had to sort this matter up. And James, in the verse 13, said, brethren, I perceive that when we listen to what Peter said, God is really working.

So, let's not put, so James was the one who is like the judge. After everybody came, James said, okay, now, let me summarize everything. Let's not put, so James, Judas.

Now, Paul went to Jerusalem, went to salute James and the brethren, and then when he got there, and they reported all that God had done in the Gentile territories.

Bible said they were all happy and glorified God. As soon as they finished glorifying God, he said, now, let's advise you. They turned on Paul and advised him that there are thousands of Jews who have come from all over the world and some of them have heard about you and they said, this, this, that.

[8 : 59] So, they advised him what he should do. And so, he went into the temple. Now, this is the picture I want to paint for you. For your information, Paul wrote, the New Testament are, we have 27 books in the New Testament.

13 or 14 of them were written by Paul. Okay. I said 13 or 14 because Hebrews, some scholars believe that it's Paul, others believe it's not Paul. So, it's a mystery no one really knows, but the styles seem to be Paul.

So, then 14. The first few letters, like Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2

Corinthians, and Romans, these six letters were written by Paul during his missionary journeys.

So, he wrote them during his missionary journey. Now, you remember, his being in Jerusalem was at the end of his missionary journeys. So, by the time he got to Jerusalem, he has written Galatians, he has written Romans, he has written 1st and 2nd Corinthians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians.

They have been written already. So, him coming to Jerusalem, you can understand his understanding of how Jews and Gentiles can have a problem fellowshiping together.

[10:17] How Galatians dealt heavily about the law. You don't need to serve God according to the law. You remember Romans? That for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. 321, verse 21 says that the law, there's a way you can be justified outside of the law.

So, verse 20, Romans 3, 20, Paul had written all these things before. He says that, therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Then he says that, verse 21, but now the righteousness of God outside of the law is revealed being witnessed by the law and the prophets. And now, he explained it and then in verse 24, he spoke about how we have justification, we have propitiation, we have redemption through the blood of Jesus but not through adherence to a law.

So, he has explained it. No wonder he wanted to go to Jerusalem to go and make sure as the Jews come from all around the world, he begins to interpret the system and the economy of God to them properly.

Now, he gets to Jerusalem and he was advised that there are some people who want to do the custom, they want to do the ritual, Nazareth vows, four of them, for a month you do it and then the last seven days you stay in the temple for six days and then the seventh day you sacrifice some lamb and shave your hair and wait for a priest to come and accept your sacrifices and take you through the ritual.

[11:42] I felt like titling that message, what is Paul doing in the temple? Why would Paul go there? So, can you imagine, so for the last seven days, for the six days after I went to James, they advised him and for six days he was in the temple doing what?

People who were doing rituals. It wasn't against God, it wasn't sinful, but God has done with this. That's not the system you need to get to God.

God himself was about to pull down the temple because the temple didn't exist again after those times. The Romans destroyed the temple because God said, you don't need the temple to have a relationship with me.

So, Paul was the one who was given the responsibility to make sure that Judaism is separated from Christianity because what was happening is that the Jews were mixing Christianity with Judaism. So, when you come as a Gentile, then they saddle you with Judaistic responsibility but because that problem was taken care of in Acts chapter 15, they now accepted, James and his team accepted that Gentiles can also be part of Christian worship without circumcision and Jewish tradition.

[13:01] However, as for you Jews, you have to do it. You see where it's going from. As for the Jews, no, you have to do it. So, Paul, he was advised, get into the temple.

Join them. Go through the ritual. For six days, Paul will be in the temple doing whatever they do. Can you imagine? That's why last week I said he will feel being imprisoned. It was almost like a prison situation for Paul.

God said, I will not allow my apostles to stay in prison under this condition. So, God had to intervene by removing Paul from this prison and changing the system. So, the arrest and the commotion that happened in the temple, it was inspired and engineered by the sovereignty of God because God had to save an apostle.

There's bigger job for him to do than staying in the temple and going back and forth and then maybe, I don't know what. Listen, you don't need any, what do you call it?

Talit or that thing. Prayer shere. You don't need, you don't need to go to Jerusalem to be a strong Christian.

