

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

# THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

## OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

*An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely*

### ACTS 5:31-32

*"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."*

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

### Lesson #94

### COMMENTARY ON: 23:11-35

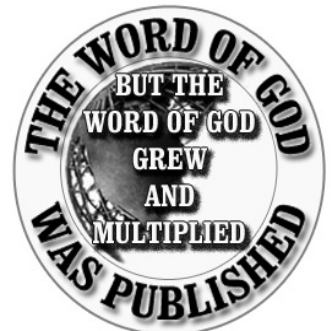
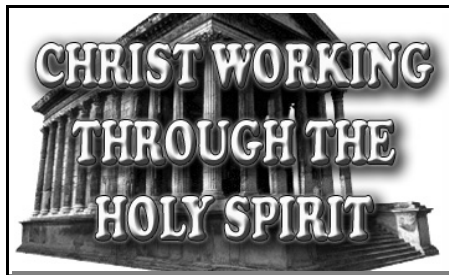
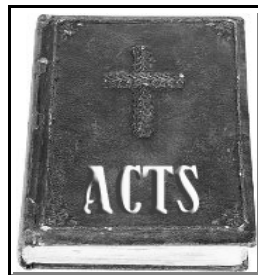
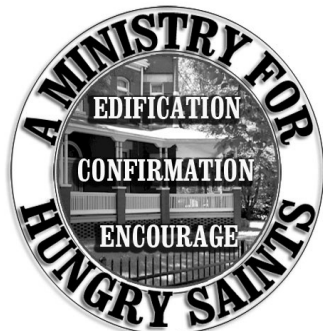
#### A PLEA TO THE GOVERNOR

The night following the rescue of Paul from a confused and violent crowd, the Lord stood by him, assuring him that all would be well, and he would testify of Christ in Rome. However, during that night the prince of darkness was also working, moving more than forty men to make a vow not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They made their intentions known to the council, asking them to have the captain bring Paul down so they could inquire of him. When he appeared, they thought, they would kill him. However, Paul's nephew heard the plot and told Paul, who informed one of the centurions to bring the young man to the chief captain, who then took appropriate action. He commissioned two centurions to marshal two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, and safely conduct Paul to the governor Felix, doing so at the third hour of the night. A beast was also to be provided Paul for the trip. An accompanying letter of explanation was also sent.

### ACTS 17:26-27

*"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."*

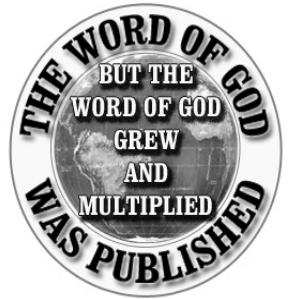
"... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ

# The Book of Acts

## Lesson Number 94



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

**LEXICON LEGEND:** FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# A PLEA TO THE GOVERNOR

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT



The night following the rescue of Paul from a confused and violent crowd, the Lord stood by him, assuring him that all would be well, and he would testify of Christ

in Rome. However, during that night the prince of darkness was also working, moving more than forty men to make a vow not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They made their intentions known to the council, asking them to have the captain bring Paul down so they could inquire of him. When he appeared, they thought, they would kill him. However, Paul's nephew heard the plot and told Paul, who informed one of the centurions to bring the young man to the chief captain, who then took appropriate action. He commissioned two centurions to marshal two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, and safely conduct Paul to the governor Felix, doing so at the third hour of the night. A beast was also to be provided Paul for the trip. An accompanying letter of explanation was also sent.

### GOD IS IN THE MATTER

As will be confirmed in the events that follow, and in spite of appearance, God was in this whole matter. As the "Governor among the nations" (Psa 22:28), He is present in the affairs of men, particularly when they involve His children. Up to this

point, as well as in what is now reported, the Lord has been Paul's "Shield" (Psa 28:7; 119:114; 144:2). The believer knows the Lord has been his shield when he is able to exit from trouble, thereby frustrating the efforts of the wicked one to kill and destroy.

When the Scriptures affirm "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psa 37:23), they do not mean trouble, pain, and inconvenience are not experienced. When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees to go to a land that was promised to him, he faced a famine in the promised land (Gen 12:10). When he went down to Egypt to survive, he faced a king who wanted his wife for himself (Gen 12:15-16). When it came to his progeny Israel being delivered from Egypt, even for those who believed, the way to the promised land led through a desert "wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water" (Deut 8:15).

