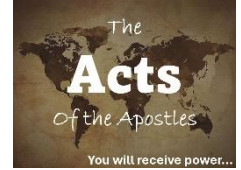




From Persecutor, to Preacher, to Prisoner Acts 21:31-22:25 (Lesson #30)



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Thirteen-point outline of Chapter 21:31-22:25:

We pick back up in Luke's account of what happened in Jerusalem following the third missionary journey. Last week we saw the Jews from Asia excited the crowd, seized Paul, and removed him from the temple.

- 1) The tribune learned that all Jerusalem was in confusion, he took centurions and soldiers and when he arrived where the crowd was beating Paul, they stopped (21:31-32).
- 2) The tribune arrested Paul and then inquired of the crowd what he had done, but some were saying one thing, while others were saying another (21:33-34a).
- 3) Because the tribune was unable to understand the charges he ordered Paul to be taken to the barracks, the crowd was so violent the soldiers had to actually carry Paul into the barracks as shouts heralded out: "away with him!" (Acts 21:34b-36).
- 4) As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he asked to speak, the tribune was surprised that Paul spoke Greek, for the tribune thought he was an Egyptian terrorist (21:37-38).
- 5) Paul responded that he was a Jew and asked permission to address his fellow countrymen (21:39).
- 6) Having obtained permission, Paul addressed his fellow countrymen by referring to them as brothers and fathers, and he spoke to them in Hebrew, these two things helped quite the mob (21:40-22:2).
- 7) Paul then outlined five key elements. First Paul outlined his own Jewish background (22:3).
- 8) Paul then described how he had persecuted Christians (22:4-5).
- 9) Next Paul described his reason for and the events that happened when he went to Damascus (22:6-11).
- 10) Next Paul outlines the events around him regaining his sight as well as his baptism into the Christian faith (22:12-16).
- 11) Finally, Paul outlined his calling to go to the Gentiles with the gospel (22:17-21).
- 12) It was at that point, when Paul mentioned the Gentiles that the crowd went crazy and began flinging dirt in the air and crying out for Paul's life. (22:22-23).
- 13) As the riot reignited, the tribune ordered Paul to be brought back into the barracks and examined by flogging (22:23a-25).

Vs 31- And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.

These Jews who had dragged Paul out of the temple were beating him with the plan to physically beat him to death. But news about a riot on the temple, quickly spread to the tribune.

The Greek word that is here translated "tribune" is **χiliarchos (chiliarchos)**, the chief or captain of up to 1,000 soldiers in the Greek army. You will meet him officially in a week or two, his name was **Claudius Lysias**.

Claudius Lysias, was the tribune, the chief, over the cohort there in Jerusalem that was stationed in the Antonia Fortress which overlooked the temple compound.

A Roman cohort was approximately **600 soldiers**.

Since it was Pentecost, the city was bustling with visitors, the Roman tribune would have had soldiers dispersed around the city and the temple mount.

Word made it to the tribune that all of Jerusalem was in confusion and that a riot was breaking out.

The tribune was housed at the Tower of Antonia, at the northwest corner of the temple mount along with a Roman cohort of soldiers. There were only a couple flights of stairs from the fortress to Court of the Gentiles.

Whenever you find confusion, you find the work of the evil one.

Vs 32 - He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

This tribune immediately grabbed centurions (each who oversaw 100 soldiers). This means at a minimum, the tribune directed 200 of the 600 soldiers stationed there to come with him out of the Antonia Fortress and down to the temple complex to ascertain what was going on.

The tribune is taking a large number of soldiers, for he is not sure what he is stepping into. They came out of the fortress and ran down “to them.” So, they arrived right where the mob was attempting to beat Paul to death.

When the people beating Paul saw the tribute (and hundreds of soldiers pouring out of the Antonia Fortress), they quit beating Paul. What they were doing was illegal and these are Roman soldiers.

Vs 33 - Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.

Then the tribute, backed by the soldiers, came up and arrested Paul and ordered him to be bound with two chains. The tribune assumed Paul was a very dangerous criminal. Why else would the crowd be trying to kill him?

This likely means each hand was chained to a different guard. Do you wonder if Paul immediately remember what Agabus had prophesied in (Acts 21:11)?

Now, having secured the scene, the **cohort inquired** of those beating Paul; “**who is he and what has he done?**”

Vs 34 - Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

Like the riot in Ephesus, it was **pandemonium** and **confusion**. One person was **shouting one thing**, another person was **shouting another thing**.

The tribute was **completely confused**, and he could not really **ascertain the facts** because of the **uproar**. The tribute then ordered that they bring Paul into the Roman barracks, into the Antonia Fortress and there he would interrogate Paul.