[14:08] You don't need to be baptized in the river Jordan in order to be a strong Christian. You don't need it. Ah, pastor, you are saying that because you've never been to Jerusalem. Yes, I have never been.

You should have been preaching if you have been there. You don't need, now, these all kinds of things that we are importing Judaism into Christianity because Moses was praying with prayer shere.

You're also going to import, please, I'm not knocking against anybody. I'm not knocking against anybody. I'm just preaching. I'm just preaching. But I understand you because James would have been very happy with you.

a lot of things that are being practiced that can be practiced or that some might be tempted to practice.

It's not necessary. It's not necessary. Don't read the Old Testament and see just the Old Testament. Many Christians are reading the New Testament with the Old Testament lenses.

[15:13] rather, you should read the Old Testament with the New Testament lenses. Read the Old Testament like you are reading the New Testament. Look into the Old Testament and read it in the light of the New Testament.

Don't read the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament. So Paul, he was basing up and down doing his religious ritual.

I'm sure they danced and everything he was doing. Hey, Paul, can you, with a prayer show, thank you. Paul, what are you doing in this temple? It's like he told me to go to certain religious organizations and then go and be bowing.

Let us pray. Bowing to what? Where am I? With my understanding of New Testament Christianity. So Paul, God had to intervene and deliver Paul.

How did he do it? Let me give you some background. You know, I made a statement a few months ago when we were talking about Stephen and I said, the church owes Stephen for the life of Paul and the ministry of Paul.

[16:31] You might take it for granted how severe Stephen radically impacted Saul of Tarsus.

How? Now, you will see from the text when he beckoned them and they came, and he was about to make a submission of his testimony.

Bible says that he made reference to how Jewish he has been and not just Jewish. Let's look at the text. I want to draw attention to it. Acts chapter 22.

It says that so after they arrested him and they were carrying him, Paul was being carried by soldiers. That's nice though. So, the Bible says that verse 36, that for the multitude of the people followed after crying, away with him.

That's how bad they didn't want him. Away with him. Away with him. Away with him. And as Paul was led into the castle, he said to the chief captain, may I speak to you?

And he said, do you speak Greek? He said, are you not the Jewish apostle? No, I'm not. I am a man which is a Jew of Tarsus, city of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city.

[17:46] I beseech you, suffer me to speak to the people. And when he had given them license, Paul stood on the stairs and beckoned with his hand unto the people. And when they were made a great silent, he spoke unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, now, he said, verse 20, chapter 22, men, brethren, and fathers.

That's so nice, a nice, respectful way of addressing his audience. Men, brethren, brethren, listen, I'm one of you. I'm not a stranger, I'm one of you.

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense. Permit me to defend myself. They are accusing me wrongly, and you might not know where I'm coming from.

Hear ye my defense. And when they heard that he spoke in Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silent. And he said, so when they heard the guy speaking in Hebrew, they were like, oh, wow. No, no, no. Everyone, listen. So the place went quiet, silent. And this is why Paul came to Jerusalem, to come and speak forth his doctrine.

[18:58] He said, the place went quiet. Then he spoke to them and said, I am verily a man which I am a Jew. He didn't say I was a Jew.

Because they said he's speaking against the Jewish custom, as though he was a foreigner. He said, I'm a Jew. I am still a Jew. And I was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city. So I was born outside, but I was brought up in this city, talking about Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of my fathers and was zealous towards God.

Yes. As he had today, I'm ahead of you. Philippians chapter three, verse six, he said, I was zealous concerning zeal.

He said, concerning zeal, I was persecuting the church. Paul said, I was zealous. What are you talking about? I was zealous. So I know you people are zealous in Acts chapter 21, verse 20, when they advised him that there are people, Jews, who are very zealous for the law.

[20:09] So he knew that he was dealing with some, and they are zealous of the law. He knew he was dealing with people who are very zealous. And so, all they were doing, it wasn't purely based

on hatred for his person.

It was zeal for the law as Jews. So he said, when you talk about zeal, I was zealous to the extent that I was persecuting the church. My zeal took me farther than you can give me credit for. Persecuting the church. But you know, he said something, he said something, I was brought up in this city. I'm not a foreigner in this city. There are a lot of corners I know some of you don't even know.

