

Study of Acts 22

by Marc Gravelle

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Acts 21 ends with Paul addressing the crowd in verse 40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, And here in Acts 22:1 it says Men, brethren, and fathers, hear you my defence which I make now unto you; therefore this is where Paul makes his defence and speaks to the people in the Hebrew tongue, and it goes on to say that once the people realized that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, they were silent and paid attention to what he had to say.

What do you suppose that means. Why would they listen more attentively because Paul spoke in Hebrew? First of all we have to understand that this group of people are the religious Jews, those that live according to the oral torah that they have been taught and they are extremely angry with Paul, to the point that they tried to kill him. Therefore I believe that they were willing to listen to what Paul had to say because they knew that this was the language that Elohim had given the Torah in, and they treated the language with reverence. They lifted the language of Elohim above all other languages as if the language itself were a special guest in their presence. Based on this reverence for the language, I believe that they spoke Hebrew in all their important matters, because of the reverence they had for the language. Their life was centred around the temple or the synagogue depending where they lived, and we can be assured that Hebrew was spoken in those places. While there might have been some Aramaic or maybe even some Greek spoken in the market place I am convinced that in their homes and in their places of worship, in their prayer time and at any opportunity they had, they spoke Hebrew. Therefore it is no surprise to me that they paid extra attention to Paul when he addressed them in Hebrew.

*In verse 3 Paul says I am verily a man who is a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, who taught me according to the perfect manner of **THE LAW OF THE FATHERS**, and was zealous toward Elohim, as all of you are this day.*

In this verse we see that Paul calls himself a Jew, who was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, brought up under the tutelage of Gamaliel, a well known and respected Rabbi, who taught Paul according to the perfect manner of **THE LAW OF THE FATHERS** and I, Paul, was zealous towards Elohim, as all of you are this day. It is very important to note that Paul said, he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel who taught him the **PERFECT MANNER** of **THE LAW OF THE FATHERS**.

When Paul says that he was taught at the feet of Gamaliel, a rabbi who was well versed in and contributed to the writing of the oral torah, the traditions of the Fathers, their man made religious doctrine, and, as is mentioned above, Paul said that he was zealous for Elohim, then this **IS** a very important statement because it shows us that a person can be very zealous for Elohim and believe and profess to love Elohim and still be totally wrong, as Paul was when he followed and obeyed the man made oral torah directives of Judaism, the Jews man made religion. How do I know that Paul **IS** indeed talking about the oral torah, the man made doctrine of Judaism? In *Acts 21:27-28* it says *And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw Paul in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This **IS***

THE MAN, that teaches all men every where **AGAINST THE PEOPLE**, and **AGAINST THE LAW**, and against this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and has polluted this holy place. However in verse 24 it says Paul, take these four people, and purify yourself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may **KNOW** that those things, whereof they were informed concerning you Paul, **ARE NOTHING; BUT THAT YOU YOURSELF PAUL, ALSO WALK ORDERLY, AND KEEP THE LAW.** If Paul **IS KEEPING** and **DOING** the Torah, the Law of Moses, as it says here in verse 24, **BUT** the Jews of Asia are saying that he does **NOT** keep the Law, then they cannot be talking about **THE SAME LAW.** Therefore we conclude that the Jews of Asia are talking about their man made religious oral torah, while the Jewish leaders of the Way in Jerusalem who are said to be zealous for the Torah, are indeed speaking of the Law of Moses, **THE WRITTEN TORAH OF MOSES.**

Prior to his encounter with YHVH on the road to Damascus, Paul was convinced that he was actually doing the work of Elohim when he persecuted those that believed in Messiah, and yet, we all know that he was **NOT** actually doing the **WORK** of Elohim, he **WAS DOING** the **WORK** of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Until the day that his eyes were opened, Paul was one of the people spoken of in *Matthew 7 21:23* who said *Adonai, Adonai, have we not prophesied in your Name? And in thy name have rebuked devils? And in your name done many wonderful works and Messiah said to them, I never knew you, get away from me you workers of iniquity, you lawless ones, you Torahlessness people.*

Judaism and Christianity today have many examples of people who walk exactly as Paul did prior to his experience with Messiah on the road to Damascus. For they, like Paul are reportedly zealous for Elohim, **BUT UNLESS** they see the **TRUTH** about Messiah, as Paul did on the road to Damascus, whereby they too will finally realize that Messiah **IS** indeed the Living Torah of Moses **MADE FLESH**, and that Messiah, the Living Torah made flesh wants **ALL** of His followers to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit of Elohim, who **IS** given to every heart that willingly surrenders their own **WILL** to our heavenly Father, for the specific purpose of causing every willing heart **TO LOVINGLY FOLLOW, OBEY AND DO** the Torah of Moses, all the days of their lives (*Ezekiel 36:26-27*), **THEN** they are at risk of Messiah saying to them, at the end of their lives, *I never knew you, get away from me you Torahless ones.* Only Elohim knows the answer to whom will enter into His eternal kingdom, for only YHVH knows man's heart.

