

Acts 23:1-35

January 6, 1977

I was thinking of Paul today, naturally; working Paul. I can figure out Felix, Festus, Claudius, all those fellows I can figure out, but Paul; never can figure him out. I pretty well can handle Peter. I think I can do a fairly comprehensive piece of work on Peter; but I can't on Paul. Every time I think I've got Paul in the bottle, the cork flips off and he comes in a new bottle. I feel about our ministry today that just nobody's going to figure it out. I've had people come and they'll say, "Well, I wish I could understand you." Don't try. Forget it. Just try to love me, don't try to understand me, because that's an impossibility because I'm just not normative, which means you can't put me in one little old package and keep me there for the next day or two or three.

Well, tonight we continue in the great opportunities with which Paul was confronted in the Book of Acts. This is the record tonight in the Book of Acts where, I think it's in the Foundational Class when we talk about revelation, or is that the Advanced Class; the revelation Paul had. For two years there is no record of this great man of God ever winning one soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. This tonight is that section. You see, that's why I said I can't figure Paul out; it's just unbelievable to me. Perhaps the greatest man of God the world ever had, now I'm thinking from the mystery point of view, because the mystery was made known to this man. A man that would go into Ephesus and in two years and three months all Asia would hear the Word. Now in two years not one soul is won. I could cry because I feel the sensitivity, the great in-depth thing that must have been in that man's soul. What could have gone through his mind in two year's time? That's as long as you are in residence in the Corps. Two year's time; something had to go through the mind of that man because his mind was like electricity. That's the way Paul thought. Imagine, two years; not one soul. Don't ask me, I don't know. You see that's why I can't put Paul together. There's just no way to do it. Imagine yourself for two years; no record of success, just lost out of time, so to speak. I think they once had a show on the lost weekend, didn't they? This one is lost two years. Just imagine! The greatest man of God with the great knowledge of the mystery and all that tremendous ability to really hold forth the Word, teach it, totally fearless, bold as crazy, tremendous command of the language, tremendous ability to motivate people: two years, nothing! What a time!

Acts 23:1

"the council" - the Sanhedrin

"earnestly" – intently - It's like my teaching you: I would earnestly behold you. That simply means: I look in your eyeballs; I look at you; I get your attention; I earnestly behold. Any of you that will be teaching, whether it's at the Twig level or here in front of this august body, get your subject so well in mind that you can earnestly behold them. That's why I told you Paul was a tremendous man. Here's another one of them. He didn't read his manuscript, that kind of stuff. No. He did what? He looked them straight in the eyeballs. He got their attention by looking at them. There is no better way to see into the heart of a man or a woman than to look them straight in the eye. When you find a man or a woman that can't look you straight in the eye, he's pretty well got something hidden in his soul. Paul was just earnestly beholding, looking at the council. He knew they were adamant. He knew that this council was stacked against him. He knew that these seventy would just rip him apart, he knew all that; yet he

looked them straight in the eye. He just looked at them. That's that word "earnestly." I don't know any better way to describe it.

"men and brethren" – It is just a greeting like "ladies and gentlemen," plus. The plus is the brethren. The reason he didn't have to say ladies is because there weren't any present; it was men.

"brethren" – does not refer to their new birth; this refers to his Israelitic type of relationship; referred to as his Jewish background, you know, Moses. That is what it's after.

"lived" - having citizenship - like I live in the United States; I have citizenship here. Paul being born again of God's spirit was a son of God and he had citizenship. This goes together with other sections of the epistles where it talks about our citizenship in heaven (**Philippians 3:20**). The thing that excited me about it was the word "lived," that it's citizenship. I have citizenship with God. That's where he had his citizenship just like you and I have.

"conscience" - I think the word conscience many places in the New Testament is a very, very lousy translation. I think it's terrible in places. The reason we have this word "conscience" in the Bible is because of the Latin change over; from Estrangelo Aramaic to Greek and then in the Roman Empire to Latin. The Latins took the words that are really used here. The word in the Greek is *suneidēsis*. That word literally means "joint knowledge." The Romans took that word and translated it *conscientia*. Then the English transliterated it into the English word conscience. And that's how it's carried on in the Bible here. To me it's very weak. Conscience; what's it mean? Don't ask me. It just hasn't got it. Joint knowledge; that is fantastic.