I was brought, even though I was born in Cilicia, I was brought up in this city and he dropped the big theological word, or intellectual word, I was brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel.

Now, I told you some time ago that there are certain people in Jerusalem or among the Jewish community, they are called rabbi. They teach, they are teachers, rabbis.

[21 : 13] So that's why they used to call Jesus rabbi, because they're teacher. But some were rabbi par excellence. So their rabbi is higher. So rabban, they call them rabban.

So Gamaliel is a rabban. If you are trained by Gamaliel, everybody respects your theology, respects your philosophy, and respects your submission.

And he said, so for Gamaliel to train you, you must be top, it's like the creme de la creme of those who teach our society. And so he said, listen, I sat under the feet of Gamaliel, so I'm not an ignorant man at all.

Why am I bringing you to this? I want to draw your attention to Stephen. Paul was so deeply theological, passionate for his religion and his God, anything that crosses it, he will give it.

He stopped working on it. He left everything to just look for those who were practicing, some Jews who were practicing what was not necessarily Judaism. To do, to kill them and to arrest them, to bring them to Damascus.

[22 : 19] That was his testimony. And so he was in the synagogue once upon a time and there's this young Jewish guy called Stephen and he was a member of the church.

He wasn't an apostle, he was a deacon. He was acceptable, but he used to preach and the miracles were followed and he got, you know, Acts chapter 6 from verse 9, it got the attention of the synagogue of the Libertines and the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians and so they disputed with him, but they couldn't resist his wisdom.

Then they hired liars to lie against him. And then, so in Acts chapter 7, now this is why I'm saying this, in Acts chapter 7, if you remember, Stephen was asked to defend himself or speak.

You are free to. The high priest said, are these things so? And Stephen, watch this, he takes the Torah or the subterranean or the Old Testament and tore it apart and show Christ is everywhere. He explained, and this Paul grew up under the feet of Gamaliel. For the first time, he knew he knew everything about Judaism. For the first time, somebody explained Judaism in a way that he couldn't deny and he didn't want to accept it, out of his pride.

[23 : 40] So from that day forward, in fact, he oversaw the guy's execution. But he knew he had encountered the Jewish scriptures in a way no one had ever taught, not even Gamaliel.

So Paul, that thing left an impression on him and it always stayed on his mind and he was always resisting it. I'm going to kill the priest. That's why when Jesus appeared to him, he said, it's difficult to kick against the ghost.

You can't fight against your ghost. Stephen left a major impression in two ways. number one, his message about Christ. Paul saw that the thing is true.

Christ is in the Old Testament. This whole Old Testament thing is about Christ. He couldn't deny it until he met Jesus. When he met Jesus, Jesus said, why are you persecuting me? Oh, that's true. It's you.

So he said, go to Damascus, they will tell you. That was his confession. Because he had already heard the gospel from Stephen. Is someone following me? He had already heard the gospel from Stephen.

[24 : 37] So two things that have impacted him from Stephen, number one, the message, and number two, Stephen's dedication. He wasn't an apostle. He was so dedicated, committed to death. So since that time, Paul knew that if somebody who is not even an apostle was ready to die, me, I am ready to go further.

Now, Paul is an apostle. When he wrote the book of Romans, his introduction was Paul an apostle. When did he become an apostle? In Acts chapter 13, verse 2, as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, separate unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the work which I have called

them.

So they said, what God has called them and they were operating as prophets and teachers. So they were separated. But Romans chapter 1, he said, me, Paul, an apostle. So before he got to Jerusalem, he already knew he was an apostle because I told you, Romans was written during the missionary journey, before he finally came to Jerusalem.

So he knew he was an apostle. If Stephen was able to die for the truth, then I have much more than me an apostle. So Stephen gave him a platform or gave him a model he couldn't resist.

I believe Stephen was his puppet role model, ministry role model. I would die for this and I will prove it as we go further. I will die for this thing. So when he was going to Jerusalem, his mission as someone who has been trained by Gamaliel was to go and reinterpret the truth of God to his people.

[26 : 06] That is why he said, come, let me speak to you. Am I communicating? Now, he calls the people and the people come together and he begins to speak to them and he uses his credentials first.

There's a way, isn't it not interesting how when God wants to use you, I'm about to say something interesting. God always prepares people before he uses them. God always prepares people.

