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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Acts 22.

(2013).

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Acts 22.

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### Topics.

- In Jerusalem Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd who had almost killed him.
- The enormous, terror, danger and destructive power of wrong belief.
- Was Paul led by his spirit or the Holy Spirit?
- The Jewish crowd shout out for Paul to be killed.
- Paul is tied to a stake ready to be whipped.
- Paul is seated before the chief priests and all the council.

**The Previous Chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul arrived in Jerusalem and James and the elders advised him to shave his head with four others to win the favour of the Jews. Paul did this and went into the temple, but Jews from Asia stirred the population of the city into such a frenzy they dragged Paul out of the temple and would have beaten him to death had not the tribune with Roman soldiers rescued Paul. The chapter ended with the captain giving Paul permission to speak to the Jewish crowd that had almost murdered Paul thus this chapter is the beginning of Paul's speech.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

### In Jerusalem Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd who had almost Killed Him.

Acts 22:1-16 ----- <sup>1</sup>"Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." <sup>2</sup>And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: <sup>3</sup>"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. <sup>4</sup>I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, <sup>5</sup>as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. <sup>6</sup>"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. <sup>7</sup>And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' <sup>8</sup>And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' <sup>9</sup>Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup>And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' <sup>11</sup>And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. <sup>12</sup>"And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, <sup>13</sup>came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. <sup>14</sup>And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; <sup>15</sup>for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup>And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Remember Paul is speaking to a crowd that has just beaten him so badly he couldn't walk, and would of murdered him had not the tribune with soldiers rescued him (Acts 21:30-32).

**Gamaliel:** was a Pharisee and eminent doctor of the law, Paul was one of his pupils (Acts 22:3).

When the enraged Sanhedrin sought to slay the apostles for their bold testimony to Christ, Gamaliel stood up in the council and urged judicious caution on the ground that if the new doctrine were of God they could not overthrow it, but if it were of man it would perish of itself (Acts 5:34-39).

Held in esteem by all the people his counsel was heeded and God used it to give a needed respite to the infant church. In as much as Gamaliel believed in God's sovereign control, his advice was sound, but also underlying it was the premise of pragmatism that what succeeds is good and what fails is evil, contrarily, the Scriptures point out that the wicked do prosper (Ps 73:12) and the godly are often destitute (Ps 109:22-26) truth must be tested by the standard of God's word.

The tradition that he afterward Gamaliel became a Christen is incongruous with the high esteem accorded him in the Talmud, it says, since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the Law has ceased.

#### **Paul tells the Jewish crowd: -**

- He is a Jew born in Tarsus, but raised in Jerusalem and was educated by Gamaliel in the strictest laws of Moses (v3).
- He persecuted those who confessed Christ to death, binding and imprisoning both men and women (v4).
- The high priest and the entire council of Jewish elders gave him written authority to drag those who believed the word of the Lord out of the synagogues and take them captive to Jerusalem to be punished (v5) (Acts 9:1-2).
- Of his encounter with Christ on his way to Damascus; this story is recorded in (Acts 9:1-22).

Jesus words, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting" (v8) shows that whenever we deliberately harm a brother or sister in Christ it is the same as doing it to Jesus himself.

**NOTICE:** Jesus did not appear to Paul or those with him, but they did all hear his voice (Acts 9:7) so this is not a vision nevertheless the men though they heard the voice did not understand what Jesus meant when he was talking to Paul (v9).

Ananias told Paul: -

- God appointed Paul to know His will, see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth (v14)

Does not mean Paul saw Christ in a physical form but manifested in a light so gloriously bright it blinded him.

**God's Will:** for Paul was that he would be a testimony to the word of the Lord to everyone (meaning to Jews and Gentiles) (v15).

#### **The Power of Wrong Belief.**

Luke in Acts eight tells us that, "Saul ravaged the church and entered house after house dragging men and women out and committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Ravaged carries the idea that he not only spoke evil of those who confessed the Lord Jesus Christ but also aggressively set about assaulting and abusing whoever believed in the Lord violently doing whatever he could to destroy and break up the church.

