

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 27: CHAPTERS 23 and 24

4 December 2015

CHAPTER 23

Vs. 11 Even though Paul was out of the will of God, “**the Lord stood by him.**” He said, “**I will never leave thee nor forsake thee**” (Heb. 13:5). We’re going to mess up at times, but “**he abideth faithful**” (2 Timothy 2:13). That’s a great comfort.

The Lord promised Paul that he must go to Rome and bear witness of Him. This is another great comfort. He can be confident that he’ll not die before he gets to Rome.

Vss. 12-13 Forty Jews vowed to kill Paul or never eat nor drink again. Either they broke that vow or they died of dehydration. They are murderers (1 John 3:15). Cross-reference: Isaiah 1:21-25. Jerusalem is lacking judgment and righteousness and is full of murderers. Judgment is coming on that city very soon.

Vss. 14-30 The forty Jews plotted to kill Paul by ambush. Their plans are foiled because their secret got out to Paul’s nephew who then told Paul about it. Paul instructed the centurion to bring his nephew to see the chief captain. When the chief captain found out about the murderous plot, he prepared an army of 470 soldiers to escort Paul safely to Caesarea to speak to Felix, the governor. The chief captain sent a letter to the governor to explain the situation (vss. 25-30).

Vss. 31-35 The 470 soldiers accompanied Paul as far as Antipatris. From there he was escorted only by the 70 horsemen to Caesarea, where he was presented to the governor. Paul had to wait five days so that the governor could hear from his accusers. After that, he would be allowed to speak in his defense.

CHAPTER 24

Vss. 1-4 Ananias the high priest came to Caesarea to accuse Paul before the governor. He hired a professional orator (prosecuting attorney) named Tertullus to speak against Paul. –After using flattery (Psa. 5:9, 78:36) in an attempt to earn the favor of Felix, Tertullus began to accuse Paul.

Vss. 5-9 **THE ACCUSATIONS:** Paul is accused of sedition (troublemaking). A review of Acts will show that it was always the Jews who started the trouble, not Paul (see 17:5, 19:28, 32). He is also accused of profaning the temple. He didn't, but it *appeared* that way to the Jews. Paul warns about the appearance of evil in his letter to the Thessalonians (see 1 Thess. 5:22, 2 Cor. 6:3, Matt. 17:27).

Tertullus also accused the chief captain in Jerusalem of using excessive force and "violence" against them when they were trying to judge Paul lawfully (vs. 7). Today our police force often gets wrongfully accused of this.

Vss. 10-21 **PAUL'S DEFENSE:** I didn't dispute with anyone in the temple, the synagogue, or the city (vs. 12). There's no proof of any of charges against me (vs. 13). They accuse me of heresy because I believe all the law and the prophets (vs. 14) and believe in the resurrection (vs. 15). My conscience is clear (vs. 16). I was just bringing alms and offerings to my nation (vs. 17). I was in the temple, but I wasn't "with multitude" (vs. 18) and I wasn't causing a tumult (disturbance, uproar). I spoke about the resurrection (vs. 21).

Notice that Paul fails to proclaim the Gospel. His testimony is no different from that of a Jewish Pharisee who believes in "the hope of the resurrection of the dead, both of just and the unjust." (vs. 15).

Vs. 22 Governor Felix needed more information. He delayed his judgment until he could hear from the chief captain. He can't accept that these Jews would oppose Paul so fiercely unless there's something else that hasn't been brought to light. Felix knew more about "**that way**" (Christianity) than anyone gave him credit for. The Jews' hatred toward Christians was well known in the region under Felix's authority.

Vss. 23-27 Paul is given certain liberty while being detained. After a few days he has an opportunity to speak with the governor and his Jewish wife in private (vs. 24) "**concerning his faith in Christ.**" This time he proclaims the gospel. Paul "**reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come**" (vs. 25). This matches Jesus' words in John 16:8-9. The Holy Spirit is convicting the hearts of Felix and his (3 times married) young wife Drusilla.

Felix trembled (vs. 25) at the words of Paul empowered by the Holy Spirit, convicting him of his sin. Instead of doing the necessary (repenting and believing), he sent Paul away. (See John 8:9).

Felix hoped Paul would try to bribe him so he could release him (vs. 26). He saw Paul often, hoping for this money.

Paul was detained for 2 years (vs. 27). Then a new governor came to replace Felix and Paul was left in bonds because Felix knew it would please the Jews. (His wife was a Jew).
