

**“I AM A CITIZEN”**  
**Acts 22:22-30**  
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INTRODUCTION

Citizens have privileges! We hear a great deal today about people who want to have an easier path to citizenship in the USA but are frustrated by the limitations and the complicated process.

Citizenship in Rome was not an easy process either, and those who managed to obtain it were very privileged. More than half of Romans consisted of slaves, who could not become citizens unless freed—generally requiring much money or a very special relationship with their master who would grant them manumission and then citizenship. Romans were exempted from many forms of harsh treatment and punishment, and had many more legal rights as well. Roman citizenship was highly coveted by the masses of humanity who did not possess it. Those who were born citizens by family ancestry were in a highly coveted position.

Such was the case with the Apostle Paul as we see in this text. But, we believers, whether or not we are citizens of the greatest country on earth, have a much higher citizenship of which we must be very “proud” and concerning which we must constantly be cognizant in all of our earthly relationships and behaviors.

We are citizens of Heaven. **Live like it!**

Before we look at the passage in greater detail, let us examine some of the significant lessons we see in chapter 22:

- 1) We can sometimes serve God more effectively by learning the language and customs of the people(s) among whom we are to serve. Cf. Daniel (1:4), Moses (Acts 7:22), and Paul.
- 2) Zeal for God is only a good thing if governed by Scripture (v. 3). The Jews had zeal “not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:13).
- 3) We must be quick to recognize God’s presence, and obey Him (v. 8); cf. Abraham in Gen. 18 and Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3).
- 4) Asking the Lord for guidance is wise (v. 10); see Ps. 119:33.
- 5) It is important to maintain a good reputation (v. 12), and is a necessity for pastors (I Tim. 3:7). The unbeliever must be able to see that our good works belie the slander against us (I Pet. 2:12).
- 6) It is necessary for all believers to maintain a witness for Christ (v. 15).
- 7) Calling on the name of the Lord results in salvation (v. 16); see Rom. 10:13.
- 8) “A soft answer turns away wrath” (v. 25—Pr. 15:1; see Col. 4:6).

I. A TIME TO ASSERT OUR EARTHLY RIGHTS

A. The Crowd’s Lack of Self Control(22-23)

1. Verbal excitement (22)
2. Physical extremism (23)

B. The Commander’s Carelessness in Response (24-25)

1. "Examination" of Paul by Scourging—to get to the truth (24)[cf. methods of torture used today]
2. Paul's cautious question—lawfulness of the proceedings (25)
  - A Roman citizen
  - No official trial for condemnation
- C. The Centurion's appropriate action (26)
  1. "What are you about to do?"
  2. "This man is a Roman."
- D. The Commander's fearful reaction (27-29)
  1. He comes to Paul: "Are you a Roman?" [You, a beaten, humbled, hated, pitiable suspect.]
  2. He comments on the cost of his citizenship (28)
  3. He fears for his own safety—he had bound a Roman citizen for scourging (29)
  4. He commands Paul's release from the scourging post
- E. The Council of the Sanhedrin called together (30)
  1. Paul temporarily released in order to stand trial.
  2. Paul set before his Jewish accusers.

Yes, Paul picked the appropriate time to assert his legal rights before the Roman commander. But, do we realize that we have a higher citizenship and special citizenship rights before God?

## II. A TIME TO ASSERT OUR HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

- A. Our Citizenship is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20; cf. Col. 3:1)
- B. Our Conduct must be in harmony with our citizenship (Phil. 1:27)
- C. We share our citizens with the saints of all time (Eph. 2:19)

## CONCLUSION

Why do we act like inferiors with no rights and authority?

Why do we degrade ourselves before the world with poor behavior?

We are citizens of the Great King of Heaven; we have all of the privileges that accompany that citizenship.

We are children of the King. **Live like it!**