

"The Road to Rome"

Part 1

Acts 22-28

Introduction: The last time we were together we were in Jerusalem with Paul and he was about to be scourged in order to get him to tell why the Jews were so upset with him. But before Paul could be scourged and while they were tying him down for the scourging, he revealed something that stopped the entire plan of the Romans.

Notice Acts 22:25

In the middle of their plan Paul claimed his rights as a Roman citizen. The Roman soldier carried this information back to the chief captain who would confront Paul personally.

Notice Acts 22:26-28

The chief captain revealed that he had purchased his citizenship with a large sum of money. Notice the words from the Bible Background Commentary.

"One could achieve Roman citizenship in several ways: one could be (1) born to a Roman father (as Paul); (2) a citizen of a Roman colony; (3) a retired auxiliary soldier; (4) part of a municipal aristocracy or other group honored by Rome; or (5)—and this was most common after being born in Rome or in a colony—a slave freed by his or her owner. This commander is either a former slave who acquired enough funds to buy his freedom (as often happened), or he bought his citizenship by a bribe, which was common under the preceding emperor, whose name he took."

Getting back to the chief captain, as he tells Paul he purchased his freedom with a large sum of money we can detect in his words that it is his desire to belittle Paul. It is as if he is saying, "I paid a large sum of money to become a citizen but looking at you Paul, I can see that they must have lowered their standards and their fees." This chief captain was proud of his citizenship in the Roman Empire, but there was a greater citizenship offered to him.

Application:

We who know Jesus Christ are citizens of heaven which is the greatest citizenship that a person can have.

Philippians 3:20

²⁰ For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Our citizenship was by far the most expensive.

1 Peter 1:18-19

¹⁸ Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Our citizenship is not purchased by our works or our finances. If we labored all of our lives with every ounce of strength we have and if we gave every single dollar we ever made we could not purchase even one square inch of space in heaven. All that God has waiting for us in heaven is because Jesus shed His blood as the payment for our sins. All that our Lord has done for us has guaranteed that heaven is ours.

Notice Acts 22:29

When the Romans heard that Paul was a citizen of Rome they immediately walked away. The chief captain was afraid because he had violated Roman law, which strictly prohibited binding or beating a Roman citizen.

➤ **Paul before the Sanhedrin**

Notice Acts 22:30

The chief captain still desired to know why the Jews were so angered at Paul so he therefore called the Sanhedrin together to examine him. We can only imagine Paul's thoughts as he would hear that he would be standing before the Sanhedrin. This is the group which he once a member of.

Acts 26:10

¹⁰ Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

For Paul to speak before the Sanhedrin would be the opportunity of a lifetime. He knew how they thought and he knew how they viewed the followers of Jesus Christ. He did not know how the meeting would go but I am sure he was ready for the opportunity.

Notice Acts 23:1

When we read this verse, we see that Paul has no fear and he is not intimidated by the Sanhedrin. He is living the Words that Peter wrote.

1 Peter 3:12-17

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

¹³ And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

¹⁴ But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

¹⁶ Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

¹⁷ For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

These verses describe the Apostle Paul as he stands before the Sanhedrin.

Application:

Might we also be ready to stand before whomever God chooses. Let us remember the words of Elijah.

1 Kings 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Let us remember that we are children of God and as His children we are the salt and light of the earth.

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

¹⁴ *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

¹⁵ *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

¹⁶ *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

There is no reason for us to be fearful or intimidated.

1 John 4:4

⁴ *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

Satan wants us to fear because in fear we compromise and become paralyzed.

Nehemiah 6:5, 14

⁵ Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

⁹ **For they all made us afraid**, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

¹⁰ Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: **for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.**

¹¹ And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

¹² And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

¹³ Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

¹⁴ My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, **that would have put me in fear.**

Now let us get back to Acts.

Notice Acts 23:2

Paul's greeting angered Ananias the high priest and he ordered Paul to be struck on the mouth. This showed the corruption of the high priest. Notice the words of Barclay.

"When the high priest ordered Paul to be struck, he himself was transgressing the Law, which said, "He who strikes the cheek of an Israelite, strikes, as it were, the glory of God."

Let us notice some facts concerning the high priest in Paul's day.

Ananias is not Aaron, and Moses is not giving him messages from Yahweh. The office of high priest was no longer passed down from father to son in the line of Aaron. The high priest was now appointed by Rome (at times annually, but Ananias had now served for a

decade). Rome appointed members of the sect of the Sadducees to that office at this time. The office of high priest was more political than religious at this time. Sadducees did not believe in the supernatural, angels, or the resurrection of the dead. That means that the high priest who entered God's Most Holy Place once each year on the Day of Atonement for himself and for all the people of Israel did not believe in atonement! He did not believe in eternal life or see a need for salvation.

The office of high priest at this time was just a position and nothing more. So the high priest was corrupt and only there for the power and wealth. When Paul testified of his clear conscience in verse 1 this brought great conviction to the high priest and that is why he ordered Paul to be punched in the mouth.

Conclusion/Application:

What we see here is what we can expect as we live lives that glorify the Lord. Righteous living will certainly stir up wickedness. The world hates Jesus so we can expect that we too will be hated. Remember how Joseph was hated, and Elijah was hated, David was hated by Saul, Daniel was hated, and the list goes on and on. We should never think that it will be any different for us. Notice the Words of Jesus.

John 15:18-21

¹⁸ *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

¹⁹ *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

²⁰ *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*

²¹ *But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

When we walk in fellowship with the Lord our lives bring conviction in the lives of unsaved people.