This is another mob similar to what we saw in Ephesus, remember (Acts 19:32).

Vs 35 - And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd,

As the soldiers got Paul to the steps that led up to the barracks, Luke records that the soldiers actually had to carry Paul, because of the violence of the crowd.

This would have been first century LA, and it is on the brink of blowing up. The crowd was so out of control that the Soldiers under the direction of the Tribute carried Paul into the garrison.

Vs 36 - for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!"

The mob, likely thousands of people was crying out “**away with him.**” This is not simply a cry to tote Paul off. This is a cry to kill Paul.

Just like the Jews did with Jesus 24 years earlier (Joh 19:14-15), this Jewish mob is crying out for Paul's blood.

So that I do not "bury the lede". The tribune had rescued Paul from what was certain death. But Paul is now a prisoner of Rome, he will remain a prisoner for approximately 5 years.

SO YOU KNOW: It is during this time that Paul will write what we refer to as the prison epistles (**Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon**).

Vs 37 - As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek?"

As Paul is about to be brought into the barracks, and now away from the stir and craziness of the mob, Paul says to the tribune (in Greek), *"May I say something to you?"*

The tribune, immediately and surprisedly responds: *"Do you know Greek?"* The tribune was actually very surprised that Paul spoke Greek, you will see why in the next verse.

Vs 38 - Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"

The tribune had assumed that the uproar was because Paul was an Egyptian, who had led 4,000 men of the assassins out into the wilderness.

Historically, these men were known as "the Sicarii", meaning the dagger men. These men carried a short sword called a "sicae" in Latin. They were enemies of Rome and any Jews who were sympathetic to Rome. They would mingle in large crowds and secretly stab their enemies or cut their throats.

Josephus wrote about this Egyptian false prophet who led many astray. The Jewish Annotated New Testament indicates that this occurred between 52-58AD.

The tribune assumed that Paul was this Egyptian who attempted to overthrow Rome, and had escaped to the wilderness. The tribune assumed Paul was a major wanted criminal.

Vs 39 - Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people."

Paul's response was quite the opposite. He was not this Egyptian, but instead he was a Jew, he was from Tarsus in Cilicia. He was a Jew who was a citizen of a major city.

Then he asked permission from the tribune to speak to the people. Considering all that has happened this is a very brave request by Paul.

Let's be honest, these Jews that Paul desires to address were just a second ago attempting to kill him. They fully planned to beat him to death right there on the temple mount!

Vs 40 - And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

The tribune, surprisingly gives Paul permission to speak to this rowdy, mob.

Paul, standing on the steps of the Antonia Fortress, looking down at the mob on the temple mount, then motions with his hand to silence this mob.

AND... surprisingly there was a great hush that fell over the crowd and Paul began to speak to them, from the elevated position of the stairway. Paul began to speak not in Greek, or Aramaic, but in Hebrew.

22:1-2 - "Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." 2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:

Here we find Paul's address to the angry mob on the temple mount. He begins his address respectfully and he refers to the Jews present as "brothers and fathers."

This is the same language the Stephen used before the Sanhedrin in (Acts 7:2).

He also addressed them in the Hebrew language. So rather than addressing them in Greek, Paul addressed them in their native language, Hebrew. This would have been a show of **respect** and **solidarity**.

As he had motioned them to be quiet and was speaking in Hebrew, the crowd became extremely quiet. Paul then delivers his **defense** which breaks into **5 main areas**:

- 1) Paul's own Jewish background (vs 3)
- 2) Paul's persecution of Christians (vs 4-5)
- 3) Paul's meeting with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (vs 6-11)
- 4) Paul's baptism (vs 12-16)
- 5) Paul's command to go to the Gentiles (vs 17-21)

SO YOU KNOW: The Greek word translated "defense" is the word *ἀπολογία (apologia)*, and it means to give a verbal defense. It is where we get the study of apologetics (giving a defense).

I. Paul's Jewish Background

Vs 3 - "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day."

First Paul describes how he is a Jew, he is descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) he is a Jew from one of the 12 tribes. Although a Jew, he was not born in the land of Israel but instead in Tarsus of Cilicia.

But, he was educated at the feet of the leading Pharisee of the day, a man named Gamaliel, and he was educated in the strictest manner of the Pharisees.

NOTE: Although Paul was brought up in Jerusalem, we have no indication that he ever heard Jesus teach.

Further, he **was zealous** for God, notice like **"all of you are this day."**

Paul would elsewhere talk about the Jew's zeal (Rom 10:1-2). He knew this for he was once guilty of the same misplaced zeal.