Then in the next chapter Luke writes, "Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2). Saul wanted the High priest to give him letters that when he presented them to the priests at Damascus they would give him permission to drag men and women confessing Christ out of the their synagogues so that he could take them captive to Jerusalem.

## **Paul's Power and Authority.**

Since there was no-one in the Jewish priesthood higher in authority than the high priest Paul's authority and power was enormous. To be given letters from the high priest (Acts 9:1-2) that allowed him to destroy whoever was opposed to the Jewish teaching gave him legal authority to use not only Jewish, but also Roman officers and soldiers throughout the land of Israel to do whatever Paul instructed them to do to destroy the opposing faith.

This is exactly what Paul was doing until the Lord miraculously turned his life around. We know this because Luke tells us when Paul left Jerusalem for Tarsus: -

- The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied (Acts 9:31).

Clearly showing the widespread havoc and destruction Paul was causing to the Church prior to his conversion.

## **The Enormous, Terror, Danger and Destructive Power of wrong Belief.**

It was not that Paul was motivated by jealousy as many of the Jews were or from an evil heart. Rather Paul's motivation was from his zeal for God and what he believed was the right way to protect the laws and faith of the Nation of Israel.

Paul had been taught by Gamaliel (a Pharisee and eminent doctor of the law) in the strictest laws of Moses and was therefore so legalistic that he believed those who were confessing Christ were blasphemers to the laws and customs God had given to Moses and to the Covenant the LORD had establish with Israel, thus the power and horror of wrong belief especially when it is infused with a legalistic heart that lacks, mercy, grace and compassion which in Paul's case had been generated by attending a religious school that gave him a wrong understanding of God, His laws and what is important to God's heart.

**The worst Sinners of All:** throughout the years I have heard people state that they are the worst sinner of all and therefore believe God could not save them, all they have to do is look at the life of Paul prior to his conversion and ask themselves, "Have I broken up Christian families and put innocent men and women into prison simply because they were devoted to Christ as Paul did,? And then look at what God was able to do with Paul's life.

## **Paul Speech continued: -**

Acts 22:17-23 ----- <sup>17</sup>"When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup>and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' <sup>19</sup>And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. <sup>20</sup>And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' <sup>21</sup>And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" <sup>22</sup>Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live." <sup>23</sup>And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

**Trance:** (ekstasis) refers to a displacement of the mind, positively it carries the idea of being astounded, bewildered, amazed, astonished or to be in wonder and ecstasy and negatively embraces the idea of being beside one-self, out of wits, bewitched or insane.

**It is interesting to notice:** after Paul's encounter with Christ on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-22) he went to the Temple in Jerusalem where in a trance the Lord warned him to, "Quickly get out of Jerusalem because the Jews would not accept his testimony about Jesus" and Paul rather than immediately go appears to give the Lord reasons why the Jews will accept him, but Jesus tells him to go as far away from Jerusalem as he can and minister to the Gentiles (v22:17-21).

## **Was Paul led by his Spirit or the Holy Spirit?**

In chapter nineteen we are told; "Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem" (Acts 19:21) and then in chapter twenty Paul says, "He is going to Jerusalem, constrained (bound in the spirit) (KJV) by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to him except that the Holy Spirit testifies to him in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await him (Acts 20:22-23). And in chapter twenty-one Luke states, "The disciples through the Spirit were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem" (Acts 20:4) and a few verses further on the prophet Agabus tied his own hands and feet with Paul's belt and said through the Holy Spirit, "This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

Upon hearing this all the brothers once again urged Paul not to leave, but he told them that his heart was set on going to Jerusalem even it meant his death so the brothers could not persuade him to stay and then after doing all they could without any success to stop him going they make an amazing statement, "Let the will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:10-14).