Verses 7-8 And I Paul fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why DO YOU PERSECUTE ME? 8 And I answered, saying Who are You, Adonai? And He said unto me, I am Yeshua of Nazareth, WHOM YOU PERSECUTE.

These verses are very important because it shows us which Law, which Torah Paul was actually following, prior to his experience on the road to Damascus, for Messiah Himself asks Paul, the same Paul who said he was zealous for Elohim and an obedient follower of the **LAW OF THE FATHERS**, why are you Persecuting Me Paul.

Now in the teaching on *verse 14* I show you that according to Scripture Messiah the **JUST ONE IS** the Living Torah, and here **MESSIAH SAYS** that prior to Paul's blinding experience on the road to Damascus, Paul **WAS** persecuting Him. **IF** Messiah **IS** the Living Torah made flesh, which of course according to Scripture, He **IS**, and Paul **IS PERSECUTING** Messiah, **THEN** that means that Paul **IS** persecuting the **TORAH** of Moses, and **IF** Paul **IS INDEED PERSECUTING** the Torah of Moses, **THEN HE CANNOT BE OBEYING, FOLLOWING OR DOING THE TORAH OF**

MOSES, for one does **NOT** persecute what one believes in, **BUT** one **OBEYS AND FOLLOWS** what they believe.

Next I want you to take particular notice that although Paul is making an appeal to these people, he doesn't **BASH** the religion nor the religious leaders that he came from, and used to emulate, **BUT** instead he says to them, *I know that you too are zealous for Elohim*. That my friends **IS** the attitude that we too must have when we talk to our Christian and Jewish brethren, for **IT IS** indeed true, that like Paul and us, there are many that are zealous for Elohim, but unfortunately, they are like Paul was before his trip to Damascus, the veil has not yet been lifted from their eyes.

Therefore let us take a page out of Paul's life, and **NOT BASH** the religion or the churches or synagogues that we came from, **BUT INSTEAD**, let us learn to love them into the Kingdom of Elohim by giving our brethren morsels of bread that have so graciously been given to us by our heavenly Father. It is only through **LOVE** that we will draw anyone into the kingdom of YHVH, into His righteousness, and be able to show them the wonders that are hidden in YHVH's Torah, and then YHVH's Holy Spirit will ensure that all other things are added unto those who willingly surrender their wills to our heavenly Father in total loving obedience to His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life.

Next we see that Paul describes his road to Damascus experience to them, in the hope of convincing many that Yeshua **IS** the promised Messiah. During his talk Paul speaks of Ananias who was sent to Paul by YHVH. In *verse 12* Paul described Ananias as a **DEVOUT** man according to the Law, the Torah and having a good report of all the Jews who dwelt there at Damascus. The name Ananias **IS** the Hebrew name Chananyah, חנניה which is a composite word made up of the word Chanan חנן which means grace or favour, and the word Yah, יה which of course means YHVH. Therefore the name Ananias means *the grace or favour of Yah* or *Yah IS gracious*. This tells us therefore that when Paul was in his greatest need, his greatest despair, that that **IS** when YHVH sent His **GRACE** and **FAVOUR** to console and encourage Paul to open his eyes to the **TRUTH** of Scripture, and that **TRUTH** my friends **IS** that Messiah **IS** the Living Torah made flesh, and Scripture tells us that the **TORAH IS YHVH'S TRUTH**, *Psalm 119:142*, which was manifested in the flesh in the form of our Messiah Yeshua.