But, do not miss Paul's underlying point here. **Nothing in Paul's past life had predisposed him to accept the gospel.** In fact, just the opposite!

II. Paul's Persecution of Christians

Vs 4-5 - I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

Next Paul describes how he actually persecuted people of “the way”, believers, followers of Jesus, and he persecuted many of them to their death. Also, he had many bound and delivered to judgment and then to prison, both men and women.

Vs 5 – Further, Paul outlines three important points:

- A) The high priest and the entire Sanhedrin can bear witness that what Paul is saying is true.
- B) Paul’s zeal even led him to **persecute believers outside of Jerusalem.**
- C) In fact, Paul had asked for (Acts 9) and received letters from elders and the high priest to go to Damascus and bring back bound, to Jerusalem, any Jews who had apostatized to following Jesus.

Not only had nothing in Paul’s past predisposed him to become a follower of Jesus. He actually hated and persecuted those who did. In fact, he went out of his way to do so.

III. Paul’s meeting with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus

Vs 6 - "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me.

Point #3, Paul begins to recount the events recorded in Acts 9, when he met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. This is the second of three accounts of Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus in the book of Acts. We will see the third in Acts 26.

Paul begins here that he was on his way to Damascus. If you remember back to Acts 9, we learn what occurred before Paul decided to go to Damascus. Following the stoning of Stephen, where Paul was the one holding the cloaks of those who killed Stephen, we read in (Acts 9:1-2).

So Paul was on the road to Damascus, with the plan that he had hatched in his heart, to bring believers back to Jerusalem bound and have them answer for their heresies.

On the way, as Paul drew near to the city, at about noon, a great light suddenly shone around him.

The Greek word translated shone is: **περιαστράπτω (periastraptō)**, it means to shine around or to flash around. Paul is likely describing how this **great light** shone all around him. This is likely the **shekinah glory of God**. Keep in mind this is the middle of the day in the ancient near east. This would have been the brightest part of the day, and it is during this time that Paul sees this great light all around him.

Vs 7 - And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’

In many pictures we see of this event Paul, they depict Paul falling from a horse, I would simply say no horse is mentioned and what we are told is that Paul fell to the ground.

Upon falling to the ground, after having seen the great light, he then heard a voice that said to him: **“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”**

Please keep in mind **three things:**

- A) As you will see in a moment, **Paul has been struck blind.**
- B) Up until now, we have no indication that Paul ever **heard Jesus speak.**
- C) We should suspect that Paul at least initially has **no idea who is speaking to him.**

But the question rings out, ***Saul, why are you persecuting me?***

APPLICATION: Persecution against God's people is persecution against Christ Himself!

Vs 8a - And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?'

We should suspect this is a **legitimate question**, seeking a legitimate answer. Consider all that has happened.

Paul is on his way to Damascus to take believers bound, back to Jerusalem. As he is approaching the city a bright light appears around him, he is knocked to the ground, he is blinded, and now the voice asks: **why are you persecuting me?**

The logical question is; who are you... LORD?

Vs 8b - And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

Then the answer came back. I am Jesus of Nazareth. I am Yeshua the Nazarene. This is Jesus the one that had been crucified and buried in Jerusalem. Jesus the one whose followers had been **proclaiming that He was alive. This is Yeshua the Nazarene!**

Here as Paul laid in the dirt, in response to his question about the identity of the one who spoke to him. The voice had identified Himself as Jesus of Nazareth, the one who was clearly crucified, who was clearly dead, and who is now, **clearly alive.**

Can you imagine the **surprise**, can you imagine the **shock?**

Vs 9 - Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

Paul then provides some additional commentary involving what was happening with his traveling companions. Namely, those who traveled with Paul saw the light, but they did not understand the voice. See (Acts 9:7-8a).

The men with Paul, **saw the light, heard a voice**, but they **could not understand what was said**, and **they did not see anyone**. Paul did not see anyone, but for very different reasons. He had been blinded.

Vs 10 - And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.'

Then Paul asks the risen, resurrected Jesus. ***'What shall I do, Lord?'*** This time, he is not Lord in the sense of respect. He is Lord in the sense of the risen Lord.

I believe at this moment, Paul submitted his will to the will of Jesus and responded like any of us would have.

The Lord Jesus, responded to Paul's question with very specific directions.

- 1) **Rise**, get out of the dirt.
- 2) Go on into **Damascus**
- 3) There you will be told all that is **appointed for you to do.**

Vs 11 - And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

Paul had **planned his way**; he had mapped it out. But the Lord, redirected his path.

