

Lesson 28 – Acts 21:37-22:29

Paul's Testimony

Paul boldly faced a crowd who wanted to kill him. However, they quieted and listened to him speak once they knew he was under Roman protection and spoke in their own Hebrew dialect. The Jews of Paul's day had extreme hatred towards non-Jews. One word from Paul—"Gentiles"—triggered an intense reaction of hostility.

Paul was in the unique situation of being Jewish and a Roman citizen. Let's discover what this meant for Paul.

Citizenship

Only about one out of every ten people living in the Roman Empire were actually Roman citizens. Being a citizen meant you had rights and protections that weren't available to everybody else, including not being tortured or put to death unless one was guilty of treason. Acts 22:28 explains two ways of gaining citizenship. To become a Roman citizen, you could either buy citizenship—a very pricey option—or be born a citizen.

Paul was born into a Jewish family in the city of Tarsus, a city in the province of Cilicia. Rome had designated Tarsus as a "free city." That's why he could claim to be both a Jew and a Roman citizen.

As Paul was about to be beaten by the Roman soldiers, he asked whether it was legal to flog a Roman citizen. Everyone there knew the answer, No! The soldiers were afraid because they had ignored a basic right. They had chained a Roman citizen without examining him for the crime of which he had been accused.

[TM note: Paul later used his citizenship to stand trial before Caesar (Acts 25:10-11) and avoid being tried in Jerusalem where he was less likely to be safe.]

Into the Word: Acts 21:37-22:29

Roman soldiers and their commander had just rescued Paul from being beaten by the mob outside Jerusalem's temple. Because of the violence of the mob, the soldiers had to carry Paul, bound in chains, up the steps to the barracks. When they got to the door, Paul asked, "May I say something to you?" That question started the sequence of events listed below.

Number in order the timeline of events that followed from Acts 21:37 through 22:20.

- 4 1. Paul recounted that Ananias was sent by God to explain to him what had happened on the road. Ananias told Paul that he would: know God's will; see Jesus, the Righteous One; hear Jesus speak to him; and be a witness for Christ to all people. [Acts 22: 12-15]
- 1 2. The soldiers assumed Paul was an Egyptian who had stirred up a revolt in the wilderness, but they realized he was not when he addressed them in the Greek language. [Acts 21: 37-38]
- 6 3. Paul told about the vision he had while at the Temple. [Acts 22: 17-18]
- 3 4. Paul explained why he was traveling to Damascus. [Acts 22: 5]
- 7 5. Paul confessed he had even approved of Stephen's murder. [Acts 22: 20]
- 2 6. Speaking in the Hebrew dialect, Paul kindly referred to the crowd as "brethren and fathers." [Acts 22: 1] [The Hebrew dialect spoken of is referred to as Aramaic. (Acts 21:40, 22:2)]
- 5 7. Paul was told to "get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." [Acts 22: 16]

Complete the following short answer questions:

8. Paul had recounted his whole life history to the attentive crowd, but suddenly they turned against him again. What did he say that enraged the crowd? v.21 *He told them that God had sent him, not to the Jews, but to the Gentiles.*

9. The Jews reacted by “crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air.” In verse 24, how did the Roman soldiers decide to find out the truth of the matter? *By examination by scourging—that is, beating him with whips.*

10. As the soldiers stretched Paul out and strapped him, what did Paul say that stopped them in their tracks? v.25 *“Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is Roman and uncondemned?”*

Paul connected himself with his listeners. He had just shared his testimony with the Jewish mob in the Hebrew dialect. He also told how one of their own well-respected leaders, Ananias, was sent by God to minister to Paul. Now Paul reminded his Roman captors that he was a Roman citizen. They knew it was against the law for him to be beaten without having been condemned at a trial.

11. How did the soldiers react to this new information? v.26, 29 *They stopped what they were doing immediately and were afraid that they would be punished for breaking the law and harming a Roman citizen.*

New Ideas:

Testimony

In Acts 22, Paul gave his testimony to the crowd. He simply explained who God is and what He has done. God had changed Paul dramatically, and he could not help but give an explanation of the hope he had in Christ.

Some people, like Paul, have an exciting testimony of dramatic conversion. Some people’s testimonies tell of God’s faithfulness to the person who has been a Christian since being baptized as an infant. God graciously comes to people with His life-giving Word at different points in their lives.

Read Psalm 71:15-17 together: “My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and of Your salvation all day long, for I do not know the sum of them. I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone. O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds.”

This is likely the testimony of a mature man as he reflects on God’s faithfulness. By God’s grace, all believers have testimonies, whether young or old.

Memory Verse

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
Philippians 3:20

Extra Memory Challenge

Psalm 71:17

O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds

Discussion Questions

Each teacher should encourage, as much as time permits, discussion and inquiry on the part of students. Not every aspect of the following questions is addressed here, and students may have thoughts related to but not mentioned in this guide. The obligation of the teacher, then, is to understand as deeply as possible the Scriptures that are being discussed, in order to answer as well as possible any questions a student might have.

1. In Acts 22 Paul recounts his conversion experience. According to verse 16, baptism accomplishes something significant. What is the purpose of baptism? What is the value of baptism in your daily life? See Acts 2:37-39, 1 Peter 3:21, Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:3-4.

a. Referring to the Small Catechism, questions 341-344, can also guide your discussion. Scripture teaches very clearly that baptism is more than a dedication to the Lord. It is not just a church ceremony or some ritual we do to babies because it is “the thing to do.” It is a sacrament that ushers us into fellowship with God, makes us His, and enables us to inherit the eternal life God provides through His Son.

b. In Baptism we came into fellowship with Christ and were made partakers of forgiveness, life and salvation—but the value of baptism is not confined to that event at the beginning of our relationship with God. Baptism is a covenant in which God gives us a new life and His grace. Through that grace, we are “clothed with Christ” (Galatians 3:27) and enabled to daily “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). As we live in this new life, God graciously gives us victory over sin and when we fail we are assured through our baptism that God will not break His part of the covenant and invites us to return to Him in daily sorrow and repentance (Catechism question #355).

2. Paul was ready to share his testimony with the angry crowd. He did so with humility and gentleness. Read I Peter 3:15. Discuss how you might respond to someone asking about “the hope that is in you”? What Scripture verses have given you hope?

Tell about who God is and what He has done. Some possible examples include: Ephesians 2:8-9 – for by grace you have been saved. I John 3:1- See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us that we would be called children of God. I John 5:11-12 – God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. [TM note: could take time to ask students to share their favorite verses.]

Daily Devotions

Sunday:	Luke 6:20-36
Monday:	Luke 12:1-7
Tuesday:	Luke 22:8-12
Wednesday:	Luke 22:54-65
Thursday:	Luke 22:66-71
Friday:	Luke 23:8-12
Saturday:	Luke 23:13-25

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND ITS CHURCH YEAR

* What is the Advent season?

Advent means “to come.” For four Sundays before Christmas, Christians are reminded that Christ Jesus came as promised at His birth, He continues to come to us through His Word, and He will come again to judge the world at the end of time. The theme of the season is anticipation -- even as we wait for the celebration of His birth, we also look forward to His return.

1. What part did John the Baptist play in the “advent” of Jesus? Mark 1:2-4, Isaiah 40:1-8
John was a voice to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.

2. Compare Christ’s first coming to His second coming. What will be different? Luke 2:7, 12; Revelation 1:7; 22:12-13

First coming: He came quietly as a lowly baby in humble circumstances. His mission was to seek and to save a lost world.

Second coming: He will come in all His glory from the clouds of heaven, and every eye will see Him. His mission will be to judge the world.