"Men and brethren, I have citizenship in joint knowledge with God unto this day."

Isn't that unbelievable? Joint knowledge with God means share fully. For years I thought joint heirs with Christ meant to share equally; Jesus Christ and the believer share equally. Joint heirship, I understand from a legal point of view, does not mean to share equally but it means where everybody shares the same, fully. I don't know any better way to teach it to you. You just have to see this in the inner most part of your spiritual awareness and perception. That immediately he says, "Men and brethren, I have citizenship and joint knowledge with God unto this day." I'll bet that Sanhedrin spit fire. They said, "Why, you egotist! What's the matter with you?" Can you imagine, you walking in front of a group like this where the cards are stacked and you say unto them, "Look! The Way Ministry's the only thing worth going to. If you ever go back to your church you might as well hang it up." That wouldn't even be as bad as what he said, you know, from a sense knowledge point of view. Do you know what he said to them? He said, "I've got citizenship with God and I've got a connection with God that makes me joint knowledge with God." It's like you saying, in our world today, "Beloved, I'm a son of God. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And they sit back and say, "Well, damn it. Let me see it." And you say, "Damn it, you'll never see it until you believe." But that's what the Word says.

Do you know what happened? As soon as he said that, somebody came down and slapped him right across the mouth. And I want to tell you, It wasn't like the TV shows, where it just looks like they're slapping him but they're not. They whopped him right across the mouth. You know how I know that? The next verse tells me.

Acts 23:2

I saw, what you'd call, the great psychological work that Paul did at Mars Hill, but over here I see no psychology whatsoever. This time old Paul says, "I want to tell you something. You may be the Sanhedrin, but you haven't got any joint knowledge with God. I do. And I've got citizenship and you haven't." About that time somebody stood up and whopped him straight across the mouth by order of Ananias the high priest.

Acts 23:3

"God shall smite thee" - this is not fully understood yet, so don't get excited; we'll handle it.

Matthew 23:27 - In the Far East or Near East all the markers for graves are white-washed. White-wash is made out of lime and water. Look at the stand Jesus took. Here in Acts Paul takes this stand.

"whited wall" - white-washed one

Deuteronomy 17: 8-13

Deuteronomy 32:10 - just mark this verse in your notes here because the phrase that you will want is "kept him as the apple of his eye." I'll be touching on that some.

Exodus 22:28 - "the gods" - i.e. judge, or high priest

Acts 23:4-5

"I wist not (did not know) , brethren that he was the high priest" - Now that cannot be true, and it isn't. It's been in our misunderstanding of it. Paul knew who the high priest was. What he did not know was that the high priest had given the order for him to be slapped. That's the problem.

"high priest" - i.e. that had given the order for Paul to be smacked down

"thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" - That to me is a fantastic thing. Paul was right. Ananias, the high priest, was wrong. We all know that. And yet, because of the position of the high priest, Paul was sorry that he had said what he said because he did not know that it was the high priest that gave the order to sock him in the mouth. Had Paul known it was the high priest, he wouldn't have said a thing. "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Boy, what a tremendous man Paul was.

Now it wasn't the high priest who slapped him in the mouth. It was one of the servants to whom the high priest had given the order and they, of course, were Levites. But when Paul said, "God shall smite thee," saying it to those Levites who hit him, it was going back to the high priest who had given the order. You see how it would carry back? This thing was so disconcerting and so totally opposite to the high priest and his knowledge, that he just flew into a rage and passed the order down and socked it to Paul.