When these things are not understood, life becomes confusing – especially for those who are in Christ, yet lack understanding. This is precisely why faith must be nourished, and believers must

*Paul is encouraged by the Lord, plotted against by a company of Jews, and protected by a Roman military man – by Given O. Blakely*

grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15). No one in Christ can afford to be naive. **The nature of spiritual of life in Christ Jesus demands that eventually the individual is “filled with all knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual**

**understanding”**(Col 1:9). This is why Paul prayed for the churches, that the God of heaven would give unto them “*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*” the eyes of their understanding “*being enlightened,*” that they might “*know what is*

*the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of the power to usward who believe*”(Eph 1:17-19). **No believer can afford to ignorant of these critical matters.**

### TEXT FOR THIS LESSON

“<sup>23:11</sup> And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. <sup>12</sup> And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. <sup>13</sup> And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. <sup>14</sup> And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. <sup>15</sup> Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. <sup>16</sup> And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. <sup>17</sup> Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. <sup>18</sup> So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. <sup>19</sup> Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? <sup>20</sup> And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. <sup>21</sup> But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. <sup>22</sup> So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me. <sup>23</sup> And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; <sup>24</sup> And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. <sup>25</sup> And he wrote a letter after this manner: <sup>26</sup> Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. <sup>27</sup> This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. <sup>28</sup> And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: <sup>29</sup> Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. <sup>30</sup> And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell. <sup>31</sup> Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. <sup>32</sup> On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: <sup>33</sup> Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. <sup>34</sup> And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; <sup>35</sup> I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.” . . . . . (Acts 23:11-35)

### THE LORD STANDS BY PAUL

“<sup>23:11</sup> *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*”

At this point we will see the value of maintaining the fellowship with Christ into which we have been called. That

fellowship includes the matter of Divine direction, for “*the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*”(Psa 37:23). **Before us is an example of the Lord directing the way of Paul to a specific place.** We also read of such direction in regard to the Thessalonians. “*Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you*” (1 Thess 3:11). In our text,

the direction has to do with going to Rome. The details of how this will be accomplished are not provided – just the fact that the appointment is sure. **It is enough to know the Lord will bring us safely to our appointed destination.** We do not need to know all of the details. That is where faith and trust come in. As it is written, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not*

*Paul is encouraged by the Lord, plotted against by a company of Jews, and protected by a Roman military man – by Given O. Blakely*

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unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov 3:5-6). **Proper preaching and teaching will lead people to this conclusion**, thereby relieving them of undue worry and fretting.

### THE LORD STOOD BY HIM

"And the night following the Lord stood by him . . ." Other versions read, "the Lord stood at his side," <sup>NKJV</sup> "stood near Paul," <sup>NIV</sup> "appeared to Paul." <sup>MRD</sup>

The presence of the Lord and the manifestation of that presence are two different things. The presence of the Lord is sure. As it is written, "When thou passest through the waters, **I will be with thee**; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa 43:2). And again, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee**. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb 13:5-6). **Faith takes hold of this reality, and lives accordingly.** However, as confirmed in this text, there are times when the Lord draws especially near and confirms this truth to our hearts, lest we be discouraged and faint because of unusual

adversity.

This whole ordeal commenced in Acts 21:30 where Paul was forcibly removed from the Temple and the people sought to kill him. Beginning at that point, the following has taken place.

- ⇨ Paul was beaten (Acts 21:32).
- ⇨ He was rescued by a Roman captain and his soldiers (21:33a).
- ⇨ He was bound with two chains (21:33b).
- ⇨ A tumult resulted among the Jews which required that Paul be removed to the military barracks (21:34a).
- ⇨ He was protected from the violence of the Jews (21:34b-35).
- ⇨ Paul asked to speak to the people, and was given leave to do so (21:39-22:21).
- ⇨ The Jews, hearing Paul speak of going to the Gentiles, erupted in anger, calling for his death (22:22-23).
- ⇨ Paul is taken into the barracks for protection, where he was to be examined by scourging (22:24).
- ⇨ Paul is bound with thongs (22:25).
- ⇨ Having learned Paul was a Roman, he was delivered from the appointed scