

# Confronted with the Glory of Christ

---

1. Paul's first defense was before the Jewish mob that wanted to kill him (21:37-40).
    - a. How did Paul see this trial? (Hint: consider how he used it.)
    - b. What do you think motivated Paul to preach the gospel to this violent mob?
    - c. How often do you see trials as opportunities from God?
    - d. How would your life be different if you saw every trial as an opportunity to glorify God?
  
  2. Paul's message to the Jews from the steps of the Antonia Fortress is a classic example of how a Christian should give his/her personal testimony (note: a personal testimony is the essential spiritual facts and events that surrounded a person's salvation). It is important for every Christian to be able to share their salvation testimony in a logical, understandable manner.
    - a. What details comprise the first part of Paul's testimony (v. 3-5)?
    - b. What came next (v. 6-10)?
    - c. How did Paul end his testimony (v. 11-21)?
  
  3. Paul was confronted by Jesus Christ on that road to Damascus.
    - a. How was Paul blinded (v. 11)?
    - b. How would you describe the glory of God?
    - c. Read Revelation 22:3-5; what will light the new Earth?
  
  4. Some twenty years after the stoning of Stephen, Paul still had a vivid recollection of the events of that gruesome event. Yet he wrote to the Philippians saying that he was "forgetting those things which are behind" (Phil. 3:13).
 

It does not seem like Paul was very successful at "forgetting those things which are behind" if he could still remember the events of Stephen's stoning about twenty years earlier. What do you think he meant by his statement to the Philippians (Phil. 3:12-14)?

Sometimes Christians say that they know that God can forgive them for a particular sin but they cannot forgive themselves. What counsel could you offer a brother or sister in this situation?

What do you think a believer should do if he has confessed his sin to God but he still does not *feel* forgiven for his sin?
  
  5. In verse 20 Paul called Stephen a "martyr." Ananias used the same Greek word in verse 15 when he told Paul, "You will be His *mar'toos*" (English: "witness" or "martyr"). The Greek word *mar'toos* simply means "witness"; the English word has come to mean a witness that was killed as a result, due to treatment Christian witnesses have received down through the ages.
    - a. How was Paul's mistreatment similar to Stephen's?
    - b. How are Christian *mar'toos* (witnesses) persecuted today?
  
  6. Prior to Paul's salvation, he hunted down believers and imprisoned them (v. 19). He even held the cloaks of those who stoned Stephen to death (v. 20). Now, twenty years later, the hunter became the hunted as Paul attempted to defend his actions and testify of his new life in Christ.
    - a. What statement did Paul make that caused the Jewish mob to raise their voices and say, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live" (v. 22)?
    - b. The gospel is often offensive to unbelievers; what parts of the gospel are offensive today?
-

## Read: Acts 23

---

### Monday

v. 1-5 — Paul's first hearing was before the Roman commander, the Sanhedrin, and the high priest Ananias. Ananias (not Annas—Luke 3:2) was one of the most hated, corrupt and blood-thirsty high priests ever. When Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest" (v. 5), we do not have to assume that Paul was lying as some suggest. This was a Roman hearing and the high priest would not have been wearing his formal clothing of office. Having recently arrived in Jerusalem, Paul had not yet met the High Priest. Notice what Paul did do in v. 5: he admitted his sin. How quick are *you* to admit when you have sinned? If you sin against your spouse do you immediately go and repent? Or do you hope it will all "blow over"? Christians are called to a life of repentance. We are called to life of asking for and granting forgiveness. Take inventory of your life today, ask God to open your eyes to any unrepented sin in your life, then go! Ask for forgiveness and you will know the joy of reconciliation.

### Tuesday

v. 6-10 — The Pharisees and Sadducees held widely differing theology. The Sadducees were basically materialists (v. 8) who only accepted the Torah or first five books of the Bible as true. The Pharisees were legalists who taught a strict adherence to the Law and their own traditions. These two groups did not like each other; they were political and theological enemies. Both of these groups were prone to arguments. They had *their own* beliefs and they would not be swayed, even by Jesus. Does your life show a pattern of argument? When someone's view is different than yours are you willing to listen or do you only argue, fight and get angry? If you have an argumentative spirit it is a clear indication of pride.

### Wednesday

v. 11-22 — This passage shows God's provision vs. man's fruitless pursuits. The Jews again thought they could kill God's servant, but God had other plans. Jesus assured Paul that he would testify in Rome. Read verses 12-14; do you think those Jews got hungry? I wonder if any of those blood-thirsty fools starved to death. We can hope that God used their foolish oath to draw some to Christ. Two lessons this passage has for us today: 1) don't make foolish oaths; and 2) Jesus Christ is sovereign over all things. God loves you and He is always watching over His children. Take comfort in that wonderful truth.

### Thursday

v. 12-15 — Why do the nations rage (Psalm 2:1)? It is interesting that the Psalmist used the Hebrew word "go'ee" for "nations." It literally means "heathen" (non-Jew) or better, "Gentile." Why do the heathen, Gentile nations rage? The question from this passage is why do the Jews rage? The Jews who were chosen by God to be His people had so rejected His Word that they now had no idea who He is; they found themselves at war against God. Christians today need to learn a lesson from these Jews; if you are not following God *by His Word* you cannot be certain you are doing His will and you are in danger of finding yourself at war with God.

### Friday

v. 23-30 — Do you think the Roman commander over-reacted? Why do you think he protected Paul with such extreme measures? I am not certain that we can understand how great a privilege it was to be a Roman citizen (22:29). Paul was an "uncondemned" Roman citizen (22:25) and as such had many rights that common people did not have. As Americans today, we have many rights and opportunities that others around the world do not have. One of those rights (one we may not always have) is free speech. Commit this week to use your American right of free speech to tell some poor, lost soul about Jesus Christ.

### Saturday

v. 31-35 — Thus begins Paul's journey to the Roman governor Felix. Jesus said that Paul would bear His name before Kings (Acts 9:15) and Paul would appear before Feilix, Festus and Agrippa II. He would eventually be taken to Rome just as Jesus said (Acts 23:11). Paul never shrank back from his calling to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, even when his audience was royalty. Is it easy for you to share your faith? Ask the Lord for specific opportunities to share Christ and for boldness this week.

---