What happened between **verse 1** and **verse 2** as far as Paul's continuing exposition of what he had just said, is not recorded for us. But some place in there, Paul must have continued to hit this thing so that the high priest had time to give orders to the other Levites to go out there and shut his stupid mouth. "Hit him in the mouth, knock his teeth out." That was the order. Between **verse 1** and **verse 2**: how much time, I do not know; what was said, I don't know. But

I know enough was said that somebody could come down by order of the high priest and slap Paul in the mouth. And he said this, in **verse 3**, unto the one who slapped him: “for sittest thou to judge me after the law.” In other words, “You hit me in the mouth as a Levite and you dare not do that, according to the law. It’s contrary to the very law that you as Levites say you are responsible to maintain and promote.” But he was carrying out the orders of the high priest. That’s why those that stood by said, “Revilest thou God’s high priest?”

Somewhere later on this business of the apple of God’s eye comes up again. Where is the apple of God’s eyes referred to other places in the Word? That one I gave you to remember is not the one I’m looking for. I don’t think it is.

Proverbs 7:2 - I would like to just say, this is Old Testament. We know that, but the mystery; I would say to you today, if I were to take this word and really teach it for those of us today, I would say that we keep the mystery as the apple of our eye. That’s a very sensitive part of your body. You just don’t let anybody touch it.

Psalms 17:6-8 - That’s the one I want. “the eye” – “thine eye” is the old translation. Keep me as the apple of thine eye.

Verse 14 is a great one in that Psalm. **Psalms 17:13-14**:

“my soul” – me

“the wicked” – the wicked guy

“*which is thy sword*” – by the sword

“*which have their portion in this life*” - the senses knowledge man gets his due in this life

“whose belly Thou fillest” - the senses man, the unbeliever, so-to-speak in the true God. God fills even his belly.

“they are full of children” – does not mean that. It says, “Their children are full.” Not only do they get blessed (“thou fillest their belly”), but their children are blessed.

“leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes” - when this rich man, this blessed man in the world, dies he leaves the balance of his substance to his kids. He leaves his inheritance to his children. Sounds real modern; men blessed because of the grace and the love of God and the beauty of the divine presence of God to bless even the unbeliever. What does he do? He gets his belly full and says how wonderful he is. Even his kids get their belly full; he puts them through college; gets them started in business. He just lays up for himself all that he can and when he dies, he makes his will and leaves his inheritance with his family. The senses man will always do it. Look inside of the church. What have they done? Same thing. The Word of God to the believer says you abundantly share everything beyond your need.

“As the apple of God’s eye” - what a figure. The high priest was like the apple of God’s eye. Born again believers, Sons of God, are like the apple of God’s eye. In the Old Testament He said, “My palms are ever before me, because I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hands.” **[Isaiah 49:16]** You do not tattoo on the palms of your hands because the inside of your

hands would be too tender to put a tattoo. Yet God engraved Israel, the believers, on the palms of His hands. In the Old Testament it says “walls”; it means palms. The “walls” are ever before me, meaning; the palms are ever before me. He has engraven us on these walls. The walls are the hands. God engraved Israel on His hands so that the believers were constantly before Him. And they were like the apple of His eye.

That’s why Paul would not have reviled the high priest even though, if he’d have known the high priest was wrong, he wouldn’t have done it, because judgment is of God and not man. Paul had no right to take a crack at the high priest. It is God’s responsibility to crack him. And that’s why when they lay hands on men of God like Paul and the rest; it’s just like touching the eye of God. And that’s not good.

Paul maybe didn’t win any souls in two years, but he still had citizenship with God, joint knowledge with Him, which means that all that knowledge God has regarding the mystery God gave to him. And every person that laid hands on Paul had a hell of an ending. That’s right.

Acts 23:6

“but” - now

“perceived” – recognized; came to his head

“Pharisees and Sadducees” - You see there were more people present there than just the Sanhedrin.

