

**Parish Fellowship Bible Study**  
**Monday 26th April 2021**  
**Acts 22:30-23:35**

Acts 22:30-23:35 (NIV)

30 The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." 2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

4 Those who were standing near Paul said, "How dare you insult God's high priest!"

5 Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"

6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead." 7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.)

9 There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" 10 The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

12 The next morning some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 More than forty men were involved in this plot. 14 They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

16 But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." 18 So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

19 The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

20 He said: "Some Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. 21 Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

22 The commander dismissed the young man with this warning: "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

23 Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen[b] to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

25 He wrote a letter as follows:

26 Claudius Lysias,

To His Excellency, Governor Felix:

Greetings.

27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. 28 I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. 29 I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

31 So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. 32 The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33 When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. 34 The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

## Introduction

Was it wrong for Paul to be in Jerusalem? How did God make the most of this opportunity?

### 22:30

The tribune summons the high priests and the elders, the Sanhedrin, to the Roman Fortress of Antonia.

### 23:1-5

Paul does not accept the validity of Ananias' identity as the High Priest or his jurisdiction over him.

He feels he has no case to answer. 1 Corinthians 4:4 Stott thinks that Ananias is way off the mark in claiming to have a good conscience and considering himself a good Jew.

Ananias did not have a good reputation: Josephus says he stole tithes that belonged to the priests.  
He was killed by Jewish nationalists.

Paul seems to set himself up as the equal of the council. Had he been a member?

Paul calls the High Priest out as a hypocrite. Matthew 23:27.

Did Paul know who he was talking to?

- Paul had been away for years and Ananias was new to the job.
- Maybe Ananias wasn't wearing his robes...
- Maybe Paul's eyesight was really bad. Galatians 4:14-15 and 6:11
- Maybe he just couldn't hear among all the voices who is was who ordered him to be struck.

Perhaps he was just being sarcastic or lost his temper:

"There is his obvious testiness, his irritability and quickness of temper, the flash of anger with which he retorts. His reply is not that of a man in control of his emotions." Ray Stedman

However his words to the High Priest prophetic

"Paul's words, however, were more prophetic than he realized. Ananias' final days – despite all his scheming and bribes – were lived as a hunted animal and ended at the hands of his own people." (Longenecker)

### 23:6-10

Looks like he gives up on preaching the gospel and determines to save his own skin.

He plays some party politics in the assembly and appeals to those who may be sympathetic to him.

Sadducees- not as keen on the supernatural- or the resurrection. Paul's gospel is entirely predicated on the truth of the resurrection.

"Paul succeeds only in polarizing the council so that his hopes for a testimony before the leaders of the nation fly out the window." Ray Stedman

The Roman tribune has to rescue him again.

Paul may have regretted stirring things up around the resurrection. Acts 24:20-21

### **23:11**

Dave Guzik points out that Jesus says “Cheer Up” this a number of times in the gospels:

- the bedridden paralytic, (Matthew 9:2).
- he woman with the 12-year bleeding problem, (Matthew 9:22).
- His frightened disciples on the Sea of Galilee, (Matthew 14:27).
- the night before His crucifixion, I have overcome the world (John 16:33).
- And here, in Acts 23:11

Jesus is always with all believers- but this was a more intense experience.

Is Jesus is saying to him that what he has done in Jerusalem has not been wasted?

“A divine decree ordains for you greater and more trying service than as yet you have seen. A future awaits you, and no power on the earth or under the earth can rob you of it; therefore be of good cheer.” Spurgeon

Paul is looking at 2 years imprisoned at Caesarea and another 3 at Rome.

“It would be hard to exaggerate the calm courage which this assurance must have brought to Paul during his three further trials, his two years’ imprisonment and his hazardous voyage to Rome.” Stott

### **23:12-15**

“This assurance meant much to Paul during the delays and anxieties of the next two years, and goes far to account for the calm and dignified bearing which from now on marks him out as a master of events rather than their victim.”  
Bruce

### **23:16-22**

Paul’s nephew hears of the plan. Right place, right time? God in command.

### **23:23-24**

Roman guards protects Paul. He is taken down to the coast.

### **23:25-30**

Dave Guzik imagines that Luke’s notes were maybe consulted by the Roman authorities.

“One of Luke’s prime motives in writing his twofold history is to demonstrate that there is no substance in this charge of subversion brought not only against Paul but against Christians in general – that competent and impartial judges had repeatedly confirmed the innocence of the Christian movement and the Christian missionaries in respect of Roman law.”  
Bruce

God can use anyone at all to fulfil his purpose.

### **23:31-35**

Sixty miles from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

Felix, a successor to Pilate as governor of Judea, learns that Paul is from Cilicia which, like Judea, is an imperial province under the direct control of the emperor himself, responsible to him.

It looks like Paul will end up being sent to Nero himself.

God’s will will be fulfilled.

### **Conclusion**

“One of Luke’s aims in Acts... demonstrating that Christianity was not a dangerous religious group, especially that there was no truth to the charge of subversion against Rome.” Ajith Fernando

Results are not our responsibility- we just need to be faithful.