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### How a Baptist Preacher Got an Angry Mob to Listen

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## HOW A BAPTIST PREACHER GOT AN ANGRY MOB TO LISTEN

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS  
NUMBER 107  
ACTS 22:1-3

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ACTS 22:1-3 "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) 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."

In our study tonight we will see how Paul began his message before the assembled mob. Roman power had temporarily stopped this angry mob and had saved Paul's life. The military power of Rome stood between Paul and this mob and this is why Paul was now able to speak to them. (Note--A police force is necessary in the kind of world in which we live. They deserve our respect and our fear. We need to bring a new respect for law and order in this country. The next time you are prone to be exasperated in some experience you may have with a policeman, just remember that he is there to protect you and your whole way of life.)

This Roman garrison commander had rescued Paul and this is why Paul was able to speak to the mob.

ACTS 21:40b "Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying" Paul stood on the stairs of the Mark Antony garrison. This was one of the highest points in the city of Jerusalem, overlooking the temple. Paul waited for the mob to grow silent so he could speak. This shows the poise of Paul as he faced this angry and dangerous mob. Paul raised his hand and when the mob grew silent, he began his message.

Paul spoke in the Aramaic dialect. This is Hebrew plus certain words the Jews had picked up when they were in Babylon during their 70 years of captivity. All Semitic languages are quite similar. The Assyrians and Chaldeans had similar languages, but when they are written down they are quite different. So when the Jews came back from captivity in 516 B.C. they were speaking what we call Aramaic. So the words here "Hebrew tongue" means Hebrew plus the language they had picked up in Babylon. This is the language used by the people. The priests and scribes used Hebrew in the synagogues, but the people all spoke Aramaic.

ACTS 22:1 "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." This sounds very much like the introduction Stephen made when he spoke to a similar mob in Jerusalem many years before this time. Now Paul realized he had made a bad spiritual blunder in being a part of those vows in the temple, but he knows he is now back in fellowship with God so he is able to speak with poise and confidence.

In using the phrase "Men, brethren, and fathers", Paul begins with a very appealing introduction. The word "brethren" does not refer to Jews who are believers, but just to Jews. Paul was a Jew by race, but also a Roman citizen by birth. He had operated officially as a Jew in the past. He had attended the great official Jewish school there, and upon graduation had been made a member of the Sanhedrin. They had elected him as their official representative to stamp out Christianity even as far away as Damascus. But though this is true, he had all the time remained a Roman citizen. (Some have tried to show that you had to be married to be a member of the Sanhedrin, but research has proved this was not true. One had to be a Jew to be a member, but he could also be a Roman citizen.) Please notice that in this incident, the religious leaders were leading the mob. (Note--A mob is not the place for a preacher. He should not take part in a mob or encourage a mob. Civil disobedience is anti-Christian.) The word "Fathers" is a technical term for these religious leaders who were a part of the mob.

When Paul said "Hear ye" which is from "Akouo" it really means to hear and obey what is said. It is an aorist--active--imperative and means that Paul is commanding them to do what he says. If he had used the indicative mood it would mean "it may be this or it may be that" but the imperative mood is a command. So Paul demands a hearing and it means he is dogmatic about it. There are only two kinds of people who can be dogmatic, and they are the stupid and the brilliant, and Paul falls into the latter class. So he said, "I demand that you hear the defense I make face to face with you."

ACTS 22:2 "(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)" The words "heard him speak in the Hebrew tongue" are very important words. Heard is "prosphoneo", and means to courageously and with confidence communicate with someone even though the ones to whom you speak have lost their stability and composure. This is exactly the meaning of this word here. This word carries the idea of standing up before someone with great courage and poise and putting it on the line with them. Now when you remember this was a mob, bent on killing Paul, this kind of courage is indeed amazing. Paul is not angry or upset or overly excited and is able to think accurately in the midst of all the excitement. "To them" is in the dative of advantage and it means it was to their advantage to hear him.

"They kept the more silent" is from "parecho" and means he pulled the silence out of them by the stability of his person and voice and bearing. Many of them had been talking but when Paul raised his hand and began to speak his confident manner caused them to be silent.

Think for a moment about good manners in listening. When a messenger is speaking for God, you are to listen. Never talk, but show your good manners. Apply your volition to what is being said. It is necessary for you to have positive volition in order to be able to learn. It takes self-discipline to learn doctrine. Don't let outside distractions keep you from concentration. Something like temperature, atmosphere, movement of others, even talking of others must be placed aside as you focus your mind on what is being said. Neither let the voice or the personality traits of the speaker keep you from learning. Leap over these barriers and get your mind on the message. You discipline yourself enough so you can break past these trivial things and then you can learn to concentrate on the message. Don't let other people around you prevent you from worship, either by their manner, or lack of attention, or talking. When you sit down to worship the first thing you should do every time is this--ask yourself this question--"Am I in fellowship with God? Am I ready to hear God speak to me?" Immediately use 1 John 1:9 and get in fellowship so you can be sure you will be in the frame of mind to hear God's voice.

Let me ask you another question--In a worship service do you dream, make plans, think about your work or other things, or have you learned to concentrate? In many worship services the majority of the people either dream or live in retrospection or plan for the future. If you learn to concentrate in church, it will carry over into your school work or into your business. This is self-discipline and teaches us how to learn to think. Those who listen best here have the least trouble in school. Every area of life demands concentration. So here we have a great tribute to Paul's speaking ability that we read, "They kept the more silence". So for the first time this mob is not a mob but the mob had become an audience of attentive listeners. This didn't happen because of the pressure of Roman law. No doubt Roman law had played a part in the rescue of Paul from their blood-thirsty hands, but it was the positive personality of Paul that quieted this mob. All he said was, "Men, brethren, fathers hear my defense I make face to face with you" and they became quiet. They heard his Hebrew dialect and became quiet. So he at first faced a mob, but now he is facing an audience.

ACTS 22:3 "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Celicia, 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." Paul began with his own background. In that day a man was not introduced but would introduce himself. He said, "I am in truth a man, a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia". That would cause them at once to realize that he was a Roman citizen. Then he said, "Brought up" and the word is "anatrepho" and means to train again. It means he was trained again and again and again. To train a child you have to tell him again and again and again. And often you have to use training aids, sometimes the paddle of discipline. Paul reminded them that he had been brought up in Jerusalem and Judaism. He didn't become a Jew, but he was brought up that way.

So they realized that Paul was born a Jew and trained in that way of life. In other words, Paul took his close-order drill in Judaism. Paul was reminding them that he was taught the Jewish catechism. In other words Paul was reminding them that he was a graduate of their school, their Seminary, and that his teacher was the great Gamaliel. Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel. The word for taught is "paideuo". Now this is not the word usually used for taught. That word is "didasko". So this word "paideuo" means trained. Paul is saying here that he received the best Jewish training in the world. "The perfect manner of the law" is from "akribeia" and it means accurate. So Paul here says that he was taught accurately the Jewish law. He was zealous toward God. That means he was on positive signals toward God. He was at that time not saved, but was on positive signals toward God. This had produced legalism. "As you all are this day" means as you all keep on being till this day. So Paul had quieted the mob, had established rapport with them, and had opened a line of communication with them. In our next study we will see the content of his message to the mob.



Dec. 26-3 His  
Thou wilt keep these in Perfect Peace  
whose mind is stayed on thee  
Act 22-10 - all things  
which are appointed for  
me to do.