**Paul’s Defense Before the Murderous Mob**

(Acts 22:1-16)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

 A defense attorney was cross-examining a coroner in court one day, and asked, “Before you signed the death certificate, did you take the man’s pulse?” The coroner answered, “No, I didn’t.” The defense attorney then asked, “Did you check to see if he was breathing?” The coroner admitted that he hadn’t done that either. The defense attorney then asked, “Then isn’t it possible that the man was still alive when you began your autopsy?”

 The coroner said, “No, that’s not possible.” The attorney asked, “How can you be so sure?” He replied, “Because, when I signed the death certificate, the man’s brain was sitting in a jar on my desk.” The defense attorney pressed him, saying, “But isn’t it *possible* he was still alive?” The coroner replied, “Yes, I suppose it’s possible he could have been alive *and practicing law somewhere!”*

Well, speaking of defense attorneys, here in Acts 22 the Apostle Paul is choosing to act as his *own* defense attorney before a murderous mob of unsaved Jews who had accused him of a number of things. He began his defense in the first two verses of the chapter, where we read:

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

 **“(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)” (Acts 22:1,2).**

Now to begin with, the reason it says they kept “the *more”* silence is that Paul had just finished silencing that riotous mob by gesturing with his hand in a way that indicated he wanted to speak to them (21:40). Personally, I believe it was a *stunned* silence. I think they were *shocked* that he wanted to stand there and speak to them, instead of letting those soldiers lead him into the safety of the castle! When Paul instead chose to remain in harm’s way to speak to them, I also think that must have piqued the curiosity of that huge crowd to hear what he had to say. So suddenly he had the attention of *thousands* of unsaved Jews.

And as we’ve seen in our earlier studies in Acts, getting the chance to preach the gospel to thousands of unsaved Jews is the reason Paul *came* to Jerusalem in the first place! He knew that *many* thousands of them would be gathered there for the Jewish feast of Pentecost, and for a couple of chapters now he’s been bustin’ a gut to get there in time for Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

But this is *not* how Paul envisioned it all playing out. He pictured pockets of unsaved Jews listening to him after they saw him offer a Jewish sacrifice, and after they saw him deliver the money he’d collected from Gentile churches to give to the Jewish kingdom church in Jerusalem. Instead, he has “all Jerusalem” listening to him at once (21:31), in curious silence, hanging on his every word. So what we’re seeing here is God acting like the God that Paul describes in Ephesians 3:20,

 **“...Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly *above all that we ask or think.”***

Now that’s not a promise that you can ask God for a thousand dollars, and He’ll give you a *million*. That’s a promise that God will do more than you ask *if you pray prayers like Paul prayed,* like asking for the chance to speak to the most people about Christ—prayers that line up with what *God* wants, not what *you* want. *Those* are the prayers God answers exceeding abundantly above all you ask—or can even *think* of asking. You see, the secret to being happy in this life is to care more about the *next*. You know. Like Paul did. He’s our example in all things, remember?

 Okay, now that Paul has their attention, he tells them in verse 3 of our text,

 **“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” (Acts 22:3).**

Paul began by telling them that he was a Jew to answer the first thing they had charged him with. They had charged him with was being *against* the Jews! In the previous chapter, they said to one another,

 **“This is the man, that teacheth all men every where *against the people...”* (Acts 21:28).**

So Paul is answering that charge here by saying he was *one* of the people of Israel. You can’t accuse me of being against Polaks because I’m half Polish, and you couldn’t accuse Paul of being against Jews for the same reason.

 Next, Paul told them that he grew up at the feet of Gamaliel to answer the *next* thing they charged him with, when they added,

 **“This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, *and the law...”* (Acts 21:28).**

 They had charged him with teaching people to be against the law of Moses. But he’d been taught by Gamaliel, the most respected *teacher* of the law of all time, and men taught by Gamaliel weren’t likely to be against the law. Paul wasn’t! He just preached grace, the *answer* to the law!

