

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for April 29, 2018

Paul Addresses the Crowd
Acts 22:1-21

Acts 22 records Paul's address to the Jewish mob that falsely accused him of teaching against Judaism and bringing Gentiles into the temple. This is the second of three times that the testimony of God's deliverance of Paul is told (cf. Acts 9:1-19, 26:2-23), this time with a Jewish audience in view.

1. The credentials of Paul (22:1-5)

Using the same opening address as Stephen (7:2), Paul addressed them in the Hebrew dialect of Aramaic in order to identify with his audience. Paul's connection to Judaism included his race, ethnicity, language, residency, education, and commitment. Our ability to connect to those listening to the story of our life before we followed Christ is helpful to understanding faith in Christ.

Paul was a zealous intellectual Pharisee. His background demonstrated his loyalty to Israel. The Jewish ruling council knew him, for he was their emissary two decades earlier. Paul's conversation is important because he was not one of Jesus's original followers.

2. The conversion of Paul (22:6-11)

There is an emphasis in this account of Paul's conversion on the divine revelation. The initiative of God, the bright light, the voice, all show this is from God and this event was confirmed by Paul's fellow enemies of the church. This was not a mere psychological experience but the outworking of God's divine plan.

When we follow Jesus, we do not fully know where He will lead us. Part of walking by faith is to follow His will in spite of our lack of understanding.

3. The care by Ananias (22:12-16)

More detail is provided in Acts 22 about Ananias than in Acts 9 and 26 because he was a respected and devout Jew who supported Paul.

Does Acts 22:16 teach that a person's sin is washed away through the act of baptism? Understanding baptism in this way would be inconsistent with the teaching of salvation by grace through faith, apart from works (Ephesians 2:8-9). The New Testament teaches that water

baptism illustrates the spiritual cleansing that occurs in our heart (1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Peter 3:21)

Looking at the details of the grammar in 22:16, there is one conjunction (“and”) that separates the two parts of this verse. In each of these two parts of this verse there contains a command connected to a participle that describes how the command is accomplished: (1) be baptized by arising and (2) wash away your sins by calling on His name. Forgiveness of sins results from our appeal to God (1 Peter 3:21), not through the act of baptism.

4. The commission by Christ (22:17-21)

Paul’s return to Jerusalem came after three years (Galatians 1:18) when God confirmed his mission. Paul includes his reluctance to leave the city in order to emphasize the failure of these Jerusalem Jews. They rejected God’s Son, God’s messengers like Stephen and Paul himself, and God’s plan to bless all families of the earth (cf. Genesis 12:3).

The crowd abruptly ended Paul’s address when they heard what they could not tolerate—God’s commission of Paul to go to the Gentiles who had no relationship with Judaism.

May we eagerly seek to obey God’s commission by seeking to reach all people for Christ.