

# Day 130, Acts 22

by David Servant

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*Paul's address to the mob highlights the power of his conversion story and the importance of humility and respect in sharing the gospel.*

**Scripture:** Acts 22:1, Acts 22:15-17, 2 Corinthians 11:24

**Topics:** "Paul's Conversion", "Gentile Ministry"

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## Description

David Servant preaches about Paul's encounter with a violent mob in Jerusalem, highlighting how Paul diplomatically addressed them despite being brutally beaten, and how his conversion story captivated their attention. Paul's encounter with Jesus transformed him from a zealous persecutor of Christians to a zealous promoter of the faith. The divine origin of Paul's encounter was validated through supernatural events like the restoration of his sight by Ananias and a direct encounter with the Lord in the temple. Despite facing rejection from the Jerusalem Jews, Paul's mission to the Gentiles was a significant turning point in spreading the gospel.

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## Transcript

It seems quite amazing that the violent mob, who had just attempted to brutally murder Paul, were willing to listen to him speak as he stood, bound with two chains, on the stairs to the Roman barracks. With a wave of his hand "there was a great hush" (21:40), and when they heard him speaking in Hebrew, "they became even more quiet" (22:2). Temporary sanity had been restored to the mindless mob. Obviously interested, they listened.

Even though Paul had just been unmercifully beaten at their hands, he addressed them graciously as "brethren and fathers" (22:1) and then complimented them for their zeal for God (22:3)---a lesson in diplomacy!

The mob was temporarily held by the amazing story of his conversion. Before them was a very educated Jew, a former Pharisee, who had been commissioned by the high priest and Sanhedrin to persecute Christians. His zeal was legendary, and Christians forfeited their lives because of it. But now he was promoting the very thing he formerly persecuted. It was because of his dramatic encounter with Jesus, who appeared in such brightness that he was blinded by the experience. Paul may have thought he was "in the light" before that divine encounter. But his "light" was darkness in comparison to the light of Christ. Such was the case for all of us who know Him now.

The divine origin of Paul's encounter was further validated when Ananias, a devout and well-respected man in Damascus, was used to restore his sight supernaturally. Ananias also prophesied to him that he would be a witness for God "to all men" of what he had seen and heard (22:15). As Paul related Ananias' words, I suspect he was measuring the crowd's response, especially when they heard his commission to be a witness "to all men." Had they caught that "all men" included Gentiles?

Notice also Paul's mention of Ananias' instructions for him to be baptized to "wash away his sins" (22:16). A zealous Pharisee needed to have his sins washed! Surely this was a subtle message to the self-righteous mob of their true spiritual state.

Finally, Paul related his third supernatural experience, when the Lord appeared to him while he was praying in the temple. Jesus specifically told him that the Jerusalem Jews would not accept his testimony. Obviously, their rejection was not what God intended. But their rejection explained why the Lord then commissioned Paul to go to the Gentiles. Tragically, that is when the mob refused to listen any further to his testimony. Blinded by religious pride and self-righteousness, the thought of God reaching out to Gentiles repulsed them. They did not realize that they were just as filthy as the Gentiles whom they despised, and were just as needy for a Savior. The riot began again, and Paul was brought safely into the Roman barracks. How ironic it was that his life was saved by Gentiles.

Paul was no stranger to scourging, having previously received thirty-nine lashes on five separate occasions at the hands of the Jews (2 Cor. 11:24). This time, however, his Roman citizenship saved him from the whip. Citizens had rights, and Paul took advantage of the law of Rome. God is not calling us to suffer injustice if it can be avoided.

Paul was no stranger to prison either, and he knew full well that the Lord could easily release him---if it was His will---just as He had done in Philippi (16:25-26). This time, it was God's will that Paul remain in Jerusalem for a while in order that some people in high places might have a chance to hear the gospel.

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