

# What One Can Be And Still Be Lost

**Introduction.** Acts 21:27 marks a major transition in the life and work of the apostle Paul. Since his conversion on the road to Damascus, he had worked freely, but from this point on in Acts, Paul will be a prisoner. No longer free to travel, he became an “ambassador in bonds” for Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:20).

During Paul’s incarceration at Caesarea and Rome, Paul gave six separate defenses of his actions: before the unruly mob at Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-22:21), the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30-23:10), Felix (Acts 24:1-25), Festus (Acts 25:1-12), Herod Agrippa (Acts 26:1-32), and the Jews at Rome (Acts 28:17-28). Those masterful defenses ably answered the false charges leveled against him, but they also did something else. They demonstrated that before his conversion, Paul had good qualities, but he was still lost. What will be important for us is examining these qualities to see if we have them in ourselves, and move beyond them to obtain eternal life.

## I. ***Paul Was A Religious Man, But Lost***

- A. As a Pharisee, he faithfully lived his religion (Acts 26:5).
- B. As a Pharisee, he was zealous toward God (Acts 22:3).
- C. As a Pharisee, he practiced vain religion (Matthew 15:8-9).
  - 1. Religion is vain if it is directed to the wrong object (Acts 14:15; 17:22-23).
  - 2. Religion is vain if it is prompted by wrong doctrine (Titus 2:1, 7).
  - 3. Religion is vain if it is void of righteous living (James 1:26-27).

## II. ***Paul Was An Educated Man, But Lost***

- A. His education was the best a Jewish boy could receive (Acts 22:3).
  - 1. Gamaliel was a renowned doctor of the law (Acts 5:34).
  - 2. Gamaliel evidently taught Paul from a young child (Acts 26:4).
- B. His education could not save him (cf. Philippians 3:4-8).
  - 1. A good education is helpful, but it cannot save your soul (Ecclesiastes 12:12).
  - 2. A good education can actually hinder salvation (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

## III. ***Paul Was A Sincere Man, But Lost***

- A. His conscience was clear because he thought he was right (Acts 23:1).
  - 1. To think you are right in ordinary affairs does not make it so (Luke 2:44).
  - 2. To think you are right in religion does not make it so (Matthew 23:15).

- B. His conscience was clear because it was misinformed (1 Timothy 1:13).
  - 1. Conscience is an inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior (John 8:9).
  - 2. A conscience reacts to "stored information," so, like a clock, it has to be set correctly. It must be clear, not seared (1 Timothy 1:15; 4:2; cf. Hebrews 9:14; 10:22).

#### IV. ***Paul Was A Praying Man, But Lost***

- A. His praying was fine, but prayer will not save a non-Christian (Acts 9:11).
  - 1. Prayer is a condition of forgiveness for baptized believers (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).
  - 2. Prayer is a privilege of God's children, not a requirement to become one of His children (James 1:5; 1 John 3:22; 5:14; cf. Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:26-27).
- B. His praying needed interruption because only baptism could wash away his sins (Acts 9:18; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

**Conclusion.** Do not trust in religion, education, sincerity, nor praying to save. You need to obey God (Hebrews 5:9)! You trust in Jesus by doing His will: Believe (John 8:24), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Romans 10:10), and be baptized (Acts 2:38). After this, you need to worship and serve God scripturally (Revelation 2:10).

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