# Ready to Give an Answer (Part 2)

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Pastor Mike Scrivani teaches on Acts 21, verse 37 through Acts 22, verse 29.

Acts 21, verse 37.
As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, May I say something to you? And he said, Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian then who recently stirred up a revolt and led the 4,000 men and the assassins out into the wilderness?
Paul replied, I am a Jew from Tarsus and Sicilia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people. And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people.
And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying, Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you. And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet.
[1:13] And he said, I am a Jew born in Tarsus and Sicilia, but brought up in the city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, as all of you are this day.

I persecuted this way to the death, abiding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From then I received letters to the brothers. I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.
As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?
And I answered, Who are you, Lord? And he said to me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting. Now those who were with me saw the light, but did not understand the voice of the one who is speaking to me.
And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Rise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do. And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.
[2:19] And one Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who live there, came to me, standing by me and said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight. And at that very hour, I received my sight and saw him.

And he said,
And he said, Yes. The tribune answered, I bought this citizenship for a large sum. Paul said, But I am a citizen by birth. So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.
So we've been following Paul back to Jerusalem, and he's back in Jerusalem. If you remember, the elders of the Jerusalem church had devised this plan for Paul to be able to demonstrate that the accusations being brought against him by the Jews who were zealous for the law and who were accusing him of things that weren't totally true for them to see, and take these four guys who were under a Nazarite vow and to pay for their expenses, and that this would make things better.
So they thought that was the plan, and it didn't work. The people were irate. They see Paul. They gather around him. They mob. They're rioting.

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[5:12] They want him to die. They are very upset. The Roman soldiers are aware of this disturbance in the temple, and so they come on the scene.

They take Paul out of there. The tribune thinks that Paul is this Egyptian terrorist, this assassin who has a large following, and Paul makes it clear that that is not who he is, and that he has to be able to address the crowd who is wanting him to die.
And so we've covered the majority of what Paul has said last week. We'll cover the rest tonight. There's not a whole lot left.
And then what happens afterwards. But if you remember from last week, the main idea is still the same. Christians are called to faithfully testify about Christ by sharing how God has transformed their lives and by standing firm in the truth, even when facing opposition.
Christians are called to faithfully testify about Christ by sharing how God has transformed their lives and by standing firm in the truth, even when facing opposition. So again, as I mentioned last week, this marks a transition in Paul's life and ministry.
[6:33] Since his conversion on the road to Damascus, he's ministered freely, excluding some short imprisonments. However, Paul's arrest does not end his ministry, though he's no longer free to travel.

He became an ambassador in chains, as he said in Ephesians 6.20, for Jesus Christ. Though he was a prisoner, that didn't prevent him from sharing the gospel.
It just changed his audience. And Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon during this time of imprisonment. So we see here in our text four principles for a good Christian defense.
And the first two we'll review real quick. First, Paul seizes the opportunity to testify. So even in the midst of this very dangerous situation for him, he's not looking for an escape, but sees this as an opportunity to be able to testify to this crowd to share the gospel.
Second, Paul shares how Christ transformed his life. And so we see from his example, a good way for us to share the gospel is to develop common ground with unbelievers.
[7:54] And the one thing that we all share in common is that we sin, that we're sinners. We're all sinners in need of a Savior. And so no matter how different that person is who you are sharing the gospel with, no matter what they look like, what they believe, we all share the common problem of sin.

And so to be able to establish that common ground with them is a good place to be able to share the gospel and obviously to show the need that we all have for a Savior.
So now we come to the third principle in verses 17 through 21. Paul states God's task for his ministry. Paul states God's task for his ministry.
Verses 17 and 18 again say, When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly because they will not accept your testimony about me.
After his conversion and a brief period of ministry in Damascus, Paul spent three years in Arabia. And he talks about that in Galatians 1, 17 through 18.
[9:11] Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him 15 days.

