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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**HEAR YE MY DEFENCE**

**Acts 22:1-9**

***Acts 22:1-2***

***1 "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence [which I make] now unto you."***

***2 "(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)"***

Paul began to address the crowd that only moments before had been beating him to a pulp. They had become angry with him based on false pretenses, so Paul wanted to clarify who he was and what he had been doing. Like Stephen did in his defense, Paul calls them brethren and begins by explaining how much they had in common.

***Acts 7:2-3***

***2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,***

***3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.***

Some were his brothers in the flesh (Jews), others were his brother in the spirit (Christians), and some were both (Jewish Christians). When Paul addressed the crowd in the Hebrew language, they become silent, seeing that he was one of them and not a Gentile. When facing opposition believers should always seek resolutions based on commonality. This “Apostolic Defense Strategy” is advisable to all who earnestly contend for the faith.

***Acts 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”***

***Jude 1:3 “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”***

***Philippians 1:16-18***

***16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:***

***17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.***

***18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.***

***1 Corinthians 9:21-22***

***21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.***

***22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.***

***John 10:16 “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”***

***Acts 22:3-5***

***3 "I am verily a man [which am] a Jew, born in Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, [and] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."***

***4 "And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."***

Paul focused on his Jewish heritage, his transformation by the Messiah Jesus, and his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. He was a Jew, spoke Aramaic, had been educated by the great Pharisee Gamaliel, and had been zealous for the law. We see, again, here, that they will listen to Paul, because he speaks their language. Instead of a frightened begging man, Paul seems to have every confidence as he brings his defense. He says here that he perfectly understands their religious zeal in trying to stop him by destroying him. He tells them that he had done the very same thing. He knew their law, probably even better than they did, because of his lifetime of study in the law. He says that he not only persecuted “This Way” men, but women as well. “The Way” was an early biblical description of Apostolic believers (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22), because Jesus is “The Way” (John 14:6). “The Way” also represented the new life of believers as they followed the pattern of their Messiah. Interestingly, Saul (old life) witnessed this “Apostolic Defense Strategy” firsthand, before his Damascus Road experience and name change to Paul (new life), when he stood and watched Stephen being stoned to death (Acts 7:1-60).

***Acts 22:5 "As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished."***

Paul is saying here, if anyone had wanted to destroy the Christian faith, it was me. If they doubted him, the Jewish high priest and council of elders could verify it all. He had been greatly opposed to Christians and Christianity. Paul had gotten his papers from the leaders of the church to go, and capture the Christians, and bring them back to be punished.

***Acts 22:6-7***

***6 "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me."***

***7 "And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"***

Paul referred to his transformation by Jesus the Messiah. On the journey to Damascus, he was blinded by a brilliant light. This great Light that shone more than the noon day sun would get anyone's attention. He heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me? Jesus so identifies with his people that to persecute them is to persecute him. The church is “the body of Christ.” So, anyone who attacks God’s people is attacking the one who loved them, died for them, and united them to himself.

***1 Samuel 8:7 “And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”***

***John 17:9-10***

***9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.***

***10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.***

***John 17:20-23***

***20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;***

***21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.***

***22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:***

***23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.***

***Acts 22:8 "And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."***

Saul responded, “Who are You, Lord?” Saul’s question indicates that he did not know to whom he was speaking. The word “Lord” both in Hebrew and Greek just means “sir.” If he knew it was the Lord Jesus, then he would not have had to ask who he was, and it would have been unnecessary for the Lord to state I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. This answer must have struck like a lightning bolt in Saul’s heart. In a brief moment, he realized that everything he believed about Jesus and His followers was wrong. If Jesus was alive, and He obviously was (and is), then He must be Israel’s Messiah, and Saul himself was in the wrong, not the followers of Jesus. Jesus identified himself as “Jesus of Nazareth” for several reasons. For one thing, in Bible times people were often identified by their native area or place of residence. Although Bethlehem was the place of Jesus’ birth, Nazareth was the place where Jesus had lived until He began His public ministry, and therefore He is said to be “of Nazareth.” The phrase “Jesus of Nazareth” is first used in the Bible by Phillip who, after being called by Jesus to follow Him, told Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph". By calling Him Jesus of Nazareth, Phillip may also have been making a statement about the lowliness of His birth. The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were despised and condemned. Nathanael’s response, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” would seem to indicate such.

***John 1:45-46***

***45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.***

***46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.***

To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a [Nazarene](https://www.gotquestions.org/Matthew-2-23-Jesus-Nazarene.html), was the same as to be despised, or to be esteemed of low birth. The Messiah who would come to save His people would be “a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness.” He would be “despised and rejected of men” from whom men hid their faces and “esteemed him not.”

***Isaiah 53:2-3***

***2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.***

***3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.***

Jesus of Nazareth was born and grew up in humble circumstances, but His impact on the world has been greater than anyone ever born before or since. He came to “save His people from their sins”, a feat that could be accomplished by none other than God incarnate.

***Matthew 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”***

***Acts 22:9 "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me."***

As Paul relates his conversion experience to an audience in Jerusalem, he says, “They that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.” Interestingly, Luke, in relating the same event, in Acts says, “The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”

***Acts 9:7 “And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”***

So, which is it? Paul says, “they heard not the voice,” and Luke says they were “hearing a voice.” Many bible critics and skeptics have used this passage to show the errancy of scripture. However, this apparent contradiction is understood in realizing that Paul heard a voice as Jesus communicated directly with him. The men with Paul heard the voice speaking to Paul but, to them, it was just an unintelligible sound. Did they hear the voice? Yes, in the sense that they heard something. But, since they could not understand what the voice said, it was nothing more than a sound—in other words, they couldn’t really “hear” Jesus. It is also strange that they all saw the light, but only Paul was blinded by it. Notice, the Lord was dealing and speaking directly to Paul only, so he was the only one who was blinded and heard. The manifestation of the message was not for the world, but for Paul.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who did Paul address in his speech?
2. What did the word brethren reveal?
3. Why does it say they kept silent and heard Paul?
4. What did Paul say he was?
5. Where was he born?
6. Where was he raised?
7. Who was his teacher?
8. What one word did he use to describe his standing toward God?
9. In verse 4, we find that Paul had persecuted whom?
10. How severely had Paul persecuted them?
11. Who did he say could bear witness of Paul getting letters to go and bring in the Christians?
12. Where was Paul headed to capture Christians and bring them to Jerusalem, when he saw the Light?
13. What sect of the Jews was Paul?
14. What time of day was it when this bright Light shone from heaven?
15. What did the voice from heaven say?
16. Who did the voice say He was?
17. How did those with Paul know something happened?