

Acts 22a 21:37-22:21

37 Paul's Greek was a level above the average Judean revolutionary. The commander could tell this was not the usual troublemaker.

38 The group were known as the "Sicarii". The word in NIV is "terrorist" which is a good choice in that they would mingle with crowds and stab someone they thought was compromising with Rome. Their first victim was Jonathon the High Priest. After an attack, they were able to melt back into the crowds undetected. This sowed a constant fear factor in the Jewish festivals much like terrorists do today.

39 Paul mentions he is a citizen of Tarsus. Citizens of important cities were held in greater esteem. Paul did not mention his Roman citizenship because it may have caused the crowd to be even more violent toward him. His citizenship status influenced the commander to let him speak.

40 Paul used the local language. (Could mean Mishnaic Hebrew) To speak to them in Greek would have only fed into the misconceptions they had of him bringing Greeks into the Temple. (Matthew 10:18-20)

22:1-3 Paul's testimony is also told in 9:1-31 and 26:1-23. He is focusing on relating his conversion to his fellow Jews. He moved to Jerusalem as a youth and studied under one of the leading rabbi Gamaliel who represented the school of Hillel. The wording of the verse implies that Paul was brought up under the strict interpretations and traditions of the Pharisees. (Philippians 3:5) "Zealous" can imply willingness to use force to defend the Jewish faith. (Romans 10:2)

4-5 Paul confesses to overseeing the murder and imprisonment of Christians. (1 Corinthians 15:9) The realization that he was completely wrong could have paralyzed him, but instead he took the mercy he had received and became just as zealous for truth. Paul tells them they can check with the council to see how ardently he attacked people of the Way. (9:2) This sets up the crowd for his conversion story.

6-8 Paul's testimony: The bright light, the words from Jesus – How was Paul persecuting Jesus? By persecuting the body of Christ, believers in the Way. (1 Corinthians 12:27) What we do to other believers, we do to Jesus!

9 Some say there is a discrepancy between this passage and 9:7. The Greek says "they did not hear the voice". The other says they heard but did not understand. To hear can mean to understand or comprehend rather than to merely recognize noise. In that case they are saying the same thing.

10-12 The Ananias that Paul is describing has already accepted Jesus as the Messiah. This shows us that early Christians did not separate their observance of the Law from their faith in Jesus. Paul pointed this out because the accusation is that he teaches Jews to ignore the Law. (1Timothy 1:13)

13-14 "The God of our fathers" – Paul is pointing out that he is not leaving Judaism but worshiping the same God. It is YHWH that gave Paul his calling. "The Righteous One" is the Lord Jesus who lived a righteous life on our behalf. Seeing and hearing Jesus was a prerequisite for being an Apostle. 1:22

15-16 "witness to ALL men" Baptized into Jesus, washing away his sins. Paul is telling them how his life was changed. This is where his story gets a little difficult for them to hear. ALL men includes the Gentiles and that is something they aren't happy about. If he was a devout Jew, then why did he need to be baptized? He was in need of forgiveness of sins. That implies they have the same need. (2:38)

17-18 This trip to Jerusalem was three years after the Damascus experience. Visions were one of the methods God used to show His will to Paul. He was earnestly seeking God when they come to him. (9:12; 16:9)

19-21 Paul testifies to the Lord telling him they would not hear his testimony. He tried to argue with the Lord (I don't recommend this) and notice that God doesn't respond to our arguments. He just told Paul where he should be ministering, to the Gentiles. That was when the crowd refused to listen any more. It should have convicted them, but instead they proved that the Lord was right when He told Paul they would not receive his testimony. Were they connecting this with the accusation of bringing Gentiles into the Temple, or were they just angry that someone would claim the Gentiles were more receptive of the revelation of Jesus as Messiah than they were. (Acts 13:47)