You might be going through a stage in your life. If you are genuinely working with God, it's part of your preparation program. God is preparing you. God is preparing.

Don't abort the preparation program. Sometimes he will prepare us in ways that we never expected. Like Joseph found himself in prison and you'll be thinking, what am I doing here?

But God, you told him, but that's the preparation. God was preparing him because he was going to Pharaoh. So they kept him in the prison of where the politicians were. So you can start interacting with politicians before you go to their king.

[27 : 05] So God prepared, God had prepared Saul. How did he prepare Saul of Thessalon Paul? By virtue of his birth. He was born in Cilicia and historians believe that his parents, that might have done something for the Roman authority and so they awarded him with citizenship.

citizenship. So Paul was born a citizen. God needed someone with that kind of credential. He, Cilicia, he schooled in Alexandria and because of that he could speak Greek fluently.

He spoke to the Roman soldier, captain in Greek, spoke to him in Greek. Then when the Jews came, he spoke Hebrew. So he could speak Hebrew, he could speak Greek and he was a Roman citizen.

That's why he was very versatile. God needed that person as the gospel was going into Gentile territories. Am I communicating something to you? And so Paul says that I am Jew.

Let's look at the text again. Acts chapter 22, verse 3. It says that 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 our fathers and was zealous towards God as you.

[28 : 22] So you see his credentials. Then he went on to say that I persecuted this way, talking about the church, what you are doing, I've done it already. I persecuted the church unto death, binding and delivering unto prison, both men and women, as also the high priest bear me witness and not only him, but the elders who are seated here, they also bear witness.

They know me. They know me. They know. And he said they bear witness that from them I also received letters unto the brethren and went to Damascus to bring them which were there bound to Jerusalem for punishment.

They know what I was doing. This is not strange. So you know what Paul did? It's very interesting. When on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to the Jews who were assembled. And then in Acts chapter 3, he preached that when a crippled man was raised.

And in Acts chapter 4, he got to preach to the elders. He says that there's no name given amongst men by which we might be saved. He preached to them. And then in Acts chapter 4, Cornelius, Peter goes to the, Stephen preaches in Acts chapter 7.

Peter preaches the house of Cornelius and to Gentiles for the first time. And he began to explain the gospel to the Gentiles. Not from Judaism point of view, but from existential point of view how Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

[29 : 46] And then he said we should go and preach. And as he was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all those who were listening. So that's the few preachings that were occurred. It was to the Jews then. It goes to Gentiles.

And in chapter 13, Paul began to preach in the synagogue to Jews. A long preaching. And then the Gentiles who were in the synagogue said, come and preach to us again next week. You know. So the preaching was going on.

But this particular place was similar to what happened in the day of Pentecost. just that on the day of Pentecost, Peter was just preaching from the Old Testament, explaining the Old Testament. In this instant, Paul was not preaching from the Old Testament. He was using his life, his testimony, referring them to the authenticity of the message they've been aware of about Christ.

He was saying that, listen, I was so zealous and I was persecuting the church. I followed them to other cities. I arrested them. Then he continues to tell his story. And then he says that verse 6, and it came to pass.

[30 : 48] As I made my journey to Damascus about noon day, suddenly there shone a great light from heaven around about me. And I fell onto the ground and had a voice saying unto me, Shaul, Shaul, why persecuted thou me?

And I answered, who art thou? And he said unto me, I'm Jesus whom thou persecuted. This is the first time Paul was narrating his story. He narrated this story about how he persecuted the church four times in scripture.

This is the first time. The first time was to the Jews. The second time is Acts chapter 26, to the Gentiles. The third time in Philippians chapter 3, when he was talking about how he persecuted the church, and he was making a doctrinal case.

And then the fourth time in 1 Timothy chapter 1, when he was talking about how he persecuted the church, he was using that to encourage people. It doesn't matter what you have done. God can still use you. So Paul referred to his story four times in scripture.

This is the first time he was talking about himself. And then he told them, he went to Damascus, arrested them. He had an encounter, and he said he fell to the ground. He heard the voice saying to him, so why are you persecuting me?

