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Saturday, July 8, 2023 • Read Acts 22:1–21
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Questions from the Scripture text: What does Paul call the crowd (v1)? What does he ask them to do? Why do they quiet down all the more (v2)? What six things does he identify about himself in v3? With whom does he especially identify? What had he done (v4)? Who could attest to this (v5)? Where was Paul going to do what? But what appeared to him (v6)? And what happened to him (v7)? And what did he hear? What did the voice ask? Whom did it say Paul was persecuting? What did Paul ask in answer (v8)? How did the Lord answer? Who else saw the light (v9)? But what couldn't they hear? When Jesus identified Himself, what then did Paul ask (v10)? How did Paul make it to Damascus (v11)? Why? Who came to him (v12–13)? What did he tell Paul to stand and do (v13)? And what did Paul do? For what three things was Paul chosen (v14)? What is Paul to do with this knowing, seeing, and hearing (v15)? What does Ananias now command Paul to do (v16)? Where had Paul gone on this mission (v17)? Whom did he see and hear there (v18)? Now what was He telling Paul to do? Why? What did Paul think would make his testimony more believable (v19–20)? What information does the Lord Jesus add to His command in v21?

How should believers give their personal testimony? Acts 22:1–21 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-one verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **believers should see themselves in terms of Who Jesus is and what Jesus has done, and they should tell about themselves in terms of Who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.**

Paul has heard a speech begin "Brethren and fathers" before (v1, cf. 7:2). And his heart has been breaking to see them saved: "I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."

He strongly identifies not only with them as countrymen but even with their currently misguided zeal (v3). So, he has been questioned about himself (cf. 21:33, 38), but his real desire is to tell them about Jesus. The apostle takes them quickly to the point of intersection between himself and the Lord Jesus, where he tells them several key things about the Lord.

Jesus is not only human but divine, v6–7, 9. He shines from heaven brighter than the sun. And He speaks from heaven (apparently in Paul's head, v9b).

Jesus is united to His people, v7. It's not just Christians that Saul persecuted then, and that the Jews are persecuting now, but Christ Himself. He receives what is done to them as done to Himself (cf. Mt 25:40).

Jesus is still fully human, v8. The glorious being Who shines and speaks from heaven identifies Himself as from Nazareth! He continues in His true humanity to the end of the world. This is proof of the hypostatic union: the union of the two natures in the single divine hypostasis (Person) of the Son.

Jesus gives rules people and providence, v10–12. Not only does He command Paul where he should go, but He also rules and overrules what will occur, so that He can tell Paul what will happen.

Jesus's commands have their own power and authority in them, v13. Telling a blind man to receive his sight is like telling a crippled man to rise or a dead man to live. But Paul immediately obeys, not from any virtue in himself but from the life and strength of God given to him by the Word.

Jesus redeems people for Himself, v14. Interestingly, Paul's primary calling is Godward, Christ-ward. He was chosen to know the Lord and His will. To see the Just One, the Lord Jesus Christ. To hear the voice of His mouth. We are given to see Him and hear Him too. Though by faith, not by sense, faith is the greater seeing and hearing.

Jesus employs those whom He redeems for Himself, v15, 17–21. He calls Paul to be His witness, and that in specific places and to specific people. Their hearing and believing comes not by how airtight the evidence or testimony is (v19–20), but by the Lord's own intent to save them (v21). Jesus knows who will believe, because He is the One Who gives them faith. It is a great encouragement when He makes you to hear the gospel, then. So, what are you waiting for? Call upon the Name of the Lord?

Jesus redeems sinners from their sin, v16. "Rise and wash away your sins" is more difficult even than "receive your sight." But the Lord gives Him a sign and seal that it is as true as his restored sight: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins." How marvelous that for sinners like Paul, and that Jewish multitude, and every beloved reader of this devotional, Jesus offers cleansing!