“he cried out in the council” - he raised his voice

“called in question” - judged

Having citizenship, joint knowledge with God, when the pressure really gets on here and he sees all this stuff he picks up the resurrection. Because Jesus Christ came to Israel, he is referred to as being resurrected. To know that Jesus Christ did not come to start the Church to which you and I belong is almost unbelievable. He too saw the prophecies of old; saw the fulfillment to Israel, but he never saw the Church of the Body. Had he been God he never would have had to see it. He would have known it from before the foundations of the earth. But he didn’t. He came unto Israel. His whole ministry was as the messiah to Israel. Israel is not a part of the Church of the Body, as Israel. Now certain people out of Israel will be part of the Body, because they’ll no longer be Jews or Gentiles. And Paul by the greatness, I believe, of the revelation; the spirit of God working within Him, hit immediately, after whatever else went on here, the greatness of the resurrection.

Romans 10:9:

The new birth is dependent, not upon his death but, upon his resurrection. But had he not died, he could not have been raised. So the death is very important but it is not important to where it takes over; like at the top of those unbelieving buildings where you put the cross and everything else you mark with the cross, because the cross is indicative of Christ’s death. When he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre: that is the resurrection. I guess it’s a little more difficult to build a sepulchre with a stone rolled away on top [of a church].

Then He carried it even a step further in the Church of the Body, where He put at the center of

that Church of the Body, His Word. The Word is at the center, because his death and his resurrection are all part of that greatness of God in Christ Jesus, but the day of Pentecost came. Now how are you and I going to know God who is spirit and His wonderful son, our lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ without the Word? This is why I believe, among other things; why He magnified His Word above all His name [**Psalm 138:2**]; why He magnified it above the cross; why He magnified it above the open sepulchre. If we're going to know God, we've got to come back to His Word.

If we're going to know His wonderful Son Jesus Christ, who made known God, we've got to go to the Word to find out; what did he do, what did he say, what is recorded for our learning and what is written specifically to us as the Body of believers. The very essence of the greatness that makes possible the new birth, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul spit out to that Sanhedrin that was adamant and just opposed to everything that he really stood for. It may have been stupid, but it was sure bold. They would not have believed though one have risen from the dead, and apparently Paul saw that; so he gave, for the benefit of the rest of the people that were there (and I don't know who were all there). He gave them the benefit of hearing about the resurrection.

The Pharisees did not believe that Jesus Christ had been resurrected. They believed in a resurrection, but they didn't believe Jesus Christ had been resurrected. Paul knew he had.

Acts 23:7

“so said” – spoken

“dissension” – argument

This dissension was a real heated argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And that whole multitude, including the Sanhedrin and all those people that were sitting in the gallery, were divided.

The Sadducees came into existence at the time of the Israelitic captivity in Babylon. That's when they and their leadership became very influential. The Pharisees were the great leaders in the days of the Persian and Greek period; rule. The Pharisees disliked the Roman rule rather vehemently.

Acts 23:8

“neither angel, nor spirit” – “no devil, no spirits” - I've never found a text for this, so you can keep looking for it, but I'm sure this is what it is. They did not believe in the Devil. The Sadducees did not believe in the Adversary, referred in the Bible as Satan or the Devil. That's why I know that: “there is no resurrection, neither devil, nor spirits (devil spirits).” I wonder if this could be in the Aramaic; I haven't checked.

“the Pharisees confess both” – there is a Devil and there are devil spirits

Acts 23:9

“let us not fight against God” - not in the Greek, but it needs to be checked out in the Aramaic and I didn't have the ability to do that. I assume it will be in the Aramaic. I “assume”; I don't know.

“strove” - to fight it out

“there arose a great cry” - they were blasting at each other; they yelled at each other

“arose and strove” – the Pharisees stood up and they fought it out

“an angel” –this has to be the carrier of the message, Gabriel

The verse I was looking for earlier is **Zachariah 2:8**: “he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye”

I often think of this stuff: this fantastic reality of this Word; why I have this understanding I just don’t know. I’m certainly not a good man where God owes me a favor or anything like this and I don’t live above reproach and a lot of other stuff at times. But, I tell you, I stand in amazement that God loves me enough to allow me to teach the Word. This thing in here is just so beautiful. I wish I would have a greater vocabulary or ability to communicate the greatness of this stuff, but you’ve just got to develop that spiritual awareness and perception within yourself that you see it spiritually inside. It’s like if you love someone, there are just no words to describe that tenderness; that whatever love is. Somebody defined it as a tickling sensation around the heart you can’t scratch. Whatever it is, you know it. That’s the Word; the heart of the Word; the love that’s in that Word when you love it, and the understanding that’s there is something.

