

## Fact Sheet for "A Defense"

### Acts 22:1-22

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Paul was having an eventful day. He went to the temple courts with four others to fulfill the requirements of a Nazarite vow. A riot ensued (Acts 21:28). He was drug out of the temple courts by the Jews and they tried to kill him. Soldiers from the Antonia fortress heard the commotion and promptly came to arrest Paul. The soldiers had to carry him because of the violence of the crowd. As Paul was taken from the temple he asked for and was given permission to speak to the crowd from the steps of the fortress.

**ESV Acts 21:40b** And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

**ESV <sup>1</sup> ¶ "Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you."**

This is not an evangelistic message. It is a defense! (*ἀπολογία a-po-lo-gi'-a*)

**<sup>2a</sup> ¶ And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet.**

"Hebrew language" = Hebrew dialect, likely Aramaic  
They became now even more quiet.

**<sup>2b</sup> And he said: <sup>3</sup> ¶ "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. <sup>4</sup> I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, <sup>5</sup> as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.**

"Tarsus in Cilicia" – Right above Israel where Asia Minor meets the eastern coast of the Mediterranean

Paul was brought up in Jerusalem. He was educated at the feet of Gamaliel (See Acts 5:34 and context).

**<sup>6</sup> ¶ "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. <sup>7</sup> And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' <sup>8</sup> And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'**

Notice that the crowd did not react at this!

**<sup>9</sup> Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup> And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' <sup>11</sup> And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.**

<sup>12</sup> ¶ "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, <sup>13a</sup> came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.'

Ananias was well spoken of by the Jews.

<sup>13b</sup> And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. <sup>14</sup> And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; <sup>15</sup> for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.

Again, notice that the crowd did not react to this!

<sup>16</sup> And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Does baptism wash away your sins? No! This is where everything else that is said about salvation and baptism would argue against this.

<sup>17</sup> ¶ "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup> and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' <sup>19</sup> And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. <sup>20</sup> And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.'

Paul had been zealous for the Law.

<sup>21</sup> And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

*GENTILES?!*

<sup>22</sup> ¶ Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."

**ESV Acts 22:23** And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

But... what about Genesis 12:1-3 and many passages like Isaiah 2:2? Paul knew very well how the crowd would react when he said the word "Gentiles." So why did he say it? What good did his defense do on the steps of the Antonia fortress that day? What was Paul trying to accomplish? He was fulfilling the ministry that was given him (Acts 22:21). These weren't Paul's words. These words came directly from Jesus Christ. For many in the crowd they would have been an indictment. For others they may have stirred serious thought that would eventually lead to their salvation.

For almost 2,000 years they have borne witness of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books of the NT, about 26% by volume. There are whole courses in seminary on "Pauline Theology." Paul was a devout, well-educated Jew (See Philippians 3:4-11).

Definitely consider who Paul was and what he taught as you consider why it is you believe.