

Stephen's
Defense
-Acts 7:2

Acts 21:40 - "Paul...motioned with his hand to the people...he addressed them in the **Hebrew language**, saying:"

ἀπολογία (apologia)

Paul's **defense** does not address the charge of bringing a gentile into the temple (21:28b-29), but instead with the **major charge** against him (21:28a) - being a Jewish apostate

Compare to...
Acts 9:1-19 & 26:2-23

"zealous for God"

Acts 26:4-8
2Co 11:22
Gal 1:14

1 "Brothers and fathers, hear the **defense** that I now make before you."

...or Hebrew dialect...likely Aramaic (21:40)

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them **in the Hebrew language**, they became even more quiet. And he said:

3 "I am a Jew, born in **Tarsus in Cilicia**, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of **Gamaliel** according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being **zealous for God** as all of you are this day. <- *Gamaliel: Acts 5:34-39*

Summary of Paul's Youth

-Born in Tarsus
-Brought up in Jerusalem
-Educated by Gamaliel

"I persecuted"

Acts 9:1-2
26:9-11

4 **I persecuted** this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, <- *Way: Acts 19:9,23; 24:14,22*

5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them **I received letters** to the brothers, and I journeyed toward **Damascus** to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

"zealous for God" (3)

*Phil 3:4-6
-Physical circumcision (Gen 17:12)
-Tribe of Benjamin (Acts 13:21; Rom 11:1)
-Hebrew of Hebrews
-Pharisee (Acts 22:3)
-Persecutor (Acts 9:13,21)
-Blameless

"a great light"

Acts 9:3-5
26:12-15

6 "As I was on my way and drew near to **Damascus**, **about noon** a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me.

7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

8 And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

9 Now those who were with me **saw the light** but **did not understand the voice** of the one who was speaking to me.

"about noon" (6)

-Luke did not mention this detail in ch. 9
-Paul points it out to show that the light from heaven was incredibly brilliant.
-The glory of God shines brighter than the sun
-Isa 24:23

"Rise, and go"

Acts 9:6-8
26:16-18

10 And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.'

11 And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into **Damascus**.

12 "And one **Ananias**, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him.

"a devout man" (12)

-Paul introduces him as a good Jew.
-If Ananias approved of Paul, then other Jews should not object.

"Ananias"

Acts 9:9-18

14 And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;

15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. <- *Acts 1:8*

"calling on His name"

-Acts 9:1-19
-Acts 16:25-34
-John 3:16
-Rom 10:13
-1Pe 3:18-22

16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Trance

-ἐκστασις (*ekstasis*)
was also used in 10:10
for Peter's vision.

-Both that vision and
this one explain that
God has a mission to
the Gentiles. It shows
the Lord's intent to
reach the ends of the
earth, not just Israel.

-Gen 12:3

-Acts 2:39

-Gal 3:7-9

This was the
last straw ->

Tribune

-Roman military officer
whose responsibility it
was to keep peace in
the city

-Leader of the entire
Cohort = A group of
1,000 soldiers.

Probably stationed at
the Antonia fortress
(barracks) overlooking
the temple.

-Name is given later as
Claudius Lysias (23:26)

Real Reason

-Paul must go through
a fair judicial
process before he can
be punished or
imprisoned.

¹⁷“When I had **returned to Jerusalem** and was praying in the **“returned to Jerusalem”**
temple, I fell into a **trance**

¹⁸and saw him saying to me, ‘**Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.**’

¹⁹And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.

²⁰And when the **blood of Stephen** your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and **approving** and **watching over the garments** of those who killed him.’ <- Acts 7:58

²¹And he said to me, ‘**Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.**’ ”

²²Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “**Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.**”

²³And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

²⁴the **tribune** ordered him to be brought into the **barracks**, saying that he should be **examined by flogging**, to find out why they were shouting against him like this.

²⁵But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “**Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?**”

²⁶When the centurion heard this, he went to the **tribune** and said to him, “**What are you about to do?** For this man is a **Roman citizen.**”

²⁷So the **tribune** came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a **Roman citizen?**” And he said, “Yes.”

²⁸The **tribune** answered, “**I bought this citizenship for a large sum.**” Paul said, “**But I am a citizen by birth.**”

²⁹So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the **tribune also was afraid**, for he realized that **Paul** was a **Roman citizen** and that he had bound him.

