

All verses are copied from <https://biblehub.com/> in King James

Religion is man's attempt to reach God. Christianity is God reaching down to man through a relationship with His Son, not a religion.

God created at least 4 types of relationships between Him and man,

Fellowship relationship (Garden of Eden),

Covenant relationship (Abrahamic),

Legal relationship, based on God's Laws (Mosaic Law),

Grace relationship through the Blood of His Only Son,
(Salvation) the final and most important relationship for Believers.

The first relationship was based on God and His Creation in the Garden. God desired fellowship, to be loved and to love His creation so He created man with Free Will.

The second relationship God desired to bless a chosen people that would be a light unto the world, so He created a Covenant Relationship with Abraham.

The third, God saw that man without restrictions would destroy himself so God Created a Legal Relationship to guide man. Sin

leads to death, the Legal Relationship required innocent blood to pay for man's sin.

The final relationship is based purely on God's Mercy and Grace. A means of fulfilling the Fellowship, the Covenant, the Legal and a Merciful Relationship between the Creator and His Creation.

God extended His Grace to man through the Blood of His Innocent Son to fulfill all Relationships.

Acts 22

Paul's Defense to the Crowd

(Acts 9:1-9; Acts 26:1-23)

Paul is going to recollect his actions prior to becoming a Believer. I doubt very much that he was proud of his life at that time of persecuting Believers, but he was going to use that part of his life to explain his commitment to Judaism from his youth until being Saved by Christ. The Greek word for Paul's "defense" is Apologia, it is where we get the term Apologetics when referring to the Bible. It is a defense of God's Word to those who are searching for Truth, don't believe in God or are outright antagonistic to God's Word.

1Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

Paul uses a combination of terms that would endear him to his audience. He aligns himself with them and their families; **brethren and fathers.**

2(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

Hebrew had been a dying language for some time due to Israel being conquered by several major militaries. After being conquered the new culture would impose their language on the Hebrew speaking nation. At the time of Paul's defense Greek was quite common even for the Latin speaking Romans. For Paul to speak fluently in Hebrew made it difficult for the Romans to understand him but was clear to his Jewish audience. All of this led the audience to quiet down and listen to Paul.

Paul now goes into his personal biography giving detail as to his heritage as a Jew. Paul had a Jewish mother and a father that was a Roman citizen. In time we will learn that it is his natural born Roman citizenship that puts him eventually before the Roman Emperor. By Paul using Hebrew he pulls again on the audience's cultural center as family as he did in vs 1.

3I 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.

Like so many religions that vector into putting the religious program or the religious process as being more important than worshipping God and the absolute need to walk in Truth by studying God's Word daily.

Paul makes a veiled point here that his zealousness is not toward the Law but toward the Author and Creator of the Law, GOD. To these Jews the Law was what mattered.

However, he includes them in this comment to soften the blow if they even got it. These folks were fanatical about the Law, but not so much about God. We saw that when the evidence was clear that Jesus fulfilled all parts of the Law and was the Messiah. They preferred the shadow of the Law over the Law Giver, Jesus Christ and killed Him in their zealousness for the Law.

4And I persecuted **this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.**

Paul admits to walking in the same manner as those in the audience toward God in the beginning by persecuting, "This way" or "The Way". "The Way" was how the Romans and Jews referred to the earliest Believers before they called them Christians. The name Christian did not come about until Paul was teaching in

Antioch, and Barnabas sought him out, at least that is the earliest mention of the term.

Acts 11:26 [26](#)And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

[5](#)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.

This must have been painful for Paul to recall this time of his life. None of us like to recall our pre-Christian lives, how much more so Paul. Perhaps like when we all of a sudden find our minds reminding us of times in our lives when we walked in sin. It is painful to remember. Imagine Paul having to recount that in front of so many of his fellow Believers.

[6](#)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. [7](#)And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? [8](#)And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

We believe by Faith and that Faithful belief is reckoned to us as being blessed.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Consider this that Paul was literally fighting against Christ in his persecution of Believers. Now face to face, so to speak, with the Son of God, whom his fellow Jews had killed and whom he, Paul did not believe in nor consider Jesus to be anything that the Way said He was. And having the conversation in a way that leaves you blind? Pretty intense.

9And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10And 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. 11And 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.

From recounting perhaps Paul's most painful memories to Paul's most exhilarating moment when he met Jesus the Messiah. Oh, the joy Paul must feel every time he thinks on that moment and now, he gets to testify before all these believers and non-believers in Jerusalem to those facts.

I don't know about you but every time I recall the moment I met Jesus my heart jumps for joy, it is like it happened yesterday the moment is so clear. Take heart thought there are many ways

people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus and if you don't have that intense moment of Salvation, your story may be one of a long walk with Christ, slowly giving yourself over to Him. But still you have joy when you think of where you were and where you are now.