And so now having returned to Jerusalem, and again, this is talking about Paul's conversion, the event soon after his conversion, having returned to Jerusalem, Paul was praying in the temple. This was further proof that Paul had not rejected his Jewish heritage, as his opponents falsely insisted was the case.
And while he was in the temple, Paul says that he fell into a trance. The Greek word translated as trance is extasis, and it describes an experience which is, you know, similar to Peter's, what we read about in Acts 10, 10, where he sees a vision, remember, of a sheet unfolding from heaven with all the unclean animals, which symbolize the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church.
And so Paul tells his audience that Jesus directed him to leave Jerusalem. Make haste and get out. These commands from Jesus, these are imperatives in the Greek, and imperatives in the Greek are commands.
[10:29] These aren't suggestions or words of advice that you could take or not take. These are commands. And if the Lord gives you a command, his expectation is that you obey it.

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And the use of a double imperative here communicates the urgency of the command. So almost like if you think of your parents, when they used your middle name, your first name, your middle name, like this is serious business here, right?
So double imperative, this is serious business. Jesus wants Paul to get out of there. So again, that communicates the urgency of the command.
At this point, Paul is making the case to the audience that it was Jesus who appeared to him, who called him to salvation, and who gave him this ministry, as he points out in verses 19 through 21, that it was Jesus who sent him to the Gentiles.
So let's look at those verses again. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another, I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.
[11:51] And when the blood of Stephen, your witness, was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him. And he said to me, go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.

So at first, in this moment, Paul questions the Lord's command. Paul reminded the Lord that he was well-known in Jerusalem and that the Jews in the synagogue there knew him as someone who had actively been involved with arresting and beating followers of Jesus, trying to put an end to Christianity.
Specifically, he mentions his involvement here in the martyrdom of Stephen, which served as a catalyst to the intensified persecution of the church in Jerusalem.
And it resulted in many of the believers there leaving, which ultimately served God's purpose because when they left Jerusalem, they took the gospel with them.
In Paul's mind, at this point in his life, the fact that the Jews in Jerusalem knew his past as a persecutor of followers of Jesus would be a powerful testimony to them and serve as evidence that Jesus is Israel's Messiah and Savior.
[13:18] Paul felt that he was a credible witness, would be a credible witness to them, and perhaps be a more effective witness in Jerusalem because he wasn't a stranger to these people.

They knew him, they knew his past, and they would have, in his mind, realized that, you know, something dramatic has happened to Paul that he has gone from persecuting Christians to now being one.
So he thought, Lord, this is a great place for me to be used by you. It's not wrong to ask God questions in prayer. It's not wrong to express our thoughts in prayer.
Why wouldn't we? It's not like we can keep those things hidden from God, can we? He knows all things. But Paul here, as he asks questions, he's gracious.
He's not telling God what to do. He's just expressing some thoughts that God certainly would have known. And God is gracious to hear those questions that we have, but he is Lord, and ultimately we are his to command and we must obey.
[14:37] Jesus doesn't tell Paul, you know, Paul, you made a pretty good point here. I hadn't thought about that. I'm going to think about that for a while and I'll get back to you.

Just sit tight in Jerusalem. Maybe you're right. No, he did not. Instead, for a third time, he issues an imperative, a command telling Paul to go.
And this time, he tells Paul where to go, which is far away to the Gentiles. In this vision, Paul receives confirmation of his commission from Jesus to go to the Gentiles.
as Jesus told Ananias in Acts 9, 15, that this would be Paul's ministry. This is how the Lord would use him. Paul states God's task for his ministry by informing or reminding the Jews in Jerusalem that he was once where they are now.
A zealous Jew who persecuted the followers of Jesus and he makes the case that he would still be with them. He would still be among their number.
[15:49] He'd be one in their crowd, but that Jesus appeared to him, revealed himself to him as the promised Messiah, the Son of God and Savior of the world.

