

# Acts 22 Commentary

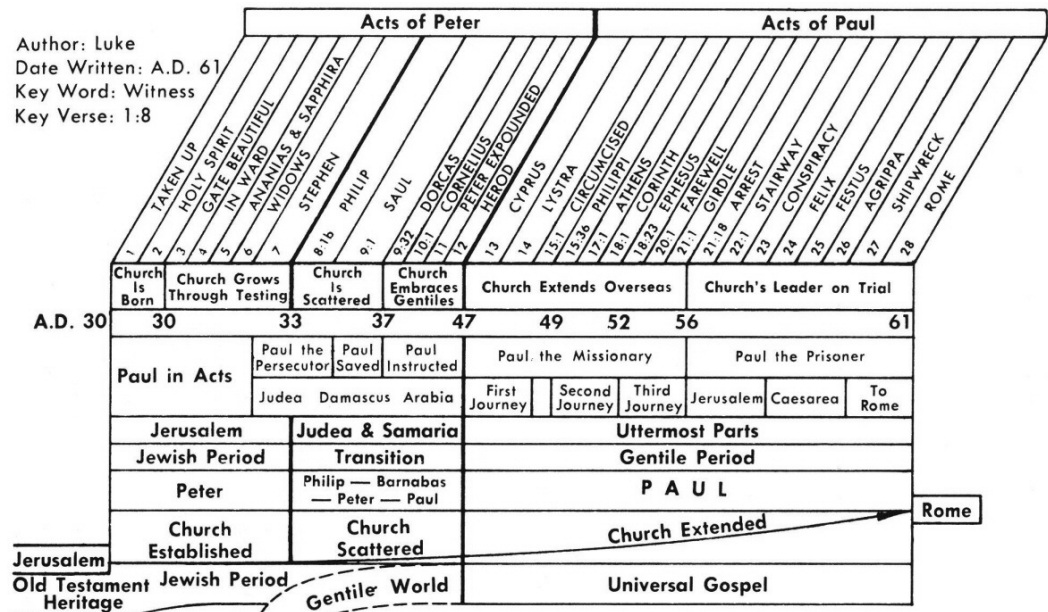
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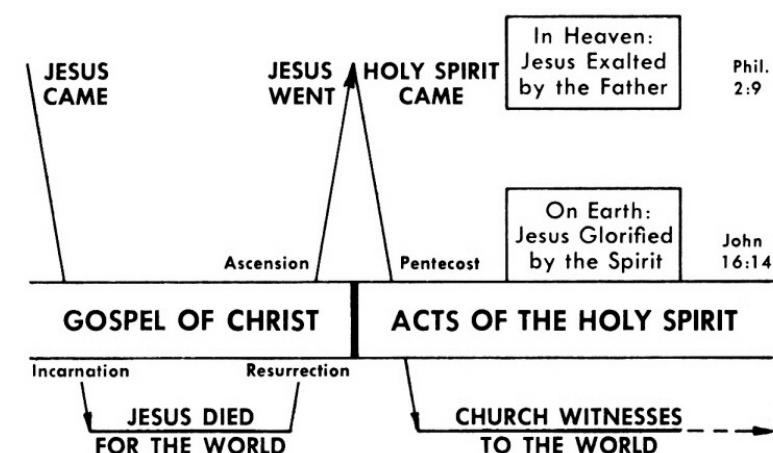
To go directly to that verse

- Acts 22:1
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Click chart to enlarge

## THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

<a href="#">Paul's First Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 13:4-14:28
<a href="#">Paul's Second Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 15:36-18:22
<a href="#">Paul's Third Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 18:23-21:26

- Maps in table above are from the **Holman Bible Atlas** ([Hardcover/Paperback version](#)) copyrighted © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, used by permission, all rights reserved. This is one of the best resources for Bible maps as the maps also include helpful short descriptions of the events portrayed on the maps. Please do not download for use on another website. Thank you.
- [Here is a map](#) with all three journeys on one map.

### John Hannah's Outline for Third Missionary Journey (see [map](#))

- D. The third missionary journey of Paul (Acts 18:23-21:16)
  1. The ministry in Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23)
  2. The ministry in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-19:41)
    - a. Instruction of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
    - b. Instruction of some of John's followers (Acts 19:1-7)
    - c. Instruction of the Ephesians (Acts 19:8-20)
    - d. Instructions concerning his plans (Acts 19:21-22)
    - e. The riots in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41)
  3. The ministry in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-5)
  4. The ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6-12)
  5. The ministry in Miletus (Acts 20:13-38)
    - a. His journey to Miletus (Acts 20:13-16)
    - b. His message to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35)
      1. Concerning his ministry (Acts 20:17-27)
      2. Concerning the church (Acts 20:28-35)
    - c. His farewell to the Ephesians (Acts 20:36-38)
  6. The ministry at Tyre (Acts 21:1-6)
    - a. His journey to Tyre (Acts 21:1-3)
    - b. His ministry in Tyre (Acts 21:4-6)
  7. The ministry in Caesarea (Acts 21:7-16)
    - a. Agabus' prediction (Acts 21:7-12)
    - b. Paul's reply (Acts 21:13-14)
    - c. The journey toward Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-16)
- E. The journey of Paul to Rome (Acts 21:17-28:31)

1. His witness in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-23:35)
  - a. Paul's report to the elders (Acts 21:17-26)
  - b. Paul's arrest (Acts 21:27-36)
  - c. Paul's defense (Acts 21:37-23:10)
    1. His first defense (Acts 21:37-22:23)
      - a. The background (Acts 21:37-40)
      - b. The content (Acts 22:1-21)
      - c. The result (Acts 22:22-23)
    2. His second defense (Acts 22:24-23:10)
      - a. The background (Acts 22:24-29)
      - b. The council (Acts 22:30)
      - c. The content (Acts 23:1-9)
      - d. The conflict (Acts 23:10)
  - d. Paul's deliverance (Acts 23:11-35)
    1. The encouragement (Acts 23:11)
    2. The plot (Acts 23:12-16)
    3. The counterplot (Acts 23:17-24)
    4. The letter to Felix (Acts 23:25-30)
    5. The deliverance to Felix (Acts 23:31-35)
2. His witness in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-26:32)
  - a. Paul's defense before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)
    1. The setting (Acts 24:1)
    2. The accusations of Tertullus (Acts 24:2-9)
    3. The reply of Paul (Acts 24:10-21)
    4. The consequences (Acts 24:22-27)
  - b. Paul's defense before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)
    1. The setting (Acts 25:1-5)
    2. The trial (Acts 25:6-11)
    3. The result (Acts 25:12)
  - c. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 25:13-26:32)
    1. The arrival of Agrippa (Acts 25:13)
    2. Festus' presentation of Paul's case (Acts 25:14-22)
    3. Festus' presentation of Paul (Acts 25:23-27)
    4. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-23)
    5. Paul's answer to Festus (Acts 26:24-26)
    6. Paul's interaction with Agrippa (Acts 26:27-29)
    7. The conclusion (Acts 26:30-32)
3. His witness on the way to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:15)
  - a. His witness aboard ship (Acts 27:1-44)
  - b. His witness on Malta (Acts 28:1-15)
    1. Paul's miraculous preservation (Acts 28:1-6)
    2. Paul's healing of Publius' father (Acts 28:7-10)
    3. Paul's continued journey toward Rome (Acts 28:11-15)
4. His witness in Rome (Acts 28:16-31)
  - a. The occasion for his witness (Acts 28:16-22)
  - b. The content of his witness (Acts 28:23-28)
  - c. The result of his witness (Acts 28:29)
  - d. The summary of Paul's witness in Rome (Acts 28:30-31)

■ [Hannah's Bible Outlines](#) - Recommended Resource

**Acts 22:1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now *offer* to you."**

KJV Acts 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

■ **brethren** Acts 7:2; 13:26; 23:1,6; 28:17

- **my defense.** Acts 19:33; 24:10; 25:8,16; 26:1,2,24; Luke 12:11; 21:14; Ro 2:15; 1 Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11; 12:19; Phil 1:7,17; 2 Ti 4:16; 1 Peter 3:15
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S APOLOGETIC

An "**apology**" in Paul's day had nothing to do with saying, "I'm sorry!" Rather it was a reasoned argument or defense presenting evidence or compelling proof. As discussed below Paul never got a chance to give a full defense of the faith because the Jews interrupted him (Acts 22:21+). It is also worth noting that this is one of 5-6 times in which Paul gave his personal testimony regarding his conversion - Acts 9, Acts 22, Acts 26, Philippians 3, 1 Timothy 1, and some would say in Galatians 1.

**Paul's Testimony in Philippians 3** - "Although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. (Philippians 3:4-9)

**Paul's Testimony in 1 Timothy** - I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:12-17)

**Brethren** is actually two Greek nouns, **men** (aner) and **brothers** ([adelphotes](#)) Notice that Paul begins his speech just as had Stephen who declared "'Hear me, brethren and fathers!" (Acts 7:2+).

**Hear** (listen - akouo = English *acoustics*) is the [aorist imperative](#) a command that speaks of urgency, a very apt description for a man who had just been beaten by a mob that still wanted his death! But on the other side of that coin, this message was urgently needed by Paul's persecutors, for their lives were in eternal danger, while Paul's was only in temporal danger.

**Defense** (627) ([apologia](#) from **apo** = from + **logos** = speech, intelligent reasoning) literally means, "to talk one's self off from" or a well-reasoned reply, a thought-out response which adequately addresses the issue. **Apologia** was a technical word used in the Greek law courts and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. In short it refers to a speech given in defense. Today **apologia** ("biblical apologetics") is used of supplying evidences for the Christian faith (e.g., see Josh McDowell's online books [More Than a Carpenter](#) and his 817 magnum opus [New Evidence that Demands a Verdict](#) - see [old version free online](#)) Although **apologia** may have the idea of a judicial interrogation in which one is called to answer for the manner in which he has exercised his responsibility, the word can also mean an informal explanation or defense of one's position (1Cor 9:3, 2Cor 7:11) and as used by Paul here in Acts 22 aptly describes his giving an answer to the skeptical, abusive or derisive inquiries of the ill-disposed Jews (so ill-disposed that they wanted to murder him!) In Paul's case his "defense" consisted only of his testimony and he never got the opportunity to give a full defense of the Christian faith because of the Jewish reaction to his mention that Jesus had sent him "to the Gentiles!" (Acts 22:21+). The crowd became [rabid](#)!

**Apologia** in the NT - defense(7), vindication(1). - Acts 22:1; Acts 25:16; 1 Co. 9:3; 2 Co. 7:11; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:16; 2 Ti 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:15

**THOUGHT** - Every believer is called (commanded) by God to be a **capable apologist**! Peter calls believers to "**sanctify** ([aorist imperative](#) = "Just do it!" - [See our need for the Holy Spirit](#) to obey this command) Christ as Lord in your hearts, always (HOW OFTEN?) being ready ([hetoimos](#)) to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;" (1 Peter 3:15+) In short, God (through the inspired writing of Peter) is insisting that the believer must understand what he believes and why one is a Christian, and then be able to articulate one's beliefs humbly, thoughtfully, reasonably, and

biblically. Beloved, when Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives (which He is whether we acknowledge it or not), each crisis (See [Chinese word for crisis](#)) becomes an [opportunity](#) for being a witness for Jesus (Acts 1:8+). When we walk out the door in the morning filled with (controlled and empowered by) the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+), we can be confident (and bold) that we are "ready always to give an answer." So this begs the question - Are you prepared to make a defense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? If not, you need to get prepared! What are you going to say to the Lord at the [Bema Seat](#) when He asks you if you gave a defense to others declaring how His Gospel had transformed your life from the gutter to glory? (Ponder the passages on the [Bema Seat](#) - 2 Cor 5:10+, cf Ro 14:10-12+).

**NET Note** - This is the first of several speeches Paul would make in his own defense: Acts 24:10ff.; Acts 25:8, 16; and Acts 26:1ff (ED: [See Outline above](#)). For the use of such a speech ("apologia") in Greek, see Josephus, Ag. Ap. 2.15 [2.147]; Wis 6:10.

#### Related Resources:

- [What is Christian apologetics?](#)
- [What is classical apologetics?](#)
- [What is presuppositional apologetics?](#)
- [What is evidential apologetics?](#)
- [Questions about Apologetics](#) - such as Does God exist? Is there a God? Is God dead? Is God imaginary?

**Acts 22:2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said**

KJV Acts 22:2 And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,

- **in the Hebrew dialect** Acts 21:40
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PAUL TESTIFIES IN THE HEBREW DIALECT

**And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect-** Addressing is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating it was ongoing. They are thinking "This man knows our language."

**Was addressing** (4377) ([prosphoneo](#) from **pros** = to + **phoneo** = to call) means to utter sounds toward someone and then to speak out, call out or address (Mt 11:16; Lk 7:32; 23:20; Ac 22:2). The other NT sense is to call to oneself with implication of shared interests (Lk 6:13; 13:12; Ac 11:2). This verb can convey the sense of to [accost](#) which can mean to approach and speak to boldly or aggressively, as with a demand or request. It is difficult to imagine that was Paul's demeanor in the present context as he addressed already blood-thirsty mob.

**Hebrew** (1446) ([Hebrais](#)) refers to the Hebrew language; not that however in which the OT was written. Most observers interpret this as a reference to the lingua franca in Palestine which was the closely related Semitic language of [Aramaic](#). It is unlikely that the Roman commander Claudius Lysias would have been able to fully understand what Paul was saying.

**Dialect** (language) (1258) ([dialektos](#) from [dialegomai](#) = to dispute, discourse, reason) usually refers to the specific [dialect](#) of a region or special district within a nation, speaking of the the form of speech characteristic of a nation or region (I am from Texas and have a definite Texas twang or "dialect").

**They became even more quiet** - Paul's use of the **Hebrew dialect** arrested the crowd's attention and they became **even more quiet** than they were in Acts 21:40+ where Luke says **"there was a great hush."** He has secured their attention. He has established a "spiritual beach head" so to speak, a point of commonality with his audience. When we prepare to share our testimony, we too should always seek to find some common ground instead of just blasting them with our testimony.

**Quiet** (2271) ([hesuchia](#) from **hesuchos** = still) means stillness, quiet. **Hesuchia** "does not mean speechlessness, which is more directly indicated by ([sige](#))" (Thayer). In 2 Th 3:12 the idea of **hesuchia** is a state of undisturbed quietness and calm - 'quiet circumstances, undisturbed life.' (Louw-Nida) In 1 Th 4:11, the idea is to live in a quiet, peaceful, mild manner. **Gary Hill** - For

believers, **hesuchia** is God-produced calm with inner tranquility which ironically prompts taking "the next (appropriate) step" (decisive action).

**Gilbrant** - It is used in classical Greek to describe a place or state of "rest, quiet." Hēsuchia is used in the Septuagint in a similar manner. In Joshua 5:8 it describes the state of "rest" needed for healing after a circumcision. Elsewhere hēsuchia is used to identify a "peaceable" or "safe" place to dwell (1 Chronicles 4:40; Ezekiel 38:11). There are only three uses (**ED**: Actually 4) of hēsuchia in the New Testament, all of which describe a state. In Acts 22:2 Luke told how "silent" Paul's hearers became when they heard him address them in their own Hebrew tongue. This "silence" is one that comes from within and is not forced from another, nor does it disturb others. Paul used hēsuchia in that same sense in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 and 1 Timothy 2:11,12. His exhortation to keep "quiet, silent" was to correct the tendency of some to disturb others and thus bring reproach upon the gospel. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Hesuchia** - 4x - quiet(2), quiet fashion(1), quietly(1). - Acts 22:2; 2 Thess. 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:12

**Gary Hill on hesuchia** in 1 Timothy 2 relating to women - 1 Tim 2:11,12 does not teach women to "shut up" (be absolutely silent) in public services. Rather, hēsuxía ("inner calm," "appropriate tranquility") refers to divinely-produced calm using controlled emotion (speech), proceeding from inner quietness produced by the Lord. "Women are encouraged in Scripture in seeking the Lord to prophesy, etc. by the inspiration of the Spirit. Their apt-quietness (hēsuxía) ensures it is done in the right fashion (time) to carry out His plan in public services, etc." (G. Archer). Note: Modern readers must remember there were no "chapter breaks" in the original text of Scripture. This is important as 1 Tim 2:11,12 begins the discussion (qualifications) of elder-overseers that continues on in 1 Tim 3:1f. In sum, women are not told to "shut up and be quiet" in church services in 1 Tim 2:11f. Rather this section teaches eldership is reserved by God for men. Reflection: Women are not told in Scripture to keep absolutely silent, i.e. "shut up" in church, family, or society! They are warned however not to "prattle" on at the wrong time. [1 Cor 14:34,35 teaches the need to judge (evaluate) all prophesying done in public worship – which women can (should) also do (Ac 2:17; 21:9). This passage may also be a prohibition to women, not to call down to their husbands for discussion during synagogue services. (Women were segregated in public worship at that time.) Women sat on the upper floor, so calling down to their husbands would have disturbed the service, i.e. by them asking questions of their husbands down on the lower floor.] (Discovery Bible)

**Hesuchia** in the **Septuagint** - Josh 5:8; 1 Chr. 4:40; 1 Chr. 22:9; Est. 4:17; Job 34:29; Prov. 7:9; Prov. 11:12; Ezek. 38:11

**Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.**

KJV Acts 22:3 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 the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

- **I am a Jew** Acts 21:39; Ro 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5
- **born in Tarsus of Cilicia** Acts 9:11,30; 11:25
- **brought up in this city** Acts 6:9; 15:23,41; 23:34; Gal 1:21
- **at** Dt 33:3; 2 Ki 4:38; Luke 2:46; 8:35; 10:39
- **educated under Gamaliel** Acts 5:34
- **strictly according to the law of our fathers** Acts 23:6; 26:5; Gal 1:14; Phil 3:5
- **being zealous for God just as you all are today** Acts 21:20; 2 Sa 21:2; Ro 10:2,3; Gal 4:17,18; Phil 3:6
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- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL CONCILIATES THE CROWD

**Conciliate** means to cause to be more favorably inclined; to gain the good will of, to ease the anger or disturbance of. Conciliate suggests ending an estrangement by persuasion, concession, or settling of differences.

And so Paul now launches into his "defense," or more accurately into his testimony because of the interruption of the crowd. In sum



his defense is from Acts 22:3-21 and can be roughly outlined as follows...

- Acts 22:2-5 - Circumstances Before Conversion
- Acts 22:6-16 - Circumstances Surrounding Conversion
- Acts 22:17-21 - Commission After Conversion

**I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia**- For context, remember that most of the mob do not even know Paul's identity. They have just been stirred up by his alledged "anti-Semitism!" So he begins literally and emphatically (first in Greek sentence) by stating [categorically](#) **"I am a man a Jew"** which might be paraphrased as *"I myself, like you, am truly a Jew"*. He proudly states his Jewish heritage. And in so doing his claim to being a true Jew (not a Gentile proselyte converted to Judaism) begins to establish common ground with the zealous mob. He goes on to describe his birthplace as **Tarsus** which follows up his declaration to the Roman officer that he was **"a citizen of no insignificant city."** (Acts 21:39+). Tarsus was a respected intellectual center in that day and his motive for mentioning his city of origin may have been to indicate that he was not an intellectual [dimwit](#).

So Paul begins with a description that clearly counters any thought the crowd had that he might be anti-Jewish. His opponents were saying now that he has become a Christian, he has become anti-Semitic, anti-Law, anti-Temple, but his opening words indicate that is absolutely not true. He goes on in this verse to explain he was just as **zealous for God** as those in the crowd were to defend Judaism.

**EXPLANATORY NOTE** - Paul is not alluding to his return to Tarsus as an adult for this would have surely inflamed his Jewish audience. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Saul/Paul was not only born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but he was "sovereignly sent" back to Tarsus (because of the threat in Jerusalem which God allowed) after his conversion to Christianity. The ESV Timeline estimates that Saul ministered for some 8 years (some say 10 years) in Syria, Tarsus, and Cilicia from 37 AD to 45 AD. The Scripture is silent about this period of his life, but the fact that the letter from the Jerusalem Council is being carried indicates that Gentiles were evangelized and presumably had formed churches in those regions. By deduction there is little doubt that the origin of those Gentile brethren fellowships was the fruit of Paul's ministry during his 8-10 year "divine exile" in Tarsus, the capital of Syria.

**John MacArthur** gives an example of a modern Jew who was proud of his Jewish heritage...

[Disraeli](#), speaking to British Parliament just after he became prime minister of England, and he was in the middle of his speech, and a very bitter and hateful, brutal lord in the House stood up and said, "You, sir, are a Jew," sat down. Disraeli drew himself to full height, which wasn't very much, and he replied these words: "My lord, you accuse me of being a Jew. I am proud to answer to the name, and I would remind you, sir, that one-half of Christendom worships a Jew, and the other half a Jewess. And I would also remind you that my forefathers were worshipping the one true and living God, while yours were naked savages running around the woods of Britain."