[31 : 57] And he said, who are you? And he said, I'm Jesus. Verse 9, and then he says that the people who were with him saw the light, and they were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of him that was speaking to him. All right.

In Acts chapter 9, verse 7, he said, they heard the voice. He said, they were so genuine, they stood speechless, hearing the voice. Here, Acts chapter 22, verse 9, he said they did not hear the voice. Which is which? Oh yeah, both is which? When he said they heard the voice, the second one that they did not hear, they didn't understand what was going on.

They could hear, it's just like John chapter 12, John chapter 12, verse 28, when Jesus said, Father, at the time has come, glorify your name. The Bible said, it's a Father, glorify. Then, there, verse 28, please.

Verse 28. Then came a voice from heaven saying, I have glorified it and I'll glorify it. Then the next verse, the people heard, they said, they thought it had standard. Others also said, angels spoke to him.

[32 : 57] So they heard, they didn't know. So, those who were traveling for, they heard, but they didn't, they couldn't, they didn't get what was being said. So that's what he meant by they didn't hear it.

They didn't understand. Does that make sense? And so, said, those who were traveling with me, they did not hear the voice that speak with me. Verse 10 says that, and I said, what shall I do? Usually people are always looking for, tell me, ABC, ABC.

If you tell me this, I will obey you. As for you, you are the boss. And he said, no, no, go. I won't tell you anything. I rise, go to Damascus and it shall be told thee of all the things that is appointed for you to do.

And then when I could not see for the glory of the light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came to Damascus. Because he was told, can't imagine, he was blind, but they said, go to Damascus.

You have to find your way there. Stop giving excuses. Just obey God. Stop giving, I don't know how I'm going to get there. Just find your way. God said, go. That means there's a way you can get there. And so he was brought there by people who were with him.

[33 : 59] And one Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, stood, and said unto me, brother Saul, receive thy sight.

And the same hour I looked up upon him. So he began telling them, I was blind, but this disciple came, he prayed for me, and I was healed. He was telling his story. He's not a hypocrite. What has happened is so real. He couldn't deny it. He was trying to appeal to the people with his story. He said, I was zealous. But look, look at me today. And there's a reason. Probably if it was you, you probably would have even done more. So he was using his story as a case to them. And then verse 14, Ananias then went out and told him that, the God of our fathers has chosen you, that you should know his will, and see the just one, that's Jesus, and should hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness unto, watch this, let's all say witness. Say thou shalt be a witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. this experience, it is going to send you as a witness that this thing, the Christian's preach is real.

[35 : 16] It's not just an ideology. It's a reality. Christianity shouldn't just be an ideology. It should be your reality. So he said that, you tell people, verse 16 says that, and now, why are you waiting? Arise, be baptized, call you on the name of the Lord Jesus. Because whoever shall call on the name, from today's reading, remember, whoever shall call on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved. That's all it takes to be saved. And so he said, arise, be baptized, call you on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Watch this, this is where I want us to get to. Verse 17 says that, and it came to pass that when I was come into Jerusalem, even while I pray in the temple, I was in a trance. And I fell into a trance. And Jesus appeared to him. Verse 18. And I saw him. That him is talking about Jesus. Saying unto me, be fast. Get out quickly of Jerusalem. Get out of here. For they will not receive your testimony concerning me. Then I started advising Jesus. Jesus, I don't know, you're getting this wrong.

[36 : 29] The people know me. They know what I used to do. Once they see me, they will even change more. He said, hey, when it comes to spiritual things, it's not in just the realm of intelligence. It might sound reasonable, but even reasonable things, people whose hearts are blind will rise against reasonable things. So I said, don't think that how many of you have either personally experienced that before or somebody's testimony where they were getting born again and they knew, ask my mother, I used to be a bad boy and I used to be rough. But when he knows I'm going to find someone now in church, he'll be so happy. Only to realize that the opposite is also true. You changed and you said they're going to church and the one who said they were praying for you to change, start fighting against you going to church. church because you assume that they will understand. Oh, my family is a Christian family. They will understand. Oh, you are dealing with spiritual matters. They might be Christians, but if they are spiritually dull, dumb and comatose, they will be the ones fighting against God. That should be a warning to all of us, me inclusive, because spiritual good credit is not a permanent possession. What I'm trying to say is you, in your day of spiritual laxity, when your water table is low, sometimes you'll be shocked the things you can do against the church.