Scripture makes it very clear to us that Ananias was a believer in Messiah the Living Torah, and that YHVH spoke to Ananias, telling him that he must go to where Paul was, and put his hands upon him, in order that Paul could receive **HIS SIGHT** through Ananias' obedience to Elohim who sent him to Paul. Now please understand that it took a lot of **courage, faith and trust** for Ananias to obey this command to go to where Paul was, for Paul had a notorious reputation of beating and imprisoning those who walked according to the **WAY of Messiah**, **BUT** Ananias went anyways, because of His Love and **TRUST** in YHVH. We read of this in *Acts 9:11-13 Arise Ananias, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he pray, 12 And has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand upon him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, YHVH, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem: And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind ALL that call on Your name. 14 But YHVH said unto him, Go your way: for Paul is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 15 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.*

Now we have to understand that here in *Acts 22* Paul is describing the story that happened to him, about ten years after Messiah's death on the cross and he says that Ananias **IS** a devout man according to **THE LAW, THE TORAH**. That indicates to me that Paul's measuring stick **NOW**, as to how to determine whether **A MAN WAS DEVOUT OR NOT WAS THE TORAH** of Moses and therefore the Torah should be the measuring stick that **WE USE** to discern whether or not a person **IS** walking in the Spirit, whether he or she is walking in total surrendered obedience to our heavenly Father. Now although **IT IS** the same word that is used in *verse 3* and *verse 12*, the word Law, Nomos in Greek, they are speaking of two **DIFFERENT LAWS**; in *verse 3* the word **LAW IS** speaking of the oral Torah of the fathers of Judaism, their man made doctrinal law, and in *verse 12* **IT IS** speaking of YHVH's written Torah, the written **LAW** of Moses,. It is very important for us to make that distinction **FOR** this confusion with the Greek word Nomos or Law happens many many times in the Apostolic Scripture, because the Greek word Nomos does **NOT** differentiate between man made laws and the **LAW** of YHVH, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life.

In *verse 14* Ananias is instructed by Elohim to tell Paul, that Elohim has chosen you Paul, that you should **KNOW** His **WILL** and **SEE**, that **JUST ONE** and **HEAR**, shemah His voice. Now it is very important that we understand that although Paul says he **WAS** zealous for Elohim before his experience on the road to Damascus, he was **NOT** zealous for Elohim's written Torah, for he followed the man made oral torah of his earthly fathers, Paul was actually walking contrary to Elohim's ways without even being aware of it, (he was deceived) and YHVH had to bring him to his knees and **BLIND** him in order to make him **SEE THE TRUTH**.

Now based on *verses 14-15* which says *And Ananias said, the Elohim of our fathers has chosen YOU Paul, that you should KNOW HIS WILL, and BEHOLD that JUST ONE, and should hear, shemah (hear, listen, understand, believe, follow, obey and DO His Torah, by obeying) the voice of His mouth. For you shall be His WITNESS unto all men of what you have seen and heard.*

When I read these verses there are four questions that come to mind. One is, How do we, or Paul or anyone for that matter **KNOW the WILL** of YHVH? The second question is, what does it mean to **SEE** the **JUST ONE** and **WHO** is the **JUST ONE**, the third question is, what did Ananias mean when He said tot Paul, **HEAR HIS VOICE**, and the fourth question is what does it mean to be a **WITNESS**?

The **WILL of YHVH** is expressed throughout **ALL** of Scripture, therefore I will let Scripture answer the first question; in *Deuteronomy 5:29* for example it says: *O that there were such a heart in Israel, that they would fear Me, and Keep ALL My Commandments, My Torah ALWAYS, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 And now, Israel, what does YHVH your Elohim **REQUIRE OF YOU**, but to fear YHVH your Elohim, to **WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS**, His Torah of Life and to Love Him, and to Serve YHVH your Elohim with **ALL** your heart and with **ALL** your soul, to Keep the Commandments of YHVH, and His statutes, His Torah, which I command you this day for your good?

Micah 6:8 YHVH has showed you, O man, what is good; and what YHVH **REQUIRES OF YOU, BUT TO DO JUSTLY, AND TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR ELOHIM?** And the only way to do **THAT IS** to willingly follow and **OBEY** the Father's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His directives for everlasting Life, His Torah.

Malachi 3:1-6 For, behold, the day is coming, a day that shall burn as an oven; and ALL the PROUD, yea, and ALL THAT DO WICKEDLY, THE LAWLESS, THE TORAHLESS ONES SHALL BE STUBBLE: and the day that is coming SHALL burn them up (the stubble, the Torahless ones), says YHVH of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 BUT unto YOU THAT FEAR MY NAME SHALL the Servant, the shemesh, שֶׁמֶשׁ OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, (servant of the Torah, Deuteronomy 5:25) ARISE with healing in his wings; and YOU SHALL GO FORTH, and grow up as calves of the stall (grow to maturity while being fully protected). And YOU SHALL TREAD DOWN THE WICKED, the Lawless, the Torahless; for they SHALL be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says YHVH of hosts. Remember, zachar, speak and act on behalf of the TORAH, THE LAW OF MOSES My SERVANT, which I commanded unto him in Horeb FOR ALL ISRAEL, If you are NOT Israel, THEN you are NOT PART of our heavenly Father's family and you don't need to pay attention to anything that YHVH is saying, HOWEVER IF you are part of Israel, THEN these Words ARE for you, the words that contain the Father's statutes and judgments that are contained in the Torah of Moses. Behold, I YHVH WILL SEND YOU Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of YHVH: And Elijah shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

