

Paul's Defenses

We saw how Paul went to Jerusalem to do a few things that he wanted to do and he had gone there against what God had wanted him to do. He was there purifying himself in the temple. It takes 7 days to purify oneself. While he was there on one of the later days, the 5th 6th or 7th day, he was taken captive. We don't know which of those later days he was taken captive because it hasn't said. He was taken captive and he was accused of having a Gentile, named Trophimus, in the temple area where he shouldn't have been. He really hadn't been there at all. They only supposed this, so they grabbed Paul and took him out of the temple.

Acts 21:30-31:

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.

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

“chief captain” – *chiliarchos* – he is the ruler over a thousand – *chilios* means one thousand.

Acts 21:32:

Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain [*chiliarchos*] and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

“immediately” – he went immediately because he was accustomed to trouble in Jerusalem; he had had his men out on the streets before taking care of these different situations.

“centurions” – *hekatontarchos* - they are over a hundred. If he's got centurions, and a centurion is over a hundred, he must at least have 2 hundred out there unless some of the soldiers under one of those centurions weren't available at the moment, otherwise he would have had at least two hundred.

They quit beating Paul because “here comes the Roman national guard.”

Acts 21:33:

Then the chief captain [*chiliarchos*] came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

He saw what he assumed to be the cause, this one fellow Paul, and he said, “Well we’ll just take him and we’ll bind him and we’ll take him back and we’ll find out what causing all this trouble. A big riot in Jerusalem; we can’t have these things.”

Acts 21:34:

And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

“some cried one thing, some another” – their accusations don’t even agree; their witness. It kind of reminds me of news reporters’ interviews of different witnesses. You get all these different reports. That’s what this chief captain was getting.

The castle sat right next to the temple. Paul had been in the temple and that is where they had grabbed him, dragged him out of there and they were beating him someplace outside of the temple area. The chief captain came along with his soldiers and centurions and they took Paul back to the castle which is right next door to the temple.

Acts 21:35:

And when he came upon the stairs [going up to the castle], so it was, that he was borne [carried] of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

The soldiers had to crowd around him and literally lift him out of that area so the people wouldn’t get to him. They had to protect their prisoner.

Acts 21:36-37:

For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

He was a Roman soldier and he understood Latin and Greek. Being a Roman soldier in that province, more than likely he or someone with him would have had an understanding of the language of the people, being Aramaic. At least they would have had an interpreter.

Acts 21:38:

Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

“murderers” – the sicarii. The Sicarii were those that carried the knives and went around and did their thing. They were the extreme zealots.

Acts 21:39:

But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a

citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer [allow] me to speak unto the people.

“Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city” – that chief captain didn’t catch that he was a citizen because later on Paul really uses this. He says, “I Am a Roman citizen.” Finally it hit that guy between the ears but this time it didn’t really register with him.

What we’re getting into here, and what we’re going to be covering in this session, are Paul’s defenses. Do you defend Christianity? Do you defend the truth? Do you apologize for it? No, but Paul was a prisoner and therefore he made defenses for himself. They were legal defenses. But you never have to defend the truth. The one reason he had to defend himself was because he had gone against the revelation God had given him. God said, “Don’t go to Jerusalem.” What did Paul do? He went to Jerusalem. Now he’s got to defend himself. We’re not going to look at the defenses real closely.

You ought to read and observe how Paul handled himself when he defended himself. He used the Word to defend himself. He didn’t defend the Word. The Word is its own defense. Look at the logic in those defenses when you study them. Look at how beautifully Paul just laid it out. Attorneys who use all the technical jargon before the jury of common people are not understood. They sort of get a hazy picture of what’s going on. But when a simple layman comes in and speaks the truth; just says it honestly without double-talk or big words; just the straight facts or truth, they understand it. That’s what Paul did; just the straight, beautiful, logical truth.

Acts 21:40:

And when he had given him licence [permission], Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

“Hebrew” – Aramaic – Hebrew was the ecclesiastical language, the language used in the temple. Aramaic was the spoken language among the people. So he’s going to speak to them in Aramaic not Hebrew.

Acts 22:1:

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

This is his first defense. This is the day when he’s taken captive. This first defense goes through chapter 22. In here he gives an account of how he was converted on the road to Damascus. A period of time after he was converted he goes down to Jerusalem and there is where he saw the vision; God told him things he was going to do and that he didn’t belong in Jerusalem.

Acts 22:21:

And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

God had told him to get out of Jerusalem. Paul's ministry was not in Jerusalem. That was Peter, John and others but Paul's ministry was to Gentiles. Now he's relating this to his Jewish brethren (in the flesh).

Acts 22:22:

And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

Reading through this defense, thinking from a natural point of view the way the Romans would have looked at it, what's wrong with what he said? "Sure, he's on some religious trip, maybe," is what the natural men would have said. But the Jews were yelling, "It's not fit for this guy to live. Get him off of the earth."