 But I believe there’s *another* reason Paul brought up Gamaliel. It was to remind them of what Gamaliel *said* when some unsaved Jews tried to kill *the twelve apostles* earlier in Acts, when

 **“...they...took counsel to *slay* them. Then stood there up...a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, *a doctor of the law,* had in reputation among all the people...And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, *take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.*... and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, *it will come to nought:* But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. *And to him they agreed...and let them go”*** (**Acts 5:33-35,38-40).**

Gamaliel told those unsaved Jews that if what Peter and the 12 were preaching wasn’t true, it would just *peter out!* Pardon the pun. He told them it would just fizzle out *without them having to lift a finger,* let alone *kill* anybody. And those unsaved Jews *agreed* with him! They thought that was pretty sound advice.

 So I believe Paul is bringing up Gamaliel here in the hopes that they’ll think the same thing about *his* message. I mean, if a man as prestigious as Gamaliel said those words, they probably became words of famous advice that the unsaved Jews Paul was addressing would be sure to remember as they were attempting to slay *him.*

 Now when Paul went on to say that Gamaliel taught him “according to the perfect manner of the law,” I have to point out that that’s more than some of his *accusers* could say! Some of them were Sadducees who didn’t believe some of the things they read in the law, as we see when it says in Acts 23:8,

 **“...*the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,* neither angel, nor spirit: *but the Pharisees confess both.”***

The Sadducees didn’t believe what the law said about angels, or spirits—or even that they’d rise from the dead someday after they died. That’s why they were sad, you see. Pardon that pun too.

 But Gamaliel taught Paul to be a *Pharisee* (23:6),so Paul believed more of the law than some of the men accusing him of being against the law!

 And he added that he was “zealous toward God” as well. In the Bible, the word “zealous” means to be *so* passionate about something that you’re willing to *kill* for it, as the law of first mention would suggest when we consider the first times the word is used in Scripture:

 **“Phinehas...took a javelin...*and thrust both of them through,* the man... and the woman...And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas ...was *zealous* for My sake” (Numbers 25:7,8,10,11).**

 **“Saul sought to *slay* them in his *zeal* to the children of Israel” (II Samuel 21:2).**

And here in our text passage, these unsaved Jews were fixin’ to kill *Paul* in *their* zeal for the Lord. So he’s telling them, “I was once just as zealous as you,” a reference to his bloody past as Saul of Tarsus, the world’s premier persecutor of God’s people.

 Of course, what he *doesn’t* tell them is that he actually used to be *more* zealous than they were! But that’s what he told the Galatians, saying,

 **“...ye have heard of my...past in the Jews' religion, how that *beyond measure* I persecuted the church...*and wasted it:* and profited in the Jews' religion *above* *many my equals* in mine own nation, *being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers”* (Galatians 1:13,14).**

 When it came to killing people in the name of the Lord, Paul was once more zealous than these Jews who were trying to kill *him.*

But how did *that* work? I mean, if *they* were willing to kill for the Lord, and *he* was willing to kill for the Lord, that sounds pretty equal to me. How could he say he was *more* zealous then they were?

 I believe Paul gives us the answer in verse 4 of our text, where he said,

 **“And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4).**

Paul says when it came to killing for the Lord, he didn’t even spare *the women.* His accusers probably drew the line at killing women, *but not Paul.* He knew that *Phinehas* had killed a woman in *his* zeal; a *pregnant* woman at that. So he was willing to cross that line *even if nobody else was.*

 And when he said he persecuted “this way,” that’s a reference to what Christians were called after the Lord said,

 ***“I am the way,* the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, *but by Me”* (John 14:6).**

 The world around us like to say that there’s *many* ways to get to God the Father, but the Lord said *He* was “the” way—the *only* way. And He still is.

