



Week 19 Acts 21:27-22:29

21:27-36 Paul is arrested

1) When Paul is recognized, his reputation ignites a city-wide rally for his arrest, if not his execution. While inciting the crowd, some were shouting, "This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law," (21:28). Is this characterization accurate?

2) Extreme characterization of a person as entirely against a group is common in our world today. What is the role of the church when we hear persons being so characterized (whether they are Christians, Muslims, politicians, family or neighbors)?

21:37-22:2 Paul with the Roman commander

3) How does Luke portray the role of Roman authority in this passage as well as vv. 33-36 preceding it? Is he supportive of Roman rule, antagonistic to it, or neutral toward it? Why do you think he takes the approach he does?

4) What do you take away from Luke's emphasis on the languages that Paul speaks with the commander and with the crowd? Does it matter what language (literally or figuratively) the church speaks when communicating its message?

22:3-21 Paul speaks to the crowd

5) What is Paul seeking to accomplish in his introductory remarks to the crowd (v. 3-5)?

6) Given that this story is fully recorded in Acts 9, why does Luke provide Paul's retelling of the story in this circumstance? What relationship does Paul's retelling of the story have to the experience of the Christians Luke was writing for?

7) Some say that if one verse of the Bible is untrue, the whole thing is untrue. Acts 9:7 and Acts 21:9 appear to be at odds with one another. What are we to do with the discrepancy in these verses? Why didn't Luke make them line up with each other? Does the truth of the Bible hinge on such matters?

8) Paul's speech closes as it began – with an acknowledgment of his sinfulness in persecuting the church. What role does confession of sin play in our own life together and in our witness to the world?

22:22-29

9) What was it that Paul said which caused the crowd to call for his death in v. 22?

10) How does the church keep a sense of openness and authentic welcome to everyone? The Jews feared (rightly in a way) that Gentile inclusion would relativize their tradition as Jews. What do we risk having relativized if we welcome other cultures into our community?

11) Earlier in Philippi, Paul did not announce his citizenship in order to escape flogging from Roman authorities (16:37). Why does he invoke his citizenship here?

12) How do we discern when the time has come to suffer unjustly for the gospel and when we should "use the system" to defend ourselves and our interests?