And so Paul is merely obeying the Lord's commands. Eckert Schnabel said, believers in Jesus profess God who reveals himself in Jesus even in dangerous situations and they give witnesses of Jesus of Nazareth who is alive, who saves and who directs the lives of God's people.
Paul defends himself in his speech before the Jews in the outer court of the temple, but he does so by speaking about Jesus. Paul speaks not only about Jesus but also and more extensively about his encounter with the crucified, risen, and exalted Jesus who spoke to him from the glory of God's

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reality.
Paul is a witness of Jesus' resurrection and as difficult as this might be for the Jews in the temple to accept, it is a reality that Paul wants to proclaim not only because it changed his own life but because it demonstrates that Jesus is indeed the Lord, Israel's Messiah and Savior whom God has sent to Israel and to the world.
So, like Paul, if you are a Christian, if God has been gracious to save you, you have likewise been commanded by him to go and make disciples.
[17:22] Read that in Great Commission, Matthew 28 verse 18. So, this is a command, it's not optional, the Lord has told us to go and make disciples, to share the gospel and again, a good way we see to do that is to establish common ground with unbelievers and again, that common ground that we share is that we are all sinners and if they say that they're not a sinner, well, that's not a difficult argument to win.

It's not a difficult argument to win and if you want tips on as to why that's not a difficult argument, we could talk afterwards, but you always hear me talk about kids, I always pick on the kids whenever I bring this up in church is you don't teach kids how to be bad, it comes instinctively, we're spending all of our time as parents, as teachers or whatever trying to teach them not to be bad and trying to tell them why it's good to be good and as adults we're just better at covering up our sin but then you just look at the world so you don't have to come talk to me afterwards, I'm telling you now, and you just look at the world and how can you not see the effect of sin everywhere, in everybody, so that's a great place to start because that's a common ground that we all share, is that we are all born with a sin nature, we all have sin, and then share your testimony, as Paul does here, this is who I was, I was once like you, and as you say that, don't say it in a way where you're boasting in yourself, or I was once like you, something like that, you know, hey, I once was in a situation where you were, I, you know, if you're saved later in life, earlier in life, just, you know, hey, there was a point where I wasn't born a Christian, nobody is born saved, so I was like you, I was questioning these things, I wasn't sure about what I believed, but then I heard the gospel, and God was gracious to save me, so share who you were prior to Christ, I was once like you, but again, don't exalt your sin either, but the Savior who saved you from your sin, every salvation is a miracle, every salvation is a miracle of God's doing, so don't think that your testimony is more or less effective based on the kind of life you lived prior to your salvation, praise God if you were saved before you could have wrecked your life even more by your sin and sinful choices,
I remember talking to when I was a youth pastor talking to our teens and you know, it was almost like they wished they had this testimony where I was addicted to drugs, I was almost near death, I was in a ditch somewhere, and I called out to Jesus and he saved me, well, praise God that you don't have that testimony and trying to help them to see that every testimony is a miracle and it's what God did in your life, and so I found that effective when I've shared the gospel with people, is, you know, especially if they know me, like, okay, you may not believe, I hear you say that you don't believe in God, but let me tell you this is what I've experienced God do in my life, and that's powerful, that's a powerful thing for them to hear.
State your task, also, is important, we believe God is sovereign, and every person he has, you share the gospel with, is a divine appointment, whether you realize that in the moment or not.
[21:28] God is sovereign, he has ordained that appointment for you to share your faith with that person. God has sent you to them so you should tell them that as well.

We're having this conversation. God has ordained this time for me to tell you this truth of who he is. Okay, now we come to the fourth principle.
Paul stands firm in the truth. Paul stands firm in the truth. Verse 22 says, up to this word, they listen to him up to this word when he says, and Jesus sent me to the Gentiles.
And this is the point where they just can't hear that. They won't hear anymore. They raised their voices and they said, away with such a fellow from the earth for he should not be allowed to live.
So the crowd could not tolerate the suggestion that Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jewish proselytes.
[22:38] That would make them, if what Paul is saying is true, that would make them spiritually equal to the Jewish people before God.

The crowd should have known though that it has always been God's plan to bring the Gentiles into a right relationship with him and it's always been his plan to use the nation of Israel, the Israelites as his instrument through which the Messiah would come to be a blessing to the nations.

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So let's look at some of these verses that they would have known, should have known, that talk about this. Genesis 12, 3, in 22, 18, God promises Abraham, in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Isaiah 11, 10, prophesies that the root of Jesse, which is a reference to the Messiah, will arise to rule over the nations, and in him the Gentiles will hope.
Isaiah 42, 4, and 42, 6, describes the Messiah as a light to the Gentiles who will establish justice on the earth.
[24:01] In Isaiah 49, 6, God tells the servant, it is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob.