 Now Paul was such an *infamous* persecutor of God’s people, it wasn’t likely that anybody in that riotous crowd that day had forgotten about it. But a good defense attorney calls *witnesses* to make his case, so Paul did too. And not just *any* witnesses! After he claimed he persecuted people to death, he added,

 **“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 22:5).**

Paul called *Israel’s high priest* to the witness stand to corroborate his testimony, and *the entire estate of the elders*. In that context, the word “estate” means *the leaders of government,* as it does in Mark 6:21, where

 **“Herod...made a supper to his lords, high captains, *and chief estates* of Galilee”**

That means the leadersof the mob that was trying to kill Paul for being against the law would have to admit that he was once so *zealous* of the law that they themselves *recognized* his zeal by giving him what we would today call “letters” *of extradition—*letters that authorized him to go to Damascus to round up *more* Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished. Those letters proved that Paul wasn’t just some religious *renegade,* some lone wolf who went off on a mission to exterminate Christianity *on his own*. He worked directly for the high priest of the nation Israel, with the full authority of the nation’s leadership. He was no loose cannon, running around like a mad dog with no leash. He was more like James Bond, 007—he had a *license* to kill! You do know that that’s what the double “0” in 007 meant, right? That he had a license to kill? See the useless stuff you can learn from reading my lessons?

 Now I can’t prove this, but I believe Paul is hinting that *he still had those letters,* and could enter them into evidence as Exhibit A, in case they tried to deny that they once *approved* of the man they were now trying to *kill.*

 But now, why would Paul be taking the time to prove that he *used to be* zealous for the law? What good would *that* do him, now that he was out there preaching grace? Well, if I told you that former president Ronald Reagan used to be a Democrat who was so *into* Democratic beliefs that he once called FDR “a true hero”—if I told you that, wouldn’t you want to know why he decided to switch to being a Republican?

 Well, that’s why Paul’s reminding these Jews that he was once zealous for the law. It was to get them to wonder why he switched to preaching grace. And now that he had them wondering about that, he started to *tell them* why he switched, when he said:

 **“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 22:6).**

Paul says he was on his way to apprehend Christians in Damascus, minding his own business, when suddenly a light from heaven shone “round about” him. I picture that light as similar to the spotlight in a theater that focuses on the lead actor in a focused circle of light. Paul was on the center stage of the universe that day.

 And don’t overlook that little detail about it being “about noon” when he saw that light, because any light you can see in broad daylight must be *brighter* than broad daylight. And that bright light is symbolic of how Paul was about to get *saved* here, and the dispensation of grace was about to begin.

 You say, “How do you get all that from a bright light?” Well, do you remember what Moses wrote about the six days of creation in Genesis 1:16?

 **“God made...*the greater light* to rule the day, and *the lesser light* to rule the night.”**

The sun and the moon were symbolic of the Old and New Testaments. How do I get *that?* Well, did you ever wonder why Genesis 1:5 says,

 ***“And the evening and the morning* were the first day.”**

That verse is the reason Jews start their days at 6 in the evening, and then the morning goes on to finish their day, instead of starting their days in the morning as we do. But most Jews miss the point that God was trying to teach them with that odd sequencing; the point being that the lesser light *of their understanding of God* that they had in the Old Testament had to come before the *greater* light of their understanding of God that came in the *New* Testament.

 But when the dispensation of grace began, Paul saw a light that was *above* the light of the sun, a light that was *brighter* than the light of the New Testament, a light that *nobody saw coming* in the types of the Old Testament because it was a *mystery.* It’s no mystery that the light of the sun comes after the light of the moon every day. But the light that Paul saw was the beginning of a mystery light that shines *for us Gentiles* in the same way the light of the Old and New Testaments shone for the Jews. It was a light Paul talked to the Corinthians about when he wrote,

 **“God, *who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,* hath shined in *our* hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”**

*That’s* the light being symbolized with this bright light that shone around Paul alone. That gospel was *centered* in Paul alone.

