
RELATED SCRIPTURES

Acts 21:1-23:11 | John 14:6 | Romans 12:1-2

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 10.22.23

SUMMARY

Before the Sanhedrin, Paul incited an argument that became violent (Acts 23:10), which subsequently caused the Roman officials to detain him again in the barracks. Though he escaped the moment's danger, a band of Jews made a pact to fast until they figured out a way to kill Paul. The plan was to have the chief priest request Paul's presence for additional questioning, and when the guards transported him, they would ambush him and beat him to death. Somehow, Paul's nephew learns of the plot and forewarns the Roman officials of the mob's intent. So the Roman tribune, Claudius Lysias, arranged for Paul to be moved away—accompanied by a massive Roman army—from Jerusalem to Felix, the governor, in Caesarea. Claudius informs Felix that he rescued Paul (yet fails to mention he nearly illegally flogged him), noting he didn't do anything deserving of death; the dispute centered around Jewish, and not Roman, law. In this account, Luke, the author of Acts, contrasts the self-preserving soldier, Claudius, against the self-sacrificing apostle, Paul. Though Claudius manipulates the truth and puts himself in a favorable light, his letter to the governor ultimately affords Paul protection from the governor because of Paul's Roman citizenship. This protection will also provide Paul with the right to a fair trial. Though man tries to thwart God's plans, his providential preservation guides those he uses to carry them out. Disciples of Christ will face trials, but their journey will lead them to ultimate peace and rest in Jesus Christ.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Acts 23:12-35.

The Lord preserved and protected Paul even though many sought to kill him. Does God always deliver Christians from danger? Why or why not?

Claudius, the Roman tribune, operates by self-preservation and telling half-truths. What benefit or comfort does the Christian have in telling the whole truth when it leads to immediate discomfort? Why should we always seek to be truth-bearers?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.