Secondly, and forgive me for I know I said this in Acts 9, but this is nothing like the entry into Damascus that Paul imagined. He is not entering as the powerful persecutor; he is entering rather like a little child being led by the hand.

APPLICATION: If you have never given your life to Christ. You might be here this morning, for a host of reasons, but none of them are about your interest in Jesus. My prayer is that as God redirected Paul's steps so many years ago, as he redirected mine 31 years ago. He would redirect yours!

IV. Paul's Baptism

Paul now shifts to talk about what happened following the Damascus road experience. Scholars disagree if Paul placed faith in Jesus on the road or here.

Vs 12-13 - "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him.

Now Paul leaves out a lot about what happened with Ananias, Acts (9:10-16) provides additional details.

Ananias, this devout man according to the law (so a Jew or Jewish proselyte) who had converted to the faith, a man who was well spoken of by the Jews who lived in the area of Damascus, came to Paul.

We now know the back story of all that God said to Ananias, and how the act of Ananias coming to Paul was a **massive act of faith and obedience**.

NEXT, Paul records how Ananias came to him and stood by him. In Acts 9 Luke adds that Ananias also laid his hands on Paul and Ananias said to Paul: *'Brother Saul, receive your sight.'*

Notice Ananias called Saul brother. This has led many to the conclusion that Paul was converted on the road to Damascus, and this time of being blind, is a time of reflection for Paul.

And at that very moment Paul received his sight and he saw Ananias. This is described in (Acts 9:17-18a).

Paul went from totally blind to seeing normally in an instant as something like scales fell off his eyes.

Vs 14-16 - And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Then Ananias, speaking on behalf of Yahweh, said **FIVE MAJOR things**:

FIRST, the God of our fathers (likely Ananias was a Hebrew) had appointed Paul to know his will.

APPLICATION: If you are saved, God wants you to know His will for your life (Eph 5:27).

SECOND, Yahweh had appointed for Paul to see the Righteous One. The Greek word is ὁράω (*horaō*), means **to see, to behold, to look at, or to observe**.

God has appointed Paul to see (the Righteous One) Jesus alive. Here Ananias, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calls Jesus the (Righteous One)!

This term “Righteous One” is used **two other places** in Acts (3:14, 7:52) and in Hebrews 10:39. Its etymology is the prophet Isaiah (Is 53:11).

THIRD, God has appointed for you to hear the voice of Jesus. Paul heard it on the road to Damascus and he would hear it again.

FOURTH, Paul would be a witness and notice the audience, to **everyone** of what he has seen and heard!

FIFTH, What are you waiting for? ***Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.***

Some believe it is this moment that Paul placed faith in the risen Jesus and in calling on his name, his sins were washed away, part of what is pictured in baptism.

The tense of the verb “calling” is **Aorist**, this is a concept that does not regard time, but rather the **action itself**. It is normally rendered into English in the **past tense**. That would have been the best way to render it here.

Rise and be baptized and be clean from your sins having called upon his name.

On the matter of how our sins are washed away Peter (IPet 3:21), John (I Jo 1:7), and Paul (Ti 3:5) spoke on this topic.

V. Paul’s command to go to the Gentiles (vs 17-21)

Vs 17 - "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance

We know that Paul was converted on the road to Damascus and three years later Paul returned to Jerusalem where he met with Peter. Paul is likely talking about this time, in Jerusalem. It appears one of the things he did was he went to the temple to pray. There in the temple, as he was praying, he fell into a trance.

The word translated trance is: **ἐκστασις (ekstasis)**. This is the same word that is used of **Peter** when he fell into a “**trance**” on top of Simon the tanners home.

Vs 18 - and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’

Then Paul said, I saw him. The pronoun goes back to the Pronoun “his” in verse 16, which goes back to the last noun, the Righteous One in verse 14.

There in the temple, as he was praying, Paul fell into a trance and he saw Jesus. And further, Jesus spoke to him. Jesus said this: ***‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’***

Leave now, the Jews will not accept your testimony about me. Now, Paul is back in Jerusalem, as God has led him, but we still see the hardness of the hearts of many of Paul’s fellow countrymen.

Although thousands have believed, there are still many who will not receive Paul’s testimony, and as we have learned they are the ones instrumental in attempting to murder Paul.

Vs 19-20 - And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’

Then Paul said to Jesus, Lord, they all know that I went from synagogue to synagogue and I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. I went from synagogue to synagogue, finding those Jews who had become your followers, I imprisoned and beat those who had placed faith in you.

Notice, Paul said from one synagogue after another, I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.

