

Parson to Person

ACTS 22 PART 3

“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 22:22–30).

Paul finally made it to Jerusalem and found himself in a lot of trouble. The Lord (and others) had forewarned him about this, but nonetheless Paul went and experienced what had been predicted.

His life ambition seems to include ministry to the Jews. In fact, when writing to the Romans, he said, *“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen”* (Romans 9:1–5). He wanted to share with his Jewish brethren to such a degree that he would, if it were possible, have been *“accursed from Christ for my brethren.”* Truth is, Paul could not be accursed from Christ for them... Jesus *“was cursed”* for them (and us), and there is nothing we can do to add to the work He has accomplished (see Galatians 3:13b).

It is clear that passion (even for the lost) will make people do and say many irrational things!

By the time Paul was able to get his introduction delivered, the Jews had already made up their minds to see Paul executed. This was in part due to the fact that Paul mentioned his calling to the Gentiles—a group the Jews had no interest in reaching. However, in a preventative delay, the Romans quickly responded and removed Paul from the scene.

By this time the Romans had chained Paul on both arms and taken him to be scourged. The scourging would not be the Jewish version, but Roman: the use of a flagrum. This instrument often caused death to the victim and was intended to purge truth from the one being beaten. It was a small whip made with various strands of leather enforced with lead weights, pieces of sharp metal, or broken glass. It would mutilate the victim. It is the same type of instrument used on Jesus.

Paul, knowing that he had been bound with chains and was facing a beating, appealed to his Roman citizenship for relief.

A partial list of those things Paul knew applied to him follows:

- 1) The right to have a legal trial (appear before a proper court to defend himself).
- 2) The right to appeal the decisions of a lower court to higher magistrates.
- 3) That following the early 2nd-century BC, a Roman citizen could not be tortured or whipped.
- 4) A Roman citizen could commute sentences of death to voluntary exile, unless found guilty of treason.
- 5) If accused of treason, a Roman citizen had the right to be tried in Rome.
- 6) If a Roman citizen was sentenced to death, he could not be sentenced to death by crucifixion.

The Roman commander having discovered that Paul was a Roman became terrified. He, having bound Paul and commanding him beaten before a proper trial, was in violation of the Roman law which would have resulted in the death penalty to all involved should it be discovered. Therefore, he (the commander) had Paul stand trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin. This too would prove problematic.

As we move on to chapter 23, we will see how this all develops.

I love you all, Pastor Paul