12And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

Ananias, a Jew who had been raised and walked in the Law, (**devout man according to the law**) now a Believer had been sent by God to Saul of Tarsus. Saul one of the most feared men at that time within Christendom.

13Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14And 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.

Selected by God to carry out a specific mission. Contacted by;
That “**Just One**” meaning Jesus the Christ.

15For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

The early church as well as Judaism had a long practice of washing for a legal cleansing. The Priests did ceremonial washing before they began their daily duties. John the Baptist baptized with water and for the repentance of sin.

Q. Can someone tell me does baptism cleans you of your sins today?

Matthew 3:11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Greek word for “repentance” in Strong’s Concordance is:

“Transliteration: metanoia

Phonetic Spelling: (met-an'-oy-ah)

Definition: change of mind, repentance

Usage: repentance, a change of mind, change in the inner man”

Q. Does repentance save you?

No, that is something we each do and are told to do it as often as we sin.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

Q. What is the one and only thing that can save you?

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Some would say that Mark 16:16 says that belief is not sufficient but has to be coupled with baptism? Is that what that verse really says upon close examination. We are told to take in the entire counsel of God, so let's look at other verses that speak of salvation.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life.

In Mark 16:16 we have Believe and Baptism

In John 3:16 we have simply Believe

So, which is correct? Is it Jesus plus something or is it simply Jesus?

Ephesians 2:8 8For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Q. Would you consider anything we do with our hands or our body, our mind that involves effort on our part as a "work"?

Many religions and cults do require an effort or work to accomplish that which God says would cause man to boast. That man did something to be saved. That is a lie from Hell, we can do nothing to be saved. Jesus did it all on the Cross. Not only did

Jesus do it all on the Cross but God then gave us when He called us the Faith through His own Grace to Believe. God does not even require our eyes to see to Believe.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

The gift of Salvation is just that a FREE GIFT by our Lord and God to those who would simply say YES. That is the total extent of our involvement in SALVATION. YES! Everything else has already been done by Christ our Lord and Savior. So, it is JESUS plus nothing.

I believe in Mark 16:16 the Baptism that is in its depths of Truth spoken of here is Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

The entire paragraph that this verse comes from is called the Great Commission.

Mark [14](#)Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. [15](#)And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. [16](#)He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. [17](#)And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new

tongues; [18](#)They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Jesus chastised His Apostle due to their lack of believing that others had declared they had seen the Lord risen. He then tells them to go into all the world and share the Good News. The only ones that are saved are those that

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”

If we understand God’s Word correctly that no work of man can save him then the Baptism that is spoken of here is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit totally outside man’s ability. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanies BELIEF in Jesus. It is the Seal that is given to Believers, an endowment on the coming Eternity with Jesus.

The Blood of Christ and Believing in Him as shown by God from the very first Passover that occurred in Egypt was God painting a picture for future Believers, for us. That was a type and shadow of the Real Passover Lamb that was to come. The Messiah, and He came to this world over 2000 years ago to bring Salvation to all who would Believe.

I think God used the arduous task that Israel had to endure, the arduous 40 years in the desert, the Law that was given and how

impossible it was for the Law to Save was all part of the painting God shows us to reveal how there is nothing we can do to be saved, it is Him and His Blood shed that saves us. All of this is what Paul through the power of the Holy Spirit spread throughout the World as instructed by God. Paul now continues to explain what he did, why he did it, and whom he serves even unto death.

17And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

The Word of God needed to be spread around the known world. How many people would just say to themselves, “gee I think I’ll leave my home and everything in it and travel far away to share the Good News, where my own people will try to kill me” In the early church it was spread by God allowing His spokesmen to be targeted by their fellow countrymen. It applied the required pressure to get them to go out into the Gentile and lost world (diaspora) of the Jews to bring the Good News.

There is no verse in the Bible that accounts for what Paul is saying here but it all makes sense that it happened and was not reported. The disciples that went with Paul were also urged by

God to remove Paul from certain places, again in an effort by God to move His Word throughout the known world.

19And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

Even in scripture there seems to be the idea that “what goes around comes around.” The very thing Paul as Saul of Tarsus did to Believers was being done to him. And now he is faced again with the anger and hatred of his own countrymen.

Matthew 7:1-2 - Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Galatians 6:7-8 - Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

The contextual idea of “what goes around comes around” is that evil will be repaid with evil. Satan does not sit idly by. He entices and watches as people do horrible things to other people. Satan delights in conflict, in lies that create conflict in abuse of power. He takes great joy in all of this and so convinces those who carry his evil message to take joy in the evil they spread.