**Tarsus** ([5018](#))([tarseus](#)) was "chief city of Cilicia ([MAP](#) - southern Turkey on coast), the southeastern portion of Asia Minor. It lay on both banks of the river Cydnus, in the midst of a fertile alluvial plain, some 10 miles from the seacoast. About 6 miles below the city the river broadened out into a considerable lake called Rhegma (Strabo xiv. 672), which afforded a safe anchorage and was in great part fringed with quays and dockyards. The river itself, which flowed southward from the Taurus Mountains with a clear and swift stream, was navigable to light craft, and Cleopatra, when she visited Antony at Tarsus in 38 BC, was able to sail in her richly decorated barge into the very heart of the city (Plut. *Ant.* 26)....Such was **Tarsus**, in which Paul was born (Acts 22:3) and of which he was a citizen (Acts 9:11; Acts 21:39). Its ancient traditions and its present greatness explain and justify the pride with which he claimed to be "a citizen of no mean city" (Acts 21:39)....it is certain that the character of his native city, its strong oriental element, its Greek constitution and speech, its position in the Roman Empire, its devotion to learning, must have made an impression upon one who, uniting Jewish nationality with membership of a Greek state and Roman citizenship, was to be the great interpreter to the Greco-Roman world of a religion which sprang from the soil of Judaism. How long Paul remained at Tarsus before beginning his studies in Jerusalem we cannot say. His own declaration that he was "born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city" (Acts 22:3) seems to show that his training at Jerusalem began at an early age....During his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, plots were formed against his life, and he was induced to return to Tarsus (Acts 9:30), where, according to Ramsay's chronology, he remained for some 8 years (SOME COMMENTARIES SAY AS LONG AS 10 YEARS). Thither Barnabas went to seek him when he felt the need of a helper in dealing with the new problems involved in the growth of the Antiochene church and the admission into it of Gentiles in considerable numbers (Acts 11:25). **Tarsus** is not again mentioned in the New Testament, but Paul doubtless revisited it on his second missionary journey, when he "went through Syria and Cilicia" (Acts 15:41), and traveled thence by way of the [Cilician Gates](#) into [Lycaonia](#), and again at the beginning of his third journey when, after some time spent at Antioch, "he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order" (Acts 18:23 )." (Excerpt from lengthy article in ISBE

on [Tarsus](#)) **Tarsus** was one of three cities in the Roman Empire with a major university, Athens and Alexandria being the other two cities.

**Tarsus** - 5x in NT = Acts 9:11; Acts 9:30; Acts 11:25; Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3.

**Cilicia** used 8x in NT - Acts 6:9; Acts 15:23; Acts 15:41; Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3; Acts 23:34; Acts 27:5; Gal. 1:21.

See [this map](#) (from **Holman Bible Atlas** copyrighted © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, used by permission, all rights reserved) of the [Roman province](#) of [Cilicia](#) which is in the right lower corner of modern day Turkey and is the site of the city of [Tarsus](#). Recall that after his conversion Luke records in Acts 9:28-30<sup>+</sup> that Saul (Paul) "was with them (Who? Acts 9:27<sup>+</sup>), moving about freely in **Jerusalem**, speaking out boldly (indicative of his being Spirit filled - Acts 9:17<sup>+</sup>, cf Acts 4:31<sup>+</sup>) in the name of the Lord. And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic [[Hellenistes](#) - Jews]; but they were attempting to put him to death. But when the brethren learned of it, **they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus**." In his letter to the Galatians Paul described this same episode adding that "Then (apparently after 3 years in Arabia - Gal 1:18<sup>+</sup>) I went into the regions of Syria and [Cilicia](#)." (Gal 1:21<sup>+</sup>)

**Brought up in this city** - Paul's point is that although born in Tarsus, he was nurtured and educated in Jerusalem. In this context, Paul is referring primarily to the spiritual upbringing he obtained in Jerusalem.

**Brought up** (397)(**anatrepho** from **ana** = an emphatic + **trepho** = nurse or nourish) in relation to raising a child means (1) to physically bring up, nourish or care for (as Moses in Acts 7:20) and mentally and spiritually training (educated as was Moses as son of Pharaoh's daughter in Acts 7:20). Because of this range of uses, *anatrephō* encompasses the entire life of the child until his maturity, including feeding and physical care, the formation of the mind and character; in which case it is synonymous with [paideuo](#).

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek **anatrepho** has the meaning of "bring up," "nourish," or "educate." It is derived from *trephō* (4982) which has the same basic meanings as *anatrephō* in a large part of its range of usages. The prefixed *ana* ([301] "up") would have here an intensifying function, an extra force largely lost by the New Testament period. However, compared to *trephō*, **anatrephō** relates especially to care and upbringing of the young (human or animal). *Anatrephō* was also used in developed meanings in the middle voice (action for oneself), "to have (someone) educated"; and sometimes in the passive voice, "to grow up."

**Anatrepho** - 3x - brought(1), nurtured(2). - Acts 7:20; Acts 7:21; Acts 22:3.

**Educated under Gamaliel** - Now Paul tells the Jews something he did not tell the Roman officer (it would have meant nothing to him anyway). He says his Jewish training was impeccable. **Under** is an idiom (*para tous podas*) literally "beside the foot of" (or "at the feet of"). In ancient Greek and Jewish schools, a master instructed his pupils from a chair – placed higher than the students. Thus they learned by "sitting at his feet." In this context the idea of "**brought up**" could also refer to Paul's "[Bar Mitzvah](#)" (usually around 12-13 years of age) at which time he was sent to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel one of the most esteemed rabbis in Judaism, and certainly the greatest teacher of Paul's day.

Luke mentioned **Gamaliel** in the trial of the apostles before the Sanhedrin writing "that a Pharisee named **Gamaliel**, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council ([sunedrion](#)) and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time (he commanded the respect of all the Council)." (Acts 5:34+) He argued that the Jewish leaders were in danger of arguing against God (Acts 5:39+) and they agreed and released the apostles (Acts 5:40-41+) **Gamaliel** was the greatest disciple of one of [the greatest Jewish rabbis Hillel](#). All of the Jews listening knew exactly who Gamaliel was and this further established Paul's credibility with his audience.

**NET Note on Gamaliel** - Gamaliel was a famous Jewish scholar and teacher mentioned here and in Acts 5:34. He had a grandson of the same name and is referred to as "Gamaliel the Elder" to avoid confusion. He is quoted a number of times in the Mishnah, was given the highest possible title for Jewish teachers, Rabba (cf. John 20:16), and was highly regarded in later rabbinic tradition.

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Gamaliel in the Bible?](#)
- [Gamaliel - Wikipedia](#)
- Jewish Encyclopedia - [Gamaliel](#)
- Whyte's Bible Characters [Gamaliel](#) - lengthy note
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Gamaliel](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Gamaliel](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Gamaliel](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Gamaliel](#)



- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Gamaliel](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Gamaliel](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Gamaliel](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Gamaliel](#)

**Educated** (3811)([paideuo](#) from **país** = child - English [pedagogue](#), [pedagogy](#)) refers primarily to the training or discipline of children (whether in the schools of men - Acts 7:22+, Acts 22:3 or in the school of God, Titus 2:12, et al), at one end of the spectrum training by teaching, instructing, educating or nurturing and at the other end of the spectrum utilizing correction and punishment if necessary (which it usually was for children) as a part of the training or child rearing process bringing them to maturity. Paul used the Greek [perfect tense](#) indicating he had been trained by Gamaliel in the past but that this training had endured. The implication is that he did not jettison everything he learned from Gamaliel the moment he became a Christian.

The [Mishnah](#) helps us understand why **Gamaliel** was so esteemed "Since Rabban **Gamaliel** the elder died there has been no more reverence for the law; and purity and abstinence died out at the same time." (Sotah 9:15)

**Strictly according to the law of our fathers** - "according to the strictness of the ancestral law." What Paul is saying to these Jews is that his training in Judaism was strict. In short, he had been trained to be a strict legalist, to follow without wavering the letter of the Law. Again he would have appealed to the zealous Jews in the crowd.

**Strictly** (195)([akribeia](#) from **akribes** = accurate) describes strict conformity to an authoritative standard as in the case of mathematical accuracy. This is the only NT use and describes strict conformity to the "ancestral law." **Louw-Nida** - "strict conformity to a norm or standard, involving both detail and completeness." In Josephus writings, the Pharisees are regularly described as the party of **akribeia**. The same association is seen in Acts 22:3 and Acts 26:5, as well as in the works of Nicholas of Damascus. These writers were repeating a Pharisaic claim that their party was the party of **akribeia**. **Akribeia** refers to the scrupulous exactness, accuracy in detail, and specificity of Pharisaic teaching.

**Liddell-Scott** - exactness, minute accuracy, precision, Thuc., etc.; with Preps. in adv. sense, with minuteness or precision, Plat.; so, eits perfect condition, Thuc. 2. parsimony, frugality,

Josephus uses the word **akribeia** (and other words derived from the same root) to refer to the excellence and/or accuracy of different things. Thus, the writings of others on the Jewish Wars are not accurate, while his own account will be (J.W. 1.1 § 2; 1.4 § 9). Kingly duties (Ant. 8.2.1 § 21), masonry (J.W. 6.9.1 § 410), or farming (Ant. 4.8.21 § 232) can all be performed excellently or accurately. Laws can be observed scrupulously (J.W. 7.5.1 § 99; Ant. 1. Proem. 3 § 14; 18.9.5 § 345). One Jewish group—the Pharisees—is regularly described as the party of **akribeia**. From his earliest to his latest writings, Josephus uses this word (and others derived from the same root) to describe the Pharisees (J.W. 1.5.1 § 108–9; 2.8.14 § 162; Life 38 § 191). Admittedly, he uses **akribeia** and related words for other groups, too, but he uses the word so often of the Pharisees that one may guess he intended to refer to them in Ant. 20.9.1 § 200–201, when he wrote περ το ς νόμους κριβε ς. Moreover, there are a number of passages in which Josephus characterizes individuals with **akribeia** and related words, and some of these individuals may have been Pharisees. Finally, Josephus applies the term to himself in Life 2 § 9. In this case, as suggested by Cohen, Josephus is clearly trying to don the mantle of the Pharisees, in accordance with the general tendency of the Life. The association of **akribeia** and Pharisees is not unique to Josephus. In Acts 26:5 Pharisaic doctrine is characterized as κριβεσπάτην ἀρεσιν. In Acts 22:3, while Pharisees are not explicitly mentioned, Paul describes himself as having been educated kata akribeian, at the feet of Gamaliel. Aquila, a disciple of the heirs of the Pharisees, regularly employed **akribeia** to render the Hebrew root ḥqq. The association between **akribeia** and law was also clear to Aquila. (Journal of Biblical Literature 102:3, Sept 1983).

**Being zealous for God just as you all are today** - He claims to be as zealous for the Law as any in the mob and will go on to prove it in following passages. He claimed to be one who is loyal to God. He was not necessarily saying he was a member of the party referred to as the "[Zealots](#)" but that his life was marked by a similar fervent partisanship for the cause of God. He is saying he was "fiercely partisan" and "uncompromisingly enthusiastic."

**Zealous** (2207)([zelotes](#) from **zeo** = to boil, be hot or glow) describes one zealous (fervent and enthusiastically devoted) for or eagerly desirous of something. A **zelotes** is one who is earnestly committed to a side or cause and thus could be described as an enthusiast, an adherent, or a loyalist. **Zealous** (English) - marked by active interest and enthusiasm; filled with or inspired by intense enthusiasm or zeal; ardent; fervent; marked by fervent partisanship for a person, a cause, or an ideal; full of great energy, effort, and enthusiasm, especially in your political or religious ideas.

**Zelotes** - 6v - Acts 21:20; Acts 22:3; 1 Co. 14:12; Gal. 1:14; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 3:13

**Just as you all are today** - This is a very interesting statement, for in describing the zeal of the crowd he is essentially justifying their motives for beating him! To put it another way he is telling them they are beating him up for the cause of God. He is going to go on in verse 4 to explain that he had the same zealous attitude toward Christians.

**Acts 22:4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,**

KJV Acts 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

NLT Acts 22:4 And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison.

- **I persecuted** Acts 22:19,20; 7:58; 8:1-4; 9:1,2,13,14,21; 26:9-11; 1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6; 1 Ti 1:13-15
- **This way** - Acts 16:17; 18:26; 19:9,23; 24:14
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S ZEALOUS PERSECUTION OF THE WAY

**I persecuted this Way to the death** - In short Paul murdered disciples of Christ! Does God save murderers? Of course he does for we are all guilty of anger toward another and Jesus clearly taught unrighteous anger was tantamount to murder (Mt 5:21-22+). Notice that again he justifies their actions against him, for they were simply seeking to do the very thing to him that he had done to Christians ("The Way").

In Galatians Paul gives us a parallel description of his previous persecution of Christians...

For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to **persecute** ([dioko](#) - [imperfect tense](#) = again and again) the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely ([perissos](#)) **zealous** ([zelotes](#)) for my ancestral traditions. (Galatians 1:13-14+)

**Persecuted** ([1377](#)) ([dioko](#) from [dío](#) = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. Paul considered Christians as tantamount to criminals! **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain, a good description of the passion of Paul before conversion! **Dioko** gives us the picture of going on the track of something like the hounds on the hunt and pursuing after the fox and implying a continuing effort to overtake, reach, or attain the goal.

**The Way** is another name for the **disciples of Jesus**, Christians who at this stage of the church development, had converted to Christianity out of Judaism. **The Way** is mentioned 5 times in Acts - Acts 9:2+, Acts 19:9,23+, Acts 24:14+ Acts 24:22+ (cf Acts 16:17+) **Marty** notes that "The designation of believers as belonging to **the Way** referred to a distinctive moral and spiritual way of life. Significantly, this is in contrast to Jewish **"halacha,"** a Hebrew term meaning **"the way of walking,"** used of rabbinic explanations and applications of Mosaic law. Instead of following **"halacha,"** these believers follow **the way** of the Messiah." (Moody Bible Commentary)

The opponents of **the Way** often referred to them as members of **"the sect of the Nazarenes"** (Acts 24:5+, cf Acts 24:14+ **"the Way which they call a sect"**; Acts 28:22 = **"concerning this sect"**). Notice how they would generally avoid using the Name Jesus or Christ. Instead in this case they use Nazarene in a derogatory sense, for this name was repeatedly linked with Jesus in the NT - (Mt. 2:23; 26:71; Lk 18:37; Jn 18:5, 7; 19:19; Acts 2:22; 3:6; Acts 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 26:9)

**Longenecker** comments that "The origin of the absolute use of **"the Way"** for Christians is uncertain, though it surely had something to do with the early believers' consciousness of walking in the true path of God's salvation and moving forward to accomplish his purposes." (Expositors Bible Commentary)

**Matthew Henry** - Perhaps the Christians sometimes called themselves (THE WAY), from Christ *the Way* or, because they looked on themselves as but **on the way, and not yet at home**.

**THOUGHT** - Notice that the Greek is very specific here - Luke says not "a Way" but **"the Way."** Christianity is

not one of many ways to God but is "**the way**," **the only way**! Proverbs describes the approach of most people in the world declaring "There is **a way** which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." (Pr 14:12). Jesus made it clear that He alone was the way (cf Acts 4:12+) when He declared "I am **the way**, and the truth, and the life; (absolutely) no one comes to the Father but through Me." (Jn 14:6). Even the demon possessed girl knew that Paul and Silas were proclaiming "**the way of salvation**." (Acts 16:17+). In Acts 18:25+ Apollos "had been instructed in the **way of the Lord**." In Paul's third mention of his conversion on the Damascus road, he declares "I saw on **the way** a light from heaven." (Acts 26:13+) In other words on **the way** to persecute Christians he encountered **the Way** of salvation, the Savior Himself! Stated another way, as Saul journeyed on his way to **arrest** members of the Way, he himself was **arrested** by the One Who alone is the Way! What divine irony! Compare parallel uses of the way - "**the way** into the holy place" (Heb 9:8), "**the way of truth**" (2 Pe 2:2), "**the way of righteousness**" (2 Pe 2:21) [John MacArthur](#) adds "Christianity became known as the Way. You know why? They were accused of the same thing we're accused of: being narrow-minded. There's no more narrow-minded thing in the world than Christianity. We're right, and everybody else is wrong. That's right, it's true."

Jesus warned there were only two ways or roads on which every person born must travel, one broad, the other narrow, the former leading to eternal destruction and only the latter leading to eternal life...

**Enter** ([aorist imperative](#)) through the narrow gate; (WHY?) for the gate is wide and **THE WAY** is broad that leads to destruction ([apoleia](#) - not annihilation but loss of **everything** that gives worth to existence as an individual!), and there are **many** (TRAGICALLY NOT FEW!) who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and **THE WAY** is narrow that leads to life (eternal life with God), and there are **few** who find it. (Mt 7:13-14<sup>+</sup>)

**Comment:** Jesus' words are paralleled by the psalmist's description of the two ways in Psalm 1 - "For the LORD knows **THE WAY** of the righteous, But **THE WAY** of the wicked will perish." (Ps 1:6<sup>+</sup>)

**A T Robertson** adds that "the way" "is a Jewish definition of life as in Isaiah 40:3 "the way of the Lord"....The North American Indians call Christianity the Jesus Road."

**NET Note** - The expression "**the way**" in ancient religious literature refers at times to "the whole way of life from a moral and spiritual viewpoint" (BDAG 692 s.v. hodos 3.c), and it has been so used of Christianity and its teachings in the book of Acts (see also Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). It is a variation of Judaism's idea of **two ways**, the true and the false, where "the Way" is the true one ([1 Enoch 91:18](#) = "And now I tell you, my children, and I show you the paths of righteousness and the paths of violence"; [2 En. 30:13](#) = "showed him the **two ways**, the light and the darkness").

#### Related Resource:

- [What is "the Way" in the Bible?](#)

**Death** ([2288](#)) ([thanatos](#)) is a permanent cessation of all vital functions and thus is the end of life on earth (as we know it). The separation of the soul from the body and the end of earthly life. Spiritual death is separation from the life of God forever by dying without being born again. The first use in the Septuagint is in a well known promise from God "you shall surely die (Lxx = thanatos apothnesko)." (Ge 2:17) followed by the second use in the deceptive lie by Satan "You surely shall not die (thanatos apothnesko)!" (Ge 3:4+) Death is natural to humanity as part of the created world. Death is a result of Adam's sin (Ro 5:12<sup>+</sup>). Death is universal - no one can escape it.

**Binding and putting both men and women into prisons** - In Acts 8:3<sup>+</sup> Luke records that "Saul began ravaging ([lumainomai](#) in the [imperfect tense](#) giving a perfect picture of Saul devastating one house, then another, wreaking havoc again and again) the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison."

**Binding** ([1195](#)) ([desmeuo](#) from **desmos** = bond, chain; **deo** = to bind) to tie or bind as with cords, to shackle, to enchain, put in fetters. There are only 3 uses - Mt 23:4, Lk 8:29, Acts 22:4. Jesus used it to describe men (the Pharisees) who "**tie up** heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger." (Mt 23:4) In Luke 8:29+ **desmeuo** describes the demon possessed man who was "**bound** with chains and shackles" (which he would break = superhuman strength!). In classical times **desmeuō** spoke of a ship loaded down with heavy contents.

**Desmeuo** is used figuratively of God's Spirit applying His supernatural balm to our souls and spirits in Psalm 147:3 "He heals the brokenhearted and **binds** (desmeuo in present tense) up their wounds."

**Spurgeon** on Ps 147:3 - This the Holy Spirit mentions as a part of the glory of God, and a reason for our declaring His praise: the Lord is not only a Builder, but a Healer; He restores broken hearts as well as broken

walls. The kings of the earth think to be great through their loftiness; but Jehovah becomes really so by His condescension. Behold, the Most High has to do with the sick and the sorry, with the wretched and the wounded! He walks the hospitals as the good Physician! His deep sympathy with mourners is a special mark of his goodness. Few will associate with the despondent, but Jehovah chooses their company, and abides with them till He has healed them by His comforts. He deigns to handle and heal broken hearts: **He Himself lays on the ointment of grace, and the soft bandages of love, and thus binds up the bleeding wounds of those convinced of sin.** This is compassion like a God. Well may those praise Him to whom He has acted so gracious a part. The Lord is always healing and binding: this is no new work to Him, He has done it of old; and it is not a thing of the past of which He is now weary, for He is still healing and still binding, as the original hath it.

**Come, broken hearts, come to the Physician who never fails to heal:  
Uncover your wounds to Him Who so tenderly binds them up!**

**NIDNTT** - The root **desm**-conveys the basic meaning of bind. **desmeuō** means to bind together, chain up (Eur. onwards). **desmē** is a bundle tied together (Dem. onwards). **desmios** means one who is in chains or in prison (tragedians onwards). **desmos** at first meant chain (Homer onwards), and later imprisonment, custody. **desmōtērion** is a prison (Hdt. onwards), **desmōtēs** a prisoner (Aesch. onwards) and **desmophylax** a prison warder (Lucian). OT **desmos** is the most frequently used of these words in the LXX; it usually translates forms of 'āsar, to bind, and the cognate mōsēr, bonds.

