

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ACTS 22****Acts 22**

There should not be a chapter break where Acts 22:1 begins, but the preceding chapter was already 40 verses. Luke is known for having some of the longest "chapters" in the New Testament, but if followed through the remainder of the story, it would be extremely long, so it was divided almost in half between chapter 21 and chapter 22. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the person who divided the Bible into chapters as we have them today. He did this around 1225-1227 A.D., and they first appeared in an English Bible in 1382 A.D. in the Wycliffe English Bible. We all appreciate this monumental work, but sometimes, the division awkwardly divides a story, as we tend to study by chapters.

This episode in the story of Paul begins in Acts 21:26. It is not finished until Acts 22:29, where Paul has made known his Roman citizenship to the Centurion in the Antonia Fortress, in this passage called "the garrison." Paul was being taken away as a villain from the temple complex and about to be mistreated when he spoke to the commander in the world trade language of the era, Greek. The commander was amazed that Paul spoke fluently to him in Greek. Paul was allowed to speak to the people who were in the mob. When he did, he spoke to them in the temple language, his native dialect of Hebrew. Undoubtedly, he had been speaking to the common people in Aramaic, which was the language of the Judean Jews. This means in a matter of minutes, the Apostle Paul spoke fluently in three common languages

of the day and, without question, would have also been fluent in Latin, the official language of the Romans. It is still not uncommon for people in the Middle East who are educated to speak more than three languages and sometimes more.

Paul recounted his pedigree and credentials to the mob, and they listened intently as he spoke until he spoke of their rejection of the Messiah and that he, as an apostle of Jesus of Nazareth, would turn to the Gentiles and share the message of the Messiah. This brought the wrath of the religious mob down upon Paul.

This part of the story ends with Paul revealing his full citizenship as a Roman, and since he had been bound and ill-treated without cause, the commander was mortified. He and those who were about to scourge him immediately backed away, fearing the wrath of Roman law by mistreating a citizen in good standing for an act that was not unlawful according to Roman law.

Paul did not use his Roman citizenship until he had to, and it was useful for the cause of the gospel of Jesus. As a Roman, those who were Roman had to respect him even though they disagreed with his message. This is a lesson to all who live in free nations. We should only appeal to Caesar when needed. But if needed, we can appeal to Caesar, and on occasion should, so that the gospel might go forth.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, please give us wisdom to know when to speak and when to stay silent. Help us to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Grant us strength not to be ashamed of You and speak the truth, but please give us the grace to do that with humility and not with pride. Thank You for allowing us to be a part of Your work in these last days. Amen