

Acts Chapter 23

Love

Acts 22

1. Paul's Testimony
2. Gentile Trigger
3. Handed over the Gentiles

Acts 22:30 [Roman Commander]... wanted to know for certain why [Paul] was accused by the Jews, [so] he released him from his bonds, and **commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.**

- **Why are the Jews angry at Paul? What was his message?**
 1. Gentiles *do not* have to become Jews to come to God
 2. God can reach people apart from religious externals
 3. Religion is a *hindrance* to a right relationship with God
 4. A relationship on God has nothing to do with *our performance*
 5. Sacrificial death of the Son of God is sufficient payment for every sin!
 6. Faith in Jesus work on cross is Salvation apart from our works or ceremonies
 7. God has no requirement for membership, no regard for skin color, gender, country of origin or...religious heritage.

Simple answer: You don't have to become a Jew to be right with God

I. Paul before the High Priest

1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

- Paul before the **Sanhedrin**
 1. Jewish Religious Rulers
 2. Pharisees and Sadducees
- **Looked earnestly at them:** Lit. Fixed his eyes upon the council

"...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
- Paul is not a man plagued by guilt...

Acts 24:1 I...always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

2 Corinthians 1:12 ... the testimony of our conscience [is] that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God

2 Timothy 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day...

- **How is your conscience today?**
 1. Bondage to a Guilty Conscience
 2. Freedom of Clear Conscience
- 2 Steps to dealing with a guilty conscience: **Repent and Receive**

1. **Repent:** Turn away from sin. Key to forgiveness

John 8:10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

- For those beaten down by guilt living in on-going sin:

Repent. Stop calling blaming your action others. Stop calling it something other than sin. Until then you will not be restored and will not experience God's forgiveness. [NJC]

Ephesians 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

- For those who cannot forget past sin...you have repented but can't forgive yourself...its time today. **Your sin did not take God by surprise:**

Romans 5: 6 ...when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2. **Receive:** Turn to Jesus.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- All unrighteousness!

Hebrews 10 [Read]

- V 1 Law was a shadow of good things to come
- V 4 Sacrifices of bulls and goats in the OT only reminded people of their sin
- V 5 Jesus offered His body as the final and sufficient sacrifice
- V 14 By one offering He perfected forever those being sanctified
- V 17 Therefore God says... "Our sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more"
- V 20 We can approach God boldly through the veil into the Holy of Holies

Hebrews 10:22 ...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts **sprinkled from an evil conscience** and our bodies washed with pure water.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

- **Repent and turn to a Loving Savior:** Released from Bondage of Guilty Conscience

Psalms 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13

As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

God does not forgive us because we are awesome...He forgives us because He is awesome!

- Paul knows he is forgiven...not perfect but completely forgiven...Past, present, future

"...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

- Ananias the corrupt Jewish High Priest:

"Who said you could speak?!" ..."Punch him in the mouth!"

3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!"

- God will strike you!
- **Whitewashed wall?** Jesus called religious hypocrites "whitewashed tombs"

Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

- New and shiny on outside but dead on inside. Cover. Façade. Disguise
- Paul says to High Priest **"You are a hypocrite!"**

"This should dispel any idea that Paul was some sort of pantywaist. The concept that humility makes a person a sort of Mr. Milk-toast is all wrong. Actually, humility and meekness mean that you submit yourself to the will of God, regardless of the cost" [JVM]

3b [God will strike you] ...For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

Romans 2:17 [Read] Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

Legalists who talk to us about keeping the law do not keep the law themselves.

Call them out.

- Paul accuses the High Priest of breaking the Mosaic Law

Deuteronomy 25:1 "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, 2 **"then it shall be,** if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down

and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.

- **Anannias:**
 1. **Josephus:** Ananias stole the tithes that belonged to the common priests.
 2. His Pro-Roman politics led to his brutal execution by Jewish nationalists.
 3. He lived as a hunted animal whose life ended at the hands of his own people
- The Law of Moses accuses you for striking me without cause...**Hypocrite**

4 And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

- Those looking for an excuse **...will find one**

Enemy uses our physical/emotional weakness to take advantage of, cash in on, exploit in front of a watching world! [NJC]

- **Apostle Paul was:**
 1. Weak after being beaten/flogged
 2. Blindsided
 3. Sucker-punched
 4. Whacked in Mid-sentence

**Doing or saying something to give people an excuse.
Paul's witness was blown.**

- Smash and Repair Ministry
 1. 7-11
 2. Stairs at work
- Do you revile the High Priest? **Paul still shook up...**

5 Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

- **Sarcasm?** I didn't think a High Priest would act like that!
- Sarcasm followed by repentance?

