

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 68

### I. Exposition of Chapter Twenty Two – Paul’s Defense before the Jews (Continued).

#### A. Verses 4-21 – Paul shares his Testimony.

1. **Verse 10** – This is recorded in **Acts 9:6**. From **verse 8** we know that Paul knew who was speaking to him. It was **“Jesus of Nazareth.”** Now we see Paul referring to Jesus as **“Lord”** when he asks, **“What shall I do, Lord?”** There should be no doubt that this is when Paul received salvation. Later he wrote **Romans 10:9-10** which states a person must believe in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess that Jesus is Lord! This shows humility and surrendering to the Lordship of Christ.
2. **Verses 11-13** – These verses correspond with **Acts 9:8, 17-18**. Some additional information from **chapter 9** showed us that Ananias laid hands on him for healing and for him to receive the filling of the Holy Spirit (**9:17**). Dr. Stanley Horton makes an important point about Ananias:  
**“Paul then drew attention to the fact that Ananias of Damascus was “a devout [God-fearing, godly] observer of the law,” that is, in the way he was careful to keep the Law. All the Jews who lived in Damascus ‘highly respected’ him. Paul at this point does not mention that Ananias was a believer in Jesus. Ananias called him ‘brother’, accepting him as a believer. His command for Paul to receive his sight brought immediate healing.”**<sup>1</sup>
3. **Verses 14-15** – These words, spoken by Ananias, are more than what we know from **chapter 9**. Here we see that Ananias started off by saying; **“The God of our fathers has chosen you...”** Dr. Robert Utley states:

**“This phrase was used to describe the deity of Jewish worship. Paul wants to make clear that it was YHWH who contacted him and commissioned him through His Son, Jesus. Paul was not called by any other god than Judaism’s God!”**<sup>2</sup>

- a. In **verse 14**, he also refers to Jesus as **“...the Just One...”** To the Jews, this would have been a clear reference to the Messiah (**Jeremiah 23:5**). Cf. **3:14; 7:52**.
- b. **“...you will be His witness...”** – The word **“witness”** means; **“One who has information or knowledge of something, and hence, one who can give information, bring to light, or confirm something.”**<sup>3</sup>
- c. Dr. Horton adds some insightful thoughts:

**“Paul then gave more details of what Ananias said to him after restoring his sight. Ananias told him that the God of their fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) had chosen him “to know [come to know, realize] his will and to see the Righteous One [the righteous Servant, that is, the Messiah] and to hear words from his mouth,” not from a distance but face-to-face. God did this so Paul could be “his witness to all men” (all humankind) of what he had seen and heard. That is, Paul became a first-hand witness of the fact that Jesus was resurrected and glorified. That Paul was chosen to hear words from Jesus’ mouth indicated Jesus would give him the facts of the gospel (as recorded in our four Gospels), which Jesus must have done during the three years Paul was in Arabia (Gal. 1:17–18).”**<sup>4</sup>

4. **Verse 16** – **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”** - This verse is NOT saying that baptism in water is the way we have our sins washed away. This verse is poorly translated. Dr. Thomas Constable asserts:

**“Verse 16 has been a problem to some readers of Acts because people could understand it to be saying that water baptism washes away sins. The writers of Scripture present water baptism, elsewhere, not as the agent of spiritual cleansing, but as the illustration (symbol) of spiritual cleansing that has already taken place (1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Pet. 3:21). The agent of spiritual cleansing is faith in Christ. Paul referred to faith in this verse as ‘calling on His name’ (cf. Joel 2:32). Paul had evidently experienced regeneration on the Damascus Road, since he was persuaded by Ananias to be baptized shortly afterward; he believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the divine Messiah predicted in the Old Testament (v. 10; cf. Gal. 1:11-12; Acts 9:17-18). He experienced baptism in water several days after he had called on the Lord for salvation. The Lord had already washed Paul's sins away when he had called**

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 360.

<sup>2</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 249.

<sup>3</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

<sup>4</sup>Horton, 360.

on the Lord. Then later Paul arose and received baptism. The Greek word *epikalesamenos*, translated ‘calling on,’ is an aorist participle meaning ‘having called on.’<sup>5</sup>

5. Verses 17-21 offer details that are not seen anywhere else in Scripture. Scholars state that this was about three years after the events of his conversion and experiences with Ananias.

a. Verse 17 – Paul now shares how he was in a “trance” as he was praying in the temple in Jerusalem. This word would have been better translated as the word “vision” and it means; “An ecstasy in which the mind is for a time carried, as it were, out of or beyond itself and lost. Great astonishment, amazement.”<sup>6</sup> The Fire Bible gives the following insights:

“The term ‘trance’ here indicates a state of mind where one’s attention is more aware of things in the supernatural realm of God’s Spirit than the natural surroundings. This meant that Paul was especially receptive to a message and revelation from God. Through the Holy Spirit, such an experience means being brought into deeper and more intense communication with God...”<sup>7</sup>

b. Constable adds the following thoughts:

“In ‘Jerusalem,’ God confirmed this mission to Paul by special revelation, as he ‘was praying in the temple’ following his return from Damascus (9:26-29; Gal. 1:18-19). That took place in the third year after his conversion. The fact that Paul was praying in the temple when God gave him direction would have positively impressed this Jewish crowd even further.”<sup>8</sup>

c. Verse 18 – Paul relays the fact that the Lord warned him at that time to leave Jerusalem because the people will not receive his testimony of Jesus. Grant Osborne asserts:

“In 9:29 he left Jerusalem after learning the Hellenistic Jews wanted to kill him. Here we learn what precipitated it, a vision in the temple where the Lord (Jesus) told him to leave immediately because the Jews of Jerusalem ‘will not accept your testimony about me.’”<sup>9</sup>

c. Verses 19-20 – Paul pleads with the Lord to let him stay in Jerusalem, thinking that the people would know that at one time he persecuted the church, including Stephen. Apparently Paul thought when the people saw what a dramatic transformation had taken place, they would believe his testimony.

d. Verse 21 – The Lord reiterated his need to depart.

#### B. Verses 22-39 - The Result of Paul giving Testimony.

1. Verses 22-23 – After hearing all that Paul had to say, the Jews wanted him dead. Several scholars agree that it’s because Paul was going to the Gentiles with the message of the Messiah that caused the rage. Again, Thomas Constable adds:

“Jews had taken messages from God to Gentiles many times in Israel's past (e.g., Jonah; the Pharisees, Matt. 23:15; et al.). That revelation could not have been what infuriated Paul's audience. What upset them was that Paul was approaching Gentiles directly about the Messiah—without first introducing them to Judaism and its institutions. This was equivalent to placing Gentiles on the same footing before God as Jews, and this was the height of apostasy to the traditional Jewish mind. This is why Paul's hearers reacted so violently and allowed him to say no more.”<sup>10</sup>

2. Verse 24 – The Roman Commander’s reaction seems to indicate he was confused. The word “scourging” means; “to beat severely with a whip”<sup>11</sup>

3. Verses 25-29 – Paul’s Roman Citizenship.

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<sup>5</sup>Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019), 433.

<sup>6</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*; (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

<sup>7</sup>*Fire Bible: English Standard Version*, Donald C. Stamps, Gen. Ed. (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers Int’l, 2011), 1863.

<sup>8</sup>Constable, 433.

<sup>9</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 398.

<sup>10</sup>Constable, 434.

<sup>11</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 222–223.

**“The apostle had already mentioned that he was born in Tarsus, but he had not told them that his citizenship was Roman. It was unlawful for a Roman citizen to be scourged. We do not know how people proved their citizenship in those days; perhaps they carried the first-century equivalent of an ID card.”<sup>12</sup>**

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<sup>12</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 493.