 Of course, Paul didn’t know about any of this yet! All he knew is that a great light from heaven had just knocked him off his feet on to his keister, as he told the Jews in the next verse of our text:

 **“And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 22:7).**

 Now when Paul heard *that,* he knew he was in trouble! Because the only One he’d been persecuting was that Jesus guy, and this voice was talking to him *from heaven.* He knew that if Jesus went to heaven when He died, then he’d been fighting *on the wrong side.* But just to be sure, he went on to ask the voice who He was in verse 8:

 **“And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest” (Acts 22:8).**

And now Paul knew *for certain* that, in fighting against Jesus, he’d been doing what Gamaliel had warned about. He’d been fighting *against God.*

 And I think the Lord was graciously *rubbing it in* when He added that He was Jesus *“of Nazareth,”* because one of the reasons Jews refused to believe Jesus was their Christ is that He haled from such a *despised* city, as we see in John 1:45,46, when

 **“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, *We have found Him,* of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, *Jesus of Nazareth...*And Nathanael said unto him, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”***

 As you can tell from what Nathanael said, Nazareth was considered the *armpit* of the nation Israel, and proud jews like him and Saul of Tarsus just couldn’t believe that their Messiah would live there. So here in our text, I believe the Lord was saying, as it were, “Yup! It’s Me, Jesus *of Nazareth.”*

But as we read on, we see that Paul wasn’t alone on the road to Damascus that day. He brought a *posse* with him. And in verse 9 it says:

 **“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” (Acts 22:9).**

Now here we have to pause to point out that—that’s not what *Luke* said happened in *his* account of this days’ events back in Acts 9:7, where he wrote,

**“And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, *hearing a voice,* but seeing no man.”**

Luke said that the members of Paul’s posse *did* hear the Lord’s voice that day, but Paul says here that they didn’t. But that’s not a contradiction in the Bible. That’s an example of what happened to the Lord as He was praying one day in John 12:28,29, where He said,

 **“Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, *said that it thundered:* others said, *An angel spake to Him.”***

God’s voice sounded like *thunder* to the bystanders that day, and that’s also what happened when the Lord spoke to Paul on Damascus Road. *He* heard the Lord’s words articulated *as words,* but the members of his entourage just heard a noise like thunder (cf. Ps.29). So any time anybody tells you that there are contradictions in the Bible, you know what list to put them on—the “pay no mind” list!

 Well, once Paul knew who the Lord was, he wasted no time in asking Him a question in the next verse of our passage

 **“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” (Acts 22:10).**

Now first, I have to point out that this is where Paul *gets saved.* We know this because he later wrote,

 ***“...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,* and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved”* (Romans 10:9).**

So when Paul called Jesus “Lord” here in our text, he took care of the first thing he said was required for salvation. And we know he also believed God had raised Him from the dead, because he knew Jesus had died—and yet here He was talking to him!

 But don’t overlook the fact that Paul got saved and right away asked the Lord what he wanted him to do. I say that because some Christians get saved and *don’t* ask the Lord what He wants them to do. Some don’t ask it for years and years. And some never *do* get around to asking it. They’re just happy as a clam to be saved, and the thought of serving God to *thank Him* for saving them never even enters their minds.

 But if *you’ve* never asked that question, isn’t it time you did? Of course, the Lord won’t answer you out loud, as He did for Paul. But He’ll answer you *in Paul’s epistles.* And then it will be between you and Him as to whether you want to obey Him or not.

 But *Paul* had a slight problem when it came to obeying the Lord, for the Lord had told *him* to rise up and go into Damascus in verse 10. That was easier said than done, because he had *lost his vision.* Verse 11 of our text says,

 **“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 22:11).**

Paul had been blinded by the light of the Lord’s glory! And that was highly symbolic.

 Think it through. He was a Jew who was blinded so that Gentiles could get saved through his ministry. That’s a type of what’s going on today in the dispensation of grace. Jews are blinded for the most part, and Gentiles are getting saved during this dispensation that is predominantly a *Gentile* dispensation, the way the previous dispensation was predominantly a *Jewish* dispensation (John 4:22). Paul said as much when he wrote,

 **“Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded...*and...through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles”* (Romans 11:7,9,11).**

 So once again we see that the Book of Acts is a book of symbols, symbols of what God was doing during that transition period from law to grace.

