

20230903 – THE MATTER OF PAUL’S CITIZENSHIP

Sunday AM – Acts 22:17-30

I. PAUL’S TRUE CONFESSION

A. His Prayer

1. His geographical location did not hinder his prayer life (vs. 17)
2. He was in the Temple – it was a place AND A TIME for prayer
3. He shut off all distractions (was in a trance)

B. His Vision

1. He saw the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 18)
2. He heard the Words of the Lord Jesus Christ
3. He spoke to the Lord Jesus Christ to gain wisdom

C. His Warning

1. He was to flee Jerusalem
2. He was to get out quickly (make haste)
3. He would not be heard by the Jews there (vs. 21)

II. THE PEOPLE’S ANGRY CRY

A. Paul’s reasoning as a former destroyer of Christians

1. He had been a terror to the churches
 - a. Can you imagine the stories told from Christian to Christian
 - b. Have you heard about Saul? He was just in the next district
 - c. He took one brother out of his home through the streets
 - d. I heard he threw the wife and children into prison!
2. Paul stood by and kept the garments of those stoning Stephen
 - a. ACTS 7:52-60 – Stephen PREACHED and was killed
 - b. Paul watched the whole thing happen (consenting)
 - c. Paul never got over it
 - i. He mentions it several times
 - ii. I wonder if he ever felt like he’d ever measure up
 - iii. It truly was HARD for Paul to kick against the prodding
3. Paul doesn’t sugar-coat his testimony
4. He also doesn’t DWELL on the details (no longer recognizes the OLD man)

B. Paul reveals his God-given mission to the Gentiles

1. They had listened until that word – GENTILE – ACTS 22:22
2. They liked the part when Paul talked about hauling Christians to prison
3. They liked the part when Paul talked about Stephen’s death

C. People flew into a mad rage – they claimed he had defiled the Temple

1. They rent their clothes and threw dust in the air (vs. 23)
 - a. That tells of the intense rage – the insensible feeling
 - b. No reasoning, no rational thought any more
 - c. Just a red rage, unthinking, mob-violence

2. They were beating him before, now they were ready to rip him apart
 - a. Sounds like our modern society
 - b. Have you seen the way people are acting today?
 - c. Like ANIMALS. Random gangs attacking lone pedestrians...
 - d. Never before seen in America, not even in the old west!
3. The captain had no idea what was said – Paul was speaking Hebrew
 - a. He just knew that the people flew into a rage
 - b. And now he had to find out why

III. A ROMAN-BORN CITIZEN

- A. They threatened Paul with scourging and bound him with leather straps (vs. 25)
 1. That means he wasn't free to do what he wanted to do
 2. He was facing prison. He was not "free" to go where he wanted to go
 3. They were going to "examine" him by scourging
 - a. Painful, flesh ripping, cat-o-nine tails
 - b. Expertly done, a gleeful torturer
 - c. No pity, no quarter, no exceptions
- B. Paul cautions the soldiers and reveals his citizenship
- C. The Centurion consults the Chief Captain about Paul
 1. Great price did the captain buy his citizenship
 2. Paul was FREEBORN
 - a. A relative, his father, or some ancestor had purchased it for him
 - b. It was a gift only available from Father to Child
 - c. It was worth so much that men gave their LIVES to receive it!
 3. If only we would consider our citizenship in the USA so valuable!
 4. Because of his citizenship, Paul is LOOSED (although kept in custody)

IV. PAUL'S TRUE CITIZENSHIP

- A. Paul's true citizenship is in heaven
 1. It was a new life a new "conversation" – DIFFERENT from the old way
 2. Paul mentions it many times, he can't get over it!
 - a. GAL. 1:13 – "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:"
 - b. EPH. 2:3 – "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."
 - c. THAT was THEN BUT THIS is NOW!
 - d. PHIL. 3:20 - For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"
 - e. There's been a GREAT change, since I've been born again

3. We are NEW creatures in Christ Jesus – OLD things are passed away!
- B. That citizenship was purchased at a GREAT PRICE by Jesus, our NEAR KINSMAN
 1. Hear Paul's words to the church at Corinth: 1 COR. 6:19-20 – "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
 2. We who are Saved owe Him everything! All praise, all honor!
 3. We should praise Him joyfully, but He will be praised.
 - a. Even by those who rejected Him
 - b. PHIL. 2:10 – "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;"
 - c. Every knee, every tongue! What a wonderful... and terrible day!
- C. Only the Redeemer can bring you into the Family of God
 1. Like Paul, Salvation SETS US FREE from the bonds of SIN
 2. ROM. 8:2 – "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 3. But while we live in this flesh here on this earth, it won't always be
 4. 1 JOHN 3:2 – "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

V. BE FREE BORN IN CHRIST

- A. You can have your citizenship in Heaven too!
 1. EPH. 2:12-13 – "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 2. It's not about BAPTISM or GOOD WORKS or GIVING or PIOUS BEHAVIOR
 3. It's all about His FINISHED work on the Cross
 4. And there are great PRIVILEGES to being a citizen in Heaven
 - a. You can enter those gates – no one will keep you out
 - b. You can tread that street of gold – no one will stop you
 - c. You can praise God with the saints forever – no one will say no!
- B. Not just CITIZENS but SONS! A child of God by Adoption
 1. JOHN 1:12 – "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"
 2. EPH. 1:5 – "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"
 3. I'm so glad, I'm a part, of the Family of God
 - a. Washed in the fountain! Cleansed by His blood!
 - b. Joint-heirs with Jesus, as we travel this sod.

- c. For I'm part of the family, the Family of God.
 - 4. There are great privileges to being a Child of God
 - a. You have access to the throne-room of God! ANYTIME
 - b. You can cry out Abba! Father! ANYTIME!
 - c. You have the blessing of conviction to keep from sin! ANYTIME!
- C. You can be FREE BORN
 - 1. Paul didn't buy his citizenship in Rome, like the captain
 - 2. Paul didn't buy his citizenship in Heaven, it was a GIFT
 - 3. Ye must be born again! Be Saved TODAY!