Acts 22:23:

And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

They looked at Paul and they said, "That guy's a screwball. He's a fanatic. Did you hear what he said?" And they're standing there tearing their clothes off and throwing dust up in the air. Times haven't changed. Today they're still tearing their clothes off, throwing dust up in the air and pointing their fingers at believers saying, "They're screwballs."

That's the world. The Word says that in order to have a sound mind you've got to know the Word. Without the Word you've got an unsound mind which is an insane mind. Where's the world? They tear their clothes off. They throw dust in the air.

Acts 22:24:

The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

"examined by scourging" – in other words; whip him and get a confession; torture

Acts 22:25:

And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

Paul asked the centurion, "By the way, is it lawful to scourge a man that's a Roman and especially one that's uncondemned, that hasn't had a trial? I was just wondering about the legal aspects of this whole situation."

Acts 22:26:

When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain [*chiliarchos*], saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

Remember I said the chief captain never heard it; never registered with him when Paul said he was a citizen of no mean city.

The centurion said to the chief captain, “You know we could get in a lot of hot water by scourging a Roman, both me and thee.”

Acts 22:27-28:

Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

“great sum obtained I this freedom” – I bought my freedom – I became a Roman citizen with a little cash-in-fist. Paul said, “I didn’t have to buy mine. I was born that way.”

There was a penalty for scourging a Roman citizen, especially one uncondemned. These guys could get into a lot of hot water, if they weren’t careful.

Acts 22:29:

Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

They could get in trouble even binding Roman citizens let alone scourging them. Now he’s got to do some real fast thinking if he’s going to save his skin.

Acts 22:30:

On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council [*Sanhedrin*] to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

In chapter 23 is Paul’s second defense. This is where Paul sees there are both the Pharisees and the Sadducees there. He does that trip about the resurrection and the Sadducees don’t believe in anything so they get this big argument going and that ends the meeting. This is the second day.

Acts 23:10-11:

And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest

Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

God said, “Paul you are going to Rome and you’re going testify there.” Paul even though he was willing to die in Jerusalem he isn’t going to. God said, “I’ve got something else for you to do. You’re going to Rome.” Did he say when he was going to Rome? No, it was about three years before he finally got there.

Maybe God is telling you to go someplace. Don’t get discouraged if it’s not tomorrow. If it took Paul three years to get there, so what? He got there and if God said he’s going then he’s going.

Acts 23:12:

And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

This was the third day. He was taken captive then the next day he had his second defense. Now it’s the third day.

“they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul” – from what I’ve told you, they must not have eaten or drank for three years at least. Do you think they got hungry? Or, do you think they broke their pledge?

Acts 23:13-15:

And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

They said, “Send word that there’s a couple things in this puzzle that don’t quite fit and you’d just like to ask Paul a couple more questions. While he’s coming we’ll be ready. There are 40 of us.”

Acts 23:16:

And when Paul's sister's son [his nephew] heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

Somebody was walking. God will always have his children there to watch over these things as long as we've got our ears cleaned out; as long as we're walking. We look at that and say, "Well wasn't that wonderful?" Did you know there's miracles happening every day? It's just that those things we look at with our eyes and say, "Boy that's BIG." It's just another one of those things God's watching over. It's just another miracle. God just had Paul's nephew in the neighborhood when some of these things were going on. Paul couldn't have been bound too tightly because his nephew could get into see him.

Acts 23:17-22:

Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council [Sanhedrin], as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

Even this Roman soldier, who was high up, had enough brains to know that if you're going to move in a situation like this you've got to move secretly. He told that young man, "Don't tell anybody that you told me." Most people have run of the mouth. It's a hard one to overcome but it's easy when you realize the importance of the situation. I'll bet he spelled it out to him. He made it very clear how important this was. Like in the communist countries; the Christians that move underground. They can't blab. They can't even smile.

Acts 23:23-24:

And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred

soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

“beasts” – not just one. There’s a reason for there being more than one.

Then he writes a letter of introduction telling Felix who’s coming and why.

Acts 23:31-33:

Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

Who, when they came to Caesarea and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

That’s how Paul got out of there over to Caesarea which is on the coast.

Acts 23:23 has presented a couple problems to the critics.

Acts 23:23:

And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

First of all he called two centurions and they made ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea. Besides that he has seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen.

From a text point of view, it’s sort of interesting. The word “two”, before “centurions”, is not in a very old manuscript (P74). It’s a seventh century papyrus. That’s the only one, basically. In other words; “And he called certain centurions...,” number not specific.

