

A DEEPER DIVE

Acts 21:33 - 22:29
September 15, 2024

Comments? Suggestions? Email me, Steve Callaway, at stvcal13@gmail.com.

Micah 6:8 – *He has shown you, oh mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (NIV)*

Paul Attacked and Arrested – The mob attacks and tries to kill Paul. They were beating him, but suddenly they stopped. What stopped them? What happened to Paul after the beating had stopped? What does the Commander ask Paul? In what ways do you see God's sovereign hand in what happens to Paul here?

Paul Speaks – Paul speaks to the commander who arrested him. The commander seems surprised that Paul is speaking in "educated Greek" (FF Bruce). What assumptions did the commander make about Paul at the time of his arrest?

Paul addressed the crowd in Aramaic. Why does he do this? What is the effect of this choice?
Summarize what Paul says about his heritage and his upbringing.
Summarize what Paul says as he recounts his conversion to Christianity.
What does Paul say about himself before his conversion?
Summarize Paul's conversion experience.
Read verses 17-21. Also consider Acts 9: 28-30.
Why does the Lord say to Paul that he will be sent to the Gentiles?

Paul is rejected – What is the response of the crowd to Paul when Paul has finished recounting his story? Read Matthew 27; Luke 23; John 19. Also read Jeremiah chapter 20; Amos 7; 1 Kings 19; 2 Chronicles 24. There are lots more of course. How are these accounts similar to what happens to Paul in chapter 22?

You're a what? Uh-Oh! – Read verses 22-30. What causes the commander to be alarmed? Why does the commander tell Paul that it had cost him a lot of money to become a citizen? What is the assumption that the commander is making? Why does the commander realize that he could be in deep trouble if he didn't change the way they were treating Paul immediately?

Commentary – Warren Wiersbe says this about this section of Acts. "At this point it is good to review the history of Israel in the Book of Acts. The people of the nation had already been involved in three murders: John the Baptist, Christ, and Stephen. They would have committed a fourth had not God delivered Paul through the intervention of the Roman guard. Paul's memory of the death of Stephen was still vivid (v 20), and he wanted in some way to atone for his share in this national crime. But Israel was now set aside; Christ had forbidden Paul to witness in Jerusalem (v. 18) because its period of probation was over." What do you think of Wiersbe's take on this section of Acts? He says Paul in some way wanted to "atone" for his part of Stephen's death, and that Paul went to Jerusalem despite being forbidden to do so by Christ. Do you agree with Wiersbe here?

Epilogue – To understand Paul's motivation better, NT Wright suggests we read Romans 9-11. In these chapters we see Paul's agonizing over the people of Israel. Do you have friends and/or family over whom you agonize because of their opposition to the faith? Read through the Romans chapters again and this time think of those people about whom you have prayed for years. Put yourself in Paul's place. As you do, as Wright says, "give thanks to God for the hope He has given you. Ask God to guide you in how you might use the gifts He has equipped you with [for the sake of those friends and family,] and for the sake of His kingdom."