Acts 23:10

“a great dissension” – that wasn’t just a dissension - They got so mad at each other, to fight it out, they stood toe to toe and said, “I’ll hit you in the mouth if you don’t shut up.” It was a real big fight between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

“soldiers” – detachment

“castle” - that Herod had built

Acts 23:11

“the lord stood by him” - When all of this was happening to Paul, where were those fantastic believers in Jerusalem unto whom he had just brought the abundant sharing of the Gentile believers? Where were the people he had taught in the Corps? They weren’t around. They just left Paul to fry in his own fat; take it on the lamb. They just were not around. This could break a man’s heart. It sends tears on mine. No believers stood with him. There is no record that there’s one believer who comforted him and said, “Paul, I’ll stand with you if I have to die with you.” They were all glad enough when he taught them the Word and when he gave them the money to bail them out. But where were they when the pressure’s on?

To me it sounds like the bunch of elders I used to have in the church, and the rest of the deacons. They were always in favor of you saying it, but when they were to stand up and speak, they never spoke up. The few that were against something, they always had the big loudmouth. And those that should have had the loudmouth sat still. It’s still true today. The people who cry the loudest get the attention, and they’re usually the unbelievers. Those of us who really know God’s Word, we haven’t got the guts to stand up and say, “Shut up!” But they’ve got the guts to stand up and say, “You shut up!” Well, we’ve got to get the guts to say, “SHUT UP!”

There was nobody who stood with Paul except God, that night. The Lord stood with him. In the Bible, when the Word talks about God or the Lord standing, do you know what that means? He'll bear His arm; He'll fight for you. That's why He stood. The Lord was standing the day when Stephen was stoned and prayed that prayer. He saw him standing on the right hand of God. [Acts 7:56] Only the Lord stood with Paul.

"Be of good cheer" – the word is "courage" – sounds like the opening part of Joshua: "Moses my servant is dead...be of good cheer." [Joshua 1:2&9] How are you going to be of good cheer, good courage, if top brass is dead? That doesn't make any difference: "be of good courage." Imagine God telling him this, when there's no believer standing with him; when everything is stacked against him. Paul knows in his heart he blew it and yet God is there giving revelation. I call that a great God.

When we put, as I would like to say in our terminology, God behind the eight-ball, He is still God and He still gives revelation at times even if men screw it up to the hilt. No man stood, but the Lord stood with him and said, "Be of good courage."

"Paul" – delete

"testified of me in Jerusalem" – What was the testimony in Jerusalem? The one we just read. That was the testimony; the resurrection. Because by this time (when Paul was standing on the staircase or someplace, was when it finally hit him that he had really blown it) Paul knew that he should have listened to the people in Caesarea and outside of Ephesus and a few other places but didn't. Here Paul just tells it like it is. He's back in alignment and harmony with God but he's still in jail. Now God's going to have to work this out to get that old boy out of jail. It's going to take a little time to do it. So if you're going to choose the rut you're going to get yourself into, choose it carefully. You may be in it a long time.

"also at Rome" – at Rome also

He's not telling him he's going to be out of jail tomorrow. He's simply encouraging him. "Be of good courage," because even in Rome you can witness the Word.

You ought to take the little book on "also" that we reprinted and correct your Bible in every place where "also" is used.

Acts 23:12

"certain of" – delete

"banded together" – a group of them, some 40 I think it is – "banded together" is "having made a conspiracy"

"curse" – oath – were they said, "we'll be cursed if we don't carry this out"

"till they had killed Paul" – wait a minute. The Lord just stood by Paul that night and said, "Be of good courage" and that he was going to bear witness at Rome also. Now how is Paul going to bear witness at Rome also, if these conspirators execute their plans? Paul knew ahead of time what was really going to happen. He was going to go to Rome.