Whom have you told, recently, about the Lord Jesus? Who is He? What has He done for sinners? What has He done for you?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You and praise You for coming in human flesh to win our salvation and for reigning, in that same human flesh, now upon the throne of glory. Rule and overrule all things to bring Your elect to saving faith, we ask in Your own Name, Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP110B "The LORD Has Spoken to My Lord" or TPH438 "I Love to Tell the Story"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Acts 22 versus one through 21. These are God's words brother and fathers here. My defense before you now. And when they heard that, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Than he said. I am indeed, you born in Tarsus of Celicia and But brought up in this city at the feet of gamalio.

Taught according to the strictness of our father's law. And was zealous toward god, as you are today, you all are today. I persecuted. This way to the death. Finding and delivering into prisons but men and women and also the high priest bears me witness and all the council of the elders.

For whom i from whom i also received letters to the brethren and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who are there to jerusalem to be punished. Now it happened, is i journey, Eden came near damascus at about noon. Suddenly a great light from heaven, shone around me.

And i fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me saul saul, why are you persecuting me? So i answered, who are you? Lord and he said to me, i am jesus of nazareth. Whom you are persecuting. And those who are with me, indeed saw the light and were afraid but they did not hear the voice.

Of him who spoke to me. So i said, what shall i do? Lord And the lord said to me, Our eyes and go into Damascus. And there you will be told all the things which are appointed for you to do. That since i could not see for the glory of that light being led by the hand of those who are with me, i came into Damascus.

Then a certain analysis devout man, according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwell there. Came to me and stood and said to me, brother, saul receive your sight. And that same at that same hour, i looked up at him. Then he said, The god of our fathers has chosen you that you should know his will.

And see the just one. And here, the voice of his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting your eyes

and be baptized and wash away your sins? Calling on the name of the lord. Now, it happened when i returned to jerusalem.

And i was praying in the temple. That i was in a trance and saw him saying to me. Make haste and get out of jerusalem quickly, but they will not receive your testimony concerning me. So i said, lord they know that in every synagogue i imprisoned and beat those who believe on you.

And when the blood of your martyr steven was said, i also was standing by consenting to his death and guarding the clothes of those who are killing him. Then he said to me, Depart. For i will send you far from here to the gentiles

So far the reading of god's inspired and There and toward

The commander. Wanted to know, back in verse 33. Of chapter 21. Who paul was and what he had done. And there were many in the crowd. Uh, shout in one thing and Uh, and another Verse 34. So, Uh, this is a question now. Everybody knows there's a big commotion.

And yet, the question is, who is paul and what is he done? And so, paul is taking advantage of god's providence. We remember that from last week. In. In god's providence has changed came. By way of protection has changed.

His james came by way of protection. This chains came by way of love and as chains came by way of opportunity. And we noticed a bunch of the different things that he's taking advantage of, and order to have an opportunity to speak in a big part of it, is this big question now, from both the Romans and the Jews, who is Paul, and what he has done, And so, He's asked to speak and there's a great silence.

In verse 40 and Of the previous chapter and when they hear that, he's speaking to them in hebrew or or Aramaic. They are all the more silent and so now he has this great opportunity and it sounds at first like he's answering the question who is paul and what has he done?

He says, all you indeed, a jew born in Tarsus of Celestia brought up in this city at the feet of gamaliel, and so forth. But as he goes on to answer the question. Uh, his primary answer, the thing that he's really gaming to get across is who is jesus?

And what has he done? And so this is something that he models here for us to do something that we desire for others to know christ to know what christ has done to rest in christ. And to rest upon and draw the benefits from what christ has done by his spirit.

And the lord uses. Testimony now about ourselves so much. About about the christ who saved, sinners, such as we are and sinners such as As those who hear us, and who employs us? Then when we are, Saved by him. So as he gives his testimony Um, Uh, giving all of these important truths, important facts.

