

**Acts 21:31-22:22 Paul's Sermon on the Steps**  
**April 17, 1993**  
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**Overview**

1. 21:15-26:32, Arrest and defense  
List of Paul's defenses in the latter part of Acts
  - a) 21:37-39, NEGOTIATION with Chiliarch. Basis: legitimate Jewish status. Outcome: address the crowd.
  - b) 21:40-22:21, TESTIMONY on the steps in the Temple--testimony of salvation
  - c) 22:23-29, NEGOTIATION with Centurion. Basis: Roman citizenship. Outcome: no beating.
  - d) 22:30-23:10, NEGOTIATION before the Sanhedrin. Basis: Pharisaic commitment. Outcome: destabilization of adversaries.
  - e) 23:11, vision of the Lord: sending to Rome.  
Thus completion of journey to Jerusalem; initiates the next step.
  - f) 24:10-21, DEFENSE before Felix--direct defense to Tertullus' accusation concerning his presence in the temple
  - g) 24:24 (not recorded) gospel presentation to Felix and his wife
  - h) 25:8 NEGOTIATION before Festus: defense (cf. early ch.24) and appeal to Caesar (brief summary)
  - i) 26:1-23, TESTIMONY before Agrippa
2. 27-28, journey to Rome
3. Today: emphasize Paul's compassion for the lost, even those who abuse him, and his winsome way with them. How can I be so heartless toward those lost in sin as not to share with them what I know?

**A. 21:31-36, The Role of Civil Authority**

Note the alternation between the Jews and the soldiers. Along with Gallio in Corinth (18:12-17) and the fear of reprisals in Ephesus (19:40), gives empirical illustration of Paul's teaching in Rom. 13 that the civil magistrate is the servant of God--even when corrupt, as Rome certainly was. God can use such powers; and this does not justify their corruption.

**B. 21:37-22:2, The Heart of an Apostle**

Several lessons in the context of Paul's message.

1. 37-39, in spite of the crowd's rough handling, and secure now from their abuse, he still wants to persuade them! He would be willing to lose his place in heaven for them, Rom. 9:3; how much more will he endure their wrath, if only he can have a word with them.

Similarly, the Lord Jesus was moved with compassion toward the lost multitudes, Matt. 9:36; 14:14.

So must we be if we are to be effective in evangelism.

2. 21:40-22:2, his extreme tact.
  - a) 40, addresses them in "the Hebrew dialect," probably Aramaic; their own tongue.
  - b) 22:1, includes honorific title "fathers," as did Stephen in 7:2. Elsewhere he speaks only of "brethren."
  - c) His choice of phrases seeks to avoid alienating them. Contrast Peter's directness in 2:23; 3:14,15.
    - 1) 3, virtually praises their zeal in attacking him!
    - 2) 20, avoids directly accusing them of killing Stephen.
  - d) The very structure of his argument emphasizes his commonality with them:
    - 1) 3-5, his past experience is consistent with Judaism.
    - 2) 6-16, his conversion is consistent with Judaism.
    - 3) 17-21, his gentile mission, far from the characterization set forth in 21:28, is a direct command from the Messiah, and his tension with the Jews is like that of Isaiah of old.

*Now expound these three parts of his presentation.*

#### **C. 3-5, Paul's Pre-Christian Experience**

Consistent in every way with devout Judaism. Developed through four participles, the fourth of which is twice specialized.

1. Born in Tarsus. They would recognize from his Aramaic that he was not Palestinian; but he quickly counters this:
2. Raised in Jerusalem. An early transplant.
3. Trained by Gamaliel (whose name probably goes with the third clause rather than the second). Cf. 5:34. Gamaliel's orthodoxy was unquestioned.
4. Zealous for God. Amplifies this:
  - a) "As ye all are this day," sc. in their wrath against Paul! Puts the best possible interpretation on their opposition.
  - b) Exhibited this zeal in persecuting "this Way," the believers, with the support of the high priests and elders.
  - c) Specific instance of this persecution: his mission to Damascus.
5. Summary: he is as Jewish as they are, and at one time manifested it with the same sincere but misdirected zeal that they now show against him.

