

Acts of the Apostles – 23

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul Addresses the Jewish Council (1-10).
 - 1. Paul tries to address the Jewish council (1-5).
 - 2. Paul turns the Jews against one another (6-10).
- B. A Plot Is Discovered to Kill Paul (11-24).
 - 1. The Lord has plans for Paul at Rome (11).
 - 2. The Jews conspire to kill Paul (12-15).
 - 3. Paul's nephew informs the chief captain (16-22).
 - 4. The chief captain prepares safe passage (23-24).
- C. Paul Is Delivered Safely to Caesarea (25-35).
 - 1. The chief captain writes a letter to Felix (25-30).
 - 2. Paul is delivered safely to Felix's protection (31-35).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul attempts to address the Jewish chief priests and their council for the second time (1-5).
 - 1. He earnestly desired to defend himself and the gospel to men who tried to kill him.
 - 2. He claims what every saint should seek – a consistently good conscience before God.
 - a. **Conscience.** 4. The internal acknowledgement or recognition of the moral quality of one's motives and actions; the sense of right and wrong as regards things for which one is responsible; the faculty or principle which pronounces upon the moral quality of one's actions or motives, approving the right and condemning the wrong.
 - b. **Con** (with) + **science** (knowledge) = knowing with and in ourselves about our actions (Proverbs 20:27; Acts 26:9; I Corinthians 2:11).
 - c. Our conscience is an internal apparatus from God to direct our conduct (Pr 14:10; Rom 2:15 (1:32); John 8:9; Heb 13:18; I Tim 1:12-14; I Kgs 15:4).
 - d. We have a pure conscience by obeying it rather than rejecting or silencing it.
 - e. Age and experience create more sensitive consciences (John 8:9; Heb 5:14).
 - f. Truth alters consciences (Rom 13:5; 14:23; I Cor 8:1-13; 10:25-27; Jas 4:17).
 - g. Ignorance can leave you conscience-less, so Rom 14 and I Cor 8,10; yet sins of ignorance are still sins (Psalm 19:12; Luke 12:48; Luke 4:1-35).
 - h. Fervent saints want more knowledge (Acts 10:33; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-17).
 - i. Sin sears the conscience and justifies sin (I Tim 4:2; Eph 4:17-19; Heb 3:13).
 - j. We need to exercise ourselves in godliness to always have a conscience void of any offence toward either God or man (24:16; Luke 2:52; I Timothy 1:5).
 - k. We must pray for conscience revelation (Ps 139:23-24; 26:2; 16:7; Lam 3:40).
 - l. There is an extensive outline available on this subject entitled "Conscience."
 - 3. Proving their evil intentions, the high priest calls for Paul to be hit on the mouth.
 - 4. Paul addresses the man as his peer and truthfully, not knowing he was the high priest.
 - 5. Paul corrects himself by quoting their law, yet they care nothing for him (Ex 22:28).

- B. Paul, sensing the futility of appealing to any reason, turns the Jews against each other (6-10).
 - 1. He had already earnestly beheld his audience and knew the Jews very well (22:3).
 - 2. Perceiving an audience of enemy factions, he delivered himself by their own heresies.
 - a. The Sadducees denied angels, man's spirit, and a resurrection (Matt 22:23-33).
 - b. The Pharisees strongly believed all three as the most conservative sect (26:5).
 - c. He identified himself as a Pharisee from a Pharisee father, which bought them.
 - d. He claimed that his controversy with the Jews was the hope of the resurrection.
 - e. It was the indirect truth (13:14-46), though they did not deserve it (Ex 20:16).
 - f. He split the multitude: the Pharisees for him and the Saducees against him.
 - 3. The chief captain had to rescue Paul again, lest these Jews had pulled him apart.
- C. The Lord came to Paul and comforted him about bearing witness to Christ in Rome (11).
 - 1. Remember the words of 21:14 . . . the will of the Lord be done.
 - 2. We do not bring the will of God by our words, but we rather submit to God's will.
 - 3. Consider Proverbs 16:9,33; 19:21; 21:30; Deuteronomy 29:29; and James 4:15
 - 4. Paul purposed in the spirit to visit Rome (19:21), and the Lord's will was for it.
- D. These rabid Jews crave Paul's blood so desperately they conspire together to kill him (12-15).
 - 1. Jesus foretold these Jews living were demon possessed (Mat 12:43-45; I The 2:14-16).
 - 2. Over forty of these Jews vowed to neither eat nor drink until they killed Paul.
 - 3. They easily get the chief priests and elders to participate in their lying scheme.
- E. Paul's nephew, the son of his sister, hears about this conspiracy and reports it to Paul (16-22).
 - 1. Don't ask me anything about Paul's family, for we are told nothing more than here.
 - 2. Please remember the words of 21:14 . . . the will of the Lord be done.
 - 3. Consider the timing and the reception by the chief captain of this bizarre message.
- F. The chief captain prepares safe passage for Paul to be delivered to the governor (23-24).
 - 1. Consider the providence of God in delivering Paul with such an escort . . . like Esther.
 - 2. We add two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, 470!
 - 3. The third hour of the night would be 9:00 P.M. and following i.e. Acts 2:15.
- G. Claudius Lysias, the chief captain in Jerusalem, writes to Governor Felix in Caesarea (25-30).
 - 1. He embellishes the account just a little to save face and promote his career (22:24-29).
 - 2. Consider how the Lord moved the heart of this chief captain to state Paul's innocence.
 - 3. Though he lied to serve himself, he told the truth in regard to Paul (Prov 21:1).
- H. Paul is delivered safely to Caesarea, where he will have opportunities to testify (31-35).