**Desmeuo** in the **Septuagint** -

Ge 37:7 ("we were **binding** sheaves in the field") ; Gen. 49:11 ("**ties** his foal"); Jdg. 16:11 (of Samson - "'If they **bind** me tightly with new ropes"); 1 Sa 24:11; Job 26:8 ("He **wraps** up the waters in His cloud"); Ps. 147:3 ("binds up their wounds. "); Amos 2:8;

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### Paul Apple's applications of persecution

- Persecution is inevitable for the godly; don't be surprised by it; Prepare!
- Persecution accomplishes God's overall goals for the health and growth of His church - We can fortify ourselves by studying the grace that God provided to His servants who gave the ultimate sacrifice down through church history
- We should have solidarity and prayer support for our brothers and sisters who are under direct attack
- We should be confident in our ultimate victory as we focus on the vision of heavenly glory and the Advocacy on our behalf by the Righteous One

**Acts 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.**

KJV Acts 22:5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate 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.

- **the high priest** Acts 9:1,2,14; Acts 26:10,12
- **and all the Council of the elders can testify** Acts 4:5; 5:21; Luke 22:66
- **I also received letters to the brethren** Acts 22:1; Ro 9:3,4
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JEWISH LEADERS CAN ATTEST TO PAUL'S ZEAL

**As also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify** ([martureo](#) - give a witness) - The **Council of the elders** is one word [presbuterion](#) which is another name for the [Sanhedrin](#), the Jewish high court in Jerusalem. One has to wonder if some of these elders were still alive, for the events of Acts 8 had occurred only about 20-23 years earlier (about 35 AD)?

**From them I also received letters to the brethren** - This explains how the Jewish religious leaders had first-hand knowledge of

Saul's/Paul's zeal. It is fascinating that Saul's action illustrates the saying "[the enemy of my enemy is my friend](#)," because here we see Saul, a Pharisee, asking for letters from a Sadducee (probably Caiaphas)! Stated another way, their common hatred of Jesus made them "[strange bedfellows](#)!"

Acts 9:1-2, 14+ Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.  
(9:14) and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

In Acts 26:12+ Paul adds

"While so engaged (I kept pursuing [dioko](#)) them even to foreign cities - Acts 26:11) as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority ([exousia](#) = the right and the might) and commission of the chief priests,

**I...received** (1209) ([dechomai](#) = [middle voice](#) of a primary verb) means to to receive something offered or transmitted by another (Luke 2:28). To take something into one's hand and so to grasp (Luke 2:28, 22:17). To be receptive to someone (Mt 10:14, 40). In this context Paul (then Saul) favorably received these letters, even welcoming these letters authorizing him to capture and imprison any believers he could catch!

**A T Robertson** on the need for **letters** - Julius Ceasar and Augustus had granted the high priest and Sanhedrin jurisdiction over Jews in foreign cities, but this central ecclesiastical authority was not always recognized in every local community outside of Judea. Paul says that he received his authority to go to Damascus from the (chief) priests (Acts 26:10) and "**all the Council of the elders** ([presbuterion](#) - another name for the [Sanhedrin](#), the Jewish high court in Jerusalem)" (Acts 22:5).

**Steven Ger** adds this note on **letters** -- "A treaty had been established between Rome and Judea in the intertestamental period which effectively extended the high priest's authority in Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire (1 Macc. 15:20-24), including the right of extradition....The letters from the high priest gave Saul jurisdiction over the Jews of Damascus and authority to arrest the Christian "heretics," both men and women alike, and transfer them back to Jerusalem for interrogation and trial. (Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series – The Book of Acts: Witnesses to the World)

**And started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished-** He was not hit and miss in his persecution—Paul was the hitman from hell, so to speak (surely the devil was overjoyed at his punishing disciples of Jesus!).

**Punished** (5097) (**timoreo** from **timoros** = watching one's honor - **Vine** has different derivation) according to W E Vine is "primarily, to help, then, to avenge (from timē, value, honour, and ouros, a guardian)." To the early Greeks this word could mean "to help," to redress an injury, or to avenge or punish a wrong. **Robertson** adds "originally to render help, to succor, then to avenge (for honour)." The idea is that those punished would be suffering what they deserve. To take vengeance upon or to avenge and implies that a person is receiving the just consequences for misdeeds. It means to punish (inflict a penalty) in the present context of procuring a legal sanction against those who violate the law. In Classical Greek, this word group (verb timoreo and noun timoria) conveyed the idea of punishment was deeply colored by vindictiveness and was a punishment meant to satisfy a sense of outraged justice, the defense one's honor or that of a violated law.

**Liddell-Scott** has a lengthy entry - also used in medical sense: (timwro,j):-to help, aid, succour, tini, Hdt., Soph., etc.:—absol. to lend aid, give succour, Hdt. II. to assist one who has suffered wrong, to avenge him, c. dat., Id.:—so in Med., Soph., Eur.:—in full construction the person avenged is in dat., the person on whom vengeance is taken in acc., and the crime avenged in gen. to avenge him on the murderer for [the murder of] his son, Xen.:—also, c. acc. to avenge his slaughter, Plat.:—Pass. to be visited with vengeance, Id., etc.; impersonal -- vengeance has been taken for him, he has been avenged, Hdt. 2. to take vengeance on him, Soph.:—in Med. to exact vengeance from, visit with punishment, Hdt., Att.; Self-tormentor, name of a play by Menander:—c. gen. to take vengeance on one for a thing, Hdt., Att.:—so, also, will visit thy sister's blood on thee, Eur. 3. in Med. also absol. to avenge oneself, seek vengeance, Hdt., Xen., etc.; the probability of vengeance, Dem.; thou wilt have vengeance taken in respect to Leonidas, Hdt.

**Timoreo** - Acts 22:5, Acts 26:11 and in Septuagint in Jdg. 5:14; Prov. 22:3; Ezek. 5:17; Ezek. 14:15;

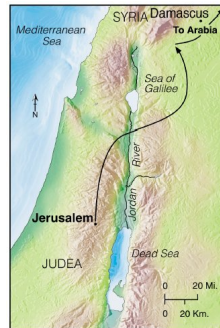
**Acts 22:6 "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,**

KJV Acts 22:6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about



noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

- **it happened that as I was on my way** Acts 9:3-5; Acts 26:12
- **Damascus** Ge 14:15; 15:2; 2 Sa 8:6
- **about noontime** Acts 26:13; Isa 24:23; Mt 17:2; Rev 1:16
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
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## REVELATION ON THE ROAD: THE SON SHONE FORTH

### Parallel Passages:

As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting, (Acts 9:3-5+)

"While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, **at midday**, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. (Acts 26:12-13+)

**But it happened** - God is sovereign, so in truth nothing that occurs in our life just "happens to happen!" God is in control (See [Providence of God](#)).

**That as I was on my way approaching Damascus** - Notice the wordplay - On his **way** after "**The Way!**" **Approaching** ([present tense](#)) ([eggizo](#)) means he was coming close to Damascus. How close? We cannot say, but given the fact that he was soon to be blinded one would reason that he was within less than a day's journey. Saul was near his journey's end in more ways than one!

**BACKGROUND** - Jerusalem to Damascus is about 150-175 miles and at 30 miles a day they must have been on the road for 5-6 days (since at this time Saul was near Damascus). Notice also that by this time (we don't know how long after the persecution of Acts 8:1), the [Gospel](#) had spread to Syria, probably having been carried there by the believers who fled the persecution of Jerusalem. And since Damascus was a major city and on the renowned [King's Highway](#), it would have been a strategic center from which those believing Jews who had fled Jerusalem could have spread the [Gospel](#). And somehow Saul got wind of these disciples of Jesus in Damascus and sought to eradicate what he considered to be a pernicious "[contagion](#)" which could conceivably corrupt the purity of Judaism. As an aside, assuming Saul went straight north, he would have gone through Samaria, where he would have encountered Samaritans radically transformed by the [Gospel](#) preached by the Hellenistic Jew Philip the evangelist and this would have undoubtedly stirred his rage against Christians even more!

**Damascus** lays claim to being the oldest continually inhabited city in the world ([see history](#)), Biblical records going back to the time of Abram (Ge 14:15, 15:2) For more on Damascus click note.

**About noontime** ("at midday" Acts 26:13+), **a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me** - Why this detail about **noontime**? Clearly this is when the sun is brightest and yet the Son shined (**a very bright light**) even **brighter than the sun** (in Acts 26:13+) He had created! Woe! I fear we do not understand the awesome majestic radiance of our King Who will one day (soon) "return with power and great glory!" (Mt 24:30+) O, why do we continue to sin against such a Glorious One!

**John Calvin** thought that Christ appeared to Paul in a flash of lightning or a thunderbolt, but that seems very unlikely. Lightning is but for a second, and in this case there had to be enough time for words to come from the flash of light.

**Suddenly** (1810)(**exaiphnes** from **ek** = of + **aíphnes** = suddenly) means happening unexpectedly, quickly without warning, at once. Referring to the unexpected nature of Christ's Second Coming (Mk 13:36). In Lk 2:13+ of sudden appearance to the shepherds in the field of an angel and "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." Luke describes the sudden appearance of that "a light (the radiant Redeemer!) from heaven flashed around" Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3+).

**Flashed** (4015)(**periastrapto** from **peri** = about, around + **astrapto** - to shine like lightning) means to shine very brightly around an object, in this case the object being the man Saul (only used here and in the conversion story in Acts 9:3+). Luke uses a different verb in the third version of Paul's testimony -- "shining all around" in Acts 26:13+ is the verb **perilampo** (**peri** = around + **lampo** = to shine) means literally to shine all around and is used in Lk 2:9+ when an angel of the Lord stood before the shepherds "and the glory of the Lord **shone around them**."

**Matthew Henry** on **very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me** - It shone round about him, not in his face only, but on every side of him let him turn which way he will, he finds himself surrounded with the discoveries of it. And this was designed not only to startle him, and awaken his attention (for well may he expect to hear when he is thus made to see something very extraordinary), but to signify the enlightening of his understanding with the knowledge of Christ. The devil comes to the soul in darkness by this he gets and keeps possession of it. But Christ comes to the soul in light, for He is Himself the light of the world (Jn 8:12), bright and glorious to us, as light. The first thing in this new creation, as in that of the world, is light, 2 Corinthians 4:6+ ("*For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*"). Hence all Christians are said to be children of the light and of the day, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Th 5:8+.

Compare Stephen's experience as he was being stoned in Acts 7:55+ "being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and **saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God**"

Saul was spiritual blind until the Spirit opened the eyes of his heart to see Jesus. Later he would write...

And even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4+)

**Saul** met the **Savior** and went from physical light to physical darkness and from spiritual darkness to spiritual light! He went from being the hit-man from hell to being the holy man from heaven. God had opened the eyes of his heart and shut the eyes in his head! Are the temporary trinkets of this passing world blinding the eyes of your heart to see Jesus high and lifted up? Jesus said "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Mt 6:24+) Confess that you have not daily been fixing the eyes of your heart on Jesus and then pray this chorus...

#### **Open the eyes of my heart Lord**

Open the eyes of my heart

I want to see You, I want to see You.

To see You high and lifted up

Shining in the light of Your glory.

Pour out Your power and love

As we sing holy, holy, holy.

What was this light? In the Old Testament we see light, the **Shekinah glory**, that guided Israel through their wilderness journey, Moses recording that "The LORD was going before them in a **pillar of cloud** by day to lead them on the way, and in a **pillar of fire** by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night." (Ex 13:21, cf Ex 40:38, Nu 9:15-23) While we cannot be absolutely certain, it is reasonable to suggest that the **light from heaven** that was about to guide Saul was similar to the **Shekinah glory cloud** that led Israel in the OT. Here the **Shekinah glory** will guide Saul lost in the "wilderness" of dead Judaism and into the way of salvation.

Ultimately this **light from heaven** was an **emanation** from the resurrected and glorified Christ. At the **Transfiguration**, the face of Jesus "**shone like the sun**." (Mt 17:2) In the Revelation, the apostle John describes the glorified Christ declaring that **His face was like the sun shining in its strength**." (Rev 1:16+)

**Horton** has an interesting comment on the glory of this **light...from heaven** - When Jesus rose from the dead, His resurrection body

was transformed—it was immortal and incorruptible, as ours will be (1 Cor. 15:52-53). But the glory was not restored until after He ascended. Probably the disciples could not have stood the glory during the forty days Jesus remained on earth with them. But now He came to Saul as the risen and glorified Christ. (Acts: A Logion Press Commentary)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the Shekinah glory?](#)
- [What is a glory cloud? Is a glory cloud biblical?](#)
- [Glory of God](#)

**Acts 22:7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?***

KJV Acts 22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

- **Saul** Ge 3:9; 16:8; 22:1,11; Ex 3:4; 1 Sa 3:10
- **why** Isa 43:22-26; Jer 2:5,9; Mt 25:45; 27:23; 1 Ti 1:13
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SAUL PERSECUTING THE SAVIOR

#### Parallel Passages:

And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4)

And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’” (Acts 26:14)

**And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me* - Saul, Saul** - While Luke uses the Greek name ([Saulos](#)), here Jesus repeats his name in the **Hebrew** dialect which is [Saoul](#) ([07586](#)). Repetition speaks of intensity. The idea is "Listen up!" It is an "attention getter!" Repetition of one's name was often associated with a warning or other important instruction (**Abraham, Abraham** - Ge 22:11, **Jacob, Jacob** - Ge 46:2, **Moses, Moses** - Ex 3:4, **Martha, Martha** - Lk 10:41+; **Jerusalem, Jerusalem** - Lk 13:34+, **Simon, Simon** - Lk 22:31+). This repetition of Saul's name also recalls God's attempt to get the attention of young Samuel (who had not yet learned to recognize the voice of the Lord) when "the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, **“Samuel! Samuel!”** And Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.” (1 Sa 3:10) Does the Lord have to repeat your (my) name in order to gain our attention?

**Saul** ([4549](#)) ([Saoul](#)) is transliterated from the Hebrew **Sha’ul** ([07586](#)). This Hebrew name corresponds to the Greek rendering of the same name which is [Saulos](#) ([4569](#)) (See [above](#)). It means asked, desired. This Hebrew form of **Saul** is used by Jesus in all three versions of Paul's encounter - Acts 22:7; Acts 26:14. It is used once for King Saul of the Old Testament (Acts 13:21). The use of this Hebrew version indicates that Jesus was speaking in Hebrew to Saul (cf Acts 26:14). **Saoul** is used 6x all in Acts - Acts 9:4; Acts 9:17; Acts 13:21; Acts 22:7; Acts 22:13; Acts 26:14

Messianic Jewish commentator **Steven Ger** helps us understand what Luke used this Hebrew version of the name Saul rather than the Greek version - That the voice spoke Hebrew (or less likely, Aramaic) is made apparent through the change of Saul's name in form from the usual Greek **Saulos**, (used Acts 9:1) to the transliteration of the Hebrew, **Saoul** (there is no way to transliterate the "sh" sound of the actual pronunciation of *Shaoul* in Greek). This particular detail of the Hebrew pronunciation of Saul's name is repeated in the two later accounts of this encounter (Acts 22:7; 26:14). (Restraint will be exercised concerning any claim that this passage furnishes proof that God's lingua franca is Hebrew!) If the light had not already gotten Saul's attention, the Lord ensures it by calling Saul's name twice, following a previous pattern of heavenly address found throughout Scripture (Gen. 22:11; Ge 46:2; Ex. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:10). (Twenty-First Century Commentary-Acts)

Note that only Acts 26:14 records that Jesus spoke with the **Hebrew dialect**, and declared "**It is hard for you to kick against the**

goads.'

**Matthew Henry** on **kick against the goads** - "To spurn at the spur." It is hard, it is in itself an absurd and evil thing, and will be of fatal consequence to him that does it. Those kick at the goad that stifle and smother the convictions of conscience, that rebel against God's truths and laws, that quarrel with his providences, and that persecute and oppose his ministers, because they reprove them, and their words are as goads and as nails. Those that revolt more and more when they are stricken by the word or rod of God, that are enraged at reproofs and fly in the face of their reprovers, kick against the pricks and will have a great deal to answer for.

## PERSECUTING THE CHURCH IS PERSECUTING JESUS!

**Why are you persecuting Me?** - Jesus directs his accusation directly at Saul, not at the high priests, etc. As noted in the title, to persecute the Church, the Body of Christ, is tantamount to persecuting Christ, the Head of the Body. Believers are in covenant (new covenant) with Jesus, and as such are one with Him and identified with Him. Furthermore, because of this covenant, Jesus is our "Covenant Defender." And because of the New Covenant in His blood, Jesus is obligated to defend those in covenant with Him.

**ONENESS OF COVENANT** - Two become one when they enter into covenant (cf marriage covenant - Ge 2:24). If you "touch" (eg, to harm or injure) the covenant partner (AS SAUL WAS RAVAGING AND "TOUCHING" COVENANT PARTNERS OF CHRIST), you are "touching" the other partner (JESUS) also because of the bond of covenant producing a somewhat mysterious, but very real identification! Based upon the solemn and binding nature of the New Covenant, Jesus is "obligated" to come to the defense of His covenant partners. Can you begin to understand some of the practical implications of being in the new covenant with Christ? Do you believe that He is your Protector? If you are born again, you can rest assured that Jesus is your Covenant Defender today and forever. Hallelujah! All believers are in Covenant with the living God, Who is our Protector. We are not to take our vengeance beloved but leave that to our Covenant Partner who is our Avenger. Of course, this truth does not guarantee we will never be harmed or never experience times of persecution. In fact, persecution is one of God's "**promises**"! (2Ti 3:12-note, cp Mt 10:22, 23, 24, 25, Jn 15:19, 20, 21, 17:14, Acts 14:22, Php 1:29-note). But the **oneness** of covenant guarantees that God will avenge wrongs done to us either in this life or in the life to come! You can stake your life on this truth!

We see this same principle at [the judgment of the nations](#), the sheep and goats...

"Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' (Mt 25:45, cf Mt 25:40, 10:40)

**Swindoll** - Collectively, we the church are the visible representation of Jesus Christ in the world! To persecute the church is to assault the Son of God.

**Toussaint** on **persecuting Me** - The reference to "**Me**" gave Saul his first glimpse into the great doctrine of Christians being **in Christ**.

**Marty** has an interesting thought on **persecuting Me** writing that "Though the idea was probably not in Paul's mind at the time, it is possible this revelation was the origin of Paul's favorite theological metaphor for the church, "the body of Christ" (cf. Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18)." (Moody Bible Commentary)

**Matthew Henry** - *First*, Before Saul was made a saint, he was made to see himself a sinner, a great sinner, a sinner against Christ. Now he was made to see that evil in himself which he never saw before sin revived and he died. Note, **A humbling conviction of sin is the first step towards a saving conversion from sin.** (ED: SO MUCH FOR "**EASY BELIEVISM**!") *Secondly*, He is convinced of one particular sin, which he was most notoriously guilty of, and had justified himself in, and thereby way is made for his conviction of all the rest. *Thirdly*, The sin he is convinced of is persecution: *Why persecutest thou me?* It is a very affectionate [expostulation](#), enough to melt a heart of stone.

**THOUGHT** - **J Vernon McGee** has a **pithy personal application** commenting that Christ "may be saying the same thing to some Christians today. Although they profess to know and to love the Lord, He asks, "**Why are you persecuting Me?**" They would protest, I'm not persecuting You, Lord; I love You!" Then the Lord would answer, "Then why do you criticize Mr. So-and-So so severely? Why are you so opposed to those who are giving out the Word of God today? Why is it that you have become a hindrance instead of a helper?" May I say to you, we must be careful about saying we love Him and then showing our hatred to other believers. It is impossible to talk about loving the Lord while you spend your time trying to destroy the ministry of someone

else. That is just blatant, bald, bold hypocrisy." ([Acts Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** makes the interesting observation that "There is an Old Testament parallel to this truth (ONENESS OF JESUS WITH BELIEVERS). Zechariah told the nation of Israel, "He who touches you, touches the apple of [God's] eye (Zech 2:8). **The apple of His eye**" refers to the pupil. God was saying those who persecute Israel are poking their finger in His eye. That is precisely the same kind of relationship Christ has with the church. He is seriously irritated when anyone offends His chosen ones (cf Mt 18:6, 10). (Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World).