Romans 1: 32Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

As Believers, we are exempt from this philosophy in that God puts a hedge of protection around us from Evil. Bad things happen to good people, it is a part of life. Just because something bad happens in the life of a Believer doesn't mean that God has withdrawn His Protection, it is a part of life in a fallen world. What God offers is

1 Corinthians 10:13 [13](#)There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

[20](#)And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

1 Timothy 1: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

We all have regrets as to how we have lived our lives, even as Believers, we have done the very thing we did not want to do and did not do those things that we knew we should do. Paul counts himself as "Chief" among sinners. I would take exception to that declaration, not that my desire is to exceed Paul in anything, but I have as a sinner. But I confess my sins and I am forgiven by God by the Blood of Jesus.

Paul gives a perfect description of even as Believers we fall short of God's Glory in our sin.

Romans 7: [19](#)For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

June 30, 2024

[21](#)And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Paul with all he knew and would know about Christ he would need to carry out his service to Jesus his Lord and Savior. God called Paul to reach the unbelieving world of the gentiles. But more important for Paul to know was that it was the power of the Holy Spirit that moved and protected Paul.

Paul the Roman Citizen

[22](#)And they gave him audience unto this word, 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. [23](#)And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

And so goes the response of the unsaved. The joy brought to Satan as these folks rejected the Savior Jesus all over again. How many times in our own lives did we reject Christ and by doing so bring great joy to Satan.

And then when you asked Jesus into your hearts the defeat that was delt Satan was enormous.

But what Joy was brought to our souls and to our Lord and Savior when we heard the Good News in our hearts and said, YES.

Cultures have from time to time believed that if you want the truth of a matter then beat the suspect until he admits what happened. The Roman Chief Captain apparently decided that was what was needed here. He may have been motivated by the desire to calm the crowd by beating Paul. What the crowd and Satan wanted was Paul dead and they wanted that now.

24The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

America and most of the self-governing world derived much of our judicial system process from the Romans and Greeks. The idea of personal rights and protection from wrong is the obligation of most democratic governments in the free world. At least until the inner decay starts.

Paul was a Free Born Roman citizen, which gave him indelible, unsalable rights and protection against even the government

without a trial. Paul will now lay down that card and all things come to a screeching halt.

25And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

The Romans were one of the first cultures to codify their judicial system. However, as they went from a Republic to an Empire with total control in the hands of the emperor the judicial system deteriorated and became weaponized. Under the Republic they put benefits in the judicial system that protected citizens from the Government. If you were a free born Roman, then you had superior benefits to a naturalized Roman citizen.

As the Republic digressed to an empire, strata levels emerged. As is quoted from "Animal Farm" *"All animals are created equal, some are just more equal than others."*

Under the emperor if you were a member of the wealthy, you had better benefits than others. Of course, money helped but even that did not put you into the elite category where if you committed the same crime as a foreigner, they would be killed but you an elite would be fined. The true Elites were the upper strata of the governing body politic, virtually untouchable unless the crime was

so heinous and well known even your elite status could not save you.

Paul would be afforded treatment that would not be offered to foreigners or non-Roman citizens. Jews were accorded some benefit as they were considered a “religious” group, until Nero came along, then they were targeted for death by burning.

This is a quote from “Life in the Roman Empire” by Carol Ashby

“During the Republic and early Empire, being a Roman citizen was tremendously valuable for anyone accused of a crime. Citizens were tried in different courts than noncitizens, and much milder punishments were meted out for conviction of identical crimes. Beheading instead of crucifixion, exile instead of slavery in the mines or quarries until you were worked to death: being a citizen had tremendous advantages.

The benefit of citizenship is dramatically displayed in the fates of the apostles, Peter and Paul. Peter, a Jew from the province of Judaea, was crucified by Nero while Paul, a Roman citizen from Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, was merely(?) beheaded.”

Killing one’s parents was of such an extraordinary crime the punishment was equally extraordinary.

A special punishment (poena cullei) made official in the first century BC by Pompey the Great was reserved for parricide (killing one’s parent or other close relative). After a flogging, the murderer and any accomplices were sewn into leather sacks with a dog, a viper, a rooster, and an ape. The viper was standard, but the other animals may have varied if some were unavailable.

The sack was then thrown into the nearest body of water deep enough for drowning or suffocation if the sack was sufficiently watertight. The Tiber was used in Rome, but any river or ocean could be used.

The person convicted of parricide was thereby “deprived of the enjoyment of the elements, the air being denied him while alive, and interment in the earth when dead.” Denial of a proper burial that included the expected Roman rites was believed to deny the soul of the dead a pleasant afterlife as well.

Paul was going to be flogged to get to the truth but after learning of his birthright as a Roman he was treated quite well.

26When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free born*. 29Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

The punishment for a Roman soldier in such cases was likely a fine as he did not do it knowingly. But one never knew for sure with the Roman hierarchy, if you irritate the emperor your life could easily be forfeited.

30On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief

priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

The Roman magistrate not understanding what the Jews wanted and what the accusation against a Roman Citizen was ordered that the Chief Priests be brought down and allow them to accuse Paul in the presence of the Roman Magistrate.

All verses are copied from <https://biblehub.com/> in King James