

"The Road to Rome"

Part 4

Acts 22-28

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we were in chapter 23 and Paul was being held by the Romans in the castle. It was then that Paul's nephew heard of a conspiracy in which 40 plus Jews had taken a vow to not eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. This young man then carried this news to Paul while he was being held to warn him. Paul then called the Roman guard and instructed him to take his nephew to the chief captain.

Notice Acts 23:16-18

This brings us to where we are tonight.

➤ **Paul's Escort to Caesarea**

Notice Acts 23:19-24

The chief captain listened to Paul's nephew which is notable because of his authority. He then ordered an escort for Paul of 470 soldiers to see that he would make it to the governor's palace. He then sent Paul off with a letter to Felix.

Notice Acts 23:25-30

The letter was short but to the point.

Notice Acts 23:31-35

When the governor read the letter, he placed Paul in the palace where he would be safe until his accusers came and then he would hear the case against Paul.

The question that arises in my mind is why do I need to know this information here in Acts 23? There is no doctrine taught in this chapter but only details of Paul going from Jerusalem to Caesarea. So, what is here for us to learn?

Application:

The answer is there is a great message here for us if we slow down and meditate on the details. Let us consider the theme of the book of Acts. It is a letter written by Luke that explains how the greatest message of all, the Gospel, goes with the Apostles from Jerusalem to Rome and beyond. This is the central focus of the book of Acts. But what are we to make of chapter 23 and those that follow? The focus in chapter 23 and the chapters to follow is the Providence of God. We are seeing in chapter 23 and will see in the chapters to come how God in His providence controls the situations in our lives to bring about His sovereign will.

Let us keep in mind that Paul has been encouraged by the Lord that he will carry the Gospel to Rome.

Notice Acts 23:10-11

This verse is here to let Paul know how the Lord would protect him and it is also here to let us know what God is doing so that we might pay close attention to the details of His providence as we follow Paul to Rome. We have seen that he used a young man who was Paul's nephew to protect Paul from the conspirators who planned to kill him. We have seen that God worked in the heart of the chief captain and he listened to the young man and he believed his story. The lesson in all of this is that God uses whomever He chooses to bring about His will in our lives.

Romans 8:31-39

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

³² *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

³³ *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

³⁴ *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 103:19

¹⁹ The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Psalm 22:28

²⁸ For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.

Daniel 4:35

³⁵ And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Let us remember all that Joseph went through for 13 years. Then let us never forget his words to his brothers.

Genesis 45:5-8

⁵ Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

⁶ For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

What does all of this look like in our personal lives? It is changed plans. It is closed doors and open doors that were not expected. It is meetings with people that we did not plan. It is being placed where we did not plan or choose to be. I suppose one of the best places to see the Providence of God is in the book of Esther. In that letter there is no mention of God at all. But yet when you read the letter He is on every page.

Now we come to Acts 24. This chapter can be divided into three sections.

1. **The Jewish charges against Paul. Acts 24:1-9**
2. **Paul's reply to the charges. Acts 24:10-21**
3. **Felix's response. Acts 24:22-27**

➤ **The Jewish charges against Paul.**

Notice Acts 24:1

Here we see that the Sanhedrin came for the hearing and they brought with them Tertullus who was a hired attorney. They had hired him to bury Paul. We can just imagine that this man was the best of the best and the Sanhedrin had great hope that he would cast enough guilt upon Paul that Felix would sentence him to death. We know this was their intent just by the accusations they raised against Paul.

Notice Acts 24:2-3

Tertullus spent almost as much time flattering Felix as he did accusing Paul. This was nothing but flattery. Felix had been a slave who won his freedom and he was known for his violent use of force. One Roman Historian summed up Felix character this way, "He exercised royal power with the mind of a slave."

Notice Acts 24:4-5

There are two accusations in verse 5.

a. Paul was a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world,

Tertullus referred to Paul as a troublemaker who stirred up riots wherever he went. This accusation was meant to bring the Roman government against him. The Romans desired to maintain order throughout the entire Roman Empire. To accuse him of stirring up riots was an attempt to paint him as a lawless man with no concern for Roman law.

b. Paul was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

This was another attempt to bring the Roman government against Paul. The Romans only permitted Judaism as a legal religion. The way Tertullus worded the accusation he made it appear that Christianity was a sect that was divorced from the Jewish religion. He tried to make Paul look like the leader of a cult. This was to again make Paul look like a lawless man who was against the Roman law.

Notice Acts 24:6

c. Paul had desecrated the temple.

This was an attempt to get permission to execute Paul. The Romans had given the Jews permission to execute any *Gentiles* who went beyond the *Gentile* courtyard in the temple. Paul was not a *Gentile* but he had been accused of bringing a *Gentile* into the forbidden area.

Notice Acts 24:6 -7

Tertullus made it sound as though the Jews had captured Paul to try him before the Sanhedrin but their intent was to kill Paul.

Acts 21:28-31

²⁸ *Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*

²⁹ *(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)*

³⁰ *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.*

³¹ *And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.*

Conclusion:

When Paul was on trial before Felix this was an attempt by Satan to get Paul put to death under the Romans. Satan moved the Sanhedrin to get the best attorney available and that is why they brought Tertullus. But as we shall see even the best of attorney could not hinder the plan of God. Again, in this chapter we see the Providence of God. He rules over all the earth and the people of the earth.

With this thought there should be no fear in our lives at all. God is sovereign and unless He permits there is no one that can harm us or hinder God's plan for us. We may not understand what God is doing in the moment but we know that He is good and His ways are best and He always does what is right.

Psalm 145:8-9

⁸ *The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*

⁹ *The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Jeremiah 29:11

¹¹ *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*