

# A GREAT TESTIMONY TO COPY

## ACTS 22:6-16

### Introduction:

What would you call a great testimony?

### 1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

I have heard many testimonies as a Christian, but none compare to the one that I am going to share with you shortly.

We mostly tend to hear testimonies of how people tell how good God has been to them in their serving him, and how he has done this or that for them. Whilst that may be true and even a blessing, it can sometimes cloud the real fact of what God has done in their lives?

There has been a story or one man who told how God had done so many things in his lifetime and how God had brought him through so many trials, that eventually he had embellished the story so much over the years that he had forgotten what was true and what was made up to tell a better story. As such he realized that he had forgotten the importance of his real testimony and so stopped telling it.

You see he had become so focused on telling a good story that he eventually forgot what the truth was, and was embellishing his testimony to make it exciting or encouraging for others to hear.

That's not what God wants us to do. Our testimony should always reflect of what God has done in the conversion of our souls, from someone lost and hopeless to someone who God has converted and changed to be a testimony for Him.

That's what we see here in the scriptures that we will study this morning. And I hope it will be an encouraging lesson for all of us and what should motivate us to tell our testimony if we have one.

### Acts 22:6-16

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

<sup>8</sup> And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> And I said, What shall I do, LORD? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

<sup>11</sup> And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

<sup>12</sup> And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

<sup>13</sup> Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

<sup>14</sup> And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

<sup>15</sup> For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

<sup>16</sup> And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

### **PAUL WAS NOT ALWAYS A CHRISTIAN.**

When you go with the flow, most of the time things seem to be less complicated and less demanding in your life.

That was also true in Paul's life. He was a man in a position of great power to command the death of those who did not follow after the Jewish ways and traditions. And a person who would not deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the enemy of Paul before his conversion.

As a man of great power and zealous for God by the law he held the Jewish audience in suspense with his position and knowledge of the scriptures, as a man who had studied under the great master of Jewish law under Gamaliel, a ruler of the Sanhedrin.

1. However what caused the change in Paul? Is the same that caused the change in us who believe?
2. For us to understand the process it took in Paul's life we have to follow the scriptures to find out.

The answer does not start here in Acts 22, but began way back in the scriptures.

**Let's take a look at Acts Chapter 1.**

Remember how in the book of Acts in Chapter 1 verse 8 how the Lord commanded the apostles that they would receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon them. This was a time when they would become witnesses for the Lord.

Then in Acts 1 verse 12 we find them gathering with the other believers in the Lord, gathered in prayer waiting for the Holy Ghost to come upon them. And in Acts 2 in verse 4 we find the Lords promise to them is that they will be filled with the Holy Ghost shortly.

1. The reason why I want us to see this promise is because this was the same promise that would fill Paul's life.
2. It is the promise that fills every believer in Christ.

The similarities of Peter standing up here to address the crowd is very similar to the Apostle Paul when he addresses the crowd in Acts 22:1ff.

### **Acts 2:14-24 (on the day of Pentecost)**

<sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

<sup>15</sup> For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

<sup>16</sup> But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

<sup>17</sup> And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

<sup>18</sup> And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

<sup>19</sup> And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:

<sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

<sup>22</sup> Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

<sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

<sup>24</sup> Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

- The prophet Joel had proclaimed and prophesied the Spirit of God would come in Joel 2:28-32, and now it was here.

### **Joel 2:28-32 (a direct quote)**

<sup>28</sup> And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

<sup>29</sup> And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

<sup>30</sup> And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

<sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.

<sup>32</sup> And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

- Part of the prophecy of Joel is still to come in the future when the Lord returns.

### **PAUL CONTINUES AS A CHRISTIAN.**

- As we read the scriptures we notice something very different about the converted Paul. We notice that to himself he is not the central focus any more but the Lord is his focus.

### **Galatians 1:15 (here is Pauls answer to his salvation)**

<sup>15</sup> But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

1. His attitude has changed and his mind is set only on one thing and that is to please the Lord. As Paul visits the brethren on the way to Jerusalem he is reminded by them here in Acts 21:8-16 that he will face persecution, yet he is not deterred by that at all. Instead we read as Paul continues his journey.

### **Acts 21:8-16**

<sup>8</sup> And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. <sup>9</sup> And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

<sup>10</sup> And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. <sup>11</sup> And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

<sup>12</sup> And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>14</sup> And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. <sup>15</sup> And after those days we took up our carriages (*packed*), and went up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

### **PAUL PUT ON TRIAL.**

The Apostle Paul is put on trial for things he did not say. The purpose of the trial was simply to destroy his reputation and testimony as a believer in Christ.

The excuse used to bring Paul to trial was a miss quote by the Jews of Paul's view of the Old Testament and the Jewish tradition.

### **Acts 21:21**

<sup>21</sup> And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

- In Paul's defence he wanted to set the record straight and so agreed to partake of the days of purification.
- Little did he know they would not accept his purification?

