

ACTS 22: 22 – 25: 27

CITIZEN PAUL, NOT CITIZEN KANE

Traitor at the game...

Paul is looking at himself, as he once was before the people at the Temple, and will look at himself again as he goes on to share his testimony in these hearings.

22 And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!” 23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?”

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, “Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.”

27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

28 The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship."

And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

29 Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Having been saved from the mob by the Roman guards, Paul is escorted from the Temple precinct to the Fortress Antonia. But he certainly isn't out of hot water. The guard is still trying to figure out what all the fuss is about. And since he can't get anything rational from the Jews in the Temple area, and doesn't know what to do with Paul, he does what the Romans do. He will beat the truth out of Paul. This wasn't punishment per se, but it was just the way things were done. But Paul then throws a curve ball to the guard. He is a citizen. Roman citizens couldn't be beaten without due process. Paul plays this card and avoids the flogging. And this gives us a clue to what Paul's strategy over the next several years. We need to pay close attention to it. Paul uses every

liberty afforded to him in order to complete his mission, but he does it with integrity and with manners. The guards back off, knowing that they could now be charged and even put to death for arresting and almost flogging a Roman citizen without formal charges and due process. In fear, they turn Paul over to the Sanhedrin in an attempt to get to the bottom of things.

30 The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Chapter 23

1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

4 And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

5 Then Paul said, “I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’ ”

6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!”

7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees’ party arose and protested, saying, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

10 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

Paul and a good conscience – doesn’t mean he never sinned, but that he never purposely wronged anyone. He has done what God told

him to do. Paul was never flippant in his actions, but did and said everything with a purpose. Now in ignorance, he slips up.

Slapped = blasphemy.

Retort to the High priest. Why didn't he know who this guy was? It's been a while. Probably informal gathering. Paul threw the Law back at them.

Paul apologizes, according to the Law.

Consistent, credible.

Knows he won't get a credible hearing and gets clever, splitting the opposition. (explain)

With fear of another riot, Paul is rescued once again by the Roman authorities. His citizenship pays dividends once again.

11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

12 And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. 14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have

killed Paul. 15 Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.”

16 So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.” 18 So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.”

19 Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”

20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. 21 But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.”

22 So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

The Lord appears to Paul and tells him not to fear, that he will get to go to Rome. No details though. I'm sure Paul was energized by this. But look at what happens next. There is a reason this is placed here.

Paul's nephew gets wind of an assassination plot against Paul. 40 men had taken a vow. (Paul had family in Jerusalem. Were they proud of him or scared to be associated with him? We may never know.)

God's sovereignty and human events. Just before Paul hears of the assassination plot, the Lord shows up and encourages him. Some might say this was coincidence, but there is no coincidence in the life of the believer and there isn't any coincidence in the Bible. There is always structure. The purpose is to show us how God is working on behalf of Paul and we need to pay attention to how these things play off each other.

Caution: things don't always work out this way. Stephen and James were martyred, but Peter and Paul have been delivered from prison and

mobs time and again. There is no formula – only faith, circumstances and God’s sovereignty.

Quote: “I don’t believe in coincidence. I believe in prayer. But when I stop praying, coincidences stop happening.”

22 So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, “Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.”

23 And he called for two centurions, saying, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; 24 and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor.” 25 He wrote a letter in the following manner: 26 Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. 29 I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. 30 And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his

accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. 33 When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

Once the motorcade got to Antipatris, the cavalry returned to Jerusalem. Paul was now in flatter terrain with a majority Gentile population. Paul is escorted by 470 armed men and a letter to Felix, the governor in Caesarea. He is one step closer to Rome.

Felix – born a slave, gained his freedom and eventually became the governor of the area. Ruled from 52 – 59 AD. Was eventually removed for allowing soldiers to loot Jewish homes after a revolt. He was replaced by Festus. (Not from Gunsmoke!) We will read of Festus shortly.

Paul is held in Herod's Praetorium. (Palace by the sea.) Once again, citizenship has its privileges.

1 Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, 3 we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 4 Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. 5 For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. 7 But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands, 8 commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him." 9 And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

The Sanhedrin hires a Roman lawyer to prosecute (Tertullus – Greek name.)

10 Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: “Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, 11 because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. 15 I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. 16 This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

17 “Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, 18 in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. 19 They ought to have been here before you to

object if they had anything against me. 20 Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, 21 unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.’ ”

Paul defends himself. (These are summaries/ abbreviated synopses of the hearing, not word for word transcripts.)

Paul states that he is on trial because of his belief in the resurrection of the dead and that all his accusers are not there to face him. They have no proof. Their charges are groundless. He has never started any trouble anywhere. And he hasn't. Paul, like Jesus, never started anything, their words inflamed those against them, but they never wanted violence. (The Gospel is like novacane.)

This is why another reason Paul can have a clear conscience. (Speaking the truth in love, peacefully.)

22 But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make

a decision on your case.” 23 So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

24 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.” 26 Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

Felix knew of “the Way.” He knew they weren’t rabble-rousers.

Paul is held in the palace, not in a squalid jail cell. He still hasn’t been officially charged with anything. He is permitted liberty and visits from friends. (food and provisions.)

Felix is between a rock and a hard place – politically and morally. As the governor, he needs to please the officials in Rome. They hate

civil unrest. He needs to please the Jews to prevent civil unrest. They can appeal to Rome and have Felix removed. If he hands Paul over to the Jews, they will love him. But if Paul, a Roman citizen is killed in an insurrection, Felix can be recalled and even executed. Felix procrastinates for 2 years, hoping Paul will offer him the customary bribe and Felix can wash his hands of the whole matter.

Morally – Felix is married to his sister.

1 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, 3 asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him. 4 But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there shortly. 5 “Therefore,” he said, “let those who have authority among you go down with me and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him.”

6 And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. 7 When he had

come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, 8 while he answered for himself, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.”

9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?”

10 So Paul said, “I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. 11 For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, “You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!”

13 And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. 14 When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, 15 about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. 16 To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' 17 Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. 18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, 19 but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. 21 But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.”

“Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.”

23 So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus’ command Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said: “King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. 26 I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. 27 For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

Still no charges.

Paul’s citizenship card and splitting the opposition – clever, but is it spiritual?

God's warning and Paul's action.

Two years and still preaching. What was going through Paul's mind for two years? Has God forgotten about me?

Paul lived his life in such a way that showed he was on a constant mission and in a constant relationship with Jesus.

What about us?