



## **MIDWEEK FILLUP | THE STUDY OF ACTS**

### **ACTS 23**

#### **OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

1. To consider the events of Paul before the Sanhedrin
2. To review the plot by the Jews for Paul's life
3. To examine Paul's transport to Caesarea to appear before Governor Felix

#### **SUMMARY**

When Paul was before the Sanhedrin council, he stated that he had lived in "all good conscience before God." Ananias, the high priest, commanded that he be struck on the mouth. Paul responded, not knowing that he was the high priest, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?" Those standing nearby asked Paul if he would "revile" the high priest. Paul then quoted the scriptures, "You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people." Paul recognized that there were Sadducees and Pharisees present in the Sanhedrin. He made it known that he was a Pharisee, and that he was being judged concerning "the hope and resurrection of the dead." This caused a dissension among the Sanhedrin, as the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection. The scribes of the Pharisees spoke out that they found nothing evil in Paul. The Roman commander became afraid that harm would come to Paul, so he ordered the soldiers to take Paul back to the barracks. (1-10)

The following night, the Lord appeared and spoke to Paul. He was to be the Lord's witness at Rome, as he had testified for Him in Jerusalem. Some Jews then planned to kill Paul. More than forty Jews banded together and took an oath to kill him before they ate or drank anything. The plotting Jews went to the chief priests and elders to present their plan. They requested that the chief priests and elders would contact the commander, and have Paul appear before the council again for further inquiry. The forty or more Jews would lie in wait to kill him along the way. Paul's nephew heard of the ambush plot. He went to Paul in the barracks and told him what he heard. Paul had his nephew taken to the commander. The commander took him aside and heard the plot. The commander told the young man to tell no one that they had spoken about the plot. Paul's nephew then departed from the commander. (11-22)

Next, Paul was to be sent to Felix at Caesarea by night. The commander had two centurions prepare the men to take Paul. 200 Soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen were readied. They were to take Paul to Caesarea at the third hour of the night. Paul was to go before governor Felix. The commander wrote a letter to Felix to accompany Paul. The commander,

Claudius Lysias, addressed the letter to "the most excellent governor Felix." The letter summarized the situation with Paul. The Jews had seized Paul and were about to kill him. Troops were sent to rescue Paul. In an attempt to learn of the Jews' accusation of Paul, he took him before the Sanhedrin council. He only learned that Paul was accused "concerning questions of the law," but nothing deserving death or imprisonment. The commander learned of a plot to ambush and kill Paul. Due to this discovery, he sent Paul to Felix and ordered his accusers to appear before Felix to state their charges against him. The letter gave Felix the background. The soldiers, horsemen, and spearmen took Paul by night to Antipatris. The next day, the horsemen continued, and took Paul to Caesarea, while the soldiers and spearmen returned. They presented Paul and the letter to Felix. The governor inquired where Paul was from and understood that he was from Cilicia. He agreed to hear Paul when his accusers arrived. Felix had Paul held in Herod's Praetorium. (23-35)

## **OUTLINE**

### **1. PAUL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN COUNCIL (1-10)**

#### **a. THE HIGH PRIEST ANANIAS COMMANDED FOR PAUL TO BE STRUCK ON THE MOUTH (1-3)**

- i. Paul stated he had lived in "all good conscience before God"
- ii. Ananias commanded that Paul be struck on the mouth
- iii. Paul responded, not knowing that Ananias was high priest
  1. Paul said, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!"
  2. Paul noted that he had commanded him to be struck contrary to the law

#### **b. PAUL DID NOT RECOGNIZE ANANIAS AS HIGH PRIEST (4-5)**

- i. When Paul spoke to Ananias, those standing near asked, "Do you revile God's high priest?"
- ii. Paul did not know Ananias was the high priest
  1. Paul quoted scripture in response
  2. "You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people"

#### **c. THE SANHEDRIN WAS DIVIDED (6-10)**

- i. Paul recognized that there were Sadducees and Pharisees present in the Sanhedrin
- ii. Paul made it known that he was a Pharisee and was being judged concerning "the hope and resurrection of the dead"
  1. This caused a dissension among the Sanhedrin
  2. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection; the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection
  3. The scribes of the Pharisees spoke out that they found nothing evil in Paul

- iii. The Roman commander became afraid that harm would come to Paul
- iv. The commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul back to the barracks

## **2. THE JEWISH PLOT AGAINST PAUL'S LIFE (11-22)**

### **a. THE LORD SPOKE TO PAUL (11)**

- i. The Lord appeared and spoke to Paul the following night
- ii. Paul was to be the Lord's witness at Rome

### **b. THE JEWS PLANNED TO KILL PAUL (12-15)**

- i. More than forty Jews banded together and took an oath to kill Paul before they ate or drank anything
- ii. The plotting Jews went to the chief priests and elders to present their plan
  - 1. The chief priests and elders were to contact the commander
  - 2. They wanted Paul to be called before the council again for further inquiry
  - 3. The forty Jews would lie in wait to kill him along the way

### **c. THE PLOT WAS DISCOVERED (16-22)**

- i. Paul's nephew heard of the ambush plot
- ii. He went to Paul in the barracks and told him what he had heard
- iii. Paul had his nephew taken to the commander
  - 1. The commander took him aside and heard the plot
  - 2. The commander told the young man to tell no one that they had spoken about the plot
  - 3. Paul's nephew departed from the commander

## **3. PAUL WAS SENT TO FELIX AT CAESAREA BY NIGHT (23-35)**

### **a. THE COMMANDER HAD TWO CENTURIONS PREPARE TO TAKE PAUL (23-24)**

- i. 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen were prepared
- ii. They were to take Paul to Caesarea at the third hour of the night
- iii. Paul was to go before governor Felix

### **b. THE COMMANDER WROTE A LETTER TO FELIX (25-30)**

- i. Claudius Lysias was the Roman commander's name
- ii. The letter was address to "the most excellent governor Felix"
- iii. The letter summarized the situation with Paul
  - 1. The Jews had seized Paul and were about to kill him
  - 2. Troops were sent to rescue Paul
  - 3. To learn of the Jews' accusation, the commander took Paul before the Sanhedrin
  - 4. He only learned that Paul was accused "concerning questions of the law," but nothing deserving death or imprisonment

5. The commander learned of a plot to ambush and kill Paul
6. Due to this, he sent Paul to Felix and ordered his accusers to appear before Felix to state their charges against him

**c. PAUL WAS TAKEN TO CAESAREA AND PRESENTED TO FELIX (31-35)**

- i. The soldiers, horsemen, and spearmen took Paul by night to Antipatris
- ii. The next day, the horsemen continued, and took Paul to Caesarea, while the soldiers and spearmen returned
- iii. They presented Paul and the letter to Felix
  1. Felix inquired where Paul was from and understood that he was from Cilicia
  2. He agreed to hear Paul when his accusers arrived
  3. He had Paul held in Herod's Praetorium