

Parson to Person

ACTS 22 PART 2

Having been arrested by the Romans for an unfounded accusation, Paul would finally have the opportunity he was looking for. His desire to get to Jerusalem—even though warned against it—was motivated by his passion to share the Gospel with his brethren the Jews.

Luke records the account: “*Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.’ And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said: ‘I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.*”

Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” So I answered, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said to me, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.” 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. 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.” 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.

Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, 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. 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. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, “Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.” So I said, “Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. 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.” Then He said to me, “Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.”’

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!’ Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, ‘Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?’

When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, ‘Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.’ Then the commander came and said to him, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ The commander answered, ‘With a large sum I obtained this citizenship.’ And Paul said, ‘But I was born a citizen.’

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, and because he had bound him.

The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them” (Acts 22:1–30 NKJV).

It is of interest that Paul’s desire to speak to his friends in Jerusalem was met with discouragements from the Lord. Jesus said, “*Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.*” However, Paul’s argument was, “*Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You.*” Then, lo and behold, seventeen years later Paul (still holding his position) tells the Jews the same thing. Jesus was right all along. The Jews did not receive him nor his message.

The moral of the story: when arguing with Jesus, try to remember that He is always right!

I love you all, Pastor Paul