#### **D. 6-16, Paul's Conversion**

Consistent with Judaism and endorsed by a devout Jew.

1. 6-11, Encounter on the Damascus Road

- a) With the bright light, cf. Lev. 10:2; Ps. 104:2; God manifesting himself as a light bright enough to be seen even at noon.
- b) The voice from heaven would fit the rabbinic model of the *bat gol*, "daughter of the voice [of God]," the heavenly echo of God's voice that remained after direct prophecy had ceased.
- c) Paul may be comparing himself with Balaam in Numb. 22, who was also struck from his mount by the Angel of the Lord while setting forth on an errand of dubious spirituality. Balaam became Israel's enemy because he did not turn aside. Surely the people cannot fault Paul for heeding such a warning as Balaam did not.

2. 12-16, Interview with Ananias

- a) His credentials:
  - 1) observant of the law
  - 2) recognized by the Jewish community in Damascus for piety
- b) His message:
  - 1) "The God of our fathers"--link with OT
  - 2) "see the just one; hear his voice" refer to the light and sound on the road. "Just one" describes the Messiah ("Just servant," Isa. 53:11; Zech. 9:9 "he is just and having salvation"; usage of 1 Enoch).
  - 3) "know his will": This God did not complete on the road, but when Saul asked about it, directed him to Ananias, who now points out two elements.
    - a> Immediate, 16: Note two ptc/verb pairs
      - 1> Arising, be baptized. Make an external visible testimony.
      - 2> Wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. It is not the baptism, but calling on the Lord, that removes sin. "Call on the name of the Lord" is a good OT exhortation: Ps. 86:5; Joel 2:32. There can hardly be any objection to such an action by a godly Jew.
    - b> Ultimate, 15: Bear witness to *all men* of what he has seen; implicitly includes Gentiles. Relies directly on Isa. 43:9-14; 44:7-11, in which Israel is to witness for the Lord in a cosmic trial in which other nations try in vain to defend their deities.

E. 17-21, Paul's Gentile Mission

Not antagonistic to the interests of Judaism, as v.28 suggests, but supportive of them; vision like Isa. 6.

1. Form: Chiastic:

- a) two commands to depart, each with its own motive (the Jews will not receive you; I have prepared a Gentile ministry for you)
- b) Paul's remonstrance: the Jews know of my zeal. Surely they will hear me. Same argument as that implicit in vv.3-5.

2. Most telling from the point of view of persuading the audience: Points of similarity with Isa. 6:

- a) Location in the temple
  - b) A vision of the Lord
  - c) The Lord commands his servant to "go" with a message.
  - d) Prediction that Israel will not receive the message
- Thus Paul presents himself as latter-day Isaiah, commissioned by the Lord himself, and characterizes the rejection of Israel as parallel to that which Isaiah faced.

**F. 22:22, Jewish Rejection**

The moment they hear of Gentiles, their uproar against him resumes, and the Chiliarch once again takes over.

**Summary:** Note

- 1. The Lord's use of civil authorities to protect his people and accomplish his ends (in spite of their wickedness);
- 2. Paul's compassion for those who are lost and willingness to inconvenience himself to reach them;
- 3. His patient, accommodating attitude in bringing the gospel to them. Does not yield to angry argumentation, but instead seeks to overcome the polarization between them.

**Hymn:** 466

**Analysis**

A. 31-36, Alternation between people and military

*Lesson: God's use of the civil rule for his purposes*

1. [Starts with people's riot. 27-30]

2. Military: intervention

a) time: 31 zhtou/ntwn te au)to\n a)poktei^nai

b) quote p

1) quote f: a)ne/bh fa/sis tw^| xilia/rxw| th^s spei/rhs o(/ti

2) quote: o(/lh sugxu/nnetai )Ierousalh/m,

c) 32 o(\s e)cauth^s paralabw\n stratiw/tas kai\ e(katonta/rxas kate/dramen e)p' au)tou/s:

3. people: oi( de\ i)do/ntes to\n xili/arxon kai\ tou\s stratiw/tas e)pau/santo tu/ptontes to\n Pau^lon.