About the lord jesus christ. So, he He says, i was jealous toward god as you all are today. Identifies himself with them. Um, But he's identifying. Um, What they're doing as Sin. That they think is the old towards god. And this sometimes is what people need. To know that even there's zeal for god.

Is uninstructed uninformed or under instructed? And uninformed? And can indeed be very offensive to god. For instance, many have Have discovered. That. What they thought was zeal for god. In their worship was very humanistic. It was actually offensive to God according to scripture. And here we have a entire

City mob, at least of jews who are zealous. That would they think for god? There's Ellis for traditions that came from god. There's always for traditions that came With respect to the saving work of god, but they are missing that That god himself has come. And so by their zeal, For these things that remain, they're actually opposing christ and just people, and his apostle.

And so forth. You know, so identify he identifies himself. With them as sinners. And he describes, i persecuted this way to the death. Binding. And delivering into prisons. Both men and women is also the high priest bears, me witness and all the council the elders for whom. I also received letters to the brethren and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who are There terrorism to be punished.

Okay, that in verses six and seven. He? Um, He says them or he tells them something about jesus that indicates Uh, that jesus is Not only human. But divine. It happens. I journey and came near into Damascus about noon suddenly a great light from heaven. Shone around me. And i fell to the ground and heard a voice.

Saying to me, saul saul, Why are you persecuting me? It's very interesting. First, the light shines from heaven, second. He hears, the voice which is implying is also from heaven. Uh, but the voice is not just from the first heaven or from the second heaven. The voice is coming.

Um, in a divine way. By way. Perhaps a vision. But you look at verse 9, he says those who are with me, indeed saw the light and they were afraid but they did not hear the voice. Of him who spoke to me. And so, we We find that the lord jesus whom.

They all are thinking of, as merely a man, it was. And who had been crucified? The lord jesus is able not only To shine light from heaven. But to speak with a great voice and to speak with a voice. That he selects, who will hear it. Perhaps speaking in paul's mind and heart, he doesn't go into Much detail there.

Uh, but He has identifying the lord jesus. As divine, he also identifies the lord jesus. As one who unites his people to himself. He did not come to save by merely by giving us instruction about what we are to do. He came to say by being our salvation. He came to save by giving us to be united to them.

When we believe. So paul thought he was persecuting the followers of the way. And he was on his way to Damascus and so forth. Um to to persecute christians. But what jesus says when he speaks to paul is saul saul, why are you persecuting me? And so, the lord jesus is man and god And one person.

Uh, but the lord jesus is uniting people to himself. So much. So, That when paul was persecuting others, he was persecuting jesus. And what is he telling you the crowd now? He's telling the crowd that even for a sinner such as paul. He became one. Who was joined to jesus christ united to jesus christ.

So that when they were persecuting paul whom were they persecuted, They were persecuting jesus but what does this mean for them? This means for them, that persecutors of jesus. Can come to be united to jesus. So that's if they go on to be persecuted, then those who persecute them will be persecuting.

Jesus, This is extraordinary. That the god who made all things. God, the son of the lord. Jesus christ would become jesus, the christ. Would become a man. So His human and divine. He's united to his people. He's still. Fully human. He didn't transform from human into divine. That wouldn't make a whole lot of sense for us to be united to him if he wasn't still in our nature, but we can even see it in the way he answers in verse 8.

So i answered, who are you? Lord And he said to me, i am jesus. This is important. Of nazareth. Whom you are persecuting. So up until this point, he says, who are you lord? He doesn't realize. That this is the god, man. This is the one. Um, Who has united his people to himself or maybe he does is beginning to realize it, but jesus puts it beyond doubt.

He says, i am the one who is from Nazareth. I'm the one. Who is conceived by the holy ghost. Uh, in nazareth. And, That was born in bethlehem. And who has taken as a baby to egypt. And returned. But ended up to returning to nazareth because Herod's son was on the throne and got accommodated.