#### Related Resources:

- [Voice of the Martyrs](#) - the church is still being persecuted
- [Study of Jesus Our Covenant Defender](#)
- [Covenant Oneness-Two Become One Flesh](#)
- [Covenant: Oneness Notes](#)

How [ironic](#) is this entire experience when compared with the experience of Stephen when he was being stoned. Jesus appears here in Acts 9 to one who witnessed the stoning and heard Stephen describe his vision of Jesus, but who himself could not see the vision. Now this same man is struck down by the glory of the Lord (rather than by stones) and he sees a vision of the glory of Jesus. How [inscrutable](#) is Your understanding (Isa 40:28, cf Isa 55:8) and how "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty." (Rev 15:3+) Amen.

Scientists at Oak Ridge National Laboratories in Tennessee believe spinach may help cure some forms of blindness. When they extract certain proteins from this deep green vegetable and add them to retinal nerve cells, tests indicate the cells react to light in ways that could give formerly blind people black-and-white vision. As part of photosynthesis, these spinach proteins send an electrical impulse in response to light, which is what is needed for sight as well. To heal Paul from his temporary blindness, God didn't use spinach; instead, He sent His servant Ananias not only with healing but also with a prophetic message.

### COMPARISON OF THREE VERSIONS OF PAUL'S CONVERSION

Acts 9+ Luke's Version of Saul's Conversion	Acts 22+ Paul's Defense before Jews at Temple	Acts 26+ Paul Trial before King Agrippa II in Caesarea
As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:3-4)	"But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'" (Acts 22:6-7+)	While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'" (Acts 26:12-14+)
And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:5)	"And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 22:8)	"And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 26:15)

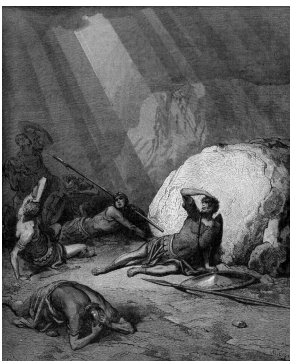


<p>"But get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." (Acts 9:6)</p>	<p>"And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'" (Acts 22:10)</p>	<p>"But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:16-18)</p>
<p>The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. (Acts 9:7)</p>	<p>"And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me." (Acts 22:9)</p>	
<p>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. (Acts 9:8)</p>	<p>"But 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." (Acts 22:11)</p>	

**Acts 22:8 "And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, *I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.*"**

KJV Acts 22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest.

- **I am Jesus the Nazarene** Acts 3:6; Acts 4:10; Acts 6:14; Mt 2:23
- **whom you are persecuting** Acts 26:14,15; Ex 16:7,8; 1 Sa 8:7; Zech 2:8; Mt 10:40-42; 25:40,45; 1 Cor 12:12,26,27
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Dore Woodcut

**JESUS' REVEALED HIMSELF**

## AND REPEATS THE REBUKE

### Parallel Passages:

And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:5+)

And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 26:15+)

**Comment:** Only here in Paul's 3 testimonies in Acts is Jesus called "Jesus the Nazarene."

**And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?'** - Imagine Paul's state of confusion. Knocked on the ground and a voice coming from Heaven! Don't miss the fact that Jesus' speaking to Saul is confirmation of the fact that He had been resurrected from the dead. Jesus was speaking, so clearly He was alive! And do you see what Paul is doing with his Jewish audience, most of whom knew about the crucifixion and perhaps a number had even been present on that fateful day? He is making sure that his Jewish audience knows that this Man that died on a Cross in Jerusalem is alive! In short he has just preached what **MacArthur** calls the "*shortest sermon in the NT on the resurrection!*" One can only imagine what was going through the thoughts of the Jews as they heard these words.

**THOUGHT** - "Who are You, Lord?" would be a good question for every person ever born to sincerely ask of Jesus? It resulted in the salvation of Saul who was miraculously transformed from Saul the greatest persecutor of Christ to Paul the greatest proclaimer of Christ. Have you ever really asked "**Who are you Lord?**"

**And He said to me, 'I am (ego eimi) Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting'** - For just a moment put yourself in Saul's sandals and imagine you thoughts as you hear that the One you have been persecuting is the risen God! Yes, Saul had been struck by a bright light, but this revelation coming from Jesus in that light would have been like a "lightning bolt" or like a "dagger" cutting into Saul's heart! In a moment, you discover that all you have devoted your life to accomplish has been a total waste! Beloved, there are many successful, wealthy people who will one day have a similar experience, but sadly it will be too late for most because their discovery will come after they take their last breath! However, this principle applies to believers also -- Stop and ask yourself - What am I working for? For time or for eternity? For the earthly or the heavenly? For the material or the spiritual? For the profane or the profound? For what passes *away* or what lasts *always*? Perhaps you need a "*Damascus Road Revival*," so that you might realign your life priorities while you still have time! Don't be a "Saul," instead be "Paul!"

Notice that Christ uses His earthly name **Jesus** which the angelic messenger had given to Joseph, Matthew recording "She (MARY) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins (NOTICE HOW THIS LAST CLAUSE EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF HIS NAME!)." (Mt 1:21+) **Jesus** was the Name that spoke of Christ's willing humiliation in emptying Himself to become a Man (Php 2:5-10+). "*He would show that now that He is in His glory He is not ashamed of His humiliation.*" (Matthew Henry)

In this version of the testimony Paul adds that Jesus describes Himself as **the Nazarene**, a Name of scorn and derision and one with which Saul was undoubtedly familiar and likely himself had used to blaspheme God!

**THOUGHT** - "*There is nothing more effectual to awaken and humble the soul than to see sin to be against Christ, an affront to Him, and a contradiction to His designs.*" (Henry) Do you really comprehend that your sins are against God the Father, His Son and His Spirit (cp Eph 4:30+)? (cf Joseph's sensitive conscience in Ge 39:9)

**John MacArthur** comments on the added phrase **Jesus the Nazarene** and how that would have struck Saul - "Jesus of Nazareth was a charlatan. He was a fraud. He was a conman. He was a huckster. He was a phony Messiah. They executed him for blasphemy. What's He doing talking out of heaven?" (Sermon)

**Jesus the Nazarene** - See notes on this designation of Jesus used a positive sense in - Acts 2:22+, Acts 3:6+, Acts 4:10+, Acts 10:38+.

Acts 6:14+ (used derogatorily! - see note below) "for we have heard him (STEPHEN) say that this **Nazarene**, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."

Acts 26:9+ (used derogatorily!) "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of **Jesus of Nazareth**."

In Acts 24:5+ (used derogatorily!) the reference is to Christians who are designated Nazarenes "For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the **Nazarenes**."

**Paul** may well have been present when **Stephen** was accused in Acts 6...

"They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law (DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR? READ ACCUSATIONS AGAINST PAUL IN Acts 21:28+) for we have heard him say that this **Nazarene**, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us." (Acts 6:13-14+)

**Longenecker** - Saul could not escape the fact that the Jesus whose followers he had been persecuting was alive, exalted, and in some manner to be associated with God the Father, whom Israel worshiped. He, therefore, had to revise his whole estimate of the life, teaching, and death of the Nazarene because God had beyond any question vindicated him. Thus he came to agree with the Christians that Jesus' death on the cross, rather than discrediting him as an impostor, fulfilled prophecy and was really God's provision for man's sin and that Jesus' resurrection confirmed him as being the nation's Messiah and mankind's Lord. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Jesus** (2424)(**lesous**) is transliteration of the Greek **lesous**, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew **Jehoshua** (**Yehoshua**) or **Jeshua** (**Yeshua**) both of which mean *Jehovah is help* or *Jehovah is salvation*. Stated another way the Greek **lesous** corresponds to the OT **Jehoshua** (**Yehoshua**) which is contracted as **Jeshua** (**Yeshua**). In the Gospels the single Name **Jesus** (**lesous**) is used as His personal Name some 538 times.

Imagine Saul's thoughts upon hearing those words "**I am Jesus!**" While we have no record that Saul ever saw or met Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry, there is not doubt that he was well aware of the claim by His disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. Now the fact that He is speaking to Saul indicates that Jesus was indeed alive and by implication had risen from the dead. Saul's systematic theology was turned upside down in a moment! However, one aspect of his theology was affirmed and that was his belief (which all Pharisees held) that there would be a resurrection! Jesus was alive!

**Jesus** had alluded to the oneness between Jesus and His followers in Luke declaring

"The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." (Luke 10:16+)

Paul clearly understood this concept of oneness between Jesus and His followers as indicated by his numerous allusions to unity with Christ in his epistles. Read Ro. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-16; 5:23-30; Col. 1:18-24; 2:19).

**THOUGHT - You can mark it down** that those who speak against Christians speak against Christ. Those who strike Christians strike Christ. Those who malign Christians malign Christ. Those who take advantage of Christians take advantage of Christ. This begs the question, even if you are a believer, have you ever done any of those things to another believer? **Woe!**

**Nazarene** (3480)(**Nazoraiois** from **Nazara** = **Nazareth**) describes an inhabitant of **Nazareth** and as in this passage is used to describe Jesus. In the plural **nazoraiois** is used once to describe Christians (in a derogatory sense) (Acts 24:5+) This was in the inscription on the Cross (Jn 19:19).

**Persecuting** (1377)(**dioko**) in the present tense describes Saul's continual ravaging of the disciples of Jesus and so continually persecuting Jesus! **Dioko** pictures the hounds used in an English "fox hunt" for when they are let loose they are off furiously barking as they chase the poor fox!

**Dioko** in **Acts** - Acts 7:52; Acts 9:4; Acts 9:5; Acts 22:4; Acts 22:7; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:11; Acts 26:14; Acts 26:15

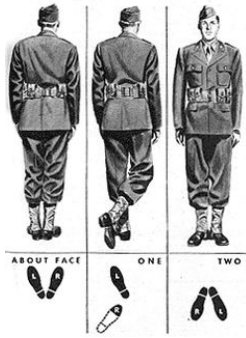
Paul later reiterated that before he was in Christ he was

"the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I **persecuted** (**dioko**) the church of God." (1 Cor 15:9+)

**Comment:** Watch Paul's "downward" progression = as Christ increases, he decreases (Jn 3:30+) - 1Co 15:9 [~55AD], Ep 3:8 [~61AD] and 1Ti 1:15 [~63-66AD]):

What a supernatural transformation the Gospel and the Spirit wrought who would later write to the saints in Rome...

"So then we **pursue** (**dioko** present tense) the things which make for peace and the building up of one another." (Ro 14:19+).



### About face!

The very one who sought to tear down the Body of Christ, now sought to build up the Body of Christ! What an illustration of genuine repentance! This reminds me of the military command "**About face!**" Paul just heard his Commander's order "About face Paul!" The command "**About Face**" describes the act of pivoting 180 degrees, especially in a military formation (see diagram above). Another English definition says "about face" is "a reversal of direction, of attitude, behavior, or point of view." This is a good picture of the repentance that Jesus commands. In the opening of the Gospel of Mark John calls for repentance in Mk 1:4<sup>+</sup> and Jesus continues the call to repentance in Mark 1:15<sup>+</sup>.

Repentance is to leave  
The sins we loved before,  
And show that we in earnest grieve,  
By doing so no more.

Again Paul used **dioko** in this positive sense in his letter to the Philippians testifying

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but **I press on** ([dioko](#) in [present tense](#) = his daily practice, enabled by the Spirit) so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus....<sup>14</sup> I press on ([dioko](#) in [present tense](#)) toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul's pursuit in Php 3:12, 14<sup>+</sup>!

The righteous God **pursued** the unrighteous **pursuer** and won him with the [Gospel](#). O, thank God for the transforming power of the glorious [Gospel](#)!

**A T Robertson** - Saul surrendered instantly as Thomas did (John 20:28) and as little Samuel (1 Sa 3:9). This surrender of the will to Christ was the conversion of Saul. He saw a real Person, the Risen Christ, to whom he surrendered his life. On this point he never wavered for a moment to the end.

Remember that to be [converted](#) means to be "turned around," so that Saul (and all believers) are "*turned around by Christ*" and face the opposite direction (a very similar picture is seen with repentance). Saul the Gospel persecutor because Paul the Gospel preacher. And just as the world was amazed at Saul's conversion, the lost world is always amazed (and often very disturbed) when someone they knew in the darkness, turns to the light (Jn 8:12, 2 Cor 4:6, Col 1:13, Acts 26:18) and begins to walk in the light (1 Jn 1:7). Has your conversion ruffled a few feathers in those who knew you when you were still in Adam before the Spirit placed you forever in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)?

**Jack Andrews** - Saul's encounter with Christ changed him forever. ([Sermon](#))

- He went from persecuting Christ to praising Christ.
- He went from plotting against Christians to preaching Christ.
- On the Damascus road he went from death to life;
- from bondage to liberty;
- from blindness to sight;
- from futility to forgiveness.

**Acts 22:9 "And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me."**

KJV Acts 22:9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

- **hose who were with me saw the light**, Acts 9:7; Daniel 10:7
- **but** John 12:29,30
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE AFFECT ON SAUL'S TRAVELING COMPANIONS

### Parallel Passage:

The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. (Acts 9:7+)

Paul's point is that other Jews could testify that something supernatural had occurred, even though they did not understand its full significance.

**And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure**- Luke does not give specific details but clearly there were sufficient numbers accompanying Saul to allow him to bind people and bring them back to Jerusalem. Some of these men with Saul may have been Jewish "Temple police." In any event they too fell prostrate (Acts 26:14) when the heaven flashed forth light. Saul's traveling companions saw the light but only Saul saw Jesus. Imagine their shock and confusion -- Saul is lying on the ground and they hear him conversing with some unseen entity! One wonders if any of these men later received the [Gospel](#) after such a close encounter of the supernatural kind! These men were in a state as depicted by our modern idiom "[scared to death](#)" and who would blame them!

They saw the natural light but failed to discern the supernatural light.

**THOUGHT** - Yes, they saw the light but sadly they did not see the Light of the World. You can know all about Jesus and still go to Hell because you never really had a relationship with Him. And tragically this is the potential fate of many in America who claim they know Him but have never truly believed in His sacrifice on the Cross in their place.

**Steven Cole** - There is a lot of confusion these days about what it means to be born again. A recent book by researcher Wade Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion*, argues that today's "born-again" Christians are united by emotions and experiences, not by shared doctrines or moral beliefs. One-third of America's 77 million baby boomers identify themselves as born-again Christians, but only 5 percent of those have any link to a conservative Protestant denomination. Half say that religions other than Christianity are "equally good and true." One-third believe in reincarnation and astrology. Nearly half support abortion (from *The Watchman Expositor*, vol. 18, number 1, 2001, p. 22). We all need to be clear about what constitutes true conversion. We need to know it for ourselves, so that we are sure about our own conversion. We need to know it for when we talk with others about spiritual matters, since clearly not all who profess to be born again are truly saved....Humanly speaking, Saul was not a likely candidate for salvation. It would be comparable to hearing that Saddam Hussein had gotten converted and had become an evangelist to the Arabs! There was no human explanation for Saul's conversion! But there is no human explanation for any true conversion, because salvation is from the Lord, not from man. God is able to do what we cannot imagine. ([An Unlikely Conversion](#))

**MacArthur** explains what Paul is doing by giving the crowd these added details about those who were traveling with him to Damascus - Now, he says, "Look, if you don't believe that this happened, you find those guys who went with me to capture those Christians, and they'll tell you that it happened." You see what he does? He draws in further testimony, further potential witnesses for the corroboration of his story. So you know what he's done? He has really put the burden of proof on the people. All they've got to do is check out his motives with the high priest and the Sanhedrin, and they can check out the fact of his conversion and the dramatic events of God's intervention in his life by simply asking anybody who was with him on the road to Damascus. And he must have had a pretty healthy entourage if they were going to haul a bunch of Christians back as prisoners. ([Sermon](#))

**But did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me**- More literally this reads "did not **hear** the voice." Translating "did not hear" as "did not understand" implies they failed to appreciate what was heard. Paul's traveling companions were like the Jews in John 12:28-29 when Jesus declared "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." So the crowd of people who stood by and **heard it were saying that it had thundered**; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." They "heard" it but did not understand.

**Toussaint** explains what some have described as a discrepancy between Acts 9:7 (**hearing the voice** = Greek phone) and Acts



22:9 (**did not understand the voice** = Greek phone) -- Literally, that clause in Acts 22:9 may be translated, "They did not hear the sound." The NIV correctly translates the verse, because the verb "to hear" with the genitive case may mean "*to hear a sound*" and with the accusative case "*to hear with understanding*." The genitive case is employed in Acts 9:7, and the accusative is used in Acts 22:9. So the travelers with Saul heard the sound (Acts 9:7) but did not understand what Christ said (Acts 22:9). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** comments "Thus those who came to this place to be the instruments of Paul's rage against the Church (will in effect now) serve as witnesses of the power of God over him."

One can just imagine the story these men would give the high priest and Sanhedrin when they returned to Jerusalem! You would think these religious leaders had seen sufficient supernatural signs clearly pointing to the hand of God and that this would shake them to their senses. But when men are hardened to the [Gospel](#), only the Spirit can break through their calloused hearts, not supernatural signs and wonders.

**Everett Harrison** relates to story of [Polycarp's martyrdom](#) - Now when Polycarp entered into the arena there came a voice from heaven: "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." And no one saw the speaker, but our friends who were there heard the voice.

In this story of Saul, it is clear that Christ laid hold of him, before he laid hold of Christ. Saul was not seeking Jesus (cf Paul's own teaching in Ro 3:11), but Jesus was seeking him. Paul was seeking to arrest followers of Jesus, but was himself arrested to become a follower of Jesus! As Paul would later so eloquently phrase it

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Ro 11:33+)

**C S Lewis** had a number of metaphors that describe God seeking after those who are not seeking after Him "**the great Angler**" playing a fish, a cat chasing a mouse, a pack of hounds closing in on a fox, a chess player moving in to the ultimate 'checkmate.' " (Surprised by Joy)

As the poet so aptly put it...

'Tis not that I didst choose Thee,  
O Lord, that could not be!  
This heart had still refused Thee  
Had Thou not chosen me.

'Twas the same Love that spread the feast  
That sweetly forced me in;  
Else I had still refused to taste  
And perished in my sin.

**Acts 22:10 "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, **Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.**"**

KJV Acts 22:10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

- **What** Acts 2:37; 9:6; 10:33; 16:30; Ps 25:8,9; 143:8-10
- **there** Acts 22:12-16; Acts 26:16-18
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THE BEST QUESTION  
TO ALWAYS ASK!**

**Parallel Passages:**

"But get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." (Acts 9:6+)

'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a

witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:16-18+)

**Maclaren** - Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? - Bring your plans, your purposes to God's throne. Test them by praying about them. Do nothing large or new—nothing small or old either, for that matter—till you have asked there, in the silence of the secret place, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

**MacArthur** comments that this section "teaches the sovereignty of God. If you ever have any doubt about who initiates salvation, just remember the conversion of Paul. God initiated this, and God never does things out of consistency with His nature. When the Bible says that "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (Jn 6:44) then God will be consistent with that. I mean here is a guy who is going one way. God invades his life, and the guy hasn't even enacted his will, except to say, "Who are You, and what do I do?" And God is already reversing his entire life. Salvation is an act of God, don't ever forget it. You acknowledge it every time you pray for somebody's conversion. You're saying, "God changed him."

**And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?'** - Notice that Paul did not "make" Jesus **Lord**, but immediately acknowledges Him as **Lord**, the One to Whom he previously was not subject, the One Who now possessed him. Paul would later write to the Corinthians "you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price." (1 Cor 6:19-20) Saul had been fighting all his life against Jesus as Lord but in a moment surrendered to His Lordship. Are you fighting against the Lordship of Christ?

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Lord has a special work for Saul to do. The Hebrew of Hebrews would become the apostle to the Gentiles; the persecutor would become the preacher; and the legalistic Pharisee would become the great proclaimer of the grace of God." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Lord** (2962) (**kurios** from **kuros** = power) primarily means the owner, master, lord, supreme one, one who is sovereign. **Kurios** describes Jesus as the One who possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. **Kurios** describes Jesus as the One to Whom a person (a disciple) belonged, over which He has the power of deciding.

**And the Lord said to me, 'Get up (anistemi) and go (poreuo) on into Damascus** - Paul had determined to go to Damascus to persecute Christians. Now he is being led to Damascus as a man blinded by the Light of Christ. Can you imagine a more humbling scenario?

## **GOD PRE-PLANNED PAUL'S STEPS**

**Proverbs 16:9** "The mind (Literally = "heart" = control center) of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps (**Ed**: One step after another which is why we need to obey at each step!)."

What does this proverb teach? It says that only the plans that are laid out and approved by God will succeed (at least in regard to eternal value). This emphasizes God's sovereignty in our lives.

**Proverbs 20:24** "Man's steps (NLT = "the road we travel") are [ordained] (Lxx = euthuno = caused to be straight, a ship steered on course = Jas 3:4) by the LORD, How then can man understand his way? "

**MacArthur** - God had chosen him. God had appointed his destiny. This is God's plan. I'm telling you, one of the most exciting concepts in the Bible is to realize that I am a part of an eternal plan made by God.