I was wrong. The law says 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" [Exodus 22:8]

- **Paul realizes he's not getting anywhere:**

6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council

- **Pharisees:**
 1. **"Fundamentalists"**
 2. Serious Bible students
 3. Added the traditions of men to OT
- **Sadducees:**
 1. **"Religious Liberals"**

2. Denied the reality of life after death
3. Denied the concept of resurrection [Sad you see]

Usually the Sadducees and the Pharisees were bitter enemies, but they were able to unite in opposition against Jesus and Paul. It's strange how people with nothing in common will come together as friends to oppose God or His work. [Guzic]

My enemy's enemy is my friend.

6b ...“Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!”

- I am a Pharisee. My dad was a Pharisee. I believe in bodily resurrection of the dead

The reason I'm here is because I believe in the resurrection!

- **Paul raises a “hot button issue”:** Not all believed in the resurrections of the dead

Shrewd move to start a riot and get Roman Commander involved again!

- Jesus said we are to act with *both* wisdom and meekness

Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

- Jesus said we could learn a thing or two from watching the world...

Luke 16:8 ...the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

- **Worlds motive:** Self-gain
- **Our Motive:** Accomplish Lords will honestly... but shrewdly

Paul's plan works!

7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, “**We find no evil in this man;** but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

- **Gamaliel:**
 1. Previous to conversion Paul's Rabi
 2. Pharisee who gave this advice concerning what to do with the Apostles

Act 5:38 “... keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 “but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

- **Scribes of Pharisees:** “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

And...he agrees with us so he must be okay

10 Now when there arose a **great dissension**, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

- Commander looking down at the Temple
- Again sees a "Nest of bees" and sends for Paul...

...fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them

- **Great Dissention:** First time used by Luke; prone to understatement in Acts.
- **Bad scene**

11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

- **Night in Roman Barracks:** Jesus stood by Paul
- **Encouragement needed: "Do not fear"**
 1. Be of good cheer!
 2. You are going to Rome

Paul, you will not here. You will bear Me witness in Rome.

- Our time is in His hand! We are invincible until God says we are done

Psalm 31:14 [Of David]...as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." 15 **My times are in Your hand**; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me.

The great truth is this—all that concerns the believer is in the hands of the Almighty God. "My times", these change and shift; but they change only in accordance with unchanging love, and they shift only according to the purpose of One with whom is no variableness nor shadow of a turning. "My times", that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth—all those are in the hand of the Lord, who arranges and appoints according to his holy will the length of my days, and the darkness of my nights. Storms and calms vary the seasons at the divine appointment. Whether times are reviving or depressing remains with him who is Lord both of time and of eternity; and we are glad it is so. [Spurgeon]

- **NOTE:** Paul was not out of the will of God. Jerusalem *was* in the plan as well as Rome

Going to Jerusalem as well as Rome was the plan

- **NOTE:** Even though Paul is having trouble/tribulation... *he is not* out of the will of God
- Just because we are having trouble/tribulation *does not mean* we are out of the will of God
- Paul is in the Roman Barracks...

II. Plot to Kill Paul

12 And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound

themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.

- Forty men swear to fast until they "kill Paul"

"I imagine they got pretty hungry and thirsty before this was all over!" [JVM]

14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

- **Plot:**
 1. Call Paul from Roman barracks to come down to the Temple tomorrow
 2. Tell the Romans that the Jews want to integrate him further
 3. We will kill him on his way down to the Temple

16 So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.

- **Paul's sister's son:** Paul's Nephew hears about plan

Courageous Young Man: Daniel and 3 Friends standing up

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- **Courage:**
 1. Teenage nephew goes into the Roman barracks
 2. Tells Uncle Paul about the Jews plot to kill him

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him." 18 So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you." 19 Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" 20 And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. 21 But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from

you."22 So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

- **Commander:** Heart for Paul's nephew. Took him by the hand. "Be careful"

SUMMARY: Plot to Kill Paul: "He will never make it to the temple"

III. Paul sent to Governor Felix

23 And he called for two centurions, saying, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; 24 and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor."

- **Roman Commander:** Claudius Lysias Protects Roman citizen Paul
 1. Take 470 Roman Soldiers
 2. Leave in the middle of the night
 3. Bring Paul to Governor Felix in Caesarea
- **Centurions:** Roman soldiers over 100 men

Matthew 27:54 ...when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Mark 15:39 ...when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

- Centurions protect Paul on his way to Felix

25 [The commander] wrote a letter in the following manner: 26 Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor **Felix:** Greetings.

- Felix: Governor for Rome over province of Caesarea in Israel

27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. 29 I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. 30 And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell.

- **Conveniently missing:** Flogging, chains, imprisonment

I am protecting this Roman citizen

31 Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks.



- 200 Soldiers take Paul through most dangerous territory
- Paul continues on with rest of his Roman escort to Caesarea

33 When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

- **Praetorium:** Herod's Judgment Hall

SUMMARY: Paul Sent to Felix: Roman escort drops off Paul. Accusers on their way.