His earthly father Joseph. Um, And his fear. We probably his wisdom. On behalf of his family. And who grew up in nazareth and who was known in nazareth? Was the carpenter's son. That this one. Is the one who has now in glory and shines light and speaks with a voice selecting, you may hear and who has united his people to himself.

So that whatever happens to them is received as done to him. He's still fully man. He's still the Jesus from Nazareth. He's fully God, and Fully man.

Then in, Versus 10 and 12, 10 to 12. It says. So what? So I said, what shall I do? Learn And the Lord said to me, arise and go into Damascus. And there you will be told all the things. Which are appointed for you to do. So, he gives Jesus as one who.

Gives his people direction. And Jesus is the one who rules overall things. For his people in. In his providence. Who tells Paul what to do. But as Paul does the things that he's told he also knows that Jesus. Is ruling an over ruling. What happens? Now, he doesn't tell us.

Um, you know, he doesn't give us a compass rose directions. Gps directions. Yeah, get up. And Go to your cousin's, house, or whatever. But he does give us. All sorts of instruction, commandment principles. Uh by which to live in his word. And as we do those things, we can be just as confident and God's providence ordering and arranging Whatever else is happening just like Paul was dependent on.

Ananias. Um, receiving him. And, Um, And coming to him and so forth. And he says, since I could not see for the glory of that light being led by the hand, And those were me I came into Damascus than a certain Nantias a devout man. According to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwell out there came to me, And so forth.

And so God is ruling and over ruling and all things. And Paul did what he was told. And God over overruled coordinated, carried out all his will in his providence. Um to make it turn out exactly as was, right? Exactly. As was good and wise. So God. So, Jesus still rules.

Uh, he rolls people, he gives us instructor and he rules providence. He orders out an arranges things. According to his will, if you know that, the one who has given you the commands, It was talked to the way of life. There's the one who is ruling and over ruling, all things under his glory.

And the gathering and perfecting of his people, and The completion. Of his. Plan of redemption. Then you are free, not to worry about outcome. So much. As to walk with him in hope and confidence. So, Jesus rules people and providence. And then Jesus's commands. Have within them. Their own power and authority.

And ice comes and Speaking on behalf of Christ. It comes to me and he stood, and he said to me, Brother saw receive your sight. And at that same hour, I looked up at him.

Yeah, God's worked. Did not carry with it. Even on someone else's lips. The power to obey it. It would be a cruel thing. Many people think of Um, The biblical view of salvation. Which they associate with Calvin. Who is just a Consistent bible teacher and bible thinker. On this point, they think it's cruel.

They think. Why would you tell people? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you know yourself that they cannot believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ. And it's kind of the same question as why would you tell a blind man? Receive your sight. If you know, That he doesn't have sight.

Why would you tell a blind, man? Hey, look at me.

But the answer is that God's word, and then specific here, Jesus's word as within it. The power to obey the command. You. You may hear much instruction from the bible that, you know, That you don't have the ability. In you to do it. But Christ, whose word it is.

Has the ability ability in him for you to do it. And so you look. To the one who is speaking. For the ability. Even as you seek to respond and obedience. And he's the one who's giving you the faith to recognize that it is word. He's the one who's giving you the desire to obey.

And if he is the one who has given you the faith and who has given you the willing, It will also be the one who gives you the working. Remember, what we've been hearing in the midweek sermons? That Jesus gives us this desire to serve and that's hatred of our sin.

I find the willing in me. Or present with me. But the doing I do not find. Well. The willing came from Jesus. And so, you know what doing is going to come from? The doing came from Jesus and often we find a lot of unwilling present with us too.

And so the overcoming of that. Comes from Jesus. So Jesus is commands have their own power and authority. In. Another thing, he tells them about Jesus. Just in this short space is, And he said, the God of our fathers has chosen you That you should know his will and see the just one and hear the voice of his mouth.