Acts 23:13

Look at **I Samuel 14:24**

“Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening” – they had banded themselves under a curse – they made a commitment; a vow

And in **II Samuel 3:35**

“David sware, saying, ‘So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down.’” – why did he not? – because he had taken a vow

Here in Acts, we got over forty fellows taking a vow that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Knowing the tail-end of this record, these fellows are going to get mighty hungry; they’ll all die of starvation. How they ever got out of that vow, the Lord will have to tell us. I don’t know. I just happen to know Paul lived years and years after that so these fellows must have starved to death.

Acts 23:14

Now look to whom they go. They don’t mess around; they go right to the top brass.

Acts 23:15

“enquire” – diagnose the problem

“or ever” – before

These forty men had said, “We’ll get Paul, but the only way we can get Paul is if you, the members of the Sanhedrin, send a note up to the captain and tell the captain that you want to do a further diagnosis. When the chief allows him to come then we’ll jump him, kill him and you’ll never get the blame for it.”

Verse 14 – “chief priests” – It was David who divided the priests into 24 courses, or groups. God never did this, it was David. He must have done it after a night with Bathsheba, or something. He divided them into 24 courses; remember John the Baptist’s father, Zacharias? He was of the course of Abia and that was the eighth course. [**Luke 1:5**] All 24 courses served in the Temple at the three major feasts. The rest of the time they were separated. The chief priest was the head of the group: the Abia course was headed with a priest who was called “the chief priest.” That’s what we’re talking about here in **verse 14** – “chief priests” - these were the priests who were the heads of the courses. They got them convinced, so that in turn they could get to the high priest, who was responsible for operating the Sanhedrin and so-forth.

Verse 15 – “the council” – that’s the Sanhedrin

“signify” – i.e. send a note - emissary

“bring him down” – allow him to come

Acts 23:16

“heard of their lying in wait” – when he gathered the information about the conspiracy. How that little old boy got inside here, so he learned this, I don’t know. He must have been “secret

service,” F.B.I., C.I.A. or something. He was working for somebody. He got inside and he found out about the conspiracy.

“entered into the castle, and told Paul” – How can this nephew just walk in and talk to Paul? Because of what has happened here between the captain and Paul, he’s sort of given him the freedom and when one wanted to visit him, it was available.

Acts 23:17

“centurions” – leader of a hundred

God never told Paul that these guys would murder him in route from Herod’s castle to the Sanhedrin in the Temple. God only told him, “Be of good courage.” “You’re going to have to teach the same truth in Rome.” He told him that. He never told him that there was a conspiracy afoot to take him from the Herod place, where he was secure, to the Sanhedrin and in the process those forty-some fellows would murder him.

In spite of the fact, the truth that Paul knew by revelation he would be preaching in Rome, he was not a fatalist. He used every precaution and every means within his ability, to guarantee his safety, or his security. He just didn’t go out and say, “Well, God’s going to take care of me.”

Sometimes in the Way Ministry, we can be awful stupid. “I have God in Christ in me, the hope of glory. Nobody can touch me. Nobody can hurt me. Nothing can happen to me.” Well, if you really believe it, go stand on the middle of the street when a big semi is coming. You’re stupid. This is a great lesson in here, if you’ve got ears to hear. Sure I know it’s God in Christ in you, the hope of glory. I know “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me,” “we are more than conquerors.” I know all that. But that doesn’t set us down on our fanny, where we become simply fatalists and say, “Well, whatever’s going to happen is going to happen.”

He took every means, every part of his ability, to guarantee his safety and his security, even though he had revelation from God that he was going to preach the resurrection in Rome. (Wish to God, somebody would preach it there today.)

I remember things that I say to our people at times. For most people it just runs off of their back like water. We either live or we die. If we die, we can’t enjoy it. If we live, we have to suffer through your stupidity. I’ve said, “Instead of leaving like at 11:30 or 12:00 at night and driving all night, why haven’t you got sense? Go to bed at 10:00. Get up at 2:00 or 3:00 and leave. Then you won’t crack-up.” You’re going to have to use a little “head knowledge”; a little wisdom and not expose yourself just to allow the Adversary to do as he fool pleases.