I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.
Isaiah 56, 3, through 7, welcomes the son of the foreigner who joins himself to the Lord and declares that God's house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.
Isaiah 61, 3, foresees nations and kings coming to the brightness of Israel's rising light. Psalm 22, 27, declares that all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.
Psalm 117, 1, calls out praise the Lord all you Gentiles laud him all you peoples. Jeremiah 16, 9, acknowledges a time when the nations will come from the ends of the earth and they will say our fathers have inherited only lies.
Zechariah 2, 11, states that many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day and they shall become my people. Malachi 1, 11, notes that my name shall be great among the Gentiles from the rising of the sun even to its going down.
[25:32] So prior to the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests of Israel and Judah, God's people, if you remember, had a problem with wanting to be like the Gentiles, wanting to be like their Gentile neighboring countries.

they wanted a king like the Gentile nations had. They wanted to worship the gods that their Gentile neighbors worshipped.
And so in judgment of that, remember, God sent his people into exile and in exile they were disciplined and they were purged of their devotion to idols, of their desire to be like the other nations, the Gentile nations.
In the New Testament, we don't see idol worship as a major problem anymore amongst the Jewish people. God purged them of that in their exile.
So, however, in a way, they made an idol of the extra laws they added to God's word, and this legalistic devotion to obey rules intensified their hatred of those who didn't, namely, the Gentiles.
[26:59] From the Jewish perspective, Gentiles were seen as pagans who did not know the true God. During Jesus' time, many Jews took such pride in their cultural and religious heritage that they considered Gentiles unclean, they called them dogs, they called them or referred to them in a derogatory way as the uncircumcised Gentiles, and also Samaritans who were viewed as I'm trying to think of a nice way to say this, you know what I mean, half Jew, half Gentile, impure.

That's what they thought of Gentiles and Samaritans. Again, this crowd could not tolerate the thought that God would save Gentiles, especially without them first becoming a Jew through circumcision and other religious rituals.
And I think it's ironic that Paul is talking about God's sending him to the Gentiles, which infuriates the Jews who order the Roman soldiers, who are Gentiles, to kill Paul.
Ironic or just you see how crazed they are and how prideful they were of their Jewish heritage.
Verse 23 records additional details about their hissy fit and as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and they were flinging dust into the air. So we see this activity in scripture of people tearing their clothes or throwing dust, taking off their cloaks and usually they would take off their cloaks to stone somebody.
[28:53] But this was a way for them to express their outrage and to express that they had taken deep offense to whatever this person had said or done.

their hatred and racial prejudice pushed them to the point or past the point where they could be reasoned with anymore.
You know how kids throw temper tantrums and you're out in public, maybe you're at Walmart and I mean they're just losing it and mom and dad are trying to reason with them.

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You know maybe talking quietly to them, okay, use our inside voice or it'll be okay, stop, stop screaming. That doesn't work, does it?
That does not work. I've also seen it the other way unfortunately where you know, kid is losing it and mom and dad give it to them right back even worse sometimes saying some things that it's like you can't believe it.
[30:06] No wonder some of our kids grew up the way that they do, hearing the way that you talk to them using four letter words and stuff like that. It's awful. Anyhow, again, picking on kids and I love kids.

I'll go up to Awana after this and I'll go down to the puggles. They make me happy. But you know there's sometimes you get to a point with somebody where they're just in such a rage.
They can't be reasoned with anymore. They're not going to listen to you. They've lost their minds and they're not thinking clearly. They are just throwing a fit.
Sometimes in sharing the gospel and defending our faith, we will come across someone who will be so angry and the common ground is sin and that might be the thing that offends them.
I'm not a sinner. I'm a good person. And you try to show them really you're not. How care you say that? It gets to a point where you have to stop casting your pearl before swine.
[31:13] In this case, the Roman tribune stepped in, but instead of paddling the crowd, he plans to punish Paul. So again, in verse 24, we see the tribune ordered him, Paul, to be brought into the barracks saying that he should be examined by flogging to find out why they were shouting against him like this.

