

"The Road to Rome"

Part 3

Acts 22-28

Introduction: When we stopped last week Paul was in the hands of the Roman guards again as they rescued him from the Sanhedrin. The Romans carried him into the castle and the next night the Lord gave Paul a message of encouragement.

Notice Acts 23:10-11

Paul now had confirmation that he would get to Rome safely. But he was not the only one aware of God promise to get him to Rome to preach the Gospel. Satan was also aware of the promise and the plan. Therefore, Satan is going to do everything he can to stop Paul and even to kill Paul.

➤ **The Conspiracy**

Notice Acts 23:12-13

There is much for us to consider in these verses. First of all, we see that these 40 plus men had taken a vow before the Lord that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. Would they starve to death because they could not carry out their oath? No, they would not. Notice the words of from the Bible Background Commentary.

"Revolutionary-minded Jews considered some assassinations pious acts; Herod the Great had once executed ten Pharisees who had formed an association by oath for the purpose of killing him. If Paul's enemies eventually broke their oaths to kill him, Jewish law would simply require them to bring atonement offerings to the temple; thus their oath here does not mean they would literally starve."

Let us consider a few lessons from what we are told here.

✓ **Lesson #1**

These men were sincere and they believed they were actually doing the Lord a favor by executing Paul. They were banded together and they were banded under an oath. This tells

me that we can be committed to a plan, we can be sincere about carrying out the plan and we can believe that we are serving God by carrying the plan out. But just because we are passionate about something that does not mean it is right and pleasing to God. We must be sure that what we are desiring to do is the will of God.

1 Chronicles 17:1-4

Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains.

² Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee.

³ And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

⁴ Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:

✓ **Lesson #2**

We see that this conspiracy came together immediately after the Lord assured Paul he would preach in Rome. This tells us that when we are being used as a tool in the hand of the Lord, we can be sure there is going to be opposition and resistance. After the solace from the Lord will come the storm of Satan. He cannot kill us who are believers without God's permission so he will therefore do all he can to strike fear deep within in an attempt to stop us.

In Acts 11 we learned of a great movement of the Holy Spirit in Antioch and the church was growing so much that Barnabas had to go to Tarsus to get Paul to assist him. In the middle of the Gentiles coming to Jesus Christ we read of Satan's move in Acts 12.

Acts 12:1-4

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

² And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

³ *And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)*

⁴ *And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.*

Satan moved Herod to kill James and he had the same intention toward Peter but God would allow Peter to be set free. This was a fear tactic to discourage the Apostles from preaching the Gospel.

✓ **Lesson #3**

In the conspiracy we see how much influence Satan can have on unbelievers. He can lead them to the point of committing murder and convince them they are serving God.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

³ *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

⁴ *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Paul's words to Titus describe these people.

Titus 1:15-16

¹⁵ *Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

¹⁶ *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

The words of Jesus in John 8 explain that these Jews who desired to kill Paul were children of the Devil.

John 8:40-44

⁴⁰ But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

⁴¹ Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

⁴² Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

⁴³ Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

⁴⁴ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Notice Acts 23:14-15

Here again we see the corruption of the Sanhedrin. They do nothing to resist the plan of the conspirators but are willing to do their part to see Paul killed. They knew exactly how morally rotten the religious leaders were. Their plan was to ambush Paul in the dark.

Application:

This is a picture of how our enemy works. He will attack in the dark at a time when we least expect it. This was not something that Paul would expect while he was under the protection of the Roman soldiers. But Satan's plan was that the 40 plus men would overpower the soldiers. Let us learn that we must first of all walk in the spiritual light and stay far away from spiritual darkness.

Psalm 56:13

¹³ For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Romans 13:11-14

¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

¹² *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

¹³ *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*

¹⁴ *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

What is it to walk in the light? It is to walk in fellowship with the True Light and it is to put off the works of darkness.

Notice Acts 23:16

This is a marvelous verse. This verse speaks loudly of the sovereignty of God. Men make plans and men plan their evil ways but God has a plan which no one can thwart. Let us slow down here and consider a few thoughts. This young man just had to be in the right place at the right time to hear about the conspiracy. He had to have access to his uncle Paul in order to get the message to him. This is all the hand of God. Now, let us consider that God could have supernaturally protected Paul just as He did Peter when Peter was placed in prison by Herod.

Acts 12:5-9

⁵ *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

⁶ *And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.*

⁷ *And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.*

⁸ *And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.*

⁹ *And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.*

God could have done the same for Paul but instead He chose to work through Paul's nephew.

Application:

This is to let us know that God's means are unlimited and he can use anyone He desires to accomplish His will. Remember how He used the young lad with the bread and the fish when He fed the 5000? This is meant to be an encouragement for us. When we have needs God can use people, we may never expect to accomplish His will in our lives. It is also a reminder to us that we may be the person that He chooses to use. Therefore, we must be available and willing to do what He calls upon us to do. Let me show you another situation where something similar happened.

1 Kings 5:1-4

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

² *And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.*

³ *And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.*

⁴ *And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*

Conclusion:

God can use us in many different ways if we are willing to speak when the opportunity arises.