

## **SBCOD Bible Study Notes**

**5-13-26**

**Acts 22**

### **The Sermon To The Crowd In Jerusalem – Verses 1-5**

**<sup>1</sup>“Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.” <sup>2</sup>When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: <sup>3</sup>“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. <sup>4</sup>I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, <sup>5</sup>as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.**

**22:1-2** Gamaliel was the most honored rabbi of the first century. He was well known and respected as an expert on religious law and as a voice for moderation (5:34). Paul was showing his credentials as a well-educated man trained under the most respected Jewish rabbi.

**22:3-4** By saying that at one time he was as zealous for God as any of his listeners, Paul was acknowledging their sincere motives behind their desire to kill him, pointing out that he had done the same to Christian leaders a few years earlier. Paul always tried to establish common ground with his audience before launching into a full-scale defense of Christianity. When you witness for Christ, first identify yourself with your audience. They will be much more likely to listen if they feel a common bond with you.

### **Paul Describes His Supernatural Experience On The Way To Damascus – Verses 6-11**

**<sup>6</sup>“About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. <sup>7</sup>I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’ <sup>8</sup>“Who are you, Lord?’ I asked. “‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. <sup>9</sup>My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup>“What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. “‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ <sup>11</sup>My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.**

**22:6** After gaining a hearing and establishing common ground with his audience, Paul gave his testimony. He shared how he had come to faith in Christ. Sound reasoning is good, but it is also important to simply share what Christ has done in our lives. No matter how we present the message, however, not everyone will accept it, as Paul knew. We must faithfully and responsibly present the gospel and leave the results to God.

**22:6-11** Suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me: Paul was a determined persecutor of Christians and Jesus until this heavenly light shone on him. It is as if Paul said: “I was just like you all, until I had an encounter with Jesus. Jesus met me and my life was dramatically changed.” And since I could not see for the glory of that light: The brightness of that light made Paul blind. In persecuting Jesus he was spiritually blind, and then he was also physically blind — and had to be humbly led by the hand into the city of Damascus.

## **Describes His Response To The Supernatural Experience In Damascus – Verses 12-16**

**<sup>12</sup> “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. <sup>13</sup> He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. <sup>14</sup> “Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. <sup>15</sup> You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup> And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’**

**22:12-16** Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews: Paul noted that it was Ananias, a man with credentials as a good Jew who received him into the Christian family. The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will: In Paul’s speech, we see that both he and Ananias both simply acted like good Jews. They did not resist God nor deny their heritage. Paul wanted them to know that he still served the God of his fathers. He had not rejected Judaism. Instead, many in Judaism had rejected God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

## **Jesus Speaks To Paul In A Trance At The Temple In Jerusalem – Verses 17-18**

**<sup>17</sup> “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup> and saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’**

**22:17** When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple: 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.

**22:17** 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.

**22:18** Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me: This word from Jesus probably was a surprise to Paul. With good reason, he probably thought of himself as the perfect one to bring the gospel to his fellow Jews. Nevertheless, Jesus gave him this warning, even telling him to make haste.

## **Jesus Replies To Paul’s Response – Verses 19-22**

**<sup>19</sup> “‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. <sup>20</sup> And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ <sup>21</sup> “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” <sup>22</sup> The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”**

**22:21-22** These people listened intently to Paul, but the word Gentiles brought out all their anger and exposed their pride. 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. God’s plan,

however, would not be thwarted; the Gentiles were hearing the gospel through Jewish Christians such as Paul and Peter.

### **Paul Reveals His Roman Citizenship – Verses 23-29**

**23** As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, **24** the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. **25** As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?” **26** When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. “What are you going to do?” he asked. “This man is a Roman citizen.” **27** The commander went to Paul and asked, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” “Yes, I am,” he answered. **28** Then the commander said, “I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship.” “But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied. **29** Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

**22:23-24** As they bound him with thongs: Paul had his hands tied with leather straps so his hands joined around a wooden pole and his back was totally exposed. He was ready for a brutal beating, one that would not stop until he confessed to the crimes he was suspected of. Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned? At that moment Paul announced his Roman citizenship.

**22:25-28** Paul’s question stopped the centurion because, by law, a Roman citizen could not be punished until he had been proven guilty of a crime. Paul had been born a Roman citizen, whereas the commander had purchased his citizenship. Buying citizenship was a common practice and a good source of income for the Roman government. Bought citizenship was considered inferior to citizenship by birth.

**22:29** 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.

### **Paul Before the Sanhedrin – Verse 30**

**30** The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

**22:30** Paul received what he probably thought of as a dramatic second chance. The opportunity to preach to the mob on the temple mount ended in another riot, but he would speak before the Sanhedrin (their council) the next day. 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. Paul would logically think this was the opportunity of a lifetime, to preach to those he loved so much and knew so well.

**22:30** Paul used his times of persecution as an opportunity to witness. Even his enemies were creating a platform for him to address the entire Sanhedrin (Jewish high council). If we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading, we will see increased opportunities to share our faith, even in the face of opposition.