As you can see for yourself, **ALL** of these verses together with many others found throughout Scripture clearly show us that our heavenly Father wants each and everyone one of His children to *hear, listen, understand, believe, follow, obey and DO* His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life.

The next question is what does it mean to **SEE** the **JUST ONE** and **WHO** is the **JUST ONE**? The word **SEE** is the Greek word *eido*, Strong's number 1492 and it means *to know, to be aware of, to behold, to perceive*; therefore this verse should read, Elohim has chosen you Paul, that you should **KNOW** His **WILL** and *know, be aware of, behold, perceive* the **JUST ONE** and hear, shemah His voice.

The word **JUST** in Hebrew is Tzadiq, צַדִּיק, which is defined as meaning *just, righteous, pious, virtuous, right, correct*, and we are told in Deuteronomy 32:1-4 who the **JUST ONE IS**: *Give ear, O you heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of My mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I WILL publish the name of YHVH: ascribe you greatness unto our Elohim HE IS THE ROCK, HIS WORK IS PERFECT: for ALL HIS WAYS are judgment: an Elohim of TRUTH (Torah Psalm 119:142) and without iniquity, without SIN, (which means that He IS Torah obedient, SINCE SIN IS TRANSGRESSION of the Torah), JUST, TZADIQ, AND RIGHT IS HE.*

It is very evident therefore that the **JUST ONE, IS MESSIAH**, also known as **THE ROCK** that followed Israel in the wilderness, **BUT** we can't stop there, we have to define who Messiah **IS** in order to get the complete picture of who the **JUST ONE** really **IS**. In *John 1:1* it says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. And in John 1:14* it says: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of GRACE AND TRUTH (Torah Psalm 119:142)* Now we have the complete picture, the **JUST ONE IS THE TORAH OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER MADE FLESH**. Amein

The third question is what does it mean when Ananias says **HEAR THE VOICE OF HIS MOUTH**. The word *hear* is the Hebrew word *shemah*, which means *to hear; listen, understand, believe, follow, obey and DO*. Therefore since we have established that the **JUST ONE IS** Messiah who **IS** the **LIVING TORAH** Made Flesh, **THEN**, when Ananias, whose name means the Grace or favour of Elohim, says, **HEAR THE VOICE OF HIS MOUTH**, what he is actually saying **IS** *hear, listen, understand, believe, follow, DO and obey THE VOICE OF HIS MOUTH*; and since Scripture tells us that Messiah **IS** the Living Word of our heavenly Father made flesh, then you can be certain that the **JUST ONE**, Messiah, will be speaking the Words of our heavenly Father, which of course **IS HIS TORAH OF LIFE**.

The fourth question is what does it mean to be a witness? Well a **TRUE** witness recounts all the facts exactly as they happened or exactly as they were presented to him, without adding anything to it or taking anything away from the facts, repeating **ONLY** what **IS FACTUAL and TRUE**. Therefore when Ananias said that Paul was to be a **WITNESS** of the **JUST ONE**, it means that Paul was to relay the exact message that the **JUST ONE** gave him, and since we now know that the **JUST ONE IS MESSIAH**, and that Messiah **IS** the Living Word of YHVH, Messiah **IS** the Living Torah, **THEN** that means that Paul **IS** to be a **TRUE WITNESS** of the Father's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life made flesh.

Now that we have this information we have to understand that there are many people today that profess to be zealous for the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and yet, they willingly walk contrary to the ways of YHVH, contrary to YHVH's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah, His directives for everlasting Life, and we have to also understand that in these last days, I believe that they too, the people of Elohim that are walking contrary to His Word, His Torah, like Paul was before his experience with Messiah on the road to Damascus, **WILL RECEIVE A WAKE UP CALL**, their own road to Damascus experience if you will, and hopefully the blinders or the veil that has kept them partially or totally blind to YHVH's **TRUTH**, His Torah (*Psalm 119:142*) will be lifted from their eyes also. That my friends **IS** a prayer that every Messianic believer should be praying for, that both our Jewish and Christian brethren should have **THE VEIL** that has caused them to be blind to YHVH's **TRUTH**, His Torah of Life, **BE LIFTED FROM THEIR EYES**, in order that they could see for themselves that **MESSIAH IS INDEED THE TORAH OF MOSES MADE FLESH**, and that our heavenly Father wants **ALL** of them to follow in the Torah obedient Lifestyle that Messiah lived while He was here on earth.

