



Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Lesson 47 – Acts 23

People — Who is involved?

*The Council – Jewish priests, elders, & scribes
Ananias – the High Priest
Paul’s sister’s son – revealed the plot
Claudius Lysias – the commander at Jerusalem
Felix – the Roman governor*

Places — Where does it happen?

*Jerusalem – Paul met with the Council
Antipatris – Paul taken to this outpost the first night
Caesarea – Paul taken to this Roman seat of Jewish oversight the following day*

Pearls — What information will help me to understand better?

- Vs 1 – It would have been very unusual for a Roman commander to call a meeting of the Council. No doubt, this is because of the unusually volatile circumstances in which Paul’s life is threatened. Could we say that we have lived in “all good conscience before God until this day?”*
- Vs 2 – Ananias was High Priest from AD 47 to 58. Josephus tells us that he was insolent and high-tempered. He died in AD 66, slain by zealot leader Menahem. Later tradition reveals that one should be smitten on the mouth only to defend God’s honor.*
- Vs 5 – Some have questioned how Paul did not know the high priest. Possible solutions: Paul did not originally hear who specifically among the judges gave the order to strike him; that he did not recognize Ananias as high priest because he had been away from Jerusalem; or that Paul reacted as he did because Ananias was not really representing the high and noble office in his actions.*
- Vs 6 – Paul shrewdly divides the Council by identifying Christianity with resurrection.*
- Vs 8 – Some scholars believe that there may have been some Sadducees who believed in spirits since spirits are mentioned in the Pentateuch. Paul is stating the general doctrinal position of this sect.*
- Vs 16 – This is the only Biblical reference to Paul’s having family in Jerusalem. This is his nephew.*
- Vs 23 – The third hour of the night is approximately 9:00 pm.*
- Vs 24 – Emperor Claudius had favored Felix, released him from slavery, and made him governor. Felix held that position from AD 52 to 59 when he was recalled to Rome. His rule had been marked by violence. His third wife was Drusilla. His first wife was a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra.*
- Vs 31 – Antipatris was about 35 miles from Jerusalem.*
- Vs 33 – Caesarea Maritima was about 62 miles from Jerusalem.*
- Vs 35 – The Praetorium was the headquarters of the Roman contingent in Caesarea.*

Perspectives – What may I learn from this chapter?

- 1. It is good to be able to say that we have lived in all good conscience in our lives as Paul did.*
- 2. The Pharisees were correct in their doctrinal views; closer to Christianity than the Sadducees.*
- 3. Paul appealed to civil authorities for protection when he was in danger.*