**And there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'** - In Acts 9:6+ it says "**What you must do**" where the verb **must** is **dei** (present tense) which speaks of an obligation or necessity. In this version of his testimony the verb **appointed** (see tasso below ) is translated by **BDAG** as "concerning everything that you **have been ordered** to do." The **NET** version has "everything that you have been designated to do," and adds the note that "designated" could be rendered "assigned." **Tasso** is in the **perfect tense** which pictures a past completed action with present ongoing effect or result. In other words, this tense depicts the appointment as Paul's standing order so to speak. It was given to him by Jesus and it remained in effect all of his life.

And so in this passage we see that Jesus is alluding to His divine call and commission to Paul. The implication is that everything he is to do has been "pre-planned" by God. While believers do not have a divine commission exactly like Paul (an apostle), we do have a "pre-planned" appointment

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which **God prepared beforehand** so

that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10).

**THOUGHT** - This truth of God's previously prepared plan for every believer's life begs the question - Am I walking in His plan? Am I engaged in carrying out His "**good works**" or my "**works**" which are ultimately not good? Jesus gave us the pattern for "**good works**" in John 15:5 declaring "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, **he bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do (ABSOLUTELY) nothing." (Read also 1 Cor 3:11-15) See related discussion of [Good Works](#) .

**Appointed** (5021)([tasso](#)) means to arrange, put in a particular order. Tassō was a military language for "designating" ("appointing, commissioning") with a specific status, i.e. arranging (placing) people or things in a deliberate, fixed order. Abbott-Scott adds that tasso as a military term meant 'to draw up in order, arrange in place, assign, appoint, order.' As used in this passage, **tássō** conveys God sovereignly appointing all the physical circumstances of life (Acts 22:10).

**Gleason Archer** spoke of the mysterious juxtaposition of sovereignty and free will writing that "God purposefully pre-sets all the physical 'scenes of life' – and keeps all of our choices free (undetermined), i.e. none are required by the Lord."

**THOUGHT** - O how wonderful when we seek His will for our life and learn to walk by the Spirit in His will, for then as Jesus promised we will bear much fruit. We would be wise to imitate the apostle Paul (1 Cor 11:1) who continually sought God's will, not his own (Read Acts 18:21, Acts 21:14, Ro 1:10, Ro 15:32, 1 Cor 4:19). **Brian Harbour** said, "Paul discovered Christ not only wanted to save him from something, but He also wanted to save him for something... We need to realize that as a Christian there are gifts that God has given us, and He expects us to use those gifts in performing a ministry for Him."

**Ray Stedman** makes some important observations on what Jesus says to Saul - "**Arise and enter** the city, and there you will be told what to do." That indicates a tremendous reversal of this man's whole approach to life. He is now experiencing the lifestyle which belongs to a Christian. "*You are not your own; you are bought with a price. You will be told what to do.*" **That is what conversion is: It is a change from thinking that you can run your own life, to an acknowledgment that God holds the program in his hands, and he has the right to tell you what to do.** This was the first thing Paul experienced when he became a Christian, this right of Jesus Christ to be **Lord**, and to tell him what he was to do. **Conversion is a revolutionary change of government resulting in a radical change in behavior.** That is what happened to Paul. He was put on a wholly different lifestyle. He was told to go into the city. Now he would no longer be giving the orders. He would no longer be directing men and sending them where he wanted them to go and doing what he wanted to do, but he would be told what he was to do." ([Beloved Enemy](#)) (Bold added)

**Do** (4160)([poieo](#)) in this context means to undertake to do something, to accomplish the task. Jesus will explain more fully to Ananias Saul's mission would be "to bear (Jesus') name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel." (Acts 9:15) In Luke's third version of the Saul's Damascus Road conversion Jesus adds some detail about what Saul/Paul **must do**...

'But **get up** and **stand** on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, (Acts 26:16-17<sup>±</sup>)

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**D L Moody** - A MAN at sea was once very seasick. If there is a time when a man feels that he cannot do any work it is then. But he heard that a man had fallen overboard. He couldn't do much, but he laid hold of a light and held it up to the porthole. The light fell on the drowning man's hand, and a man caught him, and pulled him into the lifeboat. It seemed a small thing to do to hold up the light; yet it saved the man's life. We can do as much as that. If we cannot do some great thing we can hold the light for some poor, perishing soul, who is out in the dark waters of sin.

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In his autobiographical work, *Surprised by Joy*, C. S. Lewis describes how the Lord persistently "closed in on" him. "You must picture me alone. . . night after night, feeling . . . the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me . . . I gave in and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed; perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." As influential as C. S. Lewis's conversion has been, John Stott rightly notes that "Saul's . . . is the most famous conversion in church history."

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When Cambridge University student [Thomas Bilney](#) bought a Greek New Testament, his interest was purely academic. But when Bilney opened God's Word, he encountered the gospel and was transformed.

The Protestant Reformation was underway, so Bilney joined the Cambridge Protestants. He began preaching, but was arrested in 1527 and threatened into silence. But Bilney could not keep quiet. He was arrested, released, and in 1531 arrested one last time. Condemned as a heretic, Bilney died at the stake for the gospel of Christ.

Like Bilney, Saul (later to be known as Paul) wasn't interested in the truth of the gospel when he first encountered Christ. But even though Saul was a brilliant theologian and scholar, his interest wasn't simply academic. He had murder in his heart toward the followers of Jesus.

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**WHAT'S NEXT?"** Having just received the Lord Jesus as his Savior from sin, an enthusiastic young boy blurted out, "Now what do I do? What's next?" He had the right idea! Although nothing further had to be done to receive salvation, there was much more to do to serve God.

The Bible, in Ephesians 2:8-9, makes it crystal-clear that we are saved by grace through faith. We could never do anything to deserve salvation. The best we have to offer is not good enough to meet the Lord's holy standards. We experience forgiveness of sin, find peace with God, have the promise of heaven and become possessors of everlasting life by trusting the Lord Jesus and Him alone. It is impossible for anyone to earn these favors!

Following conversion, however, we should respond as that young boy and the apostle Paul did, "Now what do I do? What's next?" Immediately after stating that we are not saved by works, Ephesians 2 tells us, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

Find there's faith, then comes service. We believe to become Christians. We serve because we have been saved. That's what's next! - R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, what can I give to the Master,  
The One who from sin set me free?  
I'll give Him a lifetime of service  
To thank Him for dying for me.- K. De Haan

We cannot work for salvation,  
but salvation is followed by works.

**Acts 22:11 "But 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.**

KJV Acts 22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

- **But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light** Acts 9:8,9
- **I was led by the hand by those who were with me** Acts 13:11; Isa 42:16
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
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## BLINDED BY THE LIGHT OF JESUS

### Parallel Passage:

Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. (Acts 9:8)

**But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light** -The irony is inescapable. As a rabid persecutor of the disciples of Jesus, his eyes were wide open and able to see his innocent victims physically, at the same time being spiritually blinded to the truth that Jesus was their Messiah. Now at conversion the irony is that he cannot see with his physical eyes, but his spiritual eyes have now been opened wide!

Note that it was not the dazzling effect of the supernatural light that had blinded him, because if that were the etiology, his traveling companions would also have been struck blind and clearly they were not as shown by the fact that they will lead him into Damascus. **Matthew Henry** suggests "it was a sight of Christ, Whom the rest saw not, that had this effect upon him. Thus a believing sight of the glory of God in the face of Christ dazzles the eyes to all things here below." As the hymn writer said "The things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace!" Are you still finding temporal trinkets and babbles irresistible

dear disciple of Jesus? If so, the [antidote](#) is a fresh encounter with the risen Christ, through His righteous Word, illuminated by His Holy Spirit! In a word, get into the Word daily (cf Mt 4:4, Lk 4:4<sup>+</sup>), so the Word gets in you and transformed by the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18<sup>+</sup>) you begin have clearer and clearer [Vertical Vision](#).

Imagine what was likely Saul's last actual visual image before the scales fell over his eyes? The Risen Christ! O, to have such a vision in our morning times (cf [Quiet Time](#)), that He might be on our heart and mind the rest of our busy day! Amen.

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now I'm found,  
Was blind, but now I see!" "

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!"

**A T Robertson** - The blindness was proof that something had happened to him and that it was no hallucination that he had seen the Risen Christ.

**I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus**- A raging bull became a docile lamb! Saul had an agenda in Damascus, but Jesus had another appointment for Saul in that city.

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever had that experience where you planned to do one thing, but through providential circumstances the Lord steps in to alter your plans? That is rhetorical because all of us have had these experiences. Are you in the ***middle*** of an unexpected ***muddle*** even as you read this? The question is did we respond like Saul, obediently and without murmuring?

**Robertson** - It was a pathetic picture to see the masterful Saul, victorious persecutor and conqueror of the disciples, now helpless as a child.

**Lenski** - It was found that he was not blinded by the great glare of light only for a time but that "he continued to see nothing," the durative imperfect. His men had to lead him by the hand, and it was thus that the great persecutor and destroyer of the Christian Church entered into the city that he had selected for his new triumphs. (The Interpretation of The Acts of the Apostles)

**Steven Cole** - Paul began the trip physically seeing, but spiritually blind. He ended it physically blind, but spiritually seeing. What he formerly thought that he saw, he no longer saw. What he formerly did not see, he now did see. What was formerly gain to him now was loss. What he formerly despised, he now cherished. Just as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, so Saul was three days and nights in the dark. When the scales fell from his eyes, he saw everything in a new light, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ. Every truly converted person can say, "I once thought that I saw, but I was blind. Now, by God's grace, I see." (Play [Amazing Grace](#)).

**Acts 22:12 "And a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,**

KJV Acts 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

- **a certain Ananias** Acts 9:10-18
- **a man who was devout** Acts 8:2; 17:4; Luke 2:25
- **well spoken of by all the Jews** Acts 6:3; 10:22; 2 Cor 6:8; 1 Ti 3:7; Heb 11:2; 3 John 1:12
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
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## **ANANIAS A DEVOUT MAN OF GOOD REPUTATION**

Paul leaves out most of the details related to **Ananias** (see **bold font below including that in red**)



And he was **three days** without sight, and **neither ate nor drank**. Now there was a **disciple** at Damascus named Ananias; and the **Lord said to him in a vision, "Anania s."** And he said, "Here I am, Lord. And the **Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."** But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." But the Lord said to him, "**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.**" (Acts 9:9-15+)

In Acts 26 Paul gives additional details found neither in Acts 9 or Acts 22...

But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes (BY PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL) so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:16-18)

**And a certain Ananias** - He is called a **disciple** in Acts 9:10+ which identifies Ananias as a believer or follower of Jesus.

**A man who was devout by the standard of the Law** - He was "a devout man according to the Law" (NET) **Law** refers to the Law of Moses. This aspect of Ananias' character is not mentioned in Acts 9:10 but is likely mentioned here because Paul is addressing Jews who are zealous for the Law. So he presents Ananias as one who was **devout by the standard of the Law**. And of course Ananias was a follower of Christ, which demonstrates that although he was a believer he did not become anti-Semitic (in fact the Jews spoke well of him). Of course his audience would not have known that Ananias was a believer.

**Devout** (2126)(**eulabes** from **e u** = good + **lambano** = lay hold of) literally means taking hold of well and is an adjective that describes one who properly receives someone or something, in this context, the Law of God. It means **Ananias** had a proper, reverent estimation of the Law. Eulabes was used to describe Simeon as a man who "was righteous (dikaios) and devout (eulabes)." **Simeon** was a man who had well and rightly received the promises of God regarding the coming Messiah and which conveys the basic sense of **eulabes** as one who had taken seriously God's promises and God's Word. Thus Ananias' had an heart attitude that accepted the Word of God as true and right. He was not like the Pharisees in his heart, who gave external devotion to the Law, but had no genuine heart devotion.

**TECHNICAL NOTE:** The Textus Receptus (source of KJV translation) has eusebes instead of eulabes, the former word speaking of external reverence, whereas eulabes speaks of internal reference. Eusebés describes one who externalizes the heart feeling in acts of worship and veneration.

**And well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there** - In other words Ananias had a good testimony among the Jews. This fact was also not mentioned in the Acts 9 testimony and presumably again because he was addressing a Jewish audience.

**Well spoken of** (3140)(**martureo** from **mártus** = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = **martyr**) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. In this case since Ananias was a believer in Jesus, he gave a good testimony about Jesus Who was now His life (Col 3:4+). The point is that while he may have witnessed with his words, he also clearly witnessed with his works (so to speak). **Martureo** is used with a similar meaning in Acts 6:3+ to describe prospective servants as "men **of good reputation**, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." This word describes **Cornelius**, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man **well spoken of** by the entire nation of the Jews." (Acts 10:22+). Paul had used this same verb earlier in Acts 22:5 of the Jewish religious leaders who could testify Paul rabid persecuted Christians (Acts 22:4-5).

**MacArthur** writes that Paul "wants the people who are hearing him below him to know that this Christianity was not something concocted by a bunch of anti-Jewish people. He was pro-Jewish. It was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they knew to be Jewish, that spoke to him. It was Ananias who was a devout Jew, who was involved. So far, the whole thing is Jewish." ([Sermon](#))

Acts 22:13 came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, **receive your sight!**' And at that very time I looked up at him.

KJV Acts 22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

NET Acts 22:13 came to me and stood beside me and said to me, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight!' And at that very moment I looked up and saw him.

- **Brother Saul** Acts 9:17; Philemon 1:16
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL REGAINS HIS SIGHT

**Came to me, and standing near said to me 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!'** ([aorist imperative](#)) - **Standing near** is probably so that Ananias could lay his hands on Saul although Paul leaves out that detail. In Acts 9:17+ Luke says he laid his hands on Saul and explained to him "the Lord Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." **Receive your sight** is the same verb [anablepo](#) translated "**looked up**." God bestowed on Ananias the power/authority to issue this command and God brought about the miracle - 20/20 vision, spiritual for sure.

**Brother** (80) ([adelphos](#) from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) means literally from the same womb. Believers are all born from one Spirit and thus have a common "birth." **Adelphós** generally denotes a fellowship of life based on identity of origin. **Adelphos** in this context describes a spiritual brother, a fellow Christian, a fellow believer.

**And at that very time** - Literally "the same hour" often speaks of an indefinite short period of time and comparison with Acts 9:18 indicates that is the meaning in this passage, for in that passage Luke records several additional details not mentioned here in Acts 22...

"And immediately ([euthéos](#)) there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized."

**I looked up at him** - **Looked up** could be translated he "regained his sight" which is how [anablepo](#) is translated in Acts 9:12, 17, 18+.

**Looked** (308) ([anablepo](#) from **ana** = up, again + **blepo** = to look, to perceive and so discern) means to look up or direct one's vision upward but in this context means to regain one's sight (Mt 11:5; Mk 10:51)

**Acts 22:14 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.'**

KJV Acts 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

- **The God of our fathers** Acts 3:13; 5:30; 13:17; 24:14; Ex 3:13-16; 15:2; 2 Ki 21:22; 1 Chr 12:17; 1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 28:25; 30:19; Ezra 7:27; Da 2:23
- **has appointed you to know His will** Acts 9:15; Jer 1:5; Jn 15:16; Ro 1:1; Gal 1:15; 2 Ti 1:1; Titus 1:1
- **and to see** Acts 22:18; 9:17; Acts 26:16; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8
- **the Righteous One** Acts 3:14; Acts 7:52; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pe 2:22; 1 Jn 2:1
- **hear an utterance from His mouth** 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Gal 1:12
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)

## ANANIAS DESCRIBES PAUL'S DIVINE APPOINTMENT

The details Paul describes in this passage are not found in the Acts 9 account.

**And he said, 'The God of our fathers - Our JEWISH forefathers or ancestors. The God of Israel.** Paul keeps emphasizing he is not Anti-Semitic! Luke uses this or a similar phrase four times (including the present passage) - Acts 3:13+ = "The **God** of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers." Acts 5:30+ = "The **God of our fathers** raised up Jesus"; Acts 13:17+ = "The **God** of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great."

**John MacArthur** comments on Paul's mention of **the God of our fathers** - Now do you see what he's doing? He's making the issue squarely where it has to be. If they deny what happened to Paul, they're denying God. If they reject Paul, they reject God Himself. That's the issue.

**Has appointed you to know His will** - Ananias is saying that the God of their Jewish ancestors or forefathers had already chosen Paul to know His will and see His Son, once again emphasizing God's [sovereignty](#) over the plans of men. Remember that for Paul to receive the official designation as an [apostle](#), he had to have personally seen the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Appointed** (4400) (**procheirizo** from **pro** = before + **cheir** = hand) literally means to put in the hand, to take into one's hand, hence to handpick beforehand and to choose in advance, to ordain, to destine, to determine. Used 3x, all in Acts - Acts 3:20+ ("Jesus, the Christ appointed for you"), Acts 22:14, Acts 26:16+ ("for this purpose I have appeared to you, to **appoint** you a minister and a witness"). 3x in the Septuagint - Ex 4:13; Jos. 3:12; Da 3:22+.

**Gilbrant** - In its earliest occurrences in classical Greek, **procheirizomai** meant to have something "ready, on hand, easily available for use." It could also describe people who were ready for action, holding themselves in preparation for a task. It had a more common usage: "take into one's hand, handle, prepare, equip." A further meaning is "choose" or appoint a person, especially to a government position. Examples from the papyri often use **procheirizomai** to describe the choosing and recruiting of troops, or the appointment of people as tax collectors or other minor officials (*Moulton-Milligan*). The Septuagint uses **procheirizomai** commonly in the sense of electing or naming someone to a task (Ex 4:13; Joshua 3:12). It often refers to a military appointment. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**And to see the Righteous One** - A reference to the [Messiah](#) and a name the Jews would have recognized from Jeremiah 23:5 where God had prophesied "I shall raise up for David a **Righteous Branch**." (cf "Branch" in Isa 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer 33:15+; Zech 3:8; 6:12). The name **Righteous One** is used in Isaiah 53:11+ but they likely would not have accepted the "Suffering Servant" passage as a description of the Messiah. (cf Isa 24:16 = "Glory to the Righteous One.")

**Peter** had used the name **Righteous One** to describe the Messiah in his dramatic Gospel message to the Jews declaring "you disowned the Holy and **Righteous One** and asked for a murderer to be granted to you!" (Acts 3:14+).

**Stephen** in addressing the Jews in Acts 7 used a similar accusation which got him stoned to death -- "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the **Righteous One**, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become." (Acts 7:52+)

**And to hear an utterance from His mouth** - Which Paul had already described in Acts 22:7-8, 10 (cf Acts 9:4-6).

**NET Note on an utterance** - Or "a solemn declaration"; Grk "a voice." BDAG states, "that which the voice gives expression to: call, cry, outcry, loud or solemn declaration (= order, command)..."

**Acts 22:15 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.'**

KJV Acts 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

- **you will be a witness** Acts 1:8,22; 10:39-41; 23:11; 26:16-18; 27:24; Luke 24:47,48; John 15:27
- **of what you have seen and heard** Acts 4:20; Acts 26:20
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
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## PAUL TO TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS

**For (hoti)** is a conjunction which can have a causal sense (because, for this reason) and that is the meaning in this context. Paul relates that Ananias gave this explanation for why the Righteous One had revealed Himself to Paul.

**You will be a witness for Him to all men** - This reminds us of Jesus' charge in Acts 1:8+ "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses**" basically **to all men!** (cf Acts 13:31+) Notice that Paul does not mention Gentiles until Acts 22:21. Had he done so, it is likely his defense in Acts 22:16-20 would never have been allowed by this anti-Gentile crowd!

**Witness** (noun) ([3144](#))([martus/martys](#)) basically describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. Notice that **martus** has a two fold meaning of (1) describing one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone (AS SAUL HAD SEEN THE RESURRECTED CHRIST) and (2) one who testifies to what he saw (WHICH IS WHAT HE WOULD DO ON HIS THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS AND THEN BEFORE KINGS.) A witness is one who furnishes evidence or proof, confirming the truth by verbal testimony.

This is the same charge Jesus had given to His eleven disciples just before He ascended to the right hand of the Father

But you will receive power ([dunamis](#) - supernatural enablement) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses ([martus/martys](#)) both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8+ or here)

**Of what you have seen and heard** - To what does this refer? It has to be Paul's Damascus Road experience and in fact this is the second of three testimonies of this experience. So in a sense, the very words Paul was speaking at that moment were partial fulfillment of the divine prophecy given to Ananias who gave it to Paul (Saul).

**Acts 22:16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'**

KJV Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

- **why do you delay** Ps 119:60; Jer 8:14
- **Get up and be baptized** Acts 2:38; Ro 6:3,4; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; Gal 3:27; Titus 3:5; Heb 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21
- **calling on His name** Acts 2:21; 9:14; Ro 10:12-14; 1 Cor 1:2
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
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## CALL ON THE NAME OF JESUS AND BE SAVED

**Now why do you delay?** - Ananias challenges his new brother in Christ.

**Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins** - Three separate statements and wash away your sins is not stated as being the result of be baptized which is what those who would like to teach so-called baptismal regeneration would like it to say. It simply does not say that! What Luke does is link the phrase "wash away your sins" with the phrase "calling on His Name." As discussed below "**calling on His Name**" in clearly a description of the experience of one who has been saved.

