

Living in the Promises of Jesus

Acts 23-24

Lesson 16

OBSERVATION: Read Acts 23

1. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below a group of key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way

Key Words Acts 23: God, Jesus, Paul, any words that refer to those who were opposing Paul (i.e. council, Pharisees, Sadducees, high priest)

Key Words Acts 24: God, Jesus, Paul, the high priest and anyone who was an accuser of Paul

THE SANHEDRIN DIVIDED: Read Acts 23:1-10

1. The events of Acts 23 began with the last verse of chapter 22. According to Acts 22:30, the commander brought Paul before the chief priests and their council. Why did he do this? Verse 30
2. What were the first words Paul spoke as he stood before this religious council of his accusers?
 - a. Paul was not sinless. How can a sinful man live in all good conscience before God?
3. Record the words of Hebrews 13:18.

- a. What is necessary in order to have a good conscience before God?
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4. When Paul was persecuting the church, we know that he was actually very wrong, but what did he think he was doing at the time? Acts 22:3,4
 1. As Paul realized who Jesus really was, what was his immediate response? (Acts 22:10)
 2. When you truly recognized Jesus for the first time and called upon His name, seeking to turn your life over to Him, what did He do for you, just as He did for Paul? 1 Corinthians 6:11

What does Hebrews 10:22 say about this, especially in relation to our conscience?

5. Acts 23:2-4 describes a volatile interaction between Paul and the high priest. What happened?
 - a. Look back at the original accusations against Paul by the Jews in Acts 21:28. What did the Jews throughout Jerusalem think about Paul?
 - b. Why do you think Anaias have been so angered at Paul's remark?
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6. In Acts 23:5, Paul quoted Exodus 22:28. What does it say?

- a. How does this commandment apply to us today?
7. According to Acts 23:6, what did Paul perceive?
- a. What was the theological difference between Pharisee and Sadducees?
Verse 8

Which sect was right? Why?

- b. Why what the effect of turning these two groups against each other?
8. Using Acts 23:9, 10 describe the intensity of their response?

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST PAUL: Read Acts 23:11-22

1. In response to the great dissension, the commander...commanded the soldiers to bring Paul into the barracks. What encouraging words did Paul hear from the Lord the following night?
 - a. The phrase "be of good cheer" is more literally translated, be of good courage. Define the word courage.

2. The Lord stood by Paul, giving him a promise specific to his circumstances. What is the promise of Psalm 46:1?
 - a. How have you discovered this to be a promise for you?

3. Acts 23:12-15 describes a conspiracy formed against Paul. Describe this conspiracy by answering the following questions:
 - a. What was the oath that was made?
 - b. How many were involved in the conspiracy?
 - c. Reading between the lines in verses 14, 15, what apparently were the feelings of the religious leaders about this conspiracy?
 - Sadly, it is all too easy to fall prey, failing to stop others from doing wrong, when we think we might benefit from it. What is the lesson for us here?
 - d. What emotion provoked the religious leaders to seek Jesus' death? Mark 15:10 1.) What are some synonyms for the word envy?

Write the warning of Proverbs 14:30 in your own words.

- e. What were the details of their plan?
4. What did Paul's sister's son do when he heard of their ambush?
 - a. When is it right to play the role of informant in correcting a wrong?

- b. What did Paul do when he heard of the conspiracy against him?
 - c. Look again at Jesus' words in verse 11. What assurance did Paul have that this ambush would not be successful?
 - In spite of the Lord's promise to Paul, Paul did not ignore the threat on his life. What can we learn from this?
5. Using Acts 23:17-22, describe what happened next.

PAUL SENT TO FELIX: Acts 23:23-35

1. More than 40 Jews were lying in wait for Paul. How many men did the commander tell the two centurions to prepare to accompany Paul to Caesarea?
2. To whom was the commander sending Paul?
3. Read the letter that the commander sent to Felix. What information about Paul did Claudius Lysias tell Felix?
 - a. What did Claudius Lysias command Paul's accusers to do? verse 30
 - b. What wisdom do you detect as you consider this commander's actions and letter?
4. The soldiers delivered both Paul and the letter to Felix. Where did he command Paul to be kept? verse 35

- a. Record the prophesy of Agabus in Acts 21:11.

We see the fulfillment of this prophesy in Acts 23. As far as we know, this trip to Jerusalem that was so important to Paul resulted in uproar, rather than conversions. Put yourself in Paul's sandals and consider what he might have been thinking. How do you handle things when they don't turn out as you expected?

Paul's chains were literal. However, there are many times we might feel chained, or limited, or confined. What are some ways a person can be chained in this life?

5. What are some examples of responses that would be pleasing to the Lord?

PAUL ACCUSED OF SEDITION: Read Acts 24:1-21

1. Acts 23 ended with Felix's announcement that he would hear Paul after his accusers had come. Acts 24 begins with the arrival of his accusers. Who were they?
2. Look back at Acts 21:27-28. Who had actually accused Paul originally and what was their accusation?
3. Using Paul's defense in Acts 24:10-21, answer the following questions:
 - a. What were the weaknesses of their accusations? Verses 12,13

- b. What did Paul confess (agree with)? Verses 14,15

 - c. This being so, what did Paul do? Verse 16
4. What statement did Paul make in Acts 23:1 that provoked the high priest to command those who stood by Paul to strike him on the mouth?
- a. Although Paul had a clear conscience, his actions still provoked anger in others. What can we learn from this?

 - b. What was Paul's version of what provoked his arrest? Verses 17,18

 - c. What claim did Paul make? Verses 19,20

 - d. What truth did Paul seek to emphasize in this defense? Verses 15,21
5. Why is the resurrection of the dead the hope of Israel? b.) Why is it also your hope?
- a. What did Paul write about this in 1 Corinthians 15:19?

 - b. What are your thoughts as you consider what your life would be like if there was no resurrection of the dead?

FELIX PROCRASTINATES: Read Acts 24:22-27

1. These verses describe Felix's reaction to the accusations and Paul's defense. What did he have an accurate knowledge of?

2. What privileges did he allow Paul? Verse 23

3. After some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, what three things did Paul talk to them about?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

4. How does Jesus resolve:
 - Our failure to be righteous?

 - Our inability to have self-control?

 - Our impending judgment?

5. According to verse 25, what was Felix's response?
 - a. Felix had an accurate knowledge of the Way. What is the difference between having knowledge of Christ and actually being saved?

- b. What does John 5:40 say about this?
- c. What is the exhortation of Hebrews 4:7 and 2 Corinthians 6:2b?

6. What was Felix's verbal response to Paul's message? Acts 24:25

- a. Why is waiting for a convenient time unwise?
- b. According to verse 26, what was Felix's real motive for waiting for a convenient time?

7. What are some reasons people postpone a decision to commit to Jesus as their Savior?

- a. What was your reason?
- b. Share what happened in your life that caused you to stop postponing a decision for Christ.

6. Felix said (verse 22) When Lysias the commanders comes down; I will make a decision on your case. We have no record of Lysias ever coming. But after two years, what did Felix do?

- a. Why did Felix leave Paul bound?
- b. In what way does the desire to please others cause a person to be bound?

What do you consider to be an important lesson to be gleaned from this homework?