In some of the manuscripts it reads, “A hundred horsemen”; in manuscript 614; in the old Latin manuscript H; in the Harkley (sp.?) and Syriac manuscript it’s in the margin; in the Egyptian or Coptic text that’s known as the Sahidic. In those manuscripts it’s a hundred. Those manuscripts are considered not as good a pedigree as others. Yet, it’s something to be considered; whether it was seventy or a hundred. I can’t make a yea or nay but I would be tempted to go with the seventy on that.

Another thing is that word “spearmen.” In most of the texts it’s the word *dexiolabous*. In some of the more modern texts it’s *dexiobolos*, or something like that, which is more

like a spearman. That's the word for spearman. In the Latin I believe it's *lanceras*; a lancer; somebody who carries a spear. This word *dexiobolos*, it's the only place it's used in the New Testament. It's never used in old classical stuff and it wasn't used again, in writing, until a number of centuries later. Therefore nobody can say with absolute certainty what that word means. One editor suggested that it could have been "led horses," in other words; replacements for the other horses. That's possible.

There were 200 soldiers, 200 spearmen and 70 horsemen. That's 470 men going with Paul. That's possible. It was at night; robbers on the highway and stuff. On the other hand, perhaps 270 plus 200 replacement horses would have been sufficient. Perhaps the 200 soldiers led the 200 replacement horses so that when they reached a certain point, they would lead the other horses that the 70 or 100 had been riding and ride a fresh horse. Wouldn't that make sense?

Whether there were 470 men altogether or the 270 plus 200 other horses for replacement, at any rate this big group accompanied Paul up to Antipatris and from there the horsemen took him the rest of the way to Caesarea and the foot soldiers went back. The foot soldiers only went part way. That's why in verse 24 they provided beasts for Paul; one to ride on and one or two replacements.

Acts 23:24:

And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

No we've got another opportunity. It says, "They left at the third hour of the night."

Acts 23:23:

And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

In the Bible, the day is divided into hours. The night is divided into watches not hours. There are only two places in the Bible where it talks about hours of the night and both of those are questionable and can be worked from the texts and manuscripts, especially when you realize how they spoke about time. In the Old Testament the night was divided into three watches. There was the evening watch, the middle watch and the morning watch.

In the New Testament times, under the Roman influence, it was divided into four watches; the evening watch, the midnight watch, the cock-crowing watch and the morning watch. You can figure it out, if you start at 6 p.m. and end at 6 a.m. roughly. The first watch would go approximately from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; the second from 9 to 12, then from 12 to 3 and from 3 to 6.

That's a problem when it talks about the third hour of the night. This is one of the texts I checked out when I was in Munster. In manuscript 1829, it has the word *protes*

(πρώτης) instead of *trites* (τρίτης). The π looks a lot like a τ, then a ρ, then the next letter is totally different, then the rest is all the same. *Trites* is the word that means “third” but *protes* may mean “first” or it may mean “foremost.” It’s not always used numerically as the first but it can mean the first part or the foremost. That would fit with the Judaic tradition of time. He left from the foremost part of the night.

Why would he want them to leave at the foremost part of the night? Because when night came along, the city gates were shut and nobody could get in or out of the city except, of course, a Roman troop. He leaves as soon as possible that nobody else could follow. He surrounds him with all these soldiers so that nobody could even tell that Paul’s there. See the precautions he took?

Acts 23:31:

Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

Antipatris is about half way in between Jerusalem and Caesarea.

Acts 23:32:

On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

They travelled all night. Where are the spearmen? That’s another thing. They’re never mentioned here later; only the foot soldiers and the horsemen. Again, that’s questionable. They travel all night to Antipatris. That’s 35 – 40 miles from Jerusalem. Suppose it took them 12 hours to make that trip. That’s roughly 3 mph. That’s pretty good walking all night. Remember Gideon? He travelled 50 miles from about 10 p.m. till about sunrise. This would have been around 6 mph. But he may have used camels. They didn’t use horses back then.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the military record was that of the English Light Brigade in 1809, when they marched in Spain. They went 42 miles in 26 hours. That’s not even 2 mph. They tell me that a wagon train, if it did a good day’s journey, went 20 miles. Wagon trains travelled slowly. Soldiers had a steady march, so it’s a little different. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Crawshaw, from England, in 1974, when he was 54 years old, walked 231 miles in 72 hours. That’s 3 1/6 mph. When you consider that people before electricity and all this stuff were generally in better shape physically than we are today, I would say that the Romans could have done it overnight at 3 mph. That’s one thing the critics really analyze but they start them out at 9 in the evening instead of 6.

The Word still fits. It fits with all laws of logic, all rules of everything. I keep reading, like here in the life and epistles of Paul, how the Word fits with everything you find in science, archaeology and historical evidence of all kinds. It just fits. It’s documented over and over. This whole section fits. What those spearmen were, nobody really knows

what that word is. But I know that Paul made it out of there. He went to Caesarea and he was accompanied by a bunch of men.