So at this point, the tribune, he doesn't know who or what to believe. He's not a Jew. He's more than likely, I think very probably, not a student of scripture.
So he doesn't know what this dispute is all about. And he sees Paul as the instigator, and he believes that he must be withholding something.
There must be some reason why this crowd, this huge crowd, is against you in the way that they are. Paul addresses the tribune in Greek, but he spoke to the crowd in Hebrew or Aramaic, and it could be that the tribune also didn't understand what Paul was saying.
Not only would he have not been probably familiar with scripture, but he may not have been familiar with the language that was being spoken here, the language that Paul was using as he was speaking to, the Jews.
[32:31] Or maybe he could grasp bits and pieces of it, we don't know. Whatever the case, the tribune's plan is to beat the truth out of Paul. The Roman method of scourging was much, much worse than paddling.

They used an instrument called a flagellum. A flagellum had a wooden handle with leather thongs attached to it.
Think of a whip like Indiana Jones, except for instead of just one whip, this had multiple leather thongs, multiple whips attached to this handle.
But the Romans, and again, if you've ever been whipped before, even if somebody rolled up a towel and smacked you with it, it hurts, doesn't it? that would be bad enough, but the Romans were good, and I don't mean that in a complimentary way.
They were good at torturing people, and by that, again, I mean they knew how to devise methods of making people suffer through torture.
[33:43] And so Roman soldiers would stick pieces of metal or bone into those leather thongs in their whips.

So maybe as they're out marching, they might come across a sharp rock or a piece of bone or after battles, and they would take these little pieces of shrapnel and they would stick them into their whips.
And so what would happen is that when they would whip you, these little pieces of rock, metal, or bone, would stick into your flesh. So they whip you, and these things are stuck into your flesh, and then they would pull it back, and would rip your flesh out with it.
So, very, very brutal. And this was the kind of flogging that Jesus experienced prior to his crucifixion.
Paul had been beaten before, but this punishment would have surpassed the others as far as the amount of physical pain that it would have cost him.

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[34:54] As verse 25 says, a person being flogged was stretched out, usually over like a stump, or maybe on the ground, or they just would be chained either to the ground or up high so that there was no way they could defend themselves, they could not run away from this, they were going to endure this terrible beating.

Verse 25 says, But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and I'm condemned? Paul, maintaining his composure and showing a measure of respect to the Roman authorities, asked a rhetorical question to point out that it was illegal to be flogged as a Roman citizen without due process.
Roman law permitted enhanced methods in the examination of slaves and non-Romans, but it protected people who held Roman citizenship from being flogged without a trial. They had to be proven guilty.
Cicero said, To bind a Roman citizen is a crime, to flog him in abomination, to slay him is almost an act of murder. So this was a very big deal, if these soldiers were to carry out this scourging on someone who is a Roman citizen.
[36:19] Verses 26 through 28 say, When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, What are you about to do for this man as a Roman citizen? So the tribune came and said to him, Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?

And he said, Yes. The tribune answered, I bought this citizenship for a large sum, and Paul said, But I am a citizen by birth. So here at first, the centurion grasps the implication of Paul's question concerning his identity, and Luke describes the actions of the centurion with three verbs.
He heard what Paul said, he understood what Paul meant, he went to Claudius Lysias, the tribune, the commanding officer, and he reported what he learned by speaking with Paul.
And again, Roman soldiers and officers faced stiff consequences for unlawfully punishing a Roman citizen. The centurion knows that status as a Roman citizen requires different procedures than for a Jewish non-citizen of Rome, and so he goes to the tribune for new instructions, or to let him know, you understand what you're asking us to do.
And that report to Lysias, the tribune, caused him to go interview Paul for himself regarding his legal status.
[37:44] Now, when Lysias asked Paul if he's a Roman citizen, he simply says yes. And so we might think, well, wouldn't he want more proof of that?

And back during this time also, if you lied about your being a Roman citizen, the consequence of that could be death. And so people didn't lie about being a citizen of Rome.
If you said that you were, you understood the consequences if you weren't telling the truth. And so this is what's probably the case and why Lysias just said, okay, you wouldn't lie about that because if you were, we would have to kill you.
The Roman soldiers, and officers again faced various consequences for punishing citizens of Rome. And so that's why this became a very big deal.
And now Lysias wonders how Paul obtained his citizenship as Lysias himself said he had to pay a significant amount of money to be able to get this for his own. Lysias is a Greek name.
[38:52] He wasn't born in a city to a town, to a place that was under Roman occupation. He was buy a citizenship. He was able to have a Paul was. His parents weren't citizens.

