

Katameros: Acts 21:40 to 22:16.

22:3 *Educated According to the Law*

Led to Preach the Gospel Through a Divine Power.

Chrysostom: [Paul] shows that great was his zeal for the worship. His native city, great as it was, he left behind, so far away, and chose to be brought up here for the sake of the law. Look how from the beginning he heeded the law. He mentions these things not only to defend himself before them, but also to show that he was led to preach the gospel not by human intention but by divine power. For educated in the way that he was, he could not have changed all at once. For if he were one of the hoi polloi, it might have been possible to imagine this. But since he was one of those who were most bound by the law, it was not likely that he should change without strong necessity. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 47.1

Paul Honors Gamaliel.

Chrysostom: He does not just say “in the school of Gamaliel” but “at the feet of Gamaliel.” By these words, he shows his patient endurance, his loving attentiveness, his eagerness to listen and his tremendous reverence for the man. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 22.3.2

Paul’s Compliments.

Chrysostom: He does not simply say “the law” but “the law of our fathers.” This shows what type of person he had been, someone not ignorant of the law. Now this seems to be said for the benefit of his audience, but in fact, it is an accusation. For what if, with all his knowledge, he had been negligent? What if you have a thorough knowledge of the law but do not fulfill it? You do not love it, then, do you? [Paul] then states plainly that he was a zealot. So after he has delivered a great encomium about himself, he then extends this praise by adding, “just as all of you are today,” and thus points out that what they are doing is not just for a human purpose but for their zeal for God. By bestowing this favor on them he also captures their understanding from the beginning. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 22.3.3

22:4 *I Persecuted the Believers*

Paul’s Witnesses.

Chrysostom: He brings forward as witnesses the high priest and the elders. On the one hand, [Paul] makes himself their equal when he says, “I being a zealot just as you,” but then he shows through his deeds that

he was a greater zealot than they. “I wasn’t waiting around,” he says, “to arrest them, but I was even stirring up the priests and being sent abroad. And I wasn’t after just men, as you are, but I sought out women too, put them in chains and even threw them into prison.” This is irrefutable testimony. His Jewish credentials could not be disputed. Count the witnesses he brings forward: the body of elders, the high priest, those in the city. Note how his defense is not fearful but instructive rather and educational. Had his audience not been stone, ⁴ they would have given heed to his words. *Catena on the Acts of the Apostles* 22.4–5.5

22:5 Journeyed to Damascus

God Rewards the Blind Yet Earnest of Heart.

Chrysostom: Did you see how by his very experience in these things [Paul] has taught all of us that he deserved to be judged worthy of kindness from above and to be led to the path of truth? When God in his goodness sees a well-disposed soul led astray through ignorance, he does not disregard that soul or give it up to its own great recklessness, but he shows it all the good things that come from him and fails in nothing that pertains to our salvation, if we make ourselves worthy to reap abundantly the benefit of grace from above, as did that blessed apostle. *Baptismal Instructions* 4.8.6

22:8 Jesus of Nazareth

We Act Ourselves into the Gospel by How We Live.

Origen: It ought not to be forgotten that in such a Gospel as this ¹ there is embraced every good deed that was done to Jesus; as, for example, the story of the woman ² who had been a prostitute and had repented, and who, having experienced a genuine recovery from her evil state, had grace to pour her ointment over Jesus so that everyone in the house smelled the sweet savor. Hence, too, the words, “Wherever this gospel shall be preached among all the nations, there also this that she has done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her.” ³ And it is clear that whatever is done to the disciples of Jesus is done to him. Pointing to those of them who met with kind treatment, [Jesus] says to those who were kind to them: “What you did to these, you did to me.” ⁴ So that every good deed we do to our neighbors is entered into the gospel, that gospel that is written on the heavenly tablets and read by all who are worthy of the knowledge of the whole of things. But on the other side, too, there is a part of the gospel that is for the

condemnation of the doers of the evil deeds that have been done to Jesus. The treachery of Judas and the shouts of the wicked crowd when it said, “Away with such a one from the earth,”⁵ and “Crucify him, crucify him,”⁶ the mocking of those who crowned him with thorns, and everything of that kind, is included in all the Gospels. And as a consequence of this we see that everyone who betrays the disciples of Jesus is reckoned as betraying Jesus himself. To Saul, when still a persecutor it is said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”⁷ and, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.”⁸ There are those who still have thorns with which they crown and dishonor Jesus, those, namely, who are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and though they have received the word of God, they do not bring it to perfection.⁹ We must beware, therefore, lest we also, by crowning Jesus with thorns of our own, should be entered in the gospel and read of in this character by those who come to know how Jesus, who is in all and is present in all rational and holy lives, is anointed with ointment, is entertained, is glorified, or how, on the other side, he is dishonored and mocked and beaten. All this had to be said; it is part of our demonstration that our good actions, and also the sins of those who stumble, are embodied in the gospel, either to everlasting life or to reproach and everlasting shame. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.12.¹⁰

22:9 Those with Me Saw the Light

22:11 Led by the Hand

The Blinding Light.

Ephrem the Syrian: Our Lord spoke humbly from above so that the leaders of his church would speak humbly. Now, if someone should ask, “How did our Lord speak humbly with Paul if Paul’s eyes were seriously injured?” they should realize that this impairment did not [result] from our compassionate Lord, who spoke humbly there. Rather, [it was the result] of the intense light that shone radiantly there. This light was not a punishment that befell Paul on account of the things he had done. It injured him with the intensity of its rays, as he himself said, “When I arose, I could see nothing because of the brilliance of the light.” Homily on Our Lord 26.1–2.¹⁵

22:15 A Witness to All People

Our Witness Is Trustworthy If We Live Accordingly.

Chrysostom: For [Paul] truly became a witness to [Jesus], and a witness as one should be, both by what he did and by what he said. We too must be such witnesses and not betray what we have been entrusted. I speak not only of doctrines, but also of our way of life. Look, what he knew, what he heard, he bore witness to this before all, and nothing hindered him. We too have heard that there is a resurrection and ten thousand good things; therefore, we ought to bear witness to this before all. “We do in fact bear witness,” you say, “and believe.” How, since we do the opposite? Tell me, if someone should say he was a Christian but should then apostatize and act like a Jew, would his testimony be sufficient? No, not at all; for people would look for testimony through his actions. Likewise, if we say that there is a resurrection and ten thousand good things but then look down upon them and prefer the things here, who will believe us? For all people pay attention not to what we say but to what we do. “You will be a witness,” [Christ] says, “to all.”¹ That is, not only to the friends, but also to the unbelievers. For this is what witnesses are for: they persuade not those who know but those who do not. Let us become trustworthy witnesses. How will we become trustworthy? By the life we lead. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 47.2

22:16 *Calling on Jesus' Name*

This Shows Christ's Divinity.

Chrysostom: What he uttered here is important. For he did not say “baptized in his name” but “calling on the name of Christ.” It shows that he is God; for it is not lawful to “call on” anyone else except God. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 47.3