**Hampton Keathley** observes that this sentence according to Greek grammar can "be divided into separate clauses with a semicolon placed after "be baptized." "Arise, be baptized (clause one); and wash away your sins by calling on the Name of the Lord" (clause two). Baptism cannot wash away one's sins. It is calling on the Lord, telling God you believe in His Son which is simply a way of expressing one's faith in Christ." ([ABCs for Christian Growth - Laying the Foundation](#))

**Calling on His name** - This phrase in Acts is used to describe those who are saved.

And so in Acts 2:21+ Peter declared "IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO **CALLS ON** ([epikaleomai](#)) **THE NAME OF THE LORD** WILL BE SAVED."

In Acts 9:14+ Luke describes believers as those "who **call on Your name**."

And again in Acts 9:21+ "the believers were describes as "those who **called on** ([epikaleomai](#)) **this Name** (Acts 9:20 = "Jesus...Son of God")."

In Romans 10 Paul uses call upon three times in the context of salvation writing

"there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for **all**

who call on ([epikaleomai](#)) Him." 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." 14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? (Ro 10:12-14)

**Calling upon** (1941)([epikaleomai](#) from [epí](#) = upon + [kaléo](#) = call) literally means **to call upon** and was often used in secular Greek to refer to calling upon deity for any purpose, especially for aid. It also means to invoke (to petition for help or support, make earnest request) a deity for something. This verb is used repeatedly to describe Paul appealing to Caesar (Acts 25:11; Acts 25:12; Acts 25:21; Acts 25:25; Acts 26:32; Acts 28:19).

**John MacArthur on baptism and salvation** - Now the statement of verse 16 has been kind of the key verse to people who teach baptismal regeneration. They say, "Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins," and the idea that water can wash away sins. Now let me just speak a minute about this. Can water wash away sin? No. I'll give you a good illustration of it. If water could wash away sin, everybody would be saved. Why? Everybody's been in the water. You say, "No, only certain water." What water? "Holy water." No, no, where did you see that? "Only Jerusalem water." That'd mean everybody in Jerusalem would be saved, who's ever dunked in the Jordan. No. No, you say, "Well, that's right, then. Water doesn't wash away sin." All right, if water doesn't wash away sin, then it doesn't wash away sin; any water doesn't wash away sin. Either water does or water doesn't; and since we know it does not, we can just stay with that. You say, "But what do you mean here then?" Well, let me take it a step further. If Ananias was saying, "Paul, be baptized, and wash away your sins," that would be the first time Paul ever really clearly heard the standard of salvation, right? This would be God saying to him, "Here's how to get saved: get baptized and wash away your sins." Then if that was true, if that's how Paul got saved, how do you think he'd tell others to get saved? Same way, wouldn't he? If it was, "Get baptized and get saved," that's what Paul would preach. Let's see what he preached. Romans 10. And it's important to know what he preached, because whatever it was, he got it from the Lord. Romans 10:9, he tells us something interesting. He says, "This is the word of faith which we preach." "What is it you preach, Paul? Remember what Ananias told you that first day, Paul, do you forget that." "Here's what I preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Do you see any water there? See any baptism there? Obviously, Paul didn't get that message from Ananias, did he? Hmm. Well, that's interesting. In verse 10, "For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, with the mouth confession is made to salvation." It's simply a matter of believing and stating that belief. You say, "Well, if it doesn't mean in verse 16, 'Be baptized and wash away thy sins,' what is it saying?" Watch, the break comes here: "Arise and be baptized." Now watch this: "Wash away thy sins" – doing what? – "calling on the name of the Lord." The thing that modifies "wash away thy sins" is the phrase "calling on the name of the Lord." Do you know how to get saved? Get baptized? No, do what? Call on the name of the name of the Lord. That's the message Paul got. Look at it, Romans 10:13. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be" – what? – "saved." Now do you see what message Paul got that day? He got that message. He didn't get the message, "Get baptized and get your sins washed away." He got the message, "You'll be saved when you call on the name of the Lord." That's the modifier. That's the way to interpret the verse. The New Testament never teaches that a man can be saved by water, it teaches that a man is saved by grace through faith, that confessing Jesus Christ is Lord, believing in his heart means salvation. "Calling on the name of the Lord." What does that mean? That means to ask God to be all that He is in your life: calling on His name, calling on His fullness, appropriating all that He is unto yourself. You say, "Well, what does the baptizing have to do with it?" That's the public testimony. "Since your sins have been washed away by calling on the name of the Lord, arise and make it public." Baptism was the symbol, the outward symbol of an inward reality. Paul didn't make any big deal out of baptism.

1 Corinthians 1:13, very interesting. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" And he's showing that there's no sense in having little factions of people in the church. 1 Cor 1:14, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." Now, if baptism equals salvation, that's a very strange statement, isn't it? "Boy, am I thankful I didn't lead any of you to Christ except Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. Oh, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." – now watch this – "For Christ sent me not to baptize." Yikes, not to baptize. "What'd He send you to do?" "To preach the gospel." Did you know that baptizing and preaching the gospel are two different things? Therefore baptism isn't part of the gospel. Salvation is apart from baptism. Baptism, folks, is an outward work, and you can't be saved by works – right? – Ephesians 2:8-9. It's only a visual testimony to an internal transformation, that's all. Paul says, "I thank God I didn't baptize any more of you. And Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Two different things. Go back to Acts 21. Ananias says, "All right, Paul, do something about it," and Paul does. Praise God, Paul did believe, he was baptized. You can check it out, Acts 9:17-18. Don't look it up now, you can look it up on your own. But he was baptized, and gave his life to Christ. ([Sermon](#))

**Gerald Cowen**  
**Wash Away Your Sins**



(Source: [Salvation Word Studies](#) - a wonderful little book! [Best price](#))

In the account of Paul's conversion that he himself gave before the Jewish people at the temple in Jerusalem, Luke recorded one statement that has resulted in much debate: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). **This statement has caused many to ask, is baptism the cause of our cleansing? Does baptism in any way effect our salvation?** Many take a sacramental view of baptism and answer in the affirmative. For instance, J. R. Lumby in the Cambridge Bible comments,

"Though the gift of the Spirit was announced, yet God directs that the means of grace, the sacrament of baptism, which the Apostle must offer to others, should also be received by himself."

The well-known expositor **R. C. H. Lenski** adds,

"This is one of the cardinal passages on the **saving power of baptism**...What makes the present passage unmistakably clear is the second imperative. Why was it not enough to say, "Having arisen, let thyself be baptized, calling on his name"? Why was "and let thyself be washed as to thy sins" inserted if baptism and its water did not do this washing to remove the sins? The answer has yet to be given.

There are several problems with the interpretation Lenski and others have proposed.

**In the first place**, there are ten accounts of baptism recorded in the Book of Acts. In several of these accounts a clear statement is made about the relationship of regeneration and baptism. For example, Acts 8:12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized." This indicates that **faith is a requirement for salvation**. While Peter was preaching to the Gentiles at Caesarea, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and Peter asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). It is clear in this instance that **regeneration has already taken place**. In Acts 16:14-15 it says that Lydia's "heart" was "opened," and then she was baptized. The most important passage in regard to the meaning of Acts 22:16, however, is Acts 9:18, which records another account of Paul's conversion experience. After Ananias had spoken to him, Luke said,

"Immediately, there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

The exact moment of Paul's conversion can be debated, but one thing is clear. It took place sometime between his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus and the falling of the scales from his eyes. At whatever point it occurred, **it was prior to his baptism**.

The most serious problem connected with the idea of considering baptism to be a means by which God's grace is made effective is that **it is contrary to the nature of grace itself**. Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved...not of works lest any man should boast." There can be no religious rite or good work required in addition to the grace (gift) of God, otherwise "grace is no more grace" (Ro 11:6). On this subject **Calvin** commented:

The question is asked, whether baptism is the cause of our cleansing. Certainly since the blood of Christ is the one and only expiation for sins, and since it was shed once for this purpose, and the Holy Spirit is cleansing us continually by the sprinkling of it through faith, the honor for this cannot be transferred to the symbol of water, without doing injury to Christ and the Holy Spirit.

However, some want to claim that baptism has some mystical connection with the receiving of salvation and the cleansing of sin. As Lenski put it, this represents "a real washing and not the mere picture of one." Yet, he does not want to deny that salvation is by "grace through faith."<sup>21</sup> However, one cannot have it both ways. Either baptism is necessary for salvation or it is not. If it is, then grace is in jeopardy.

**Finally, the interpretation that favors baptismal regeneration runs into a third problem, the text itself.** A literal interpretation reads like this:

"And now what do you intend? Rising up be baptized and wash away your sins, calling upon his name?"

There are two participles, **anastas** and **epikalesamenos** (rising up and calling upon), and there are two imperatives, **baptisai** and **apolousai**. Both of these are in the aorist tense and middle voice. Aorist would specify a once-for-all action, and the middle voice would convey the idea: "baptize yourself" or better "have yourself baptized," and "cleanse yourself" or "have yourself cleansed." Both of the participles mentioned are also in the aorist tense, which, again, refers to a once-for-all action. The time significance of these participles would necessitate that the action spoken of be prior to the time of the main verb in the sentence. So an expanded translation is,

"After you have risen up, have yourself baptized, and have your sins washed away, having called upon his name" (author's translation).

It is also possible to interpret the last half of the verse in this manner: "wash away your sins by calling upon his name." This is the proper translation if *epikalesamenos* is understood as an adverbial participle of means, which it in fact can be. If this is the correct translation, then it is clear that **"calling on his name"** effects salvation, not baptism. This is in accord with Romans 10:13, which says, **"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

Even if one rejects this interpretation, it has to be admitted that since the participle is in the aorist tense, its action is prior to the verb. Therefore, the calling upon the Lord is the prior action. No one should deny that baptism is an important step of obedience to Christ for the new convert, but it cannot be the cause of salvation, although it is closely connected with it. One must agree with Robertson that Luke was using "picturesque language" to describe what takes place here, and he could make this statement because baptism is an outward reenactment of the inward spiritual change that has taken place.

So, in conclusion, one must reject the interpretation favoring baptismal regeneration in Acts 22:16

- (1) because it would contradict other, clearer passages in Acts on the subject,
- (2) because of conflict with the doctrine of grace, and
- (3) because an exact translation of the Greek text does not require it.

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**Robert Morgan** alludes to Acts 22:16 in his discussion of the question "What Am I Saying Through Baptism?"

Baptism is a testimony. It sends a signal to others. It's a way of preaching a wordless sermon that communicates our new life to others.

**First**, we are saying, "I am identifying myself with Christ. He died and rose again, and in re-enacting His death and resurrection, I am expressing my personal commitment to follow Him." Romans 6:4 makes this clear: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

**Second**, we are saying, "I have been washed from my sins." In the Old Testament, water was used in purification rites, and when John the Baptist came preaching repentance, he made a connection between repentance, and being cleansed from sin, and baptism. There's an obvious sense, after all, in which baptism is analogous to bathing. It conveys the idea of washing away. One place in the Bible makes this crystal clear—the description of the baptism of Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the apostle. Paul recounted the experience in Acts 22:12-16:

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."

Notice these words: **"Be baptized, and wash away your sins."** At first glance that sounds like Ananias is saying that the act of baptism itself is what washes away our sins; but we know that it's the blood of Christ alone that cleanses us from sin. Revelation 1:5KJV says that Jesus Himself washed us from our sins with His own blood, but baptism is symbolic of that inner, spiritual washing and cleansing that takes place.

**Third**, we are saying, "I have been united with the body of Christ by an act of the Holy Spirit." When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit descended on Him and equipped Him with power for His supernatural ministry. When Jesus prepared to go to heaven, He told His disciples, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4, 5, NIV). Ten days later, God the Father sent the Holy Spirit hurtling down from heaven like a ball of fire, and all the believers were filled with the Spirit. That dynamic, common, spiritual bond marked the birth of the church. When you and I receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, at that moment the Holy Spirit enters our lives and we become a part of that worldwide, timeless family of God known as the church. Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13 (NIV)—"The body [the church] is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

**Fourth**, we're saying, "I've decided to live a separated life—no turning back." Look at 1 Corinthians 10:1, 2 (NIV)—"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." This is referring to the miraculous parting of the Red Sea that we read

about in Exodus 14. As the Israelites fled from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, they came to the Red Sea, and there they were trapped like doves in a snare. The water was in front of them, and the armies of Pharaoh were behind them. But God parted the waters, and the people of Israel escaped through those towering liquid walls to the other side. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the pillars of water collapsed and the army was drowned. Paul described this experience as a sort of baptism for the Israelites. Now, of course, the Israelites didn't get wet—it was the Egyptians who encountered the water. In what way, then, was it a baptism for the Israelites? It marked a break from the past, a separation from their old way of life in Egypt. It symbolized their freedom from slavery. It was a new beginning for them. There was no turning back. When we "go through the water," there is a sense in which it symbolizes our turning point, like the old song that says, "The cross before me, the world behind me, no turning back, no turning back." Here's another way to look at it. Think of baptism as you would think of a wedding ring. When a couple offers their vows to one another, they are making a commitment to belong to the other exclusively in wedded union. There follows the ring portion of the service in which each partner places a ring on the fourth finger as a symbol of those vows. When someone sees that ring, it's a testimony that sends this message: "I have entered a relationship with another person and am identifying myself with my spouse. We have entered into a new family relationship, we have forsaken all others, we belong one to the other—there is no turning back."

**That's the fourfold message being preached by everyone who follows the example of our Lord Jesus in baptism. In all the world, there's no more powerful symbol or sermon than that.** ([Simple.: The Christian Life Doesn't Have to Be Complicated](#))

**Acts 22:17 "And it happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,**

KJV Acts 22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

- **when I returned to Jerusalem** Acts 9:26-28; Gal 1:18
- **was praying in the temple** Acts 10:9,10; 2 Cor 12:1-4; Rev 1:10
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL FALLS INTO A TRANCE IN THE TEMPLE

**And it happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple-** Paul a believer in Jesus was in the Jewish Temple. Notice how this would emphasize to this protagonists that he was not anti-Temple but to the contrary was pro-Temple even after conversion. He did not cease being a Jew. And so Luke describes Paul's early post-conversion life in Acts 9

When he (PAUL) came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. (Acts 9:26-28).

**That I fell into a trance** - My problem is I am praying and instead of falling into a trance, I too often fall into a deep sleep! HCSB says Paul "went into a visionary state." The word **trance** "describes the unique apostolic experience of being transported beyond the normal senses to the supernatural realm to receive divine revelation. The word is twice used to describe Peter's vision at Joppa (Acts 10:10; 11:5)." (MacArthur)

**A trance** (1611)(**ekstasis** [English - [ecstasy](#)] from [existemi](#) = "be out of one's sense") literally is Literally "change of place." It is used in classical Greek of displacement (so also in Aristotle) – particularly "an abnormal condition of the mind, in which the subject passes out of his usual self-control (Hippoc.). In the NT, **ékstasis** is used of a trance (Ac 10:10, 11:5, 22:17) or trance-like amazement" (Abbott-Smith). By etymology ekstasis is a 'displacement,' and medical men used the word for the dislocation of the joints. The verb existēmi, too, is a displacing.

**Friberg** - "strictly being put out of place; hence (1) as an abnormal state of mind distraction, terror, amazement (Mk 5.42); (2) as a partially suspended consciousness ecstasy, trance (Acts 10.10)." (Friberg)

**Gilbrant** - Classical Greek demonstrates a rather diverse usage of this term. Both Hippocrates and Aristotle used the term to indicate "displacement or change," as well as the "distraction of the mind due to fear, astonishment, anger, etc." (Liddell-Scott). This second use of **ekstasis** emphasizes the change of a state of mind, that is, from normal or peaceful to fear or amazement. The

Septuagint translates **ekstasis** as "fear" or "anxiety." However, it also includes the translation of "deep sleep" (Ge 2:21 = "God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man"; Ge 15:12 = "a deep sleep fell upon Abram").

**Thomas Page** adds that **ekstasis** "represents a state in which a man, to a greater or less extent, ceases to be under the control of conscious reason and intelligence: he 'passes out of himself' (**existemi**) and needs 'to come to himself' again (cf. Acts 12:11). It may describe the effect of awe and amazement (cf. Acts 3:10, Acts 8:9, 8:11, 8:13), or fear (Mk 16:8), or as here and Acts 22:17 a complete loss of outward consciousness, 'a trance'." (The Acts of the Apostles, 1895)

**Ekstasis** - 7x in NT - Mk. 5:42 ("they were completely **astounded**"); Mk. 16:8 ("trembling and **astonishment** had gripped them"); Lk. 5:26 ("struck with **astonishment**"); Acts 3:10 ("filled with...**amazement**"); Acts 10:10 (Peter "fell into a **trance**"); Acts 11:5 ("I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a **trance** I saw a vision"); Acts 22:17

**Guzik** makes a good point - Paul told them about something that happened about 20 years before, when he had been a follower of Jesus for 2 or 3 years. Even though he had been a Christian for a few years, yet he still came to Jerusalem to pray in the temple. He wanted the crowd to know that even though he trusted in Jesus, he was not against all Jewish ceremonies and rituals. b. I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me: Paul had an impressive vision of Jesus while in the temple; yet he never referred to this vision in his letters, and seems to only mention it now out of necessity. Paul's Christian life was founded on God's truth, not spiritual experiences, and he didn't even like to talk a lot about his spiritual experiences. (Enduring Word Bible Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 22:18 and I saw Him saying to me, **Make haste**, and **get out** of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'**

KJV Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

- **And I saw Him saying to me "Make haste"** - Mt 10:14,23; Luke 21:21
- **Because they will not accept your testimony about Me** - Acts 3:19; Ezekiel 3:6,7
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JESUS WARNS PAUL OF THE DANGER TO HIS LIFE**

**And I saw Him saying to me, **Make haste**, and **get out** of Jerusalem quickly** - So Saul/Paul was not only born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but he was "sovereignly sent" back to Tarsus (because of the threat in Jerusalem which God allowed) after his conversion to Christianity. The ESV Timeline estimates that Saul ministered for some 8 years (some say 10 years) in Syria, Tarsus, and Cilicia from 37 AD to 45 AD. The Scripture is silent about this period of his life, but the fact that the letter from the Jerusalem Council is being carried indicates that Gentiles were evangelized and presumably had formed churches in those regions. By deduction there is little doubt that the origin of those Gentile brethren fellowships was the fruit of Paul's ministry during his 8-10 year "divine exile" in Tarsus, the capital of Syria.

**Make haste** [4692](#) (**spseudo**) means to do something quickly, to be in a hurry. And if it Jesus commanding you to do it [aorist imperative](#) = Don't delay!), it is best to respond immediately! Luke used **spseudo** describing Paul "**hurrying** to be in Jerusalem if possible on the day of Pentecost." (Acts 20:16+). The Lord adds **Get out** (*exerchomai* - to move out of or away from an area, in this case Jerusalem) again in the form of an urgent command ([aorist imperative](#)).

**Luke** describes the danger to Paul in Acts 9...

And he (PAUL) was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting ([epicheireo](#) = literally put their hands on him) to put him to death. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. (Acts 9:29-30+).

**Because they will not accept your testimony about Me** - Not only will they **not accept** it but they would kill him (Acts 9:29) as they did Stephen. **Stephen** got stoned for his testimony "You men who are stiff-necked ([sklerotrachelos](#) from [skleros](#) = hard + + trachelos = the neck - resistance against changing one's behavior) and [uncircumcised](#) in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the **Righteous One**, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;" (Acts 7:51-

52+) Similar words were spoken by God to His prophet Ezekiel almost 500 years earlier "For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, but **to the house of Israel**, nor to many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. But I have sent you to them (ISRAEL) **who should listen to you**; yet the house of Israel **will not be willing to listen to you**, since they are not willing to listen to Me. (NOW GOD EXPLAINED WHY THEY WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO LISTEN) Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn (Lxx = philoneikos [philos = friend or loving + neikos = dispute] = quarrelsome, contentious, fond of dispute!) and obstinate (Lxx = sklerokardios = literally hard hearted; translates "crooked mind" in Pr 17:20). (Ezekiel 3:5-7<sup>+</sup>)

**Matthew Henry** said, "As God knows before who will receive the gospel, so He knows who will reject it."

**Accept** (3858) ([paradechomai](#) from **para** = from, beside, near + **dechomai** = accept deliberately and readily, receive kindly and so to take to oneself what is presented or brought by another) means literally to receive or accept near or beside and then to accept deliberately, willingly, favorably and readily. In this case Jesus says they absolutely, positively will not welcome your message. **Paradechomai** was used to describe good hearts that would "accept it (SEED - WORD OF GOSPEL) and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." (Mk 4:20) How foolish both in time and eternity that these Jews would refuse to receive the Word implanted which could have saved their souls! (James 1:21<sup>+</sup>).

