



CAPITOL COMMISSION[®]

Barbaric Means to Discern Truth?

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Pastor David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / David.Andersen@capitolcom.org

Acts 22:24-30 *The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him. 25) And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?" 26) When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman." 27) Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" He said, "Yes." 28) The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." 29) Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. 30) The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them. (NKJV)*

THE SCOURGE WAS MADE OF LEATHER STRAPS TO WHICH PIECES OF BONE OR METAL WERE ATTACHED. CONSEQUENTLY, WHEN THE WHIP WAS APPLIED TO THE VICTIMS, THEY WERE OFTEN LEFT WITH OPEN WOUNDS THAT EXPOSED THEIR BONES. AT TIMES THE VICTIMS DIED ON THE SPOT OR SOON AFTERWARD.
SIMON KISTEMAKER

After rescuing Paul again from the angry mob of Jews trying to kill him, why does he choose this barbaric inquisition? Does the commander really believe that Paul is a criminal? Who are the actual criminals? In what way did Roman law relate to how Paul was being treated? Was the "large sum" provided by the commander actually a bribe? Had this commander jeopardized his own citizenship and maybe even his life? Was Paul given the full respect of a Roman citizen by the commander?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > FEBRUARY 27: ACTS 23:1-10 **ROGUE AUTHORITY OUTWITTED BY PAUL**
- > MARCH 5: SELECTED SCRIPTURES **DR. MICHAEL WILBURN, SENIOR PASTOR AT IMMANUEL**

His imprisonment as "ordered" by the commander was nothing new to Paul. He shared with the Corinthian believers that his imprisonments had been even more frequent than the stripes inflicted upon his back. After his relating that he had received "stripes above measure," he recounts the 195 stripes he had received from the Jews, "five times I received forty stripes minus one" (2 Cor 11:23-24). He was beaten with rods unmercifully in Philippi and yet sang in the prison, after which an earthquake occurred, bringing the Philippian Jailor and his household to Christ (Acts 16:22-34). On two other occasions he was beaten with rods for as long as they wished by the Romans (2 Cor 11:25). Yet never the lethal scourging he now faced.

HERE PAUL WAS AT THE BRINK OF THE KIND OF UNJUST PUNISHMENT CHRIST ENDURED WHEN PILATE, IN A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE, HAD HIM FLOGGED AFTER DECLARING HIM INNOCENT (JOHN 18:38-19:1).

RICHARD LONGENECKER

I. A DEADLY INQUISITION

ACTS 22:24

The commander had to continually rescue Paul from the vicious mob that had been beating him to death. He had

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR ROOM 300B

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR ROOM 300B

Virginia

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not only personally stopped the initial assault; in which he had tried to find out why the riot was occurring in the first place. Then he literally had to have Paul carried up the stairs to the entrance of the Fortress of Antonia to keep them from further assaulting him amid their cries for his death. And finally, after letting him address the crowd, in which he hoped to again discover the reason for this mob's anger, the commander had to rescue Paul from an unprecedented display of fury where their shouts for Paul's execution was accompanied by their ripping off their outer garments and throwing dust in the air to demonstrate their hostile, murderous intent against him. To stop the riot and appease the crowd simultaneously, the commander must have shouted above the din of the mob for Paul to be escorted immediately into the fort and "that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him." Everyone knew that the scourging would likely maim him or kill him.

AS THE SOLDIERS ARE STRETCHING THEIR PRISONER OUT WITH THONGS ABOUT HIS WRISTS TO SECURE HIM FOR THE SCOURGING, HE ASKS A QUESTION THAT TRANSFORMS HIM FROM VICTIM TO MASTER OF THE SITUATION.
WILLIAM LARKIN

II. A DRAMATIC IDENTIFICATION ACTS 22:25-29
The commander seems no longer interested in Paul and likely assumes he is a hardened criminal that the crowd has caught, so he delegates this torturous inquisition to a centurion. While stretching Paul out with thongs for this barbaric abuse of authority to supposedly produce the truth, the entire travesty of justice comes to a screeching halt with one calm and simple question: "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?" Here the rule of law and citizenship is introduced and it counteracts the mob's wishes and even the placating of them by those in authority. Many innocent lives had been

taken by barbaric scourging but every Roman citizen was exempt. Even though it would insure greater distance from his people, the Jews, it was time for Paul to speak up for his life to avoid this appointment with death. The *lex Julia de vi publica* precisely forbid flogging or executing a Roman citizen without the due process of a trial or even preparing one for such torture. As soon as the centurion heard that Paul was a Roman, he flew to the commander with unusual words for a subordinate officer, literally: "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman!" Immediately, Claudius Lysias, the commander is interested in Paul and comes to him to verify his Roman citizenship. He spoke of a "large sum" spent for his own citizenship, meaning he had bribed a Roman official for it while the Emperor Claudius had recently allowed such corruption. With Paul's status as a born citizen, he feared, knowing that he had done wrong and was out ranked.

OPEN YOUR MOUTH FOR THE SPEECHLESS, IN THE CAUSE OF ALL WHO ARE APPOINTED TO DIE.
PROVERBS 31:8

III. A DARING IMPROVISION ACTS 22:30
The commander probably lost sleep trying to decide what to do with Paul. Now he had a Roman citizen whose very presence had continually ignited the fury of a murderous mob in the temple. To protect him it was important to keep him detained. Yet to keep him detained in custody required what he had been seeking all along, legitimate charges. The solution came the next day. He "commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them." Now the Jewish leaders were in a dilemma. The chief priests would have discovered the four with Paul in the temple were Jews. Thus, they had no case against Paul the Roman, now protected by Romans, and they were partly responsible for the riot!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What price are you willing to pay to give the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others around you?
- 2) Do you "open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all those appointed to die?"
- 3) If you are doing God's will, can you trust Him completely to protect you (Ps. 91)?