

Jesus Christ's work through the Apostles to the Uttermost

Paul's Story

"... and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae'a, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8

Introduction: Paul has been taken and now uses his situation as an opportunity to use his personal testimony. The end goal of Paul's life was to please his Master. He did so by obedience. Paul's desires were the same as his Masters. Jesus Christ desired that men should be saved, Paul desired the same. Here even under great persecution, Paul to the end, was trying to tell others about Jesus Christ. Here he uses his personal testimony. In the end the people reject Paul and his message. Ultimately, they were rejecting Jesus Christ. Many today stumble at the messenger and consequently miss the message.

Outline:

I. Testimony of Paul v1-21

II. Trial and Turn of Events v22-30

I. Testimony of Paul v1-21

A. Address v1-2

1. v1 Paul makes an appeal. *"...he ye me my defence..."*
2. The word used here is where we get the word **apologetics**. ἀπολογία (apologia)
3. Paul address them with the salutation *"men, brethren, and fathers."* This expression was one of great respect.
4. **Proverbs 15:1** *"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."*
5. How hard would we have talking to people with respect be for you and I after just being beaten? How could Paul do so? Because he was once where they were.
6. *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."* **I Timothy 1:15**
7. v2 He spoke in their language.

B. Paul before Jesus Christ

1. Shows his identity with the world and his people.
2. v3 He was a Jew.
3. v3 He was born in Cilicia of Tarsus.
4. v3 He was a Pharisee taught by Gamliel. (**Acts 5:34**)

5. "The rabbis usually sat on a raised seat with the pupils in a circle around either on lower seats or on the ground. Paul was thus nourished in Pharisaic Judaism as interpreted by Gamaliel, one of the lights of Judaism. He was one of the seven Rabbis to whom the Jews gave the highest title *Rabban* (our Rabbi)." – A.T. Robertson
6. v3 He followed the law after the teachings of "*the fathers.*"
7. v3 He was in his heart zealous toward God.
8. v3 He identifies with them. "*...as ye all are this day.*"
9. v4 He persecuted unto death, binding and delivering into prisons.
- 10.v5 He appeals to the high priest to bear witness.
11. v6 He was in this way when something happened.

C. Paul encounters Jesus Christ

1. v6 Notice the light came from heaven. We should understand that Salvation is from God.
2. v7 Notice the encounter was personal. Salvation is a personal matter. Those who accept Jesus as Savior do so individually. Though the Gospel may be preached in a corporate setting, people are individually dealt with by the Holy Spirit and are individually accountable to God.
3. v7,8 Notice his heart was convicted of sin.
4. v9 Notice this was God's work in Paul's life was not a community event. "*...but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*" (**Acts 9:7**) They heard something but did not understand what Paul did. This is typical of the Gospel being preached. Many may hear the message, but perhaps only one or two "get it."
5. v10 Notice Paul's decision and submission. "*What shall I do Lord?*" This signifies a change in Paul's direction. If we were to go back and look we would remember Paul was on his way to persecute Christians, now he was on his way to greet one.
6. v11 Notice Paul was physically blinded to the world. "The last thing Paul had seen was the face of Christ. The next thing he saw was the face of a Christian. He had seen the Head; now he saw a member of the Body. Ananias, a Jew of Damascus of impeccable reputation, had come to him- to him the great persecutor of the church- and had called him "brother."" – John Phillips
7. v12-14 Notice Paul would now see the world differently. His mission was to "*be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*"
8. In verse 12, Paul purposely mentions that Ananias was "*...a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there...*"

9. v15 (v14) Notice Paul's call to be an apostolic witness. He had seen and heard the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Galatians 1:11,12**) Now he was to be a witness for Him. You and I have not physically seen our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we are called to be witnesses of Him.
- 10.v16 *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* There are many components mentioned here.
- 11.First baptism is mentioned. **This step of obedience was necessary for Paul to publicly identify with Jesus Christ.**
12. Secondly, we see *"...wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* The act of faith is expressed by *"calling on the name of the Lord"* and belief in the heart. This faith makes accessible God's gracious gift of Salvation. The construction of the sentence should be noted. When we interpret the Bible, we take a **Literal/Contextual – Historical – Grammatical- Cultural** interpretation. This deals with the grammatical, but please do also note this verse does not hang on its own. The Bible has much to say both about Salvation by grace through faith and baptism. This is not the sole verse in the Bible about baptism or Salvation. *"And be baptized"* is one component. *"...and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* is another component. They are separated by the conjunction "and." This also tells us that those who accept Jesus should in no wise put off being baptized (symbolically identifying with Jesus Christ.)
13. **Galatians 1: 11,12** sets the record straight that the Gospel was received by Paul directly from Jesus Christ himself. What we have here is a recount of Paul's dealings with Ananias.

