



Acts Chapter 22

Theme of Acts: The Holy Spirit and the Birth of the Church

Personal Reflection

Complete this section in one sitting or little by little during the week. Begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit into your time. Spending time in the Bible, studying the original intent, meaning and cultural context helps you to understand how it applies to you now.

Further Study

Complete on your own or with your small group.

Read Acts 22 Click on any Bible verse in the study to read it or use your own Bible.

Song for the week: My Story - Big Daddy Weave

Song links: <https://youtu.be/t8TBoR-GSso?si=jJlpVqCxxgews1XAX>

Personal Reflection

In the original writing of the Bible, there were no chapters or verses. In 1560 the Geneva Bible was printed and was the first to contain headings, chapters and verses, making it easier for people to notate, reference and communicate about what they were reading.

Remember when Frank said he was reading *John 1:1* which says “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” and his head exploded? He turned to *Genesis 1:26* and read, “Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image.” He had a fresh understanding of Jesus; He had been part of creating humans!

Since the Geneva Bible, it is easier for us to find these connections as we search our Bibles. Frank was able to communicate exactly where in John and where in Genesis he read these passages; and we could easily look them up to confirm what he taught us.

Shannon talked this week about Gospel Contemplation. It is a way to engage with Scripture that allows us to enter into the story and engage with it.

As we read the Bible we look for the original intent. In Frank’s example, John tied Jesus back to Genesis as the God who created humans. The Jews would have been taught Genesis and understood what John was saying. For us, Scripture becomes richer, our understanding of God grows richer and we know Him better as we learn things like this. Or as Frank said, his head exploded!

Being curious like Shannon encourages us helps us understand the cultural context. We stop at names to understand who these people were, what they did, why they are mentioned. We use maps to understand where things occurred, where that place was then and where it is located today. We learn about the culture of an area and what they may have been experiencing which helps us understand what is said and why.

Using Gospel Contemplation we can imagine the 25,000 people in Jerusalem assembled together in anger. We can look up pictures of Jerusalem and picture the scene. We can imagine what it would be like to have been like to be one people group or another. We can marvel at the Holy Spirit in Paul helping him to be brave and address the people in the midst of the accusations against him.

Bringing together what we learn, we can apply it to our lives as we know that the Word of God is living and active, still used by the Holy Spirit today. We can identify which people groups we identify with - sometimes it's each one to some extent. The Holy Spirit can use that to convict us or encourage us. When we face opposition for Jesus, we can remember Paul and be encouraged. *Optional, read Hebrews 4:12*

This week we will practice connecting what is in Acts 22 with other parts of Acts and John, the two books we have studied. Focus on the story and how God is revealed in it. Ask the Holy Spirit who is in you to show you what He has for you in this study - to help you be open and ready to learn and grow.

In Acts 22:3-21 Paul recounted his Jewish background, his conversion story and a vision from Jesus while in Jerusalem which sent him to the Gentiles.

Using your Bible or searching online, answer the following questions.

Paul's Jewish Background

The term Grecian or Hellenist is used to describe Jewish people who knew Greek but did not have Greek ancestry. Paul was a circumcised Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin, born in Tarsus, making him a Roman. He was able to address the Roman commander in Greek and the Jews in Aramaic.

We have been learning about the different people Luke wrote about.

Paul said he studied under Gamaliel. In which chapter of Acts was Gamaliel first mentioned? What are at least four things you know about Gamaliel based on what is said about him there?

As Paul addressed the people, he said he had been trained in the law.

Consider what you have learned about the law in John and Acts. Why was the law important to the Jews?

Paul confessed his persecution of those who were part of the Way.

What would this confession have meant to those who were not yet believing in Jesus?

What would this confession have meant to those who did believe in Jesus?

How does confession help you in your relationships?

Paul's Conversion Story

Some of the people listening may have known Jesus, or known of Him, but not yet believed Him to be God.

Where in Acts was Paul blinded and spoken to by Jesus?

Following the idea of blindness, in what chapter of John does Jesus heal a blind man?

In the NIV version (the version most used by One Hope), what is the third heading in that chapter of John?

How does that heading connect with what happened to Paul (Saul) during his conversion?
How does what Jesus said in that section connect with Paul's conversion?

How does this process of curiosity with what you read and looking things up help you learn more about the Bible and God?

Paul said that Ananias came to see him.

What do you learn about Ananias in Paul's speech in Acts 22?

Reading Paul's conversion story earlier in Acts, what else do you learn about Ananias?

Paul mentions Stephen being killed and how Paul approved of it.

What two chapters of Acts had Stephen in them? Based on those chapters, what are some descriptive words used of him?

How was what Stephen went through similar to what Paul went through in Acts 22?

Paul's Vision of Jesus

It was Jesus who spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus and it was Jesus who spoke to Paul in the vision.

How do we know it was Jesus in Paul's vision? (What did Paul see and hear?)

“Given the rise in Judean nationalism over the previous decade, Paul's mention of ministry to Gentiles rekindles the riot which started over the charge that he had brought a Gentile into the temple (Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible).” The crowd took off their upper garments, perhaps to prepare for stoning. Before the coats were put at Paul's feet during a stoning but this time they were taken off because of Paul. *Optional, read Acts 7:58*

As you read *Acts 22:22-30*, what parallels do you see between what Jesus went through and what Paul was now going through?

Putting it into practice:

Paul was ready to give his conversion story. Sunday Shannon read *1 Peter 3:15* which says, “ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

Write down one or two recent stories of how God has either used you or provided for you. Once you are done, thank God for using you or for being there for you.

Further Study

Paul told his conversion story in *Acts 22*. In other parts of *Acts* he also told stories from his missionary journeys, of people believing in Jesus and churches being built. Each story is a testimony.

Some of the definitions of testimony include: evidence or proof provided by the existence or appearance of something; a public profession of religious experience; firsthand authentication of a fact.

According to *Christian Educators Academy*, it is “a personal and authentic account of how God has worked in one's life.” It is how our individual experiences are used to the glory of God.

Telling a testimony of God in your life builds connection with those listening and it shows God's character and personal interaction which brings Him glory and honor. The story of God in your life reminds you of His faithfulness and may encourage someone else with what they are going through.

Spend time as a small group sharing stories of how God has used you (how humbling that the God of the universe would use you!) or how God has worked in your life (how humbling that the God of the universe would work in you!).

Pray

Thank God for His part in each of your stories. Invite Him to continue to use you and to work in you.