

October 2, 2022

**“Along for the Ride”**  
**Acts 23:12-35**

**Prel Rmks**

LOGW

**We ended last week: Paul was rescued from the Sanhedrin**

God had given him the words to say ...

For the second time the Roman Commander Claudius Lysius had to rescue him

**Acts 23:11** 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."

Great encouragement

**But Paul's enemies did not give up**

**(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. **(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."

**(16)** So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. **(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 [summons] 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." **(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."

**(25)** He wrote a letter in the following manner:

**(26)** Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. **(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.

**(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. **(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.

## INTRODUCTION

**Psalms 37:12-13** The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. **(13)** The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.

**We want to use this as our outline:**

**The Plot of the Wicked**

**The Providence of God {John MacArthur ...}**

### I. The Plot of the Wicked 12-15

**More than 40 Jewish men formed a coalition and conspired together to kill Paul**

**(13)** Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.

**(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.

**(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.

→→→

“anathematized” – placed themselves under a curse

**These men came to the leadership of the Sanhedrin – the chief priest and elders who would have been Sadducees and outlined the plot for them:**

**(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.

- 1. Ask the Roman Commander Claudius to send Paul back before them for further interrogation**
- 2. They would lie in wait along the way, and would ambush the soldiers escorting Paul, and would kill him. (Probably a small escort)**

**(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."**

**Who were these men – more than 40 men?**

Zealots – overthrow Roman rule by force

Simon Zelotes

Judas?

Terrorists – used guerilla tactics

1. The hatred involved – why? ...

Because of what Paul stood for – what he represented

2. What did he stand for?

He stood for a way to be right with God apart from man's works – apart from religious works

Through the death and resurrection of Christ

Man's goodness and keeping of the law had nothing to do with it

Paul represented an entirely different way to be right with God – a way that contradicted what they stood for

He taught the truth – that **Jesus is the Messiah**, the One promised in their OT Scriptures, and that He came and died as the ultimate sacrifice, the only sacrifice, for sins and had risen from the dead ...

What Paul stood for threatened to undermine everything they stood for – their entire worldview.

Their position and power in the world  
 Their prestige in the world  
 Their prosperity in the world

**That's why they hated him so much** – just like they had hated Jesus to the death some 25 years earlier

**Mark 13:13** And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.

3. Let's not miss the connection to our day ...

## The Plot of the Wicked

### II. The Providence of God 16-35

#### A. The Plot Uncovered 16-22

**(16)**

**Paul's nephew overheard the plan to ambush Paul**

Where did he come from? ... speculation ...

**He went and told his uncle**

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

**(17-18)**

**Paul called one of the centurions guarding him and told him to take his nephew to Claudius so he could tell him what he had overheard – and so he did**

**(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."

**Paul's nephew told Claudius about the plot**

**(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** [summons, consent] 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."

## **B. The Plan of the Commander 23-24**

**Now that he knows about the plot, he makes a plan to get Paul safely out of Jerusalem to Caesarea**

the capital of the Roman Province of Judea

the administrative center and judicial center of Judea at the time – it was where a trial would take place if there was to be one ...

**(23) Claudius' plan:**

**200 soldiers**

**70 horsemen**

**200 spearmen**

**leave after dark at 9:00**

**(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."

Paul would have never been able to hire a security force large enough to protect him from over 40 zealous vigilantes ...

He would have died trying to escape Jerusalem if he didn't have the protection of these soldiers – what an escort this was!

They even provided a horse for Paul to ride on – maybe more than one?

**Paul was being delivered safely out of Jerusalem by God and he was just along for the ride**

**God was arranging everything and providing everything**

### **C. The Letter Claudius Wrote 25-30**

**To let Felix the governor know what was going on**

**Makes himself look good by telling a couple of lies**

**(25)** He wrote a letter in the following manner:

**(26)** Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings. **(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.



### Reveals his assessment of Paul's guilt

**(29)** I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains.

### D. The Escape to Caesarea 31-35

**(31)** Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to **Antipatris**.

A Roman military post about 40 miles from Jerusalem

**(32-33)**

**The next day the 70 horsemen take Paul on into Caesarea**

**They deliver the letter and Paul to Felix**

**(32)** The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. **(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.** **palace used as a judgment hall**

Think about God's providence in all of this:

**God is not mentioned!**

But are we to think all these things happened by chance?

1. Paul's nephew overheard the plot – boy, timing  
 Boy – **God uses the weakest among us at times**  
 Just a boy – {David, the lad with 5 loaves 2 fish}
2. A Roman commander who proved to be somewhat sympathetic to Paul throughout the entire ordeal in Jerusalem ... **God uses seemingly insignificant circumstances and events**
3. Paul ended up with the strongest security detail around him that anyone could have provided and God delivered him safely out of Jerusalem to Caesarea

**Psalms 37:12-13** The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. **(13)** The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.

He does more than laugh. He works to accomplish His eternal purposes, His eternal will, and His eternal plans.

**Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD. **What does that mean?**

**Things may seem to be happening by chance, but God is sovereignly in control of it all.**

## Conclusion

I think about Paul:

He had been on 3 missionary journeys as a free man –  
**seemingly** made his own plans

But now he can do nothing that can even be mistaken for  
 him directing his own life.

And what was this all about?:

Paul had testified before thousands of people as a free  
 man – was he now a victim of circumstances?

But now as a prisoner, God is going to use Paul the  
 prisoner and fulfill that promise made about him  
 years earlier – he is going to testify before kings!

24 – Governor: Felix

25 – Governor: Festus

Later – King Agrippa

Then on to Rome where he made an impact for the  
 Gospel on the household of Caesar – and only in  
 heaven will we find out the extent of that impact on  
 the entire world!

“The start of something big”

Because in the big picture of things, that’s what is really  
 important – redemptive history ...

**God controls the details of our lives, too.**

**We have to keep on serving Him**

**We have to keep on trusting Him**

**“Still We Trust”**  
**William H. Burleigh**

Still we trust, though earth seem dark and dreary  
And the heart faint beneath His chastening rod;  
Though rough and steep our pathway, worn and weary –  
Still we trust in God!

Choose for us, God! Nor let our weak preferring  
Cheat our poor souls of good you have designed;  
Choose for us, God! Your wisdom is unerring.  
And we are fools and blind.

Let us press on, in patient self-denial,  
Accepting the hardship, shrink not from the loss;  
Our portion lies beyond the hour of trial,  
Our crown beyond the cross!