I still have my rifle loaded. All you have to do is take it off of safety. It’s hanging right in front of the motor coach. The damn thing shoots and if it would become necessary, I would use it. That’s what I’ve got it loaded for, not for people. So don’t come around and tell me, God’s going to take care of you. He will, but you better do a little taking care of yourself, too. You can’t go out here and drink carbolic acid and tell me it’s not going to burn your stupid throat. It may not, but there’s a 99 & 44 hundredth percent that it will. If God stops all of that, it’s going to have to be, not only a miracle, but a phenomenon, which He’s capable of doing. But I think we’re sort of stupid trying it all the time, don’t you? You know, you drink carbolic acid instead of 7-Up.

I think these verses speak real loudly. Paul did not trust the centurion. He simply asked the centurion to bring this young man to the top brass, the captain in charge. I am confident, had Paul trusted the centurion; the centurion, in order to save his own face, would never have gone to the captain. But being the boy, or the young man, and Paul requesting it, it's no problem to the centurion. The centurion simply says, "Well, Paul said I'm to bring this fellow to you."

Acts 23:18

"prayed" – asked

Acts 23:19

"took him by the hand" - which simply means they shook hands

"went *with him* aside privately" – i.e. where the centurion could not hear

Acts 23:20

"desire" - ask

Acts 23:21

"now are they ready" - they're ready now. They've got the plan all laid. They're in tact.

"looking for a promise from thee" – i.e. that you'll do it, because they had gone to the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin would send the note down that had the official stamp of protocol on it, all the finery and the machinery, everything. Those guys had it all figured out.

Acts 23:22

"charged" commanded

"shewed these things" - or "told this"

Acts 23:23

"Caesarea" - Caesarea's about seventy miles downhill from Jerusalem. It's a sea coast town. The reason they went to Caesarea is because it had another courthouse; a judicial place. That's why they went to Caesarea.

"horsemen threescore and ten" - that's seventy cavalry

"spearmen" - the spearmen are lightly armed troops

Four hundred and seventy people to escort Paul towards Caesarea: the chief captain must have made up his mind that he had a real prize to protect. He wasn't going to let anybody touch him.

"at the third hour of the night" - nights are usually presented in watches. But here it says, "hour." I think this is put in there from a Roman point of view. I don't know. Figure it out. It would be 9 o'clock.

Acts 23:24

"beasts" – that means "horses"

"bring *him* safe" - bring him safely

“Felix the governor” - at Caesarea. Felix became the ruler or the governor of Judaea in, I think, 52 A.D. He was a rat. He had a brother by the name of Pallas. It should have been “Fail-us.” They should have ‘paid him less,’ if you like that. The reason Felix got to be governor or ruler here is because his brother, Pallas, was a real favorite of Claudius, the Emperor. And because Pallas was such a good friend of Claudius, the Emperor, Pallas, interceded for Felix and got Felix to be given this assignment by Claudius in 52 A.D. Felix was, as I said, a rat. He was a rat. He was a good for nothing nincompoop or something; cruel, wicked, dishonest. I think finally Nero comes on the scene and releases him of the responsibility. If Nero is going to have any crookedness, he wants to do it his way, I guess. I don’t know.

Acts 23:25

Now this letter in the Word of God that Luke put in here according to the revelation from God, is a real interesting piece of ingenuity.

Acts 23:26

“unto the most excellent governor” - truthfully, he would have liked to have said, “Lousy governor,” but you know you can’t do that. Protocol does not allow that.

Acts 23:27

“should” - would

“an army” - a detachment

“having understood that he was a Roman” - did he? Oh, no. He had him already tied up and he was going to whop him good. But he’s not going to tell that; great letter, you know. He’s not going to tell any of that stuff, because had old Felix known this, he could have reported it up to higher authority and old Lysias would have got clawed good; maybe from the empire down for having mistreated a Roman.