As we read on we can see that **ALL** of the people that Paul was speaking to, listened to him very carefully **UNTIL** he made one statement which turned the crowd against him and they wanted to kill him. Can you tell me what that one statement was?

I believe **IT IS** when Paul said in *verses 21-22 And Messiah said unto me, Depart: for I will send you Paul far hence unto the Gentiles. 22 And they gave him audience UNTIL he spoke this word, (Gentiles) and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*

As you can see, when Paul said that Yeshua of Nazareth told him, Paul, *to depart, because I am sending you far hence UNTO THE GENTILES*, the crowd turned against him, **BUT** until he made that statement, he had their undivided attention. Why did they turn against Paul after he mentioned that Messiah had sent him to the gentiles? To the Jewish leadership of Judaism, for any Jew to allow

a Gentile into their midst was blasphemous, for in their Jewish mindset, they, the Jews were the chosen people of Elohim and therefore there was **NO ROOM** for any foreigners or Gentiles in their midst, unless they converted to the traditions of the Fathers first, converted to Judaism, and here Paul is saying that Elohim Himself, through Yeshua the Messiah, has sent him to the Gentiles. In their Jewish mind, their Elohim **WOULD NEVER DO THAT**, He would never allow any gentiles into their midst, and therefore in their minds Paul **MUST BE A FALSE PROPHET AND SHOULD BE PUT TO DEATH**.

That my friends **IS** the danger of **ALL** man made religions; because unless a person is willing to adhere to their man made doctrine, **THEN** that person becomes a false prophet to them and according to them, this false prophet deserves to be purged out of their midst, and **IF** having you put to death **IS** the only way to do that, then I am sure that in many instances, they would **NOT** hesitate to do exactly that. It is very unfortunate, but I assure you that in **EVERY CASE** of every man made religion, that Elohim's Torah, His Law **HAS GIVEN WAY TO AND HAS BEEN REPLACED BY MAN'S LAW**, because **ALL** religions are man made and they must adhere to their man made doctrines to survive.

In these man made religions, Elohim's doctrine, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life has somehow been discarded and in some cases relegated to the trash heap, because in most of the houses of the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob today, the Torah of Moses has been replaced by man made laws, man made teaching and instructions, man made doctrines, man's **ORAL LAW**.

As we read on we see that the crowd turned against Paul, and therefore the Chief Captain had him brought to the castle so that he could interrogate him.

Elohim is such a great Elohim, and because of His great love for His people and His Word, Elohim in His foreknowledge of events protected Paul by allowing Paul to be a natural born Roman citizen and that fact protected him against harsh and unfair treatment by the Chief captain of the area and the Roman centurion. We have to realize that **IT IS NOT** a coincidence that Paul was born a Roman citizen, **IT IS ALL** part Elohim's overall plan of salvation and **IT SHOULD BE GREAT IN OUR SIGHT**.

We are told that because Paul **WAS** a Roman citizen, that both the centurion and the Chief Captain were concerned and maybe even afraid of what could happen to them **IF** they mistreated Paul without a fair trial by his peers, after they knew that Paul was a Roman citizen. What a great Elohim we serve. Amen.

Now that we have gone through all of *Acts 22* what would you say **IS** the Theme or the lesson that YHVH wants us to learn from this chapter?

I believe that YHVH **IS** teaching us to have discernment between finite man's oral torah, their man made doctrine and Elohim's inerrant and everlasting Torah, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, for one leads to eternal damnation and death, and the other leads to **ETERNAL LIFE** in the kingdom of Elohim as the Bride of Messiah. Furthermore I believe that YHVH **IS** preparing us for the end days because what happened to Paul could quite easily happen to **ALL** of YHVH's saints,

BUT we are to take heart for YHVH has confirmed throughout Scripture that He will never leave us nor forsake us and that He will be there for us when we **NEED** Him. Amein

Studying and keeping Torah together as a community.

Have a great Elohim blessed week and may Yahweh bless your every thought, and your every deed. Until we meet again, שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, Shalom Aleykem. Amein