

"The Road to Rome"

Part 2

Acts 22-28

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we came to chapter 23 and in the beginning of this chapter the Romans have set Paul before the Jewish Sanhedrin in order to discover what he had done to cause the Jews to be so angry. As Paul opened up with an address to the Sanhedrin, he made a statement that brought conviction to the high priest.

Notice Acts 23:1

The righteousness of Jesus Christ in Paul's life stirred up the evil in the high priest and he then ordered that Paul was to be struck on the mouth. We learned last week that this high priest Ananias was not a godly man. He was appointed by the Roman officials and he was a Sadducee. As a Sadducee he 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. He was simply in the position for personal wealth and power.

Notice Acts 23:2

This brings us to where we are tonight.

- **Paul before the Sanhedrin**
- **Part 2**

Notice Acts 23:3

The actions of the high priest made Paul angry but his anger was not sinful anger. This was a righteous anger.

Ephesians 4:26

²⁶ *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

Paul's anger was righteous anger. The reason he was angry was because the Sanhedrin was to be the Supreme Court that led in spiritual matters. Paul needed to point out the corruption in this court. What the high priest did was completely against the Law of Moses.

Deuteronomy 25:1-2

If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

² And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number.

There are times when it is sin to be silent and seem satisfied when we know the situation is an offense against God. There are times when we are put in situations so that we will speak up to bring conviction into another person's life.

Ephesians 5:11

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Let us get back to the situation in Acts. The violation of the Law and the hypocrisy of the high priest is what angered Paul. He then referred to the high priest as a "WHITED WALL" which meant, he presented himself as righteous on the outside but inside he was corrupt and vile. This was the condition of the religious leaders in the first century. They presented themselves as holy and righteous but they were extremely corrupt. We can see this in several passages.

John 8:3-5

³ And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

⁴ They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

⁵ Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

Here the religious leaders brought a woman caught in the act of adultery to Jesus. We see their sinful hearts in that fact that they brought her but not the man with whom she was

caught. Many believe the man was one of their group. Notice how Jesus addressed the religious leaders.

Matthew 23:25-28

²⁵ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

²⁶ Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

²⁷ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

²⁸ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

This is the condition of all "RELIGIOUS" people today. They focus upon the outside because they believe that it is the exterior that makes them pleasing to God.

"There was once a famous artist who met a poor tramp and was so impressed with his woebegone appearance and condition that he felt he would make an apt subject for a drawing. He gave the tramp a little money and his card and promised to pay him well if he would call at his house on the following day and sit while he drew his picture. The next morning the tramp arrived, but the artist's intention was defeated. The tramp had washed and shaved and so spruced himself that he was scarcely recognizable!"

This is the very way the religious man responds when he is convicted. He feels as though he must make himself presentable to God before he can be accepted. Instead of coming to the Lord just as he is, lost and undone, he does his best to reform himself. He will get involved in religious activities, he may give up a few bad habits, and he will start attending a church service. He does not understand that God looks on the heart and the heart is the problem. Salvation is from the inside out.

Notice Acts 23:3 again.

I want us to notice that Paul never sought any vengeance he simply stated that God would smite him. God did smite him about five years after this, after his house had been reduced

to ashes, in a tumult raised by his own son, he was besieged and taken in the royal palace; where having attempted in vain to hide himself, he was dragged out and slain.

Notice Acts 23:4-5

Paul states that he did not know he was speaking to the high priest. There are several thoughts concerning what is said here. Let me first of all point out that Paul knew he was not to speak evil of the high priest.

Exodus 22:28

²⁸ Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

One of the questions raised here is, "How did Paul not know the high priest?" There are 3 possible answers.

1. His eyesight was so bad he was not able to see very well. This does not seem to fit because he looked earnestly at them in verse 1.
2. Possibly his words were sarcastic. Maybe he was in a way stating, "I did not know he was the high priest because he certainly did not act like the high priest with the order he gave!"
3. The high priest was not wearing his priestly garments and Paul would not have known him because he had not had contact with the Sanhedrin for 20 years.

We do not know the answer but we do know that Paul was quick to confess his sin. Paul may not have respected the man Ananias but he certainly respected the position and the Word of God.

Application:

Let us learn from this that we must be quick to confess our sins and deal with them the moment we realize what we have done. Those who are quick to do this will save themselves much chastisement.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32

³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

³² But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

1 John 1:7-10

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Paul kept a short account of his sin and that is exactly the way in which we should live. We will sin, but we must be quick to get it right.

Notice Acts 23:6-10

As Paul thought the situation over and as he realized the Sadducees made up the Sanhedrin, he knew his chances of a fair trial were nonexistent. He knew the theological differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He then told them his hope was in the resurrection. This then split the crowd because the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection but the Pharisees did. The Pharisees then sided with Paul and the Roman soldiers thought they were going to kill Paul so they carried him into the castle.

Notice Acts 23:11

In the middle of all the chaos God spoke to Paul great Words of encouragement. No matter what would happen in Jerusalem, no one could take Paul's life because God's plan was for Paul to share the Gospel in Rome. In the situation that looked to be out of control, God reminds Paul that He is in complete control of every detail.

Conclusion/Application:

This verse contains much encouragement for each of us. In all that we encounter in our lives God is in control of every detail of our lives.

Job 1:8-12

⁸ *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

⁹ *Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?*

¹⁰ *Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

¹¹ *But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

¹² *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

Proverbs 16:9

⁹ *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Romans 8:28-31

²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

²⁹ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

³⁰ *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

³¹ *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*