We do not know exactly what Paul is thinking. The context seems to be, Lord I cannot really do anything to expand your kingdom, I really cannot be useful in the work of the good news of your Son. **For, look at all that I have done to Jews who came to faith in your Son.**

And then there is Stephen. When the blood of your witness, Stephen, was spilled, I myself was standing by, I myself approved of his execution. I watched over the garments of those who killed him. It seems what Paul is saying is Lord I am **damaged goods**, I killed Jews who came to you by faith, I am of no use to you.

APPLICATION: God is not worried about your **past being a hinderance to your future**. Quite the opposite, God can use your past as proof of what the gospel can do in the life of a person.

Also, when God starts looking for a someone through which to do something amazing. He is not looking at who you were before you placed faith in Jesus. God is looking for someone who is **close and clean**.

Vs 21 - And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'

After Paul explains to God why he is not worthy to be used of God, and let's be honest on his own he is not worthy and neither are any of us. But after hearing Paul lay it all out.

God simply responds "go", for I will send you to the gentiles. Go, do not worry about the Jews, for I have an alternate plan for you. I will send you far away from Jerusalem. I will send you to the gentiles scattered all over the Roman empire. **Go, for I am sending you!**

Here Paul is recounting all that has happened to him, from his early days, through his conversion, through God's calling to proclaim the good news to the Gentiles.

Now before we read any further, the Jews worked to convert Gentiles, and we have run across many proselytes to the Jewish faith. It appears Gentiles coming to God through the Jewish path was not a problem. BUT...

Vs 22 - Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."

They were willing to listen to Paul, even the events involving Jesus, even when Paul outlined how he had seen Jesus alive. But when the story turned to Jesus sending Paul to the gentiles with the good news of the gospel, that was too much. That was a bridge too far!

The mob collectively raised their voice and said: *"Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."*

I hope you see the animosity between the Jews and the gentiles. Stated differently, I hope you see how much the Jews hated the gentiles. In particular the idea of gentiles coming to a relationship with Yahweh apart from circumcision, apart from keeping Jewish laws and customs. They had a huge problem with that!

Vs 23 - And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

Further Luke records that as they were shouting away with this man, he is not worthy to live, execute this man, they also threw off their cloaks and they began to fling dust up into the air.

Once again, the mob erupts into an uncontrolled frenzy and they are demanding the execution of Paul.

Vs 24 - the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this.

When the tribune saw the whole thing sinking back into chaos, he ordered Paul to be brought into the barracks, into the Antonio Fortress.

The tribune then commanded one of the centurions to prepare Paul for flogging so that they could find out what all of the commotion was about and what and why they were shouting at Paul.

Vs 25 - But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?"

One of the centurions likely directed some of his soldiers to prepare Paul for flogging by having him stretched out for the whips. Paul then asked the centurion a very important question.

This is an important question and contains two items that are both illegal.

- 1) A Roman citizen could not be punished without a trial.
- 2) It was illegal to scourge a Roman citizen. Period.

We have to **leave off here**, the riot continues to boil on the temple mount in Jerusalem. Paul has given a defense, but when he brought up the gentiles the crowd went crazy! Now Paul is stretched out in preparation to be flogged!

Reflecting on Today's Lesson

Acts 22 is a pivotal chapter in the Book of Acts, where the Apostle Paul recounts his dramatic conversion to a hostile Jewish audience in Jerusalem. His speech, delivered in Hebrew to show cultural solidarity, reveals profound biblical and moral lessons that remain relevant today.

The first key biblical lesson is the transformative power of God's grace. Paul recounts how he was once a zealous persecutor of Christians, complicit in the death of Stephen, yet was radically transformed after encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-11). This demonstrates that no one is beyond the reach of God's mercy and redemption. Paul's life is a testament to how divine grace can repurpose even the most misguided zeal into a mission of love and truth.

Another important biblical theme is the call to witness. Paul's conversion is not an end but a beginning. God commissioned him through Ananias to be a witness to all people of what he has seen and heard (Acts 22:15). The lesson here is the importance of testifying to personal experiences of faith and using one's story to inspire and lead others to truth.

Lastly, Acts 22 also reveals the moral cost of truth-telling. Despite Paul's respectful tone and personal testimony, the crowd reacts violently when he mentions his mission to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21-22). This highlights the reality that standing for truth and righteousness can provoke opposition, especially when it challenges entrenched biases or privileges. Yet, Paul's courage teaches believers to remain steadfast even when truth is unwelcome.

In sum, Acts 22 teaches that transformation through grace, bold witness, and moral courage are all central to a **faithful life**.