³⁰But on the next day, desiring to know the **real reason** why he was being **accused by the Jews**, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

-3 years between Paul's conversion and his trip to Jerusalem. He first went to Arabia and then back to Damascus.

-Acts 9:20-29

-Gal 1:11-24

“examined by flogging”

-The Romans probably couldn't understand Paul speaking in Aramaic

-They decided find out the truth of the matter through torture

-The scourge consisted of leather thongs studded with pieces of metal or bone

-Its use often crippled for life and sometimes killed

-Pilate had Jesus flogged after declaring Him innocent

-John 18:38-19:1

Roman Citizen

-Roman law forbade the flogging of a citizen without a trial (uncondemned)

-This was prescribed by the Valerian and Porcian laws, and confirmed and amplified by the Edicts of Augustus

-Paul's citizenship by birth is more reputable than citizenship that was purchased

-This implies Paul is of higher social status than the military leader.

-Acts 16:37-39

Compare To...

Acts 9:1–19 (ESV)

¹ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

Acts 26:2–23 (ESV)

² “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴ “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. ⁵ They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. ⁶ And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, ⁷ to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! ⁸ Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

⁹ “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

¹² “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that

shone around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵ And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

¹⁹ “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. ²¹ For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³ that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

Brothers and Fathers

Acts 7:2 (ESV)

² And Stephen said:

“Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,

Paul’s Defense

665 ἀπολογία (*apologia*), ἀς (*as*), ἡ (*hē*): n.fem.; ≡ Str 627—**1.** LN 33.435 **defend oneself**, make a formal justification (Ac 25:16; 2Co 7:11; Php 1:7, 16; 2Ti 4:16; 1Pe 3:15+); **2.** LN 33.436 **defense**, the content of the answer or reply (Ac 22:1; 1Co 9:3), note: these verses and entries may overlap¹

Acts 21:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸ crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

Hebrew Language

Acts 21:40 (ESV)

⁴⁰ And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Gamaliel

Acts 5:34–39 (ESV)

³⁴ But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵ And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶ For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷ After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸ So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice,

Zealous for God

2 Corinthians 11:22 (ESV)

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.

Galatians 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

Philippians 3:4–6 (ESV)

⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Genesis 17:12 (ESV)

¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,

Acts 13:21 (ESV)

²¹ Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Romans 11:1 (ESV)

¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

The Way

Acts 19:9 (ESV)

⁹ But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

Acts 19:23 (ESV)

²³ About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.

Acts 24:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,

Acts 24:22 (ESV)

²² But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case."

About Noon

Isaiah 24:23 (ESV)

²³ Then the moon will be confounded
and the sun ashamed,
for the LORD of hosts reigns
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and his glory will be before his elders.

Calling on the Name of the Lord

Acts 16:25 –34 (ESV)

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. ²⁷When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." ²⁹And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³²And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 10:5-13 (ESV)

⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. ⁶But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

I Peter 3:18-22

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Witness

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Trance

1749 ἔκστασις (*ekstasis*), εως (*eōs*), ἡ (*hē*): n.fem.; ≡ Str 1611; TDNT 2.449—**1.** LN 25.217 **amazement**, astonishment, bewilderment (Mk 5:42; 16:8; Lk 5:26; Ac 3:10+); **2.** LN 33.489 **ecstatic vision**, a trance (Ac 10:10; 11:5; 22:17+)²

Acts 10:10–16 (ESV)

¹⁰ And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a **trance** ¹¹ and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³ And there came a voice to him: “**Rise, Peter; kill and eat.**” ¹⁴ But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” ¹⁵ And the voice came to him again a second time, “**What God has made clean, do not call common.**” ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

² Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Genesis 12:3 (ESV)

³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Acts 2:39 (ESV)

³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Galatians 3:7–9 (ESV)

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Returned to Jerusalem

Acts 9:20–29 (ESV)

²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” ²¹ And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

²³ When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him.

Galatians 1:11–24 (ESV)

¹¹ For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. ¹² For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother. ²⁰ (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) ²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only were

hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”²⁴ And they glorified God because of me.

Stoning of Stephen

Acts 7:58 (ESV)

⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Tribune

Acts 23:26 (ESV)

²⁶ “Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings.

Examined by Flogging

John 18:38–19:1 (ESV)

³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”⁴⁰ They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

¹ Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.

Roman Citizen

Acts 16:37–39 (ESV)

³⁷ But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.”³⁸ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.³⁹ So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.