4. military:

- a) 33 to/te e)ggi/sas o( xili/arxos e)pela/beto au)tou^
- b) kai\ e)ke/leusen deqh^nai a(lu/sesi dusi/,
- c) kai\ e)punqa/neto ti/s ei)/h kai\ ti/ e)stin pepoihkw/s.

5. people: 34 a)/lloi de\ a)/llo ti e)pefw/noun e)n tw^| o)/xlw|:

6. military: execution p

a) command:

- 1) reason: mh\ duname/nou de\ au)tou^ gnw^nai to\ a)sfale\s dia\ to\n qo/rubon
- 2) text: e)ke/leusen a)/gesqai au)to\n ei)s th\n parembolh/n.

b) execution:

- 1) time: 35 o(/te de\ e)ge/neto e)pi\ tou\s a)nabaqmou/s,
- 2) text: sune/bh basta/zesqai au)to\n u(po\ tw^n stratiwtw^n dia\ th\n bi/an tou^ o)/xlou,
- 3) reason: 36 h)kolou/qei ga\r to\ plh^qos tou^ laou^ kra/zontes, Ai)^re au)to/n.

B. 37-39, interchange p, Paul and Chiliarch

*Lesson: Paul's focus on his mission! Secure from the mob, most of us would rush to get away; he still wants to confront them with the claims of Christ.*

1. iu: Paul: quote p

- a) quote f: 37 Me/llwn te ei)sa/gesqai ei)s th\n parembolh\n o( Pau^los le/gei tw^| xilia/rxw|,
- b) quote: Ei) e)/cesti/n moi ei)pei^n ti pro\s se/;

2. cu: chiliarch: quote p

- a) quote f: o( de\ e)/fh,
- b) quote:
  - 1) (Ellhnisti\ ginw/skeis;
  - 2) 38 ou)k a)/ra su\ ei)^ o( Ai)gu/ptios o( pro\ tou/twn tw^n h(merw^n a)nastatw/sas kai\ e)cagagw\n ei)s th\n e)/rhmon tou\s tetrakisxili/ous a)/ndras tw^n sikari/wn;

3. cu: quote p

- a) quote f: 39 ei)^pen de\ o( Pau^los,
- b) quote:
  - 1) )Egw\ a)/nqrwpos me/n ei)mi )Ioudai^os, Tarseu\s th^s Kiliki/as, ou)k a)sh/mou po/lews poli/th:s
  - 2) de/omai de/ sou, e)pi/treyo/n moi lalh^sai pro\s to\n lao/n.

C. 21:40-22:21, quote p, Paul's defense in the Temple

*Lesson: seeks to identify with them, not further polarize the situation.*

1. circumstances: 40 e)pitre/yantos de\ au)tou^

2. quote f: o( Pau^los e(stw\s e)pi\ tw^n a)nabaqmw^n

- a) kate/seisen th^| xeiri\ tw^| law^|: cf. 12:17; 13:16; 19:33--call for quiet; now we rely on the PA system.

b) pollh^s de\ sigh^s genome/nhs prosefw/nhsen th^| (Ebrai/+di diale/ktw| le/gwn,

3. quote (Paul):