D. Paul after Jesus Christ

1. This encounter with the Lord changed Paul's life forever. He went to Damascus then to Arabia and back to Damascus, at least three years. Nothing is known of this time, except that he emerged with powerful truth and preached the Gospel to those in Damascus. (**Acts 9:22**)
2. *"Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."* **Galatians 1:17,18**
3. In Damascus the Jews went about to kill Paul (**Acts 9:23**) and in Jerusalem the Greeks went about to slay him. (**Acts 9:29**)

4. v17 *“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, **even while I prayed in the temple**, I was in a trance;”*
5. **Paul’s design was for unity and the furtherance of the Gospel. He mentions specifically in his testimony his adherence to prayer in the temple.**
6. v18 *“And saw him...”* – Here Paul again sees the Lord and has a conversation with Him. The command that follows is split between **verse 18 and 21**. Paul could have left off what he was about to say, but he gave the entire truth.
7. Notice the Bible tells us *“Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive **thy testimony concerning me.**”* In this very statement we see two things. 1. Some people are more fitted for reaching certain people. 2. Some will not receive Jesus Christ regardless of who testifies to them. Paul was a scholar of the highest caliber. His testimony was powerful in light of his former persecution of Christians. One would have to admit that something had changed this man.
8. v19,20 **Remind us of God’s wisdom versus Man’s reasoning.** Two items could be mentioned here as well. To the lost, particularly the Jews, Paul’s testimony would be very hard to resist. He was one of “them.” They knew his learning, his record, his zeal for the Lord and now he was a new man. Surely, they would not reject his testimony.
9. Secondly, not only would the unbelievers not receive him, but the Christians would be scared of Paul as well. *“Is he really a Christian?”* (*“And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.” Acts 9:26*)
10. v21 God’s direction should always prevail. *“...Depart: for I will send thee far **hence unto the Gentiles.**”* Question, How fruitful was Paul’s ministry because of his obedience?

E. People's Response

1. v22 At first, they listened. "And they gave him audience unto this word...."
2. What was the word that offended them so?
3. Look in verse 21, *"Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."*
4. People oftentimes are ok with Jesus Christ as long as He does not rule in their lives. Here the mention of a Jew going to Gentiles incites the crowd.
5. The question could be raised, what right do we have to question God and His motives?
6. Today we could look at salvation offered both to "good people" and the "riffraff" of society and some would be offended. "I am a better person than him."
7. Their verdict *"Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."*
8. Paul was bearing the reproach of Christ.
9. **I Peter 4:12-14** *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."*

F. Protection of the Castle

1. v23 The mob once again was in a frenzy.
2. v24 The chief captain desire to get to the bottom of the problem and commands Paul to be scourged.
3. "Out fire and into the frying pan" it would seem.
4. v25 Paul invokes his citizenship for protection, *"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, uncondemned?"*
5. "Citizenship bestowed certain rights. These included the right to vote for magistrates, the right to be elected as a magistrate, the right to contract a legal marriage, the right to hold property in the Roman community, and the right to appeal to the people, and in later times to the emperor, against the sentences passed by magistrates or other officials of rank. Paul's citizenship surfaced in several details of his missionary activity in Acts. Acts 16:39 records the consternation of either the lictors or magistrates in Philippi upon discovering that Paul was a Roman citizen. They realized that they had punished him without trial. By law, citizens could not be bound or scourged (compare Acts 22:24-29). Most

important of all is the right of “appeal to Caesar” and trial at Rome (Acts 25:10-12).” – Mike Fuhrman

6. Our citizenship will be declared one day. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God. And our King is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.