The omniscient Jesus knew that a plot on his life was in the works (Acts 9:22-23<sup>+</sup>).

**Paradechomai** - Mk. 4:20; Acts 15:4; Acts 16:21; Acts 22:18; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 12:6

**Testimony** (3141) ([marturia/martyria](#)) describes a witness who sees an event and reports what happened, in Paul's case his encounter with the ascended Lord Jesus. The Jews would not accept this testimony because it meant that they had been unsuccessful in their attempts to kill Him but that He had risen from the dead.

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**LIFE APPLICATION GOD'S GUIDANCE** -God spoke to Paul through a vision and through his friends (Acts 9:29-30). He speaks to us in various ways—through his written Word, through circumstances and "coincidences," through Bible study, sermons, memories, nature, even art. The right question is not, "Is God speaking to me?" but "Am I listening for his voice?" Make it your goal to hear what God is saying. He wants to guide you and give you daily reminders of his power and presence in your life. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 22:19 "And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.**

KJV Acts 22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

- **they themselves understand** Acts 22:4; 8:3; 9:1; 26:9-12
- **in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat** Mt 10:17
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
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## PAUL REASONS WITH JESUS

**Jack Andrews** - Paul wasn't arguing with the Lord—though he was making an impassioned plea to the Lord. He was in effect saying that he believed that his changed life would lend weight to testimony before the Jews. (Ibid)

**MacArthur** - Paul wrongly believed that seeing the radical transformation the Lord had wrought in his life would convince the unbelieving Jews of the truth of the gospel. The Lord knew better, however, and repeated His command for Paul to leave, saying to him, "**Go!**" (see Acts 22:21). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue ([sunagoge](#)) after another** - Note that Paul would go to the synagogues because that is where the first Jewish believers would go. After he met Jesus he continued to go first to the synagogues, now not to persecute them but to proclaim Jesus to them in hope that they would become believers! Such is the transforming power of the Gospel of our salvation!



**Understand** (1987) ([epistamai](#) from **epi** = upon + **histemi** = to stand) means to fix one's mind on, have intellectual apprehension, to understand - to possess information about, with the implication of an understanding of the significance of such information

**Robertson** - In every synagogue (*kata tas sunagogas*). Up and down (*kata*) in the synagogues.

**I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You** - Paul threw believers into prison and **beat** them both of these verbs being in the [present tense](#) indicating that as a zealous Pharisee this was his continual practice - to bind and beat believers!

**Beat** (flogged, gave lashes, struck) (1194) ([dero](#)) literally meant to remove the skin (flay = strip off skin) and here Paul confesses to the practice of whipping, beating, thrashing and scourging believers in a manner calculated to take off the skin (Mt. 21:35; Mk 12:3, 5; Lk 20:10, 11; Ac 16:37; 22:19)! Imagine how this would have "appealed" to the Jews who were opposed to the believers in Jesus.

**Believed** ([present tense](#)) (4100) ([pisteuo](#)) those who placed their faith in Jesus as Messiah and Redeemer.

**Acts 22:20 'And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.'**

KJV Acts 22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

- **your witness** Rev 2:13; 17:6
- **Stephen** Acts 7:58; 8:1
- **approving** Luke 11:48; Ro 1:32
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#)
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## PAUL ACKNOWLEDGES APPROVING STEPHEN'S STONING

**And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed** - The KJV has "Thy martyr" for in his death Stephen gave one of the most amazing testimonies to a life sold out to Jesus. His "reward in Heaven is great" (Mt 5:12+). Paul recognized that Stephen died for his faith—that he was the Lord's servant and the Lord's martyr.

**Your witness** ([martus/martyrs](#)) - This is somewhat ironic for in Acts 22:18 Jesus had told Paul in the trance that the Jews would not accept his witness concerning Jesus. Paul would have had vivid memories of that horrible stoning leaving little doubt that that might be his fate if he failed to heed the warning to leave town. **Martus** is used in the Revelation (Rev 2:13+ = "of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.") and (Rev 17:6+ = "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.")

**Being shed** (poured out) (1632) ([ekcheo](#) from **ek** = out + **chéo** = pour) means literally to flow out, to gush forth or to pour out . The inherent idea is to cause something to be emitted in quantity. The [imperfect tense](#) is grotesquely picturesque - as a doctor I envision a site I have often seen of an arterial bleed which is pulsating in synch with the heart, so that it spurts out again and again.

**I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him** - In modern legal parlance, Paul was in essence an [accomplice](#) in the murder of Stephen, even if he did not pick up and throw a stone at Stephen. He was watching the jackets which made it possible for others to throw more effectively (having removed their coats)! He was as guilty as those who actually threw the stones!

**Approving** ([present tense](#)) (4909) ([suneudokeo](#) from **sun** = together with + **eu** = good + **dokéo** = think) literally means to "think well with". To show close identification that is personally involved ([sun](#)); enthusiastically agree, and so to consent or to give hearty approval to something. Ponder that thought - Paul was giving full, hearty approval as the stones were crushing on Stephen's body! Only the Gospel could save a heart that cold and hard!

All NT uses of **suneudokeo** - Lk. 11:48; Acts 8:1; Acts 22:20; Rom. 1:32; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:13

**Watching** ([present tense](#)) (5442) ([phulasso](#)) means to preserve by keeping an eye on, carrying out this role like a military guard or sentinel (cp Acts 23:35, 28:16). We get a great picture of **phulasso** which describes the vigilance of the shepherds "keeping watch

over their flock by night." (Lk 2:8+). Paul was keeping his eyes on the coats lest one be snatched away. What irony, watching coats so they would not be snatched, while he watched a man's life be snatched away! Paul's priorities as an unbeliever were "upside down!" And that's a true statement for virtually everyone who refuses to believe in Jesus. They focus on the temporal which they will lose, and refuse to focus on the eternal where they will lose their soul! They are double "losers!" How foolish can you be! Jesus says "the way is broad that leads to destruction ([apoleia](#) = loss of all purpose for which man is created = To glorify God!), and there are **many** who enter through it." (Mt 7:13+)

All 31 uses of **phulasso** -

Mt 19:20; Mk. 10:20; Lk 2:8; Lk 8:29; Lk 11:21; Lk 11:28; Lk 12:15; Lk 18:21; Jn 12:25; Jn 12:47; Jn 17:12; Acts 7:53; Acts 12:4; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:24; Acts 21:25; Acts 22:20; Acts 23:35; Acts 28:16; Ro 2:26; Gal 6:13; 2 Th 3:3; 1 Ti 5:21; 1 Ti 6:20; 2 Ti 1:12; 2 Ti 1:14; 2 Ti 4:15; 2 Pe 2:5; 2 Pe 3:17; 1 Jn 5:21; Jude 1:24

**Were slaying** ([present tense](#)) (337) ([anaireo](#) from **ana** = up + **haireo** = to take) literally means to take up or lift up (from the ground), and most of the uses of are in an active sense referring to literal killing or putting to death (Mt. 2:16; Acts 5:36; 7:28; 9:23, 24, 29; 16:27; 23:15, 21, 27; 25:3). Anaireo speaks of public execution (Luke 23:32; Acts 2:23; 10:39; 12:2; 13:28; 22:20; 26:10).

**Acts 22:21 "And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles'"**

KJV Acts 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

- **Go** - Acts 9:15
- **For I will send you** - Acts 9:15; Acts 13:2,46,47; Acts 18:6; Acts 26:17,18; Ro 1:5; 11:13; 15:16; 16:26; Gal 1:15,16; 2:7,8; Eph 3:6-8; 1 Ti 2:7; 2 Ti 1:11
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
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## JESUS PROPHECIES PAUL'S PURPOSEFUL LIFE

**Parallel Passage** addressed to Ananias to go to Saul/Paul but in the present passage addressed by Jesus to Paul the go is to the Gentiles (his "commissioning" as the apostle to the Gentiles)...

But the Lord said to him, '**Go** ([present imperative](#)), for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; (Acts 9:15+)

I explain this more below, but that word **purposeful** could just as easily be phrased "**purpose filled**." **Purposeful** means having meaning through having an aim. When we travel with God, in His will (His "aim"), in His Spirit's power, for His glory, our life becomes a great adventure ([play song](#)) and the reward is temporal **and** eternal joy!

**Alexander Maclaren** - "Let us say all that is in our hearts. He will listen, and clear away hesitations, and show us our path, and make us willing to walk in it. Jesus did not discuss the matter with Paul, but reiterated the command, and made it more pointed and clear; and then Paul stopped objecting and yielded his will, as we should do."

**And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles'** - This is an interesting verse -- notice the command to **Go** which clearly is Paul's choice (man's responsibility) juxtaposed to **I will send** which is Jesus' empowerment (God's sovereignty). Our part/His part - this pattern is seen all through the Bible as God invites saved sinners to join Him in saving sinners! Amazing grace indeed! As aside, "I will send you far away to the Gentiles" is a prophecy, a fore-telling! And of course it was fulfilled.

**Jack Andrews** - It is always good to go where the Lord wants us to go and do what the Lord wants us to do. May God give us wisdom and clear direction to know His will and obedience and faithfulness to do His will! Homer Kent said, "Paul had not repudiated his people. He had preached to Gentiles only because God had directly ordered it." Are we going where the Lord commands us to go? Are we doing what the Lord commands us to do? Are we serving where the Lord has us to serve? Are we taking advantage of every opportunity to share our testimony and His gospel? Paul took advantage of every opportunity to witness for Jesus! Paul talked about his testimony: his conduct before Christ. Paul talked about his transformation: his coming to Christ. Paul talked about his task: his commission by Christ. Let us be faithful in taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who need Him. Would you take advantage

of every opportunity in Jesus name?.(Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

It is interesting that Jesus gives Paul "go" commands in Acts 22 - Acts 22:10 (**go** on into Damascus), Acts 22:18 (**"Make haste, and get out"**) Acts 22:21 (**Go!** from Jerusalem)

**Go** (4198)(**poreuo**) means to move from one destination (port) to another and it implies (especially in the context of this passage) to travel along a purposeful ("PURPOSE FILLED") passageway! **Go** is in the [present imperative](#) which is a command for this to always be Paul's direction in life. In addition it is in the [middle voice](#) which underscores Paul's personal involvement in the process.

**THOUGHT** - When we willingly travel on the path God has laid out for us we are blessed for He gives eternal meaning to our temporal journey when we "go in His direction," (so speak). And best of all when we "go in His direction," He puts the wind of His Spirit in our sails to enable us to navigate the inevitable challenges that will arise along that journey. And remember, the secular ad got this one right - to paraphrase it "You only go around once, grab for all the [gusto](#) of God's purpose you can!" (Gusto means "enthusiastic and vigorous enjoyment or appreciation; vitality marked by an abundance of vigor and enthusiasm" - Dear believer, don't you want a life like that? Of course you do and it is yours for the taking, by grace through faith, daily taking in the Word and relying wholly on the Holy Spirit!

**Gary Hill** adds "The Lord views all or goings (poreúomai) as "rewardable" or "judgable" (Eccl 12:14). Indeed, we are eternally held accountable for every decision (action) we make (cf. Jn 1:4,7,9 with 1 Cor 4:5). This is underlined by the fact that **poreúomai** is always [middle voice](#) in the future tense, and perhaps in other forms (depending on the context). All of our "goings" (traveling) have eternal significance (everlasting repercussions) because the Lord purposefully designed all the physical scenes of life before creation. This truth calls each of us, all the time, to a purpose-driven life (God's purpose)! (See Ps 119:89-91, 139:16.) Each decision (action) we make in faith transports us to "His next stop," i.e. the next scene He set from eternity for our everlasting gain (cf. Eph 2:10). There is no amoral scene in life – so everything counts...because God counts all things! ([Discovery Bible](#))

**Jesus** amplifies the "**Go**" in Acts 26

'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, (HERE IS THE HIGH AND HOLY PURPOSE) to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:16-18)

**Acts 22:22 They listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!"**

KJV Acts 22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

- **Away with such a fellow from the earth** Acts 7:54-57; 21:36; 25:24; Luke 23:18; John 19:15
- **for he should not be allowed to live** Acts 25:24
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyright by Holman)
- [Watch Video of Jewish reaction and Paul taken into barracks](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE LAST STRAW!

**They listened** ([imperfect tense](#)) **to him up to this statement** - "Until he said this" - The Jews were patient but Paul's mention of a Jew going to Gentiles was the proverbial "last straw" or the "[straw that broke the camel's back](#)." In a word, the Jews were adamantly closed to ethnic openness as explained by **Barton**!

**Barton** - They were supposed to be a light to the Gentiles, telling them about the one true God, but they had renounced that mission by becoming separatist and exclusive. Did the Jews hate the Gentiles? No. Continual efforts were made by the Jews to try to convert the Gentiles. The implications of Paul's testimony and Christian gospel were clear, however. He was suggesting that the Gentiles could be saved and made right with God without first subscribing to the law and submitting to Jewish circumcision. In effect, Paul

was claiming divine approval for the idea that Jews and Gentiles could have equal standing before God. This message collided head-on with the blindness, pride, and prejudice of the Jews. The results were explosive. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**MacArthur** adds - "Members of the crowd had **listened to** Paul **up to** his **statement** that God had sent him to minister to the Gentiles. But that was the end of their interest, since they could not tolerate the suggestion that Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jewish proselytes. That would make them spiritually equal to the Jewish people before God—the most blatant heresy imaginable to the crowd." (Ibid)

**Robertson** - But "this word" was like a spark in a powder magazine or a torch to an oil tank. The explosion of pent-up indignation broke out instantly worse than at first (Acts 21:30).

**And then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth** - They spoke loudly and cried out. The Jews begin calling for Paul's life, reminiscent of the angry words of their forefathers (and possibly even some the present mob were there) when "they cried out, "Away with Him (JESUS), away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate \*said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." (Jn 19:15). "Anyone who dared place Gentiles on an equal footing with Jews in God's saving purpose should not be allowed to pollute the earth with his presence." (MacArthur)

**Away** ([present imperative](#)) ([142](#))([airo](#)) which is the same cry as in Acts 21:36+, but this time adding **from the earth**, clearly a cry to kill him. This is reiterated by the following phrase (not be allowed to live). They were serious and wanted his blood!

**For (gar)** is a **term of explanation**, in this case explaining why he should be removed from the earth.

**He should not be allowed to live!** ([zao](#)) - NLT = "He isn't fit to live!" This would be a somewhat [euphemistic](#) way of saying "kill him!"

**Allowed** ([2520](#))([katheko](#) from *katá* = down, according or together with + *heko* = to come) literally means to come down and then to be convenient, to be fitting or right. It means to be appropriate. In the negative use (as in this verse) **katheko** refers to "what is unfitting or improper" and was a technical word used by the Stoic philosophers. They are saying that Paul is "offensive even to natural human judgment." Robertson adds "The [imperfect tense](#)) is a neat Greek idiom for impatience about an obligation: It was not fitting, he ought to have been put to death long ago. The obligation is conceived as not lived up to."

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**LIFE APPLICATION AUTHENTICITY** Paul demonstrated great candor and courage in sharing his conversion story. He could have hit lightly on controversial points or mumbled his way past them. But he didn't. Convinced of the truth of the message of grace that Christ had given, he spelled it out clearly. It is tempting in conversations with unbelieving friends or neighbors to gloss over our faith. And how wrong! Sometimes a simple sentence or two about "how God helped me during the grief process," "how prayer transformed my marriage," or "the comfort I found in a Bible promise" can be just the tool to open up a spiritual conversation. Ask God for opportunities this week to speak an honest word of testimony that he can use to bring forth new life. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - In June 1987 London held its collective breath. While working on a building site, a construction foreman thought his workers had hit a cast iron pipe while using a pile driver. After picking up and then dropping the huge object, they realized the pipe strangely resembled a bomb. It was—a 2,200 pound WW II bomb, one of the largest the Germans dropped during the blitz which killed more than 15,000 people in London. After evacuating the area, a ten-man bomb disposal unit worked eighteen hours before finally deactivating the seven-foot device. Hatred is like an unexploded bomb. Unless it is deactivated it can detonate and cause great damage. The Jews hatred and anger toward Paul was detonated at the word "Gentiles." (Jack Andrews)

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**Acts 22:23 And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,**

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KJV Acts 22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

- **throwing off their cloak** Acts 7:53; 26:11; Eccl 10:3
- [Watch Video of Jewish reaction and Paul taken into barracks](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE CROWD GOES WILD

**And as they were crying out** - Shouting (continually - [present tense](#)) is [kraugazo](#) (from [krazo](#) = clamor or cry = a word like "croak"

~ suggests a rough and guttural sound = croaking of ravens) depicts the mob clamoring, even screaming. It was a verb used of a dog's barking, a raven's squawking or a drunk's bawling. They were "drunk" with (filled with - controlled by) anger!

**Alexander Maclaren** wrote, "What a picture of frenzied hate! And what was it all for? Because Gentiles were to be allowed to share in Israel's privileges. And what were the privileges which they thus jealously monopolized? The favor and protection of the God who, as their own prophets had taught them, was the God of the whole earth, and revealed Him to Israel that Israel might reveal Him to the world. The less they entered into the true possession of their heritage, the more savagely they resented sharing it with the nations. The more their prerogative became a mere outward thing, the more they snarled at any one who proposed to participate in it. (ED: MACLAREN'S NEXT STATEMENT IS VERY INTERESTING) **To seek to keep religious blessings to one's self is a conclusive proof that they are not really possessed. If we have them we shall long to impart them.**"

**Matthew Henry** wrote, "The spirit of enmity against the gospel of Christ commonly shows itself in silencing the ministers of Christ and His gospel, and stopping their mouths, as the Jews did Paul's here... They clamored against him as one that was unworthy of life, much more of liberty ."

**And throwing off their cloaks** - The [present tense](#) pictures the crowd as continually tossing off their cloaks ([himation](#)).

**Throwing off** (4496) ([rhipto](#)) means to throw, hurl or cast (Mt 27:5; Lk 17:2; Acts 27:19+, Acts 27:29+). **Vine** adds the idea is "to throw with a sudden motion, to jerk, cast forth."

**And tossing** ([present tense](#)) **dust into the air** - You can see the dust flying. What a [cacophonous](#), [chaotic](#) scene this must have created. The Romans must have been aghast, thinking we will have an riot on our hands if we are not careful.

**John MacArthur** has an interesting thought on what their angry actions represented - Some people would say, "Well, that was just fury, and they were throwing dirt and throwing – you know, like they were mad." No, I don't think so. I think they had a very specific purpose. You say, "What do you mean?" Well, you know, I was reading about casting off their clothes, and my mind went back to Acts 22:20, and it says that when Stephen was stoned, Paul was "watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him." You know, whenever they stoned somebody, apparently they took off their outer garment so they could really let the rocks fly. And I think what they were going to do was stone Paul; and since he was clear up at the top of the stairs, it was a long shot. And they started throwing off their outer garments, you see, but they threw dirt. You know why they threw dirt? There weren't any rocks. They grabbed whatever there was: dirt clods instead of stones. I think they were going to stone him. They were so infuriated. They were in a frenzy, and they began to grab dirt and throw dirt, and threw their clothes off so they could throw it far enough to hit him. What a scene. Can you see how totally stupid and totally irrational they are? All of the logic of Paul's presentation means nothing. All he does is mention the word "Gentiles" and they go nuts. That's religious prejudice.

**Dust** (2868) ([koniortos](#) from [konía](#) = dust + [órnumi](#) = to stir up, excite, raise) means fine particles of matter usually of the dirt of the earth. It was used most often in the NT in the phrase [shake the dust off your feet](#) (Mt 10:14; Lk. 9:5; Lk. 10:11; Acts 13:51) and then in this verse of dust in the air.

**Gilbrant** - The word pictures raised dust or clouds of dust. Most of the occurrences in the Septuagint retain this image (Deut 28:24; Isaiah 5:24; Ezekiel 26:10; etc.), with three exceptions: (1) the golden calf was ground to dust/powder (Deut 9:21); (2) the perfumers had powders (Song 3:6); (3) cities will be made into dust (Isaiah 10:6).

**Koniortos** in the NT - Matt. 10:14; Lk. 9:5; Lk. 10:11; Acts 13:51; Acts 22:23

**Koniortos** in the **Septuagint** -

Ex 9:9; Dt. 9:21; Dt. 28:24 = "The LORD will make the rain of your land **powder** and dust"; 2 Ki. 9:17; Job 21:18; Song. 3:6; Isa. 3:24; Isa. 5:24; Isa. 10:6; Isa. 17:13; Isa. 29:5; Ezek. 26:10; Da 2:35 = "were crushed all at the same time and became like **chaff**"; Nah. 1:3 = "clouds are the dust beneath His feet."