 But a blind apostle can’t take salvation to the Gentiles, so as we read on we see,

 **“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,**

 **“Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him” (Acts 22:12,13).**

Now the reason Paul made it a point to mention that Ananias was a devout man according to the law is that he wanted his accusers to know that it was a devout Jew who had told him what to do! Of course, Paul doesn’t mention that Ananias was *also* a Jew who believed in Jesus. He was telling them what today we’d call the useful part of the truth!

 But he wasn’t trying to fool them. Those unsaved Jews weren’t stupid. They hadn’t just fallen off the turnip truck. They knew that only a Jew who followed Jesus would help a man who claimed he’d *seen* Jesus.

 But those unsaved Jews had no problem with devout Jews who believed in Jesus. They had *thousands* of Jews who believed in Jesus living right there in Jerusalem, as we saw James tell Paul just a few chapters ago when he declared,

 **“Thou seest, brother, *how many thousands of Jews there are which believe;* and they are all zealous of the law” (Acts 21:20).**

So how come these unsaved Jews weren’t trying to kill *them?* It’s because *those* Jews were still zealous of the law!

 Do you remember how James told Paul to join some Jews in offering a sacrifice back in Acts 21? That must mean Jewish kingdom saints like James were still offering the animal sacrifices prescribed by the law of Moses!

 And *that’s* why these unsaved Jews were not trying to kill *James,* or any of the members of the Jewish kingdom church in Jerusalem. They had no problem with Jews who believed in Jesus *and kept the law.* They probably just considered them yet another sect that had risen up in their ranks. But they had a *huge* problem with Jews who believed in Jesus who preached *grace* like Paul.

 You see, the bone of contention was no longer *Jesus.* The bone of contention was now *grace.* That’s because Satan always goes after what God is doing *now,* not what he *used* to be doing. Satan *used to* go after the Jewish kingdom saints who believed in Jesus, but that was before the dispensation of grace began with Paul’s conversion. Look happened *after* Paul was saved:

 **“Then had the churches *rest* throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria...” (Acts 9:31).**

 They had rest because Satan *stopped* going after them, and started going after *Paul,* as he was doing through this cutthroat mob here in our text passage. Satan believes in dispensationalism, even if many Christians don’t!

 Well, after Ananias restored Paul’s vision, he had a message for him, one that we read about in Acts 22:14:

 **“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” (Acts 22:14).**

Now the “fathers” Paul is talking about there were *the fathers of the Jewish race,* Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And when Ananias said that the God of their fathers had chosen Paul, every one of the unsaved Jews who heard Paul quote him would have thought of what happened in Exodus 3:13,16, where

 **“God said...*unto Moses,* Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *The LORD God of your fathers,* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, *hath sent me unto you*...gather the elders of Israel...and say...*The LORD God of your fathers,* the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me...*And they shall hearken to thy voice.”***

Do you see the connection? The Lord God of Israel’s fathers sent *Moses* to them, and the Jews received *him*. Now the God of Israel’s fathers sent *Paul* to them, and Paul was hoping they’d receive *him* as well. That’s why he made sure to quote those particular words that Ananias had spoken the day he got saved. He knew those unsaved Jews would catch his drift.

 And when Ananias told Paul that God had chosen him *to know His will,* God’s will *used to be the law,* as we see when David prayed,

 **“I delight to do *Thy will*, O my God: yea, *Thy law* is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8).**

 So Jews thought they *knew* God’s will, because they knew the law! At least that’s what Paul said to them in Romans 2:17,18, when he addressed them, saying,

 **“Behold, thou art called a Jew, *and restest in the law,* and makest thy boast of God, *and knowest His will...*being instructed *out of the law.”***

But the will of God *changes* down through the ages and dispensations, and the God of Israel’s fathers had just made known a *new* will of God *to Paul,* a will he talked about in Ephesians 1:8,9, where, speaking of God, he said,

 **“...He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us *the mystery* of His will...”**

The God of Israel’s fathers revealed a will of God to Paul that was a *mystery,* a will of God that was not found in Israel’s Old Testament Scriptures. It was the will of His grace.

