**Lesson 23 Mar 10 Acts 21:27-40 and 22:1-29 Arrest, Defense, and Imprisonment**

In our last lesson we read that Paul and his companions are sailing in the direction of Jerusalem. They stop in Tyre and spend a week there. The Spirit is informing both Paul and the brothers that there will be danger in Jerusalem. The disciples of Tyre walk Paul and his entourage to the beach and pray with them before they re-board the ship. When they arrived at Caesarea, they stayed with Philip. A prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea and binds his hands and feet in a demonstrative prophecy, explaining that that is how Paul would be bound before he is handed over to the Gentiles, by the Jews in Jerusalem. Paul is urged not to go on to Jerusalem, but he is being driven by the Spirit and is willing to die for Jesus Christ. When Paul, a few days later, arrive in Jerusalem, he is welcomed warmly by James and the other members of the Jerusalem Church. Paul is told that the devout Jews in Jerusalem have been told that Paul is teaching Jews who live with Christians not to observe Mosaic Law or circumcise their children. Paul is told that in order to convince the Jews of Jerusalem that he is a practicing and pious Jew, that he should take four men who are ready to take vows at the Temple and be purified with them. He should pay the fees for the men. Paul does this and then registers the date of the vows at the Temple.

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? Was there a particular verse or message in this week’s lesson from Acts 21-22 that you found inspiring?**
2. **What are the charges brought against Paul? Check for footnotes for additional comments on Acts 21:27-32.**

**Acts 21:27-3227**When the seven days were nearly completed, the Jews from the province of Asia noticed him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd, and laid hands on him, **28**shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us. This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place, and what is more, he has even brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this sacred place.” **29**For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him and supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. **30**The whole city was in turmoil with people rushing together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the gates were closed. **31**While they were trying to kill him, a report reached the cohort commander that all Jerusalem was rioting. **32**He immediately took soldiers and centurions and charged down on them. When they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

1. **Who is it that is making the accusations against Paul?**
2. **What parts of the charges in the above verses are *misrepresentations* of Paul’s teachings?**
3. **What is the *main concern of the cohort, soldiers and centurions* in verses 30-32?**
4. **Did the cohort have any idea who Paul was? Who did he think Paul might be? Check footnotes for help here. Read Acts 21:33-48.**

**Acts 21:33-4833**The cohort commander came forward, arrested him, and ordered him to be secured with two chains; he tried to find out who he might be and what he had done. **34**Some in the mob shouted one thing, others something else; so, since he was unable to ascertain the truth because of the uproar, he ordered Paul to be brought into the compound. **35**When he reached the steps, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob, **36**for a crowd of people followed and shouted, “Away with him!” **37**Just as Paul was about to be taken into the compound, he said to the cohort commander, “May I say something to you?” He replied, “Do you speak Greek? **38**So then you are not the Egyptian who started a revolt some time ago and led the four thousand assassins into the desert?” **39**Paul answered, “I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; I request you to permit me to speak to the people.” **40**When he had given his permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people; and when all was quiet he addressed them in Hebrew.

1. **What does Paul do and say to convince the crowd that he is one of them and not a threat? See Acts 21:40, 22:1-21.**

**Acts 21:40 40**When he had given his permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people; and when all was quiet, he addressed them in Hebrew.

**Acts 22:1-211**“My brothers and fathers, listen to what I am about to say to you in my defense.” **2**When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became all the more quiet. And he continued, **3**“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city. At the feet of Gamaliel, I was educated strictly in our ancestral law and was zealous for God, just as all of you are today. **4**I persecuted this Way to death, binding both men and women and delivering them to prison. **5**Even the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify on my behalf. For from them I even received letters to the brothers and set out for Damascus to bring back to Jerusalem in chains for punishment those there as well. **6** “On that journey as I drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me. **7**I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ **8**I replied, ‘Who are you, sir?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.’ **9**My companions saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to me. **10**I asked, ‘What shall I do, sir?’ The Lord answered me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything appointed for you to do.’ **11**Since I could see nothing because of the brightness of that light, I was led by hand by my companions and entered Damascus. **12**“A certain Ananias, a devout observer of the law, and highly spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, **13**came to me and stood there and said, ‘Saul, my brother, regain your sight.’ And at that very moment I regained my sight and saw him. **14**Then he said, ‘The God of our ancestors designated you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of his voice; **15**for you will be his witness before all to what you have seen and heard. **16**Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name.’ **17**“After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance **18**and saw the Lord saying to me, ‘Hurry, leave Jerusalem at once, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ **19**But I replied, ‘Lord, they themselves know that from synagogue to synagogue I used to imprison and beat those who believed in you. **20**And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I myself stood by giving my approval and keeping guard over the cloaks of his murderers.’ **21**Then he said to me, ‘Go, I shall send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

1. **What is it from Paul’s address that enrages the crowd again? See Acts 22:21-22 and check for footnotes.**

**Acts 22:21-22** **21**Then he said to me, ‘Go, I shall send you far away to the Gentiles.’” **22**They listened to him until he said this, but then they raised their voices and shouted, “Take such a one as this away from the earth. It is not right that he should live.”

1. **Reflection: Why do you think the commander mentioned that he had *paid* for his Roman citizenship? What do you think he had presumed about Paul? See Acts 22:23-29.**

**Acts 22:23-2923**And as they were yelling and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, **24**the cohort commander ordered him to be brought into the compound and gave instruction that he be interrogated under the lash to determine the reason why they were making such an outcry against him. 25But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion on duty, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen and has not been tried?” **26**When the centurion heard this, he went to the cohort commander and reported it, saying, “What are you going to do? This man is a Roman citizen.” **27**Then the commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” “Yes,” he answered. **28**The commander replied, “I acquired this citizenship for a large sum of money.” Paul said, “But I was born one.” **29**At once those who were going to interrogate him backed away from him, and the commander became alarmed when he realized that he was a Roman citizen and that he had had him bound.

1. **This is the second time that Paul mentions his Roman citizenship. What is different about his timing this time? Compare Acts 22:25 above with Acts 16:37-38.**

**Acts 16:37-3837**But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, even though we are Roman citizens and have not been tried, and have thrown us into prison. And now, are they going to release us secretly? By no means. Let them come themselves and lead us out.” **38**The lictors reported these words to the magistrates, and they became alarmed when they heard that they were Roman citizens.