Otherwise, he would have his citizenship by birth. He had to pay for it. So it's probable that Lysias joined the Roman army and he worked his way up to a place where he was able to acquire the money and the friends he needed to be able to purchase his citizenship.
citizenship. And so just like today was the case back then, politicians could be bribed. And so what could have happened here too is the money Lysias is talking about is he raised it to get in contact with the person who would write all of these names for citizenship on a piece of paper which would be given to Caesar who would approve their citizenship.
ship and so maybe he acquired it that way. We don't know. What we do know is he had to pay for it. And Paul didn't because Paul was a citizen by birth and Tarsus where Paul was born was a free city.
And this goes back in ancient Roman history where the city of Tarsus was on the side of those who won the battle like Mark Antony and such.

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[40:18] And so they were awarded as a free city and all the citizens were considered Roman citizens and thus we don't know anything about Paul's father but it could have been the case that he was a citizen of Rome and thus he gained his citizenship by birth.

Paul's father was probably a citizen of Rome and so Paul inherited his citizenship. Granted that because of his father's being a citizen plus he lived in Tarsus.
what's interesting here is that also in Roman culture though Lysias was a commanding officer very important in the eyes of the Roman world it's better to be born a citizen than to pay for a citizenship. And so even though Paul was a Jew and he was you know the one who had been taken under arrest in the eyes of Roman society Paul would have been considered above Lysias since he had received his citizenship through birth.
And so this further complicated matters for the tribune. Verse 29 says so those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately and the tribune was afraid for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.
[41:42] so he knows he's in big trouble here. And so they unbind him but keep him in the fortress and I think that served a couple of obvious benefits both for Paul because the crowd wanted him to die and so this protected him from the crowd and also it protected Lysias because he knew where Paul was and he could keep his eyes on him.

Now Paul's birth was no accident. Who he was born to and where he was born was no accident. He understood Paul did where he was born, his training under Gamaliel and his eventual salvation and called to be an apostle to the Gentiles as all being acts of God's sovereignty.
This was all part of God's plan for his life. As he says in Romans 1.1 he identifies himself there as a servant of Christ called to be an apostle set apart for the gospel of God. And then Galatians 1.15-16 But when he who had set me apart before I was born and who called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son to me in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone.
And so everything that has happened in Paul's life, it's been according to the sovereign plan and will of God. It was no accident that he was born where he was born to the parents that he was born to because now he's in this place where he will get to appeal eventually we'll see to Caesar and he is going to be able to go to different places to appear before powerful people where he will continue to share the gospel and this was all part of God's good and sovereign plan for the apostle Paul's life.
So when you share your gospel when you share the gospel establish common ground, talk about who you were before your salvation and who you are now as a result of what Jesus has done to save you and then state your task.
[43:48] This is why I'm sharing the gospel with you in the hopes that you will be saved and that you will know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and then stand firm in the truth though we know that there are times where we could be casting our pearl wolf or swine and it's better to back away but not to stop praying and hope for another opportunity and chance with that person and who knows maybe you've planted a seed that the Lord will have somebody else come along and water and hope that it will grow.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father thank you again for this time that we've had to be together and to examine the life of your servant the apostle Paul and see through his example of how we can likewise share our faith with a hostile crowd.
Lord we know that in our nation there are many the Lord who their opposition to the gospel is intensified and father we could be afraid of them we could be afraid to share the gospel with them Lord we could be tempted even to hate them and so Lord I pray that you would help us to follow the example that we see here that like Paul we would be obedient to your command to go to not be afraid to be bold and courageous to speak the truth in love and to stand firm on the truth Lord that you have been gracious to teach us and to help us to know you better.
so God I pray that we would see opportunities and that we would take advantage of the opportunities that you give that we would seize them as Paul did and that no matter the cost to us personally Lord that we would give a bold defense in the hopes that you would save others in Jesus name we pray amen.
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