[37 : 57] Over a period of time, you realize you've been coming to church, but you are still very spiritually light. Light. I mean, light. So, it's so important that when people are in church, we allow them to enjoy the fellowship experience in the church. It's so important. Am I communicating? Now. So, Paul fell into a trance, and Jesus said, get out of town. Jesus told him, get out of town. He said, yes, thank you for reminding me. He said, quickly. Quickly, not next week. Get out of town now. The trance level is red. Highest level. Get out. He was in the temple, praying. Good God. Fell into a trance. Jesus said, oh boy. Get out, get out. Then he told Jesus, what did he say they should get out of town? He said, the reason why you should get out of town is because they will not receive your testimony concerning me. Get out of town.

[39 : 05] Then, he told him, said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believe on you. They knew I did it. Then he went on to say, you see the impact of Stephen?

When he had an encounter with Jesus, he made reference to Stephen. He said, and when your matai, the Greek word translated matai, shares the same root word with witness.

Paul was a witness and he said, me and Stephen, there's no practice. The only difference is he died for you and I made sure they were killing him. He said, when the blood of your witness was being shed, I was standing by approving and watching out for the courts of those who were killing him. Me, I was there. That thing never left the gentleman. I told you Stephen made a strong impact on Paul by virtue of his theology or his understanding of God's word and his commitment and dedication.

The next verse. And he says that, then Jesus said to me, leave. Stop giving me reasons. Leave. You are not ready to die. I'm not ready to let you die. Leave.

[40 : 14] For I will send you far from here to the Gentiles. These Jews. Anytime you read the New Testament and see Jews, most of the time, especially during the time of Jesus and John, when he said the Jews sent, the Jews asked him, most of the time he was talking about the Pharisees and those who were opposing Jesus.

Okay. But sometimes they will use the word the Jews. But this one is all the Jews people. So he says that, you see, the Jews, they don't like Gentiles, you know. They don't like Gentiles. They were happy until he mentioned, God said, depart, for I'll send you to Gentiles.

He said, this guy, they lost the plug. Look, you mentioned Gentiles here. God is sending you to Gentiles. Why would God send somebody to Gentiles? Why would God? This is Jerusalem.

And they listened until this word, Gentiles. Until this word. And they raised their voices and said, away with such a fellow from the earth.

He is not fit to live. These were religious people. So sometimes when, I don't understand when people can be so religious and killing other people. Religious people.

[41 : 26] Zeal. When it's not in the right direction, you can cause a lot of harm and a lot of havoc. That's what happened. Anyway, so they said, away from me, he's not fit to live.

And there was a major uproar. As they cried out and tore their clothes and threw dust into. Can you imagine? Just this small preaching. They were okay to reset Gentiles.

But, what's the point here? Should Paul not speak the truth? There are some ways if you use, people will be upset with you.

So in our generation, preachers can't even say some things because it's not politically correct.

Sometimes it's not necessary to go into it if it's not part of your message. Don't upset people for the sake of saying my mind.

But if it's part of the explanation of the message, you don't also have to be afraid because people...

Paul preached his message unashamedly without fear.

[42 : 26] And when he said it, it brought more... But did you know that that was God's way of rescuing Paul? I have to say this as I ran up. God was rescuing Paul from being absorbed into this Judaism nonsense.

That will block... Because Paul, you said that the law and grace are not together. Why are you bringing back law? Why are you getting to the temple?

Because they are advising you. James has lost them. James is good, but he is still not fully there because I have given the revelation to you.

For Paul to write Romans and go into the temple and practice those things. For Paul to write Galatians and then go into the temple. That tells you that, Paul, you are going too far down. So God had to separate Christianity from Judaism.

That's why... Now what did God do? There was April and the soldiers had to come in quickly, rescue, and the officer said, examine him. So when the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks and then said that he should be examined under scourging.

[43 : 35] What's the meaning of that? Those days, the Romans have a way of whipping and beating you. You speak the truth. Because they knew there was something wrong with him.

It's almost like torture. They knew there was something wrong with this guy, but they couldn't find out what it was. So let's extract it. Let's extract it from him by scourging him, beating him.

