



The Great Adventure *Acts 23 Paul's Wild Reaction!*

Message to Conversation Guide

1. In the passage below discuss possible explanations for Paul's reaction to the high priest. Why was he so curt and terse with his words?

Acts 22:30-23:5

30 The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them. 23 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." 2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!" 4 Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?" 5 Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'" NIV

2. Read over and discuss the description of Ananias', the high priest. career.

ANANIAS The Jewish high priest before whom Paul appeared after his arrest in Jerusalem following his third missionary journey, about A.D. 58 (Acts 23:2). Ananias was also one of those who spoke against Paul before the Roman governor Felix (Acts 24:1). Ananias was appointed high priest about A.D. 48 by Herod. In A.D. 52 the governor of Syria sent Ananias to Rome to be tried for the Jews' violent treatment of the Samaritans. Ananias was acquitted of the charges through Agrippa's influence, and he was returned to his office in Jerusalem. About A.D. 59 Ananias was deposed by Agrippa. Known to the Jews as a Roman collaborator, Ananias was murdered by a Jewish mob at the beginning of the Jewish-Roman War of A.D. 66-70. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

3. Discuss C.S. Lewis' quote below stating that our true self is revealed by our reactions.

“Surely what a man does when he is taken off his guard is the best evidence for what sort of a man he is? Surely what pops out before the man has time to put on a disguise is the truth? If there are rats in a cellar you are most likely to see them if you go in very suddenly. But the suddenness does not create the rats; it only prevents them from hiding. In the same way the suddenness of the provocation does not make me an ill-tempered man; it only shows me what an ill-tempered man I am (p. 192).” Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

4. How does **1 Peter 2:21-23** indicate we are to respond to injustice?

1 Peter 2:21-23

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges. NIV

5. Discuss the power of God's comfort to Paul in the vase blow which covers the time when he was in jail all alone.

Acts 23:11

11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." NIV

6. Note and discuss from the passage below how Paul was marvelously protected from harm by the Roman authorities. Discuss the sheer number of people escorting Paul to a safe place. How does this reveal God's extravagant protection?

Acts 23:23-24

23 Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix." NIV

Acts 23:31-35

31 So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. 32 The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33 When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. 34 The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace. NIV

Ps 23:5-6

*5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever. NIV*