Now we're separating verse 14, from verse 15 or rather taking them one at a time. So that we can see. That. Employment in Christ's service is secondary too. And derived from a result of knowing Jesus himself See, Paul is Uh, is accustomed to thinking as a Pharisee accustomed to thinking.

Uh, well before. He was converted. Soul, as he is standing there and not standing yet. He stands in verse 16. As he is on his knees are sitting there. In an analysis house, he's a costume to thinking of God as one. Uh, who places many demands on us? And, And, The first thing he's told, Is that Jesus redeems him?

Why to know Jesus as well? Or God redeems him to know as well and to see Jesus whom he calls the just one. And to hear the voice of Jesus's mouth. And, Um, that this knowledge of Christ and fellowship. Uh with crisis knowledge of God in Christ and fellowship with God, in Christ is the first part.

Of that for which Jesus redeems us. And if you want to think in terms of God's law, that's fine. Just know that. The first table of the law is the most important table. It is the greatest, commandment And it is all therefore, the keeping of the first table of the law is the first great benefit of salvation.

That we would know God himself. First commandment. That we would be liberated from all man-made ideas about him and man-made ways of coming to him. Second commandment That in knowing him and coming to him in the right way through Jesus Christ, his glory would not be lightened or lessened.

But emphasized and displayed. In. It's greatness. Third commandment. That we would know all of our time. As designated by God. The worship times. Morning and evening. Yes. The six days. But especially All day long. On that seventh. Or the first day for Adam and Mrs. Adam. The first day of the week for us.

The Lord's day. When we discover that Jesus is Yahweh. And that creation. Has really concluded. In the resurrection. And the new creation that is to come. The. The fourth commandment. And, of course, all of our time in between that The the morning and evening time on the six days and The six days themselves.

More generally speaking. Belong to him. And so, the first great thing, we're redeemed for is to know. The God of our fathers has chosen you? That you should know his will. And see the just one. And hear the voice of his mouth. And if you are redeemed, This is the great reason that God has Has chosen you?

Sent Christ for you. A turn for you, sent his spirit to give you faith, that you would be joined to Jesus. First and foremost, that you would know him. That as you read and hear his words that you would know them as his words and that you would hear him.

That you would know who he is, by faith and have fellowship with him, have interaction with him. But he does also employ us. And, In paul's case is, Assigned role of life. Uh what was what was given to him in the place that he was put in the relations, in the calling of god, the specific calling on his life.

Was this? Um witnessing to all men verse 15 for you, will be his witness to all men. Of what you have seen and heard. And there's no greater. Uh, loving your neighbor as yourself. Them to love them with the gospel. There are other things that are necessary. But there is nothing that That is greater.

And so, he becomes christ's agent. Than whatever else he does and you must be christ's agent. If he has redeemed you if he has given you to obey the first great commandment especially in the knowledge of the lord jesus himself. As the great, keeping of the first four, Commandments of the law.

Then, as you keep the other six, And all of the work that you do, And all of your interaction with others. You are to be christ's agent and all those. And all those relationships as well. The employees, those whom he Um, redeems for himself. Now, he doesn't always give them the results that they desired.

The employees them. According to his own wisdom. He returns to jerusalem, he's praying in the temple. He's eager. To. Uh, to tell the jews. Um, About the christ who has saved him. He thinks for sure, it's kind of like The rich man and lazarus. And the rich man saying, If someone rises from the

Can remember that texture?

Allow me to go in one, warn them. So, the rich man wants to be. Permitted to go and warn his family. He thinks of someone rises from the dead and tells him, they'll believe him. And, And what is he told? He's told They have moises and the prophets. If they don't believe them, they won't even believe someone rises from the dead.

But both things, he's a pretty good candidate for a similar kind of thing. If the one who is the greatest persecutor of the church tells them, then surely they will believe him. Now, it's very interesting. How this works out next 22 because they actually end up proving the point.

