

Paul on Trial in Jerusalem – Acts 22:1-23:11

Introduction:

Can't say they didn't warn him! The Apostle Paul was repeatedly told that if he went to Jerusalem he would be arrested, and maybe even killed. But Paul was determined this is what God wanted him to do, so he went to Jerusalem. He did everything he could to keep out of trouble while still ministering to the Christians there. Nonetheless, his opponents found him at the temple worshipping and trumped up charges against him that causes the whole city to rise up in protest. If the Roman soldiers had not come down to the temple courts to see what was happening Paul likely would have been beaten to death right there. But God still has work for him to do. So Paul is rescued by the Gentile soldiers, then arrested by those same soldiers, and is bound and ushered towards the jail. On the way Paul asks the commander if he can say something to the crowd – Paul never missed an opportunity to tell people about his faith in Jesus. The commander says it is okay, and this is where we find Paul as we start our chapter – ready to tell the crowds who he is and what he is about. Who do you think will be the focus of his speech?

Who Am I? Acts 22:1-5

1. What caused the crowds to quiet down according to verse 2? Why?
2. Paul starts by telling about his upbringing. What six things do we learn about Paul in verse 3?
3. Paul was zealous for God, so what did he do to demonstrate his loyalty to the Jewish faith according to verse 4?
4. Who could verify the zeal of Paul if they wished to (vs. 5)? In what way was the Jewish council complicit in the persecution Paul brought on the church? Where did they send Paul with their blessing to arrest more Christians?

Paul's Conversion – Acts 22:6-11

5. When and where did Paul encounter Jesus? (vss. 6-7) Who pursued who?
6. Verse 8 reveals how Paul came to know Jesus. His question, “Who are you Lord?” reveals an important truth about that day. What is it? And the reply he received from the bright light confirmed what truth to Paul?
7. Knowing to whom he was speaking, what is Paul's first response (vs. 10)? What does God tell him to do?
8. Paul was the one in charge. What does God do to humble him, and demonstrate how best to manage his life (cf. v. 11)?

Paul's Commission – Acts 22:12-21

9. Paul introduces Ananias to the crowd. How is he described? (v. 12) What did he do for Paul (v. 13)?
10. In verses 14-15 we read Paul's commission (what he was sent to do). What was that commission?
11. What was the significance of the actions of verse 16?
12. In verses 17-18 we find the account of an event not recorded anywhere else in scripture. What happened and what was the significance? How might this inform us about why Paul was so adamant about coming back to Jerusalem?
13. At first Paul could not believe the people of Jerusalem would not accept his message. What does he cite as reasons why they should believe him (vss. 19-20)? Where did the Lord want Paul to go? (v. 21)

Paul Imprisoned Again – Acts 22:22-29

- 14.** What made the crowds so angry (v.22)? Why?
- 15.** Verse 23 gives the picture of a very upset crowd. What did the commander (who likely did not understand a word Paul had just said) conclude? (cf. v. 24)
- 16.** How does Paul prevent a flogging (v. 25-26)? What is behind that?
- 17.** Paul has a discussion with the Roman commander. Each one of them is a Roman citizen. How did the commander become a citizen? How did Paul become a citizen? (vss. 27-29)
- 18.** Roman citizenship did provide protection. What else was done illegally to Paul (vs. 29)?

Paul before the Sanhedrin – Acts 22:30-23:11

- 19.** Why is Paul taken before the Sanhedrin (v. 22:30)?
- 20.** Is Paul afraid of the highest power in the Jewish system (v. 23:1)? What message does he give the council?
- 21.** How does the High Priest respond to Paul's words (v. 23:2)?
- 22.** Paul points out the hypocrisy of what the High Priest just did. What does he say? (v. 23:3)
- 23.** Would Paul intentionally disrespect the High Priest? Why or why not? (cf. 23:4-5)

24. How does Paul divide the Sanhedrin (vss. 23:6-8)
25. This approach almost backfired. What nearly happened to Paul as the Sanhedrin fought among themselves (v. 23:10)
26. Who comes to Paul's rescue once again (v. 23:10)
27. What message does God have for Paul (v. 23:11)? How would Paul feel about this?

Conclusion:

8“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. 9“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.... (Isaiah 55:8)

We have read this verse many times and in this passage we see it fleshed out once again. God has a special mission for Paul – to preach in Rome. And the journey to Rome is starting in a prison in Jerusalem. Certainly this is not the way we would have written the script, but we are not God. The church, and the Gospel, will be strengthened through this path in a way a simple boat ride to Rome would never accomplish. The rest of the book will show how Jesus will be glorified through this path God has chosen for Paul.

So when it looks like we have hit a dead end, remember that our God makes doors wherever he wants them. Trust God to make a way – His way. And in the end God will be glorified.