- a) 22:1 )/Andres a)delfoi\ kai\ pate/res,  
*Paul's usual greeting is simply "men and brethren," 13:26; 23:1,6; 28:17. He adds "fathers" here as a mark of respect, and perhaps in imitation of Stephen in 7:2. Cf. the similarity of accusation in 21:28; 6:13*
- b) a)kou/sate/ mou th^s pro\s u(ma^s nuni\ a)pologi/as.
- c) [2 a)kou/santes de\ o(/ti th^| (Ebrai/+di diale/ktw|  
 prosefw/nei au)toi^s ma^llon pare/sxon h(suxi/an. kai\  
 fhsi/n,]
- d) 3-5, Past zeal  
*Point: Evidence of his Jewish legitimacy; note emphasis on persecution of Christians, as explaining 19 below*
- 1) 3 )Egw/ ei)mi a)nh\r )Ioudai^os,  
 a> gegennhme/nos e)n Tarsw^| th^s Kiliki/as,  
 b> a)nateqramme/nos de\ e)n th^| po/lei tau/th|,  
 c> para\ tou\s po/das Gamalih\l pepaideume/nos kata\  
 a)kri/beian tou^ patrw/|ou no/mou,  
 d> zhlwth\s u(pa/rxwn tou^ qeou^  
 1> kaqw\s pa/ntes u(meis e)ste sh/meron:
- 2) 4 o(\s tau/thn th\n o(do\n e)di/wca a)/xri qana/tou,  
 a> desmeu/wn kai\ paradidou\s ei)s fulaka\s a)/ndras te  
 kai\ gunai^kas,  
 b> 5 w(s kai\ o( a)rxiereu\s marturei^ moi kai\ pa^n to\  
 presbute/rion:
- 3) par' w(^n kai\ e)pistola\s deca/menos pro\s tou\s  
 a)delfou\s ei)s Damasko\n e)poreuo/mhn a)/cwn kai\ tou\s  
 e)kei^se o)/ntas dedeme/nous ei)s )Ierousalh\m i(/na  
 timwrhqw^sin.
- e) 6-16, Damascus experience  
*Point: Consistency of Christianity with his Jewish background*
- 1) Setting: 6 )Ege/neto de/ moi poreuome/nw| kai\ e)ggi/zonti  
 th^| Damaskw^| peri\ meshmbri/an e)cai/fnhs e)k tou^  
 ou)ranou^ periastra/yai fw^s i(kano\n peri\ e)me/,  
 2) interchange--The Lord identifies himself to Saul.  
 a> setting:  
 1> 7 e)/pesa/ te ei)s to\ e)/dafos  
*Cf. Balaam, Numb. 22:31*  
 b> IU: kai\ h)/kousa fwnh^s legou/shs moi, Saou\l Saou/l,  
 ti/ me diw/keis;  
 c> CU: 8 e)gw\ de\ a)pekri/qhn, Ti/s ei)^, ku/rie;  
 d> RU: ei)^pe/n te pro/s me, )Egw/ ei)mi )Ihsou^s o(  
 Nazwrai^os o(\n su\ diw/keis.
- 3) escorts: contrast 9 oi( de\ su\n e)moi\ o)/ntes  
 a> to\ me\n fw^s e)qea/santo  
 b> th\n de\ fwnh\n ou)k h)/kousan tou^ lalou^nto/s moi.
- 4) interchange: The Lord sends him to Damascus.  
 a> IU: 10 ei)^pon de/, Ti/ poihs/w, ku/rie;  
 b> RU: o( de\ ku/rios ei)^pen pro/s me,  
 1> )Anasta\s poreu/ou ei)s Damasko/n,  
 2> ka)kei^ soi lalhqh/setai peri\ pa/ntwn w(^n  
 te/taktai/ soi poihsai.
- 5) escorts: reason p

a> reason: 11 w(s de\ ou)k e)ne/blepon a)po\ th^s do/chs  
 tou^ fwto\s e)kei/nou,  
 b> text: xeiragwgou/menos u(po\ tw^n suno/ntwn moi h)^lgon  
 ei)s Damasko/n.

