

Defending What You Believe

Follow Paul's example

Acts 22

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • May 28, In the year of our Lord, 2017
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Speaking truth, evangelism, God

Persuasion:

I. Acts 22.1–5 | The Way Paul Had Lived

- A. Finally, Paul got to do that for which he went to Jerusalem;
 - 1. he got to speak publicly to his fellow Jews.
 - 2. They had heard various rumors about him and the Greeks,
 - a) that he taught the Jews among the Greeks
 - (1) not to circumcise their children,
 - (2) not to respect the Law of Moses, and
 - (3) to disregard the temple.
 - b) They also believed that he had brought Greeks into the temple.
- B. Then he spoke to them, not in Greek, but in the Hebrew language.
 - 1. He had their full attention, for
 - 2. this showed that he appreciated their unique language.
- C. The first thing he said about himself was that he was a Jew,
 - 1. although born in Tarsus of Cilicia, a Roman city,
 - 2. he grew up in Jerusalem
 - a) at the feet of their most respected teacher, Gamaliel.
 - b) Gamaliel taught Paul the strictness of their fathers' law.
- D. In harmony with those things,
 - 1. he was zealous for God
 - 2. just as they all were that day,
 - a) demonstrated in their fervor against him, for
 - b) he also persecuted the Way even to the death,

- (1) first binding and putting into prison men and women.
- (2) Paul declared that the high priest and elders
 - (a) could testify to what he was doing and
 - (b) why he was doing it.
 - i) They even gave him authority
 - ii) to go to Damascus and arrest any Jew following the Way.

II. Acts 22.6–8 | What Caused Him to Change

A. However, something changed Paul.

1. As he traveled to Damascus,
2. during the middle of the day,
 - a) a great light out of heaven shone all around Paul.
 - b) It outshone the midday sun.

B. The light knocked him down to the ground.

1. Then he heard someone
 - a) from the light speaking to him,
 - b) someone who knew Paul,

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

2. He asked this voice who he was,

“I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.”

- a) What do you suppose that did to Paul?
- b) What would it have done to you?

III. Acts 22.9–11 | What Paul Did with the Evidence

9 “And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. 10 So I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you

will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' 11 And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

- A. As you can imagine, the men traveling with Paul feared
 - 1. when they saw the light and
 - 2. because they did not understand the voice.
- B. Paul wanted to know what the Lord Jesus wanted Paul to do.
 - 1. Jesus did not deny that Paul had nothing he could do, but
 - 2. explained that Paul was to continue traveling to Damascus.
 - a) Once he arrived someone there would tell him what he had to do.
 - b) In fact, someone there would tell him all that he was to do.

IV. Acts 22.12–16 | Paul Washed Away His Sins

12 “Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, 13 came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him. 14 Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15 For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’

- A. The Lord sent a well-known and devout man to Paul,
 - 1. so that Paul did not have to go looking for someone to tell him what to do.
 - 2. Then this man, Ananias, cured Paul of his blindness.
- B. Ananias explained to Paul that God had chosen him
 - 1. to know God’s will,
 - 2. to see the Just One, and
 - 3. to hear Jesus speak.
- C. Paul needed to experience these three things

1. that he might be a witness of Jesus to all people
2. of what Paul had seen and heard.
 - a) That would consume his life,
 - b) using up all his time and energy, and
 - c) finally so consuming his life that he would die for it.

D. Ananias had only one more thing to address.

1. He let Paul know that there was no need for him to wait any longer
2. to have his sins washed away, and
 - a) told him to get up and
 - b) be baptized, for
 - (1) in so doing he would be calling upon the name of the Lord, and
 - (2) the Lord would wash away Paul's sins.

V. Acts 22.17–22 | Paul Affirmed His Zeal for the Lord

17 “Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance 18 and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ 19 So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. 20 And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ 21 Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’” 22 And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”

A. In Paul's closing words to his fellow Jews, two amazing things happened:

1. They tolerated his preaching of Jesus!
2. They did not tolerate including the Gentiles!

B. They must have thought that for this man to change his life,

1. what he just said about Jesus and the heavenly vision,
2. had to be true.

C. He also reasoned with the Lord that the Jews should have accepted him because they all knew his previous life of persecuting the way.

1. He went so far as imprisoning and beating believers.
2. He consented to the stoning of Stephen and some of them saw it.
 - a) A man like that does not change easily and
 - b) start promoting what he once persecuted.

D. However, it was their misunderstanding of their relationship to the world

1. that moved them to seek Paul's death.
2. They thought, and many people today think,
 - a) that Israel simply existed for itself.
 - b) For that reason many today believe the Lord will approve of the Jews rebuilding their temple in the future.
 - (1) However, Israel was a vehicle for bringing the blessing of Abraham to the nations,
 - (2) which Paul was demonstrating.
 - (a) They needed to hear again the promises of God to the fathers,

“In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12.3).

“Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Gen 18.18).

“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen 22.18).

VI. Acts 22.23–25 | Paul Experienced Rejection

A. The Roman commander saw the Jews reacting to Paul,

1. crying out that Paul was not fit to live on the Earth,
2. tearing off their clothes, and

3. throwing dust into the air.
- B. The commander had Paul brought into the barracks
1. that they might scourge him
 2. to find out why they shouted against him.
- C. So they bound Paul and
1. he said something that stopped the Roman commander in his tracks,
“Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?”
 2. Romans could not scourge Romans.
 3. Plus the Romans had not condemned Paul.

VII. Acts 22.26–30 | Paul Used His Roman Citizenship

- A. The centurion reported to the commander that they needed to take care what they would do to Paul, because he was a Roman.
- B. The commander questioned Paul on his Roman citizenship.
1. Paul affirmed that he was.
 2. The commander responded that he had become a citizenship through a large sum of money.
- C. However, Paul countered that he had been born a Roman.
1. Therefore, they withdrew from Paul,
 2. fearing Paul as a Roman citizen,
 3. especially because they had bound him.
- D. However, the Roman still needed to do his job.
1. He called for a meeting the next day.
 2. He released Paul the Roman citizen from his bonds, and
 - a) commanded the chief priests and their council members to appear at the meeting, and
 - b) then set Paul before them.

Exhortation:

I. Prepare to Defend Yourself

- A. The Way You Used to Live
- B. What Caused You to Change
- C. What You Did Further with the Evidence
- D. How You Had Your Sins Washed Away
- E. Affirm Your Zeal

II. Are You Lost?

- A. How is your way of life working out for you?
- B. Have you thought about a change?
- C. Consider the evidence
- D. How to have all your sins and guilty conscience wiped away
- E. Now live the rest of your life affirming your zeal