**Lesson 24 March 17 Acts 22:30 and Chapter 23 Sanhedrin**

In our last lesson Paul was in Jerusalem at the Temple when a group of Jews accuse him of bringing Greeks into the Temple. They also accused him of teaching against the Jews, the Law and the Temple. A riot ensues and the people try to kill Paul. The Cohort Commander and soldiers arrest Paul and it is revealed that the Cohort Commander had thought that Paul was an Egyptian criminal assassin. Paul asks if he might address the angry crowd and he does appeal to the Jews in Aramaic. He tries to defend his position by revealing his roots as a Jew from Tarsus who was raised in Israel. He reminds them that he too had persecuted people of The Way to the death. He then tells them of his vision and his mission to go out to the Gentiles. His statements about a vision of God sending him to the Gentiles is not received well and violence again broke out. The Cohort Commander arrested Paul at this point, put him in chains and was about to flog him and interrogate him when Paul revealed that he was a Roman citizen.

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? Was there a particular verse or message in this week’s lesson from Acts 23 that you found inspiring?**
2. **Where does the Cohort Commander begin to look for answers about why the Jews are trying to kill Paul? See Acts 22:30.**

**Acts 22:3030**The next day, wishing to determine the truth about why he was being accused by the Jews, he freed him and ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin to convene. Then he brought Paul down and made him stand before them.

1. **Check footnotes for information on Acts 23:1-5. What did Paul’s comments in verse 3 mean? What is meant by “whitewashed wall”? Read Acts 23:1-5 and Mathew 23:27-28.**

**Acts 23:1-5** 1Paul looked intently at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have conducted myself with a perfectly clear conscience before God to this day.” 2The high priest Ananias ordered his attendants to strike his mouth. 3Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall. Do you indeed sit in judgment upon me according to the law and yet in violation of the law order me to be struck?” 4The attendants said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?” 5Paul answered, “Brothers, I did not realize he was the high priest. For it is written, ‘You shall not curse a ruler of your people.’”

**Mathew 23:27-2827**“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and every kind of filth.  **28**Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing.

1. **After reading your footnotes, do you think Paul’s words in Acts 23:3 were prophetic or merely words of anger?**
2. **Why does Paul apologize for his words? See Exodus 22:27 and footnotes.**

**Exodus 22:27 27**You shall not despise God, nor curse a leader of your people.

1. **What are some of the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees?**

**See Acts 23:6-11.**

**Acts 23:6-11.6**Paul was aware that some were Sadducees and some Pharisees, so he called out before the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; [I] am on trial for hope in the resurrection of the dead.” **7**When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the group became divided. **8**For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, while the Pharisees acknowledge all three. **9**A great uproar occurred, and some scribes belonging to the Pharisee party stood up and sharply argued, “We find nothing wrong with this man. Suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” **10**The dispute was so serious that the commander, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, ordered his troops to go down and rescue him from their midst and take him into the compound. **11**The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage. For just as you have borne witness to my cause in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.”

1. **How does Paul use his knowledge about these differences to help his cause?.**
2. **How does Paul’s vision of Jesus Christ in verse 23:11 help Paul? What does this confirm about his ultimate mission or destination? See Acts 23:11, Acts 19:21, Acts 20:22-23, and Acts 21:3-4.**

**Acts 23:1111**The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage. For just as you have borne witness to my cause in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.”

**Acts 19:21 21**When this was concluded, Paul made up his mind to travel through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go on to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must visit Rome also.”

**Acts 20:22-2322**But now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem. What will happen to me there I do not know, **23**except that in one city after another the holy Spirit has been warning me that imprisonment and hardships await me.

**Acts 21:3-43**We caught sight of Cyprus but passed by it on our left and sailed on toward Syria and put in at Tyre where the ship was to unload cargo. **4**There we sought out the disciples and stayed for a week. They kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to embark for Jerusalem.

1. **An elaborate plot is made against Paul because of his religious beliefs. What is it that is being planned for Paul? Read Acts 23: 12-14.Acts 23: 12-1412**When day came, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. **13**There were more than forty who formed this conspiracy. **14**They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have bound ourselves by a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. **15**You, together with the Sanhedrin, must now make an official request to the commander to have him bring him down to you, as though you meant to investigate his case more thoroughly. We on our part are prepared to kill him before he arrives.”
2. **How do the Romans find out about this plot to kill Paul? Read Acts 23:16-22.**

**Acts 23:16-2216**The son of Paul’s sister, however, heard about the ambush; so he went and entered the compound and reported it to Paul. **17**Paul then called one of the centurions and requested, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to report to him.” **18**So he took him and brought him to the commander and explained, “The prisoner Paul called me and asked that I bring this young man to you; he has something to say to you.” **19**The commander took him by the hand, drew him aside, and asked him privately, “What is it you have to report to me?” **20**He replied, “The Jews have conspired to ask you to bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as though they meant to inquire about him more thoroughly, **21**but do not believe them. More than forty of them are lying in wait for him; they have bound themselves by oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are now ready and only wait for your consent.” **22**As the commander dismissed the young man he directed him, “Tell no one that you gave me this information.”

1. **What do the Romans do to prevent Paul’s murder and to preserve the peace?**

**See Acts 23:22-35**

**Acts 23:22-3522**As the commander dismissed the young man he directed him, “Tell no one that you gave me this information.” **23**Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea by nine o’clock tonight, along with seventy horsemen and two hundred auxiliaries. **24**Provide mounts for Paul to ride and give him safe conduct to Felix the governor.” **25**Then he wrote a letter with this content: **26** “Claudius Lysias to his excellency the governor Felix, greetings.[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+23&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-32080h)] **27**This man, seized by the Jews and about to be murdered by them, I rescued after intervening with my troops when I learned that he was a Roman citizen. **28**I wanted to learn the reason for their accusations against him so I brought him down to their Sanhedrin. **29**I discovered that he was accused in matters of controversial questions of their law and not of any charge deserving death or imprisonment. **30**Since it was brought to my attention that there will be a plot against the man, I am sending him to you at once, and have also notified his accusers to state [their case] against him before you.”

**31**So the soldiers, according to their orders, took Paul and escorted him by night to Antipatris. **32**The next day they returned to the compound, leaving the horsemen to complete the journey with him. **33**When they arrived in Caesarea they delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul to him. **34**When he had read it and asked to what province he belonged, and learned that he was from Cilicia, **35**he said, “I shall hear your case when your accusers arrive.” Then he ordered that he be held in custody in Herod’s praetorium.