Because here he is the great persecutor. And that's how he identifies himself. And he tells them Uh, but as we're going to see, The next week's passage. They don't believe him. And this was what the lord jesus. Uh, told him. Um, Make a case to get out of jerusalem quickly for they will not receive your testimony concerning me?

How does jesus know? Because the only way anyone ever comes to receive jesus's testimony is by jesus's grace. And we don't know. Uh, him. He will give faith by the hearing. Of his word. Uh, but he does. And so, jesus employs us. Um, according to his good and wise, and perfect.

Well, And still. Uh, not always according to our expectations. And this can be a difficulty for us. Whether with in our personal relationships, we're in How we serve in his church. Or. Or whatever else, but we need We need to trust him. He is the sovereign lord. So, He employs.

Those who he redeems. For himself. Uh, and if you know that, Uh, and if you know that, Uh, he's the one. Who must produce the fruit as well? Then you can look back at your own believing and say, That didn't come from me. That came from christ. That came.

He is the one who gave to me. To receive the testimony of others concerning it. It wasn't how convincingly they spoke. That wasn't how cleverly i listened. It was because jesus gave to me. To receive that testimony. And ultimately, this is because jesus is the one. Who buy the authority that he has in his work.

Who in his providence to give. To those. Give to centers to receive testimonial concerning and he redeemed centers from their sin verse 16. Which is your memory verse. And now why are you waiting a rise? And be baptized. And wash away. Uh, your sins. Calling on the name of the lord.

Arise is told to do and We think of ourselves as those who can stand. On our two feet. Uh, by ourselves. But then this wonderful thing. It's a passive command. Be baptized. Which you can't do. Um, it's something that's necessary. But it has to be done to you. And so, there is A physical picture of a spiritual reality.

Of when the lord caused commands, you. To arise and wash away, your sins. Um, it's something that is necessary for you, but you can't do it. And so, as the water is poured out upon you, And you receive that. That physical. Well display. Of washing. Uh, yet, you know that.

The one who has commanded, it has given this command of something that he does to you. It's not the. Um, it's not the application of water and baptism. It's not the. Uh, the praying that you do or the believing in jesus. Uh that you do that washes away, your sins or forgives you, it is jesus.

To whom you pray. It is jesus who pours out his spirit And so this calling on the name of the lord in verse 16. Explains. How it can be that sins are washed away. It's because it's the lord who washes them away. Not us who are being washed. And so, the sign itself is intentionally Passive intentionally something that has done to us from above.

So that we will see that the watching away of the sentence is the same. It is something that is done to us from about. Your baptism. My dear children. Teaches you to call upon the name of the lord. That that which you most need in your life, Both in the washing of justification.

The washing away, your guilt. And in the washing of sanctification. And the removal of your remaining sin. There's something that has done to you. From above. From where there is a man. Who identifies himself? As from nazareth. But who has died for sinners and risen again and ascended. And all authority in earth, belongs to him.

And all authority in heaven. Belongs to him. And from heaven. He works on earth. In order to redeem you, But you might know that. Following the The. First four commandments especially with respect to the lord jesus Christ. And that you might be employed by him. Following the last six commandments.

In everything that he gives you in his providence to do. In accordance to his word. And so this is the story of our life. But who i am? And what i have done. Is really the story of who jesus is. And what jesus has done. And this is what we ought to be.

Looking for opportunities to tell. And let's start thinking of that when When people are asking us. About ourselves. How can i? Answer this. So truthfully. Not bitten switch. But more truthfully than i'm tempted to answer. How can i answer this? So truthfully. That is quite obviously an answer about who jesus is.

And what jesus has done.

Father, thank you for this. Portion of your word that We are going to get to here tomorrow. We thank you that. You have answered the question the same way. That the great way in which you tell us about yourself and what you have done. Is in christ. So we pray that you would help us to know you this way to know him this way.

To see our lives this way. And then to be ready to speak of ourselves. This way really to speak of him. Who has saved us by his power. So we ask you these things in his name, even in the name of jesus.