So was Paul being led by his own spirit or the Holy Spirit? To understand the answer to this it is helpful to know that the word constrained (Acts 20:22) can carry any of the following meanings, controlled, compelled, pressured, made, coerced, restrained or hindered and the word bound (the Greek word *deo*) from Strong's Concordance literally or figuratively means to bind or be in bonds, it carries the idea of something necessary i.e., must be, ought to, should do with the thought in the mind of something needful.

### **Putting it all together: -**

It appears Paul in his own spirit felt a responsibility to once again attempt to take the gospel to his Jewish brothers at Jerusalem, we know he had an overwhelming love for them because he says, "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom 9:3), but through the checks he felt in his own spirit the Holy Spirit was constraining him from going and through difficulties was hindering him and through the brothers and the prophet Agabus warning him from going.

But Paul was determined most likely because of his love for his nation, the Jewish people and those he had spent his life growing up with in Jerusalem. So the statement, "Let the will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:10-14) seems to mean that even if the Lord attempts to warn us from danger what we end up doing for him is still counted as the will of the Lord, but we will suffer the consequences of such a choice.

### **A Typical Example.**

A natural example of this would be when an older and mature Christian man finds himself advising a new convert in the Lord not to take a certain path since being the older man he is able to see the end result of such an action, but being young and zealous the young man is determined that the path he is about to take is the right path so he ignores the older man's warning and does what he determined to do, in this scenario the older man can correctly say, "Let the will of the Lord be done". Even though he knows the path the young convert is taking will eventually lead to sorrow and hardship.

This scenario happens in almost all Christian families there are times when our adult children are determined to take a path we would prefer they didn't sometimes we have to say as the brothers did to Paul "Let the will of the Lord be done" and rest in the fact that silver and gold cannot be produced without fire.

**NOTICE:** the Jews accept Paul's testimony until he said, Christ told him to go to the Gentiles (v22). This is because the Jewish zealots saw themselves as the holy race with God and the Gentiles as an unclean race without God, thus the Jewish extremists and fanatics especially at Jerusalem would not defile themselves by mixing with Gentiles and to teach that God was favouring them was absolute blasphemy as they believed that their Messiah would not defile Himself by visiting an unclean race of people.

### **The Jewish Crowd Shout Out for Paul to be Killed.**

The frenzy of the crowd is extreme, they throw their coats and dust in the air and filled with rage, anger and fury they shout for Paul to be killed this is religious fanaticism at its worst (v22-13).

### **Paul is tied to a stake ready to be Whipped.**

Acts 22:24-30 ----- <sup>24</sup>the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. <sup>25</sup>But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" <sup>26</sup>When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." <sup>27</sup>So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." <sup>28</sup>The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth." <sup>29</sup>So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him. <sup>30</sup>But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

**Tribune:** refers to the chief captain of a band of men. In the ancient Roman republic a tribune was a representative annually elected to defend the rights of the common people. The tribune at this time was the chief captain Lysias (Acts 23:26) (Acts 24:7, 22).

Is it any wonder God turned from His chosen people to call out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14). This Jewish crowd who worship at God's temple have absolutely no-understanding of God's law, are totally blind to what is important to God's Heart and have murdered God's Son their Messiah the Christ and now they are screaming to have Paul killed. The power of religious fanaticism is one of the most dangerous and destructive forces on earth.

The tribune intending to torture Paul has him tied to a stake to be whipped so he can find out why the Jews are shouting for Paul to be killed. Had Paul not been a Roman citizen it is certain Paul would have been whipped to near death. Roman law protected Roman citizens thus the reason why Roman citizenship was so valued and the reason tribune was willing to pay such a large sum to obtain one.

### **Paul is seated before the Chief Priests and all the Council.**

The tribune still wanting to know the real reason why the Jews desired to kill Paul commands the chief priests and all the council to meet and he brought Paul down and set him before them. The reason the Jews want Paul put to death is because he said: -

- Christ told him to get out of Jerusalem because they will not accept his testimony about the Lord and go far away to the Gentiles (v18-22).

It seems tribune did not understand the Jews fury and desire to kill Paul or he did not believe this was their real reason.

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