And sometimes, some people don't even make it. They bleed to death. Because those Romans were wild. So they said, let's examine him so we can know this truth about by scourging so that we might know why the people are, there's something this guy is not saying.

Beat him and bring it out of him. And so, just before they could beat him, as they bound him, they bound him with tongues and about to beat him, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, it's not lawful to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned.

Roman? Do you know, if you do that to a Roman, you are supposed to be executed. You will lose your life, not just your job. You can't afflict, scourge a Roman who is not condemned.

[44 : 50] Being a Roman citizen is better than any citizenship we currently see. It was a big privilege. Hallelujah. Anyway, so, look at the next verse quickly. The next verse says that, when the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, take care of what you do, for this man is Roman.

When he heard it, the commander came and said to him, tell me, are you a Roman? He said, yes. The commander asked, with a large sum, I obtained my citizenship. Yes.

I paid for it. This thing started a long time ago. It's in the Bible. It's in the Bible.

So he said, the last time, I obtained my citizenship. Paul said, I didn't have, I was born a citizen. Because that's his background. I was born a citizen. Now look at what happened. Then, immediately, those who were about to examine him, withdrew from him and the commander was also afraid.

After he found out that he was a Roman citizen because he had bound him, not even scourged him, bound him a Roman citizen, the guy was in trouble. He was not afraid. You see, it was good Paul was a Roman citizen.

[45 : 58] So now from that, he enjoyed some protection. His security men were covering, covering. They protected him. Now, this is where the thing is going. The last verse, the next day, because he wanted to know for certainty why he was accused by the Jews.

He released him from his bound and commanded the chief priest and all the council to appear and brought Paul down and set him before. So that's the end of that text. But then, watch this.

This is the core point I want to draw to our attention. God delivered him because he wanted to separate Christianity from religion. And then number two, God delivered him because from that time, Paul was kept in prison.

He was in prison for two years and then he was released on house arrest. That was when he wrote the epistle, watch this, epistle of Ephesians, epistle of Philippians, epistle of Colossians and then Hebrews.

I just believe Hebrews. Okay. So that was when he wrote these epistles but these epistles were some of the best in Christology, in the message about Christ. In Ephesians, he explained how we are, who we are because of Christ and how Jews and Gentiles can be together in one body.

[47 : 08] And he explained how God has given him that message to make the mystery of God known because he made it known that this whole gospel is a mystery in Ephesians. And then in Philippians, that's where he made his case about who he used to be.

But Christ is the most important thing and he elevated Christ about Christ being God. In Philippians chapter two, even though he was God, he became man, he died and God has exalted. He explained the Christ thing and in Colossians, he says that all the fullness of deity dwelt in Christ. He spoke about how he's the beginning of all things. Without him was nothing made that was made. Colossians 1, 15 and 16. And so he took his time to explain and expose Christ in prison.

God wanted him to become somewhere. He's been traveling a lot. Now, Paul settled. He was locked up in prison and in his imprisonment, he had the opportunity to turn out some of the deepest revelations about Christ and the church.

That's when he wrote Hebrews. Then when he was released from prison and the house arrest, he wrote First Timothy. He wrote Titus. He wrote First Timothy and Titus and that's the personal epistles.

[48 : 19] Philemon was written in the first prison. He wrote First Timothy and Titus. And Hebrews as well was also written in the first imprisonment. All right. So Paul turned out something so deep.

When you read these texts, it's so strong and that's one of the things that has built the church. God wanted, watch this, his apostle to settle down and have concentration and pour out the things that will secure the future of the church.

So when he was being arrested in Jerusalem, I believe God was behind it. Separate Judaism from the church and get his apostle to be protected and then isolated.

He wasn't traveling anymore. He was in one place, writing and writing and he wrote Second Timothy. Second Timothy was his last letter. He wrote it just when he was in prison, just before he died, he was taken back in Rome.

He wrote Second Timothy and he told him, now my life is about to be poured out as an offering. I know the time of my departure has come. He wrote all those things in prison because he left a legacy that would take care of the church for generations.

[49 : 26] That's why Paul and the mission was worth it. The mission was, did you receive something? Hallelujah! Praise God. Thank you for listening to this message by David Entry.

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