As we read in Acts 21:22-28 Paul is captured and arrested by the Jews, to which Paul asks for a hearing to speak to the people.

- It is here where we pick up on a great testimony of one who declares Christ as his witness, and one who is not scared to name his true Saviour.

### **PAULS CREDENTIALS**

1. Let's not forget Paul's credentials and credibility amongst the Jews.
2. As the Apostle Paul starts to deliver his speech to the Jews he begins with who he is.

Here in Acts 22 and in verses 1 through 5 we see Paul exposing his credentials as a Jew to the Jewish people. Would this make a difference if they knew who he was?

1. Let's see. Remember this is the Apostle Paul not the unconverted Paul speaking here!
2. He is appealing to his citizenship with the people he knows.

### **Acts 22:1-5 – Pauls Testimony begins by his address to the people**

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

<sup>2</sup> (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

<sup>3</sup> 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.

### **We can refer to many scriptures which relate to his appeal.**

#### **In Acts 5:34-40 - a Pharisee, named Gamaliel.**

**Earlier in the scriptures we see this man Gamaliel a Dr of the Law, speaking about Peter as nothing worthy of noticing.**

<sup>34</sup> Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; <sup>35</sup> And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

<sup>36</sup> For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

<sup>37</sup> After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. <sup>38</sup> And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

<sup>39</sup> But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. <sup>40</sup> And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

#### **Acts 26:5 – Paul's previous conviction**

<sup>5</sup> Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

**Romans 10:2 - Paul's current conviction 2.** For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

## **2 Corinthians 11:22- Paul's comparison**

<sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

## **Galatians 1:14 – Paul was zealous of traditions of the fathers**

<sup>14</sup> And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

## **Philippians 3:5- Paul's adherence to the Law**

<sup>5</sup> Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

<sup>4</sup> And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

## **Acts 8:3 – Paul's previous power**

<sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

## **1 Timothy 1:13 – Paul's conversion by Gods mercy.**

<sup>13</sup> Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

## **Acts 9:2 – How Paul persecuted the church in his unbelief.**

<sup>2</sup> And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

## **Acts 22:6-16 - The Lord reached out to Paul**

<sup>6</sup> 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.

## **Acts 9:3-8 – the Lord reached out to Paul**

<sup>3</sup> And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: <sup>4</sup> And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto

him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? <sup>5</sup> And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. <sup>6</sup> And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. <sup>7</sup> And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. <sup>8</sup> And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

### **The Lord spoke out to Paul**

<sup>7</sup> And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

<sup>8</sup> And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

### **Acts 26:15**

<sup>15</sup> And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

### **The Lord spoke only to Paul – the others were afraid**

<sup>9</sup> 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.

### **Daniel 10:7**

<sup>7</sup> And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

### **Acts 9:7**

<sup>7</sup> And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

### **Acts 26:13**

<sup>13</sup> At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

### **Paul response was to follow**

<sup>10</sup> And I said, What shall I do, LORD? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

<sup>11</sup> And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.



### **Acts 9:8**

<sup>8</sup> And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

### **The Lord also uses others to achieve His purpose.**

<sup>12</sup> And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

### **Acts 9:10,17,18**

<sup>10</sup> And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

<sup>17</sup> And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. <sup>18</sup> And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

<sup>13</sup> Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

<sup>14</sup> And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

- It is no wonder that the Jews wanted to kill Paul. He was everything they were not, and that was that he believed Jesus Christ to be his Savior.

### **Acts 3:13**

<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

### **Acts 26:16 – Paul’s witness to King Agrippa as having seen Christ.**

<sup>16</sup> But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

### **1 Corinthians 9:1 – Paul’s qualification of Christ**

1. Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

## **1 Corinthians 15:8 – Paul’s testimony of Jesus Christ**

<sup>8</sup> And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

## **Galatians 1:12- Paul was taught by Jesus Christ**

<sup>12</sup> For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

## **Acts 22:15-16....continued....**

<sup>15</sup> For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

<sup>16</sup> And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

- I have found that through this great testimony of the Apostle Paul that the light of the Lord had shone into the hearts of many men. It was not until Acts Chapter 28, that the Apostle Paul finally was released as a free man, but during his capture and subsequent trials he had spread the gospel to many men.

People’s hearts had been filled with the Word of Christ and the Apostle Paul was faithful in delivery of the Word of Christ.

1. It’s interesting to see in Acts Chapter 28 and in verses 17-ff that Paul’s testimony to the Jews is again revealed and many Jews and Gentiles who did not know Christ had another chance to hear Paul’s testimony which was to testify of Christ his Saviour.
  2. Through his testimony which was a testimony of Christ many Jews and Gentiles were saved.
- ✓ **How does your testimony bear up against the common man, is it a testimony of Christ in you or is it a testimony of what Christ can do for you.**

PRAYER.....