Acts 23:28

“their council” - i.e. their own Sanhedrin; their own council

Acts 23:29

“perceived” – I’ve got something written in my Bible – could be “found”

“to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds” - from the Roman law; “our law”

Acts 23:30

“the Jews” - In the critical creek text the words “the Jews” are scratched. It has to be in the text and I’m pretty sure it’s in the Aramaic text. If not, it ought to be. You’ll find it; because that’s the only gang we’re talking about.

“I sent straightway to thee” - in other word, “I sent him straight-way to you”; sent him on to you

“and gave commandment (to those two centurions and) to his accusers” -he gave

commandment: first of all to the centurions to deliver him straight down, and commandment to the accusers.

“what *they had*” – delete

In other words, he commanded the accusers to go. They really never got there; the accusers didn't. I think it shows up in the next chapter or something.

“to say before thee” - in other words - come up and state the case against Paul

“farewell” - not in the text

Acts 23:31

“then” - so then

“to Antipatris” - It's about forty miles from Jerusalem that they traveled. And this was the city that Herod, I think, built it for the guy that was the top brass, Antipater: called it in his name. It had some other name before and I can't remember what it was. It doesn't make much difference.

Acts 23:32

“the horsemen” - the seventy of **verse 23** escorted him. The balance of them, four hundred of them then, must have returned back to Jerusalem. Even seventy horsemen is still top notch security, because this area between Jerusalem and Caesarea is like the area between the post office and five houses or something even worse; robbers, attackers; that's why they had to have a large caravan for security. That's why in the Old Testament when this woman came down to see the prophet about her son she disguised herself. She never traveled alone. They had to travel in caravans for security. That's why in the Advanced Class I hit that thing so hard; that nobody recognized her. She really had a good Halloween face on. Nobody knew her. And I know she had to go potty. I know she had to take a bath. I know she had to get dressed up daily, but nobody knew her. They traveled for security. When the wise men came for Jesus, they were just not the three boys.

I do not know why the other four hundred returned. Whether this was an order; to travel that night to that place and they would come back the next day, I don't know. I just know that the horsemen went on.

Acts 23:33

Now, seventy armed men, the cavalry, were parading into Caesarea and Caesarea was not a metropolis like New York. Moving into that city, what do you think the citizens of that city would think? How about Philip, the evangelist who had 4 daughters? Wasn't that in Caesarea? Now, all at once there's a big hullabaloo in Caesarea; “The army's coming, the army's coming!” Philip and other believers run out. Who did they see? Paul handcuffed to a soldier. I wonder if it could have gone through their mind, “If only he would have listened.” It didn't take long, did it, to get him back from Jerusalem to Caesarea? He had just left Caesarea, gone to Jerusalem and delivered the abundant sharing.

As best I can estimate this; at the most fifteen days later, he's handcuffed back in Caesarea. He went in for “the rights” you know, seven days, I don't think it was over fifteen days. I can get it

down to thirteen in my mind, but I'll let you have two extra days for fun. I don't know for sure, but I can put it together where I think you could honestly say; within almost thirteen days he was back in the city of Caesarea, handcuffed, where he now is going to be for two years. I've often wondered what happened in that city; Philip and the Church, seeing this great man of God in handcuffs. "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem..." -remember? [Acts 21:11] Their heart must have been hurt because he was hurt.

"presented Paul also before him" – i.e. they turned Paul over to him

Acts 23:34

"he asked of what province he was" – i.e. he turned to Paul and he said, "What province are you from?" Somebody must have informed him, either Paul or someone else.

"Cilicia" - which is really Felix's territory; his rulership; his area. That's why they sent him from Jerusalem over there. The chief captain was glad to get rid of him out of Jerusalem. So was Claudius Lysias; sent him to Felix because Cilicia.

Acts 23:35

"when thine accusers" - because in the letter it had said that Claudius Lysias had demanded that Paul's accusers go up to Caesarea to present their case, so Felix says, "I'll hear you when he comes."

"in Herod's judgment hall" - that is not quite accurate. He didn't stay in the judgment hall, but he stayed in the house next to it. Herod's judgment hall had a house connected next to it.