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**Illustration** on Paul's Rejection by the Jews - G. Campbell Morgan was one of 150 young men who sought entrance to the Wesleyan ministry in 1888. He passed the doctrinal examinations, but then faced the trial sermon. In a big auditorium that could seat more than 1,000 people there sat three ministers and 75 others who came to listen. When Morgan stepped into the pulpit, the vast room and the searching, critical eyes caught him and hindered him in his delivery. Two weeks later Morgan's name appeared among the 105 rejected for the ministry that year. Jill Morgan, his daughter-in-law, wrote in her book, A Man of the Word: "He wired to his father the one word, 'Rejected,' and sat down to write in his diary: 'Very dark everything seems. Still, He knoweth best.' "Quickly came the reply: 'Rejected on earth. Accepted in Heaven. Dad.' Rejection is rarely permanent, as Morgan went on to prove. Even in this life, circumstances change, and ultimately, there is no rejection of those who are accepted by Jesus Christ. (Jack Andrews)

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**Acts 22:24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.**

KJV Acts 22:24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

- **the commander ordered him** Acts 21:31,32; 23:10,27
- **he should be examined by scourging** Acts 22:25-29; 16:22,23,37; John 19:1; Heb 11:35
- [Watch Video of Paul taken into barrack to be flogged](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Schematic of Roman Scourging - click to enlarge

**The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks** - He is determined to find out why all the fuss about Paul.

**Ordered** (first word in sentence for emphasis) ([2753](#)) keleuo

**Commander** ([5506](#))([chiliarchos](#) from [chikioi](#) = a thousand + [archo](#) = to rule) is transliterated as chiliarch, literally a commander of a thousand. is used to indicate the commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem (Acts 21:33+)

**Jack Andrews** - The soldiers heard their commander and heeded their commander. They brought the prisoner Paul into the barracks. Roman soldiers obeyed orders—they understood the importance of following orders and they respected their officers and those in authority over them. The army of the Lord would do well to heed our Commander in Chief and do all He tells us to do! (Ibid)

**Barracks**(2925a)([parembole](#) from from [para](#) = from beside, by the side of + [emballo](#) = throw) means something thrown beside something else and as a military technical term expressing a method of drawing up the troops as in preparation for battle (Heb 11:34). It came to mean a military encampment and as a standing camp took on the idea of military quarters or barracks. The KJV translates it in the present passage as "castle" and in this context [parembole](#) referred to the [Antonia Fortress](#) next to the Temple (see picture).

**Parembole** in NT - Acts 21:34; Acts 21:37; Acts 22:24; Acts 23:10; Acts 23:16; Acts 23:32; Heb. 11:34; Heb. 13:11; Heb. 13:13; Rev. 20:9

**Stating that he should be examined by scourging**- This was the Roman equivalent of our modern "water boarding" and was extremely painful even to the point of sometimes causing death. But in point of fact this ancient method of interrogation would be far worse than water boarding. See [video of a Roman Scourging](#). And as if the repeated deeply cutting lashings did not inflict enough pain the Romans kept salt readily available to cast on the wounds.

**THOUGHT** - Dear fellow believer in Christ, O how the vivid realization of this horrible torture technique should drive home to our heart the greatness of our Savior's love for us as we ponder the truth of Isaiah's words by "**His stripes we are healed.**" (Isaiah 53:5+) And as you ponder the price Christ paid for our redemption listen to [How Deep the Father's Love](#). O my, what a wonderful Savior is our Lord Jesus Christ. And if you are being tempted to sin even as you read this, may the thoughts of Christ's suffering in our place create in your heart an "affection" which expels those tempting thoughts to sin against Him! (see [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#))

**NET Note** - Under the Roman legal system it was customary to use physical torture to extract confessions or other information from prisoners who were not Roman citizens and who were charged with various crimes, especially treason or sedition. The lashing would be done with a whip of leather thongs with pieces of metal or bone attached to the ends

**Boice** - "This was not the normal Jewish flogging, which was bad enough, but the dreaded Roman flagellum. It was a beating so severe that in some cases it resulted in the death of the victim."

**Examined** ([426](#))([anetazo](#) from [ana](#) = emphatic + [etazo](#) = to examine) means to be examined thoroughly judicially or forensically, give someone a hearing and in this context using torture in connection with the hearing. Only other NT use Acts 22:29. Once in Septuagint Jdg 6:29. In one of the papyri it refers to the careful examination of documents.

**Robertson on anetazo** - Milligan and Moulton's Vocabulary quotes an Oxyrhynchus papyrus of A.D. 127 which has a prefect using the word directing government clerks to "examine" (anetazein) documents and glue them together into volumes (tomoi). The word was evidently in use for such purposes. It was a kind of "third degree" applied to Paul by the use of scourges (mastixin), instrumental plural of mastix, old word for whip, as in Hebrews 11:36. But this way of beginning an inquiry by torture (inquisition) was contrary to Roman law (Page): Non esse a tormentis incipiendum, Divus Augustus statuit.



**MacArthur** - Scourging by the Roman flagellum (a wooden handle to which were attached leather thongs tipped with bits of metal and bone) was a fearful ordeal from which men frequently died (from loss of blood or infection). Jesus endured it before His crucifixion (John 19:1). Such a beating would have surpassed anything Paul had previously experienced. In preparation, the guards stretched him out with thongs to make his body taut and magnify the effects of the flagellation. (Ibid)

**Scourging** (3148)(**mastix**) is a whip, a scourge (Acts 22:24; Heb. 11:36; Sept.: 1 Kgs. 12:11, 14; Prov. 26:3). Figuratively, a scourge from God meaning a disease, plague (Mark 3:10; 5:29, 34; Luke 7:21; Sept.: Ps. 32:10; 39:10; 89:32).

**So that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way** - As the chief captain did not understand Hebrew, he was ignorant of the charge against Paul, and also of the defence which the apostle had made; but as he saw that they grew more and more outrageous, he supposed that Paul must have given them the highest provocation, and therefore, according to the barbarous and irrational practice which has existed in all countries, he determined to put him to the torture, in order to make him confess his crime.

**Find out** (understand) (1921)(**epiginosko** from **epí** means upon intensifies the force of + **ginosko** = to know) means to know fully, to know with certainty, or to know thoroughly, exactly, fully, or completely.

**Robertson** - Lysias was as much in the dark as ever, for Paul's speech had been in Aramaic and this second explosion was a mystery to him like the first.

**Acts 22:25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"**

KJV Acts 22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

- **What are you about to do** Acts 10:1; 23:17; 27:1,3,43; Mt 8:8; 27:54
- **Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman** Acts 22:27,28; 16:37; 25:16
- [Watch Video of Paul taken into barrack to be flogged](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PAUL CLAIMS HIS RIGHTS!**

**But when they stretched him out with thongs** (see picture in v24) - **Moulton-Milligan** on **stretched forth** (proteino - only NT use) says "this verb seems to be used not of binding or tying with thongs (AV, RV), but rather of "stretching forward" with thongs, so as to cause a tense posture for receiving blows." He was ready for a brutal beating, one that would not stop until he confessed to the crimes he was suspected of.

Recall that Paul had already resolved "I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:13+)

**Thongs** (2438)(**himas**) is a string or strap as one of leather to tie sandals to the feet (Matt. 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:27; Lxx uses - Isa. 5:27, Job 39:10). In the present passage himas refers to thongs or straps of leather used to bind and scourge Paul. Scourging was used with criminals, and especially slaves. In the Septuagint Isaiah 5:18 has a figurative use "Woe to those who drag iniquity with the **cords** of falsehood (literally with "ropes of emptiness")." This is a sad picture of sinners so attached to their sinful ways (depicted metaphorically as a heavy load) that they strain to drag them along behind them! Woe!

**Paul said to the centurion who was standing by** - Paul was not foolish, so spoke up before the [scourge](#) hit his back! Why Paul did not speak of sooner is a mystery.

**Centurion** (1543)(**Hekatontarches** from **hekaton** = one hundred + **archo** = to command) means a commander of a hundred soldiers, a centurion, and would be our equivalent of an army captain or company commander. **Centurion** is from Latin centurio an officer in charge of a hundred soldiers (the Latin equivalent being used by Mk 15:39-45).

**Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned** - By the Roman law, no magistrate was allowed to punish a Roman citizen capitally, or by inflicting stripes, or even binding him; and the single expression, "I am a Roman citizen," arrested their severest decrees, and obtained, if not an escape, at least a delay of his punishment.

In (Acts 16:22-24) Paul did not invoke his Roman citizenship and was beaten with rods

The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**Is it lawful** (permitted)(1832)(**exesti** from **ek** = out + **eimí** = to be) is an impersonal verb, signifying "it is permitted, it is lawful" (or interrogatively, "is it lawful?"). Paul knew that Roman citizens were exempted from such brutal methods by the [Valerian and Porcian laws](#)

**Uncondemned** (178)(**akatakritos** from **a** = without + **katakrino** - to condemn) means either uncondemned or not having gone through a legal trial (both true in the present passage). In the only other NT use in Acts 16:37 "But Paul said to them (the soldiers sent by magistrates to set Paul and Silas free), "They have beaten us in public **without trial** (**akatakritos**), men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

**Acts 22:26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman."**

KJV Acts 22:26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

- **What are you about to do** Acts 22:29; 23:27
- [Watch Video of Paul taken into barrack to be flogged](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **CENTURION WARNS COMMANDER**

**When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman** - The centurion like a good Roman soldier immediately took this issue to the next in command in the form of a warning.

**MacArthur** - To subject a Roman citizen to the *flagellum* could have destroyed Lysias's military career or even cost him his life. (Ibid)

**Acts 22:27 The commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."**

KJV Acts 22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

- [Watch Video of Paul taken into barrack to be flogged](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **COMMANDER'S RESPONSE TO PAUL**

**The commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"** - At this point the commander is gravely concerned.

**And he said, "Yes."** - Presumably the commander responded to this new information immediately.

Applying this to believers, we have a heavenly citizenship purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Who redeemed us from slavery and sin...

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Php 3:20-21)

**Herschel Ford** said “We are citizens of a greater kingdom—the kingdom of God. Our citizenship came to us at a great cost, also. We did not pay the price. Jesus paid it on Calvary. We should weep forever over our sins, we could spend all our time in the work of the flesh, we could give until it hurts, but we could never purchase one foot of ground in the kingdom. When we come unto Him, we find that He has paid the price for us. All that He has done is put to our account and all of heaven becomes ours.” ([Simple sermons from the Book of Acts](#))

**Acts 22:28 The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born a citizen."**

KJV Acts 22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

- [Watch Video of Paul taken into barrack to be flogged](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### COMMANDER'S RESPONSE TO PAUL'S CITIZENSHIP

**The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money."** - His point may have been that Roman citizenship can be bought if you have enough money. We learn in Acts 23:26 that the commander's name was Claudius Lysias. He would have taken this name when he became an official citizen of Rome. The Emperor Claudius was probably ruling when this man obtained his citizenship—thus his choice of name. In any event he understood that Roman citizenship had its privileges.

**F F Bruce** comments - “Something of this sort may have been in the tribune's mind as he said, It cost me a very large sum of money to obtain Roman citizenship – the implication being that the privilege must have become cheap of late if such a sorry-looking figure as Paul could claim it.”

**Marshall** adds that “The point was not that the tribune doubted Paul's claim, but rather he was implying that anybody could become a citizen these days!”

One might ask why did the commander accept Paul's declaration of citizenship based just on his word? The answer is that the penalty for makes a false declaration of citizenship was death. So clearly he did not think Paul was trying to deceive him.

**Longenecker** - “The verbal claim to Roman citizenship was accepted at face value; penalties for falsifying documents and making false claims of citizenship were exceedingly stiff – Epictetus speaks of death for such acts.”

**And Paul said, "But I was actually born a citizen"** - This must have shocked the commander, for Paul did not purchase his citizenship but was born a citizen.

**F F Bruce** - “How the citizenship was acquired by Paul's father or grandfather we have no means of knowing, but analogy would suggest that it was for valuable services rendered to a Roman general or administrator in the southeastern area of Asia Minor.”

**John Phillips** wrote, “There are times for a believer to claim his civil rights. A believer should be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ, but there is no virtue in suffering merely for suffering's sake.” (Exploring Acts)

**Bible Background Commentary** - Scholars note that one could **achieve Roman citizenship in several ways**: one could be (1) born to a Roman father (so Paul); (2) a citizen of a Roman colony; (3) a retired auxiliary soldier; (4) part of a municipal aristocracy or other group honored by Rome; or (5)—and this was most common after being born in Rome or in a colony—a slave freed by his or her owner. This tribune or commander is either a former slave who acquired enough funds to buy his freedom (as often happened), or he bought his citizenship by a bribe, which was common under the preceding emperor, whose name he took (Acts 23:26). He had to be a citizen before he could be part of a legion; to have the status of a tribune, he must have had a powerful patron or been one of the rare individuals who toiled his way up through the ranks to this position. Being freeborn normally gave one higher status than being a freedperson did, and a slaveborn citizen had limited rights. (This was true from the aristocratic standpoint of status, although it was not necessarily true economically. Still attached as clients to their former owners, freed slaves had economic advantages that freeborn peasants lacked.) Paul thus has superior status in some sense. He may have replied in Latin: he was *ingenuus*, a citizen by birth (though cf. his family in Acts 16:37). (The IVP Bible Background Commentary – New Testament)

**Acts 22:29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.**

KJV Acts 22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

- **to examine him.** Acts 22:24; Heb 11:35
- **the commander** Acts 22:25,26; 16:38,39
- [Watch Video of Paul taken into barrack to be flogged](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL RELEASED IMMEDIATELY

**Therefore** - The situation is coming to conclusion. All of this was happening in the barracks where Paul was bound and the soldiers were ready to make him talk. He talked alright, but not what the Romans wanted to hear or expected to hear.

**Herschel Ford** said "We are citizens of a greater kingdom—the kingdom of God. Our citizenship came to us at a great cost, also. We did not pay the price. Jesus paid it on Calvary. We should weep forever over our sins, we could spend all our time in the work of the flesh, we could give until it hurts, but we could never purchase one foot of ground in the kingdom. When we come unto Him, we find that He has paid the price for us. All that He has done is put to our account and all of heaven becomes ours." ([Simple sermons from the Book of Acts](#))

**Guzik** - Paul was an extremely rare individual. It was uncommon to find such an educated, intelligent, devout Jew who was also a Roman citizen. God would use this unique background to use Paul in a special way, even as he wants to use your unique background to use you in a special way. (Ibid)

**Those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him** - The examination was quickly brought to a halt! Some officials flaunted this law Keener recording that "some Roman procurators crucified Jerusalem aristocrats who were Roman citizens." (Ibid) As note in (Acts 21:38-40) this commander clearly respected the Roman law.

**Examine** (426) see notes above on [anetazo](#)

**Immediately** (2112) ([eutheos](#) from [euthus](#) = straight, immediate) is an adverb which generally means at once, right away, forthwith, straightaway, without an interval of time or a point of time subsequent to a previous point of time

**And the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains**- The commander and the soldiers under him did not want any part with scourging a Roman citizen that had not be tried and found guilty.

**Was afraid** (5399) ([phobeo](#) from [phobos](#) = fear source of our English "phobia") means to be in an apprehensive state that can range from mild uneasiness to stark terror as when one is frightened, terrified or alarmed. It is hard to say where along this "fear continuum" that the Commander had landed, but clearly he feared possible retribution for his illegal conduct (he had already bound him which would have been illegal).

**Jack Andrews** - He was afraid for his position, his life, his well-being. He had made a grave mistake and he was fearful because it could cost him dearly. I don't know if you have ever messed up on the job—trying to do a good job, trying to be conscientious, trying to work hard—and still blow it! When that happens you definitely don't want to see your boss coming or have to go report to your boss. (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

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**John MacArthur** gives five practical principles from the pattern of Paul's testimony -

**First**, Paul accepted the situation as God ordained it. Facing persecution never caused him to be unfaithful to God's plan. He had known for some time that he faced arrest when he arrived at Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-23; 21:4, 10-13). He calmly accepted that as God's will, telling those trying to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, "I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

**Second**, Paul used his circumstances as an opportunity. The crowd had not gathered to hear him preach but to beat and kill him. Paul, however, used that occasion to proclaim to them how God's saving power had transformed his life.

**Third**, Paul was conciliatory toward his persecutors. He did not threaten the hostile crowd or seek revenge. Instead, he courteously addressed them as "brethren and fathers" (Acts 22:1) and even assigned to their vicious beating of him the noble motive of zeal for God. Paul practiced the command he had earlier given to the Roman Christians: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not" (Rom. 12:14). He was like his Lord Jesus, who "being reviled... did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

**Fourth**, Paul exalted the Lord. His defense to the crowd focused not on his impressive credentials and achievements but on what God had accomplished in his life. That was consistent with his words to the Corinthians: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31). Exalting the Lord also served to exonerate Paul and put the crowd in the position of opposing God.

**Finally**, and most important, Paul maintained the proper attitude—one of selfless love. It was his love for other believers that brought him to Jerusalem (to deliver the offering). It was his love for his weaker brethren and desire for unity in the church that brought him to the temple. It was his love for his unsaved countrymen (cf. Ro 9:1-3) that led him to evangelize the hostile crowd. And it was his love for God that motivated his love for people and caused him to give glory to Him.

Believers who practice these principles will, like Paul, be able to give a positive testimony in the most negative of circumstances. ([The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13-28](#))

**Acts 22:30 But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them.**

KJV Acts 22:30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

- **wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews** Acts 21:11,33; 23:28; 26:29; Mt 27:2
- **ordered the chief priests and all the Council** Acts 22:5; 5:21; 23:15; Mt 10:17
- [Video of Paul before the Sanhedrin](#)
- [Acts 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE JEWISH SANHEDRIN

Paul's delivery to the Sanhedrin sets the stage for his defense in Acts 23:1ff that ended up with him again back in the hands of the Roman commander (Acts 23:10). From now until the end of the Book of Acts, Paul will be in Roman custody.

**But on the next day** - Where he spent the night is not stated, but surely in the Fortress of Antonia, for the Jews would have killed him.

**Wishing** ([boulomai](#)) **to know for certain** ([aphales](#)) **why he had been accused** ([kategoreo](#)) **by the Jews** ([loudaios](#)) - The commander is still confused about the accusations against Paul and so he calls for an "emergency" session of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish "Supreme Court."

**He released him** ([3089](#))([luo](#)) means to loose, release, dissolve. Here the meaning is to set free from his bonds (presumably the thongs).

**And ordered** ([keleuo](#)) **the chief priests** ([archiereus](#)) **and all the Council to assemble** ([sunerchomai](#)) - The Romans commander calls [the Sanhedrin](#) to meet. In cases of emergency, as this was, a Roman official, such as the tribune, could order the Sanhedrin to meet.

**Council** (supreme court) (Sanhedrin)([4892](#))([sunedrion](#) from [sun/syn](#) = together + **hedra** = a seat or **hedraios** = sedentary, as one seated in a chair) means ones seated together. This noun generally describes an assembly or council. In classical Greek **sunhedrion** initially referred to the place of meeting; and later described the assembly itself or the "council."

**Guzik** - The Sanhedrin was the Jewish congress or parliament. Paul would be given the opportunity to speak before the group that he was once a member of. Acts 26:10 clearly says that Paul had a vote – usually, that would be used as a member of the Sanhedrin.. Paul would logically think this was the opportunity of a lifetime, to preach to those he loved so much and knew so well....Paul knew the general plan; but just like us, he didn't know how it would all work out. He had to trust God, just like every believer.

**And brought Paul down and set him before them** - The scene would have been somewhat like depicted above.

**Brought down** (2609)(**katago** from **kata** = down or intensifier + **ago** = to lead, bring) means literally to bring down (Acts 9:30; 22:30; 23:15, 20, 28; Rom. 10:6; Sept.: Ge 44:21; 1 Ki 1:33). (See [video reproduction on youtube](#))

**Katago** - 9x - bring...down(3), brought(1), brought...down(3), put(2).

Lk. 5:11; Acts 9:30; Acts 22:30; Acts 23:15; Acts 23:20; Acts 23:28; Acts 27:3; Acts 28:12; Rom. 10:6

**Jack Andrews** - Thank God that when he was rejected by man that he was not rejected by God. When men turned on Paul he didn't turn from God! He trusted the Lord, served the Lord, honored the Lord, and witnessed for the Lord even when he was being rejected by the Jews. How do we respond when we are rejected? How do we treat those who are mean to us? How do we act toward those who are hostile toward us? Often we do not respond Christ-like! Often we retaliate, ridicule, defend ourselves, and dishonor God! Would you trust Him in the face of adversity? Would you honor Him in the midst of rejection? Would you repent and stand up for Jesus in a hostile world? May we learn from Paul how to handle adversity and rejection! Let us be faithful to the Lord and remember that our citizenship is in heaven and we are to be loyal citizens to our King! (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)