



## The Great Adventure *Acts 22 -23*. Paul: Public Enemy # 1!

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### Message to Conversation Guide

#### **Acts 22:1-21**

22 "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."

2 When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: 3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, 5 as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.

7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

8 "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked.

"'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

10 "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.

"'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' 11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

12 "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

14 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' 17 "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 19 "'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. 20 And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there

giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' 21 "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" NIV

1. Review the scriptures below that shine light on Paul's main purpose for going to Jerusalem, he would have normally returned to Antioch. Paul was returning to help poor Jewish people, both Jewish Christians and non-Christian Jews.

**1 Cor 16:1-4**

*16 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. NIV*

**2 Cor 8:1-9**

*8 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.) NIV (also see **Acts 24:17, Romans 15:25-32, 2 Cor 8:13-15 & Gal. 2:10**)*

**Acts 11:27-30**

*27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.*

2. Discuss the statement below. How important is it that we sometimes redefine success when others don't respond as we think they should?

*Kindness and love are not always **reciprocated**. We must redefine success as doing what God wants us to do regardless of how others **respond**.*

3. Paul shared his testimony 3 times in the book of Acts. Why do you think that he shared his testimony in this incident? Why is the frequent sharing of our testimony a good thing?
4. Paul sought to convince his hearers that he was just like them - he hated the gospel and Christians. He sought to destroy the church but could not do so. Discuss the impossibility of the church being eradicated by persecution?

**Gal 1:13**

*13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, **how intensely I persecuted the church** of God and **tried to destroy it**. NIV (also see **Matt 16:17-18**)*

5. When a group of zealous Jews made a pack to kill Paul how did the Lord protect Paul - what are some of the details of how God preserved Paul from this conspiracy?