 And *the way* that God revealedthis new will to Paul was *different* than the way He revealed the law to Moses. Moses never saw God, *but Paul saw the Lord!* Verse 14 says that God had chosen him to “see that Just One,” speaking of Christ. That was actually one of the requirements to be an apostle, as we see when Paul asked the Corinthians, who were *challenging* his apostleship,

 **“Am I not *an apostle?...*have I not *seen Jesus Christ our Lord?”* (I Corinthians 9:1).**

Now Paul never saw the Lord *on earth,* at least as far as the record of Scripture goes, and that’s all we have to go by. He saw him after He ascended into heaven. That was to symbolize how his message was going to be all about *going* to heaven. The 12 saw the Lord on earth because *their* message to the Jews was all about the kingdom of heaven on earth. They never saw the Lord in heaven, because when He ascended, “a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). So we have some *more* symbolism in how and where these apostles saw the Lord.

 But when Ananias told Paul that he’d hear the words of God’s mouth, that would have gotten the attention of these Jews, because the only people who heard from God in the Old Testament were *the people of Israel.* And do you know what they were supposed to *do* with the words of God’s mouth? God told them,

 ***“Ye are My witnesses,* saith the LORD, and My servant *whom I have chosen”* (Isaiah 43:10).**

 In the Old Testament, God chose *the Jews* to hear the words of His mouth, and He expected them to be His witnesses to the Gentiles. So what Ananias told Paul next must have *really* grabbed their attention:

 **“For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).**

*The Jews* were supposed to be God’s witnesses to the Gentiles, but when they refused to be, God didn’t let a little thing like that keep the Gentiles from hearing about Him. He raised up *Paul* to be His witness to them!

 Of course, God’s plan *for the Jews* to be His witnesses involved making them what He told them in Isaiah 61:6, when He predicted,

 **“...ye shall be named *the Priests of the LORD...”***

And the thing about priests was, they had to be *baptized,* as God told Moses in Exodus 29:1,4, saying:

 **“And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, *to minister unto Me in the priest's office....*Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the taber-nacle of the congregation, *and shalt wash them with water”***

And that explains what Ananias told Paul in the last verse of our text in verse 16:

 **“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).**

Ananias figured that if God was making *Paul* His witness to the Gentiles, that must mean God was making Paul *a priest.* And he knew priests had to be baptized, so he baptized Paul.

 What he *didn’t* know was that God’s plan for *Paul* to be His witness to the Gentiles *didn’t* involve making him a priest. He didn’t know that because God’s new program *wasn’t revealed to Ananias,* it was revealed later to Paul.

 And when Ananias told Paul to be baptized “calling on the name of the Lord,” that shows he thought Paul *wasn’t saved yet,* for he knew that Peter had declared

 **“that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord s*hall be saved”* (Acts 2:21).**

But we’ve seen that Paul *was* already saved. He had called Jesus “Lord,” and as he wrote later, “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, *but by the Holy Ghost”* (I Cor.12:3). So once again, Ananias was a day late and a dollar short, as they say. Through no fault of his own, he obviously had no clue as to what God was doing. He was just being faithful to the only program he knew, the kingdom program.

But *you* know what God is doing in this dispensation! Maybe you can’t explain all the details to others, but that’s okay. You *can* do what Paul did here, and tell others what He did *for you* when He saved you. We call that *giving your testimony,* and you can surely do that. Your testimony may not be as dramatic as Paul’s, because you probably weren’t a murderous persecutor of God’s people before you were saved. But you can tell people you were a self-righteous person who didn’t think you *needed* to be saved, because you were good enough to go to heaven on your own. But then *you* saw the light, and realized you needed a Savior.

 Why not tell someone your story this very week?

You’ll be eternally glad you did.