



I. Paul Speaks to the Rioters (21:37 - 40)

Verse 37

As the soldiers
 were about to take Paul
 into the barracks,
 he asked the commander,
 “May I say something to you?”
 “Do you speak Greek?” he [the commander] replied.

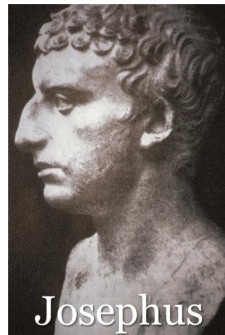
Verse 38

“Aren't you the 1) Egyptian
who started 2) a revolt
and 3) led four thousand terrorists
 (sikarios = dagger men)
 out into the wilderness
 some time ago?”

The “Egyptian” and the Sicarii

Josephus – the most famous ancient historian in his writings mentions three rebel leaders who led Jewish uprisings against Roman occupation of Jerusalem: Judas the Galilean, Theudas and “The Egyptian”.

The Sicarii (dagger men) would use a type of dagger called a jambiya to assassinate Roman leaders and Jewish sympathizers. They were feared because of their ability to kill and escape without being caught. “The Egyptian” led an insurrection in 54 AD against Rome that led to thousands of deaths.



Josephus



NOTE: Some have claimed that Judas was a Sicarii due to his name Judas Iscariot.

Verse 39

Paul answered,

- 1) “I am a Jew,
- 2) from Tarsus in Cilicia,
 a citizen of no ordinary city.
 Please let me speak to the people.”

Tarsus ranked with Alexandria and Athens as a city of Greek culture and importance.

Verse 40

After receiving the commander’s permission,
 Paul stood on the steps
 and motioned to the crowd.
 When they were all silent,
 he said to them in Aramaic : [local language of Jews]

II. Paul’s Call to Ministry (22:1 - 21)

Verse 1

“Brothers and fathers,
 listen now to my defense.”
 (apologia = apology = explanation and defense)

Verse 2

When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic,
 they became very quiet.
 Then Paul said:

Verse 3

- 1) “I am a Jew, (Jewish parents)
- 2) born in Tarsus of Cilicia, (Greek culture)
- 3) but brought up in this city. (Jerusalem)
- 4) I studied under Gamaliel (Respected and was thoroughly trained Rabbi and in the law of our ancestors. Pharisee)
- 5) I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Verse 4

I persecuted the followers (Leader of the Sanhedrin) of this Way to their death,
arresting both men and women
 and throwing them into prison,

Verse 5

as the high priest
and all the Council can themselves testify.
I even obtained letters from them
to their associates in Damascus,
and went there to bring these people
as prisoners to Jerusalem
to be punished.

Verse 6

“About noon [new info -- Acts 9]
as I came near Damascus,
suddenly a bright light from heaven
flashed around me. [brighter than the
noon day sun]

Verse 7

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

Verse 8

“ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.
“ ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, [new info]
whom you are persecuting,’ he replied.

This is probably 20 years after the death of Christ, so people
would probably just have heard the story.

Verse 9

My companions saw the light,
but they did not understand the voice
of him who was speaking to me.

Verse 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.’

Verse 11

My companions led me by the hand
into Damascus,
because the brilliance of the light
had blinded me.

Verse 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.

Verse 13

He stood beside me and said,
‘Brother Saul,
receive your sight!’
And at that very moment
I was able to see him.

Verse 14

“Then he said:
‘The God of our ancestors
1) has chosen you
2) to know his will
3) and to see the Righteous One [“Messiah” Isa. 32]
4) and to hear words from his mouth.

Verse 15

You will be his witness
to all people
of what you have seen
and heard.

Verse 16

And now what are you waiting for?
Get up,
be baptized
and wash your sins away,
calling on his name.’ [Rom. 10:13]

Verse 17

“When I returned to Jerusalem [3 years after conversion] and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance

Verse 18

and saw the Lord speaking to me.

‘Quick!’ he said.

‘Leave Jerusalem immediately,

because the people here

will not accept your testimony about me.’

Verse 19

“ ‘Lord,’ I replied,

‘these people know that I went from

one synagogue to another

to imprison

and beat those who believe in you.

Verse 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.’

Verse 21

“Then the Lord said to me,

‘Go;

I will send you far away

to the Gentiles.’ ”

Paul states:

1) You can't claim I am anti-Semitic – I am a Jew just like you!
2) You can't claim that I am not a “good” Jew – I have a reputation with the High Priest and the Sanhedrin as a member myself!

2) You can't claim I don't understand how you feel about those outside of your religion – I felt the same way!

3) You can't claim that I left Judaism – God called me to follow Christ!

4) You can't claim that I chose to preach to the Gentiles – God sent me to preach to them!

III. Paul's Citizenship Revealed (22:22 - 30)

Verse 22

The crowd listened to Paul

until he said this. [the word “Gentiles”]

Then they raised their voices

and shouted,

“Rid the earth of him!

He's not fit to live!”

Verse 23

As they were shouting

and throwing off their cloaks

and flinging dust into the air,

Like when they stoned Stephen, the Jewish leaders took off their outer clothing.

Verse 24

the commander ordered

that Paul be taken into the barracks.

He directed that he be flogged

and interrogated

in order to find out

why the people were shouting at him

like this.

Verse 25

As they stretched him out to flog him,

Paul said to the centurion standing there,

“Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen

who hasn't even been found guilty?”

The Portion law and the Valerian Law forbid any Roman from ever going through punishment by flagellum.

Verse 26

When the centurion heard this,
he went to the commander
and reported it.

“What are you going to do?” he asked.

“This man is a Roman citizen.”

Verse 27

The commander went to Paul and asked,

“Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”

“Yes, I am,” he answered.

Verse 28

Then the commander said,

“I had to pay a lot of money
for my citizenship.” [usually bribes]

“But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

[we don't know how his father gained his citizenship]

Verse 29

Those who were about to interrogate him
withdrew immediately.

The commander himself was alarmed
when he realized that he had put Paul,
a Roman citizen,
in chains.

Verse 30

The commander wanted to find out
exactly why Paul was being accused
by the Jews.

So the next day
he released him
and ordered the chief priests
and all the members of the Sanhedrin
to assemble.

Then he brought Paul
and had him stand before them.

The next opportunities – a trial before the Sanhedrin – then
Felix – then Festus – then Agrippa – then Rome!

For the next few chapters we are going to be in court with Paul.