6) Visit from Ananias

a> 12 (Anani/as de/ tis, a)nh\r eu)labh\s kata\ to\n  
 no/mon, marturou/menos u(po\ pa/ntwn tw^n katoikou/ntwn  
 )Ioudai/wn, 13 e)lqw\n pro/s me kai\ e)pista\s ei)^pe/n  
 moi, Saou\l a)delfe/, a)na/bleyon:  
 b> ka)gw\ au)th^| th^| w(/ra| a)ne/bleya ei)s au)to/n.  
 c> quote p  
 1> quote f: 14 o( de\ ei)^pen,  
 2> quote:  
 a: (O qeo\s tw^n pate/rwn h(mw^n proexeiri/sato/ se  
 1: gnw^nai to\ qe/lhma au)tou^  
 2: kai\ i)dei^n to\n di/kaion  
 3: kai\ a)kou^sai fwnh\n e)k tou^ sto/matos  
 au)tou^,  
 b: 15 o(/ti e)/sh| ma/rtus au)tw^| pro\s pa/ntas  
 a)nqrw/pous w(^n e(w/rakas kai\ h)/kousas.  
 c: 16 kai\ nu^n ti/ me/lleis;  
 d: a)nasta\s ba/ptisai  
 e: kai\ a)po/lousai ta\s a(marti/as sou  
 e)pikalesa/menos to\ o)/noma au)tou^.

f) 17-21, interchange in the temple

*Point: legitimacy of his gentile mission. Response to v.28: he is not teaching "all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place," but on the contrary is obeying Messiah's command to bring them to faith. Compare Isaiah's temple vision.*

*Chiastic: two commands to depart, each with its second motive (the Jews will not receive you; I have prepared a Gentile ministry for you), surrounding Paul's remonstrance.*

1) IU: quote p  
 a> setting: ... de/ moi u(postre/yanti ei)s )Ierousalh\m  
 kai\ proseuxome/nou mou e)n tw^| i(erw^| ...  
 b> quote f: 17 )Ege/neto ...  
 1> gene/sqai me e)n e)ksta/sei  
 2> 18 kai\ i)dei^n au)to\n le/gonta/ moi,  
 c> quote:  
 1> Speu^son  
 2> kai\ e)/celqe e)n ta/xei e)c )Ierousalh/m,  
 3> dio/ti ou) parade/contai/ sou marturi/an peri\  
 e)mou^.

2) CU: quote p  
*Reasons that they ought to receive Paul's testimony: his demonstrated zeal for the Jewish way; cf. argument in vv.3-5 above.*  
 a> quote f: 19 ka)gw\ ei)^pon,

b> quote:  
 1> Ku/rie,  
 2> AQ p  
 a: AQ f: au)toi\ e)pi/stantai o(/ti  
 b: AQ:  
 1: e)gw\ h)/mhn  
 A. fulaki/zwn  
 B. kai\ de/rwn kata\ ta\s sunagwga\s tou\s  
 pisteu/ontas e)pi\ se/:  
 2: temporal p  
 A. time: 20 kai\ o(/te e)cexu/nneto to\ ai(^ma  
 Stefa/nou tou^ ma/rturo/s sou,  
 B. kai\ au)to\s h)/mhn  
 1. e)festw\s  
 2. kai\ suneudokw^n  
 3. kai\ fula/sswn ta\ i(ma/tia tw^n  
 a)nairou/ntwn au)to/n.

3) RU: quote p  
 a> quote f: 21 kai\ ei)^pen pro/s me,  
 b> quote: motivated command p  
 1> command: Poreu/ou,  
 2> motive: o(/ti e)gw\ ei)s e)/qnh makra\n e)capostelw^  
 se.

D. 22-24, Final turn, people -> Military

1. People:
  - a) 22 )/Hkouon de\ au)tou^ a)/xri tou/tou tou^ lo/gou
  - b) kai\ e)ph^ran th\n fwnh\n au)tw^n le/gontes, Ai)^re a)po\ th^s  
 gh^s to\n toiou^ton, ou) ga\r kaqh^ken au)to\n zh^n.
2. Military:
  - a) 23 kraugazo/ntwn te au)tw^n kai\ r(iptou/ntwn ta\ i(ma/tia  
 kai\ koniorto\n ballo/ntwn ei)s to\n a)e/ra,
  - b) 24 e)ke/leusen o( xili/arxos ei)sa/gesqai au)to\n ei)s th\n  
 parembolh/n,
  - c) purpose p
    - 1) text: ei)/pas ma/sticin a)neta/zesqai au)to\n
    - 2) purpose: i(/na e)pignw^| di' h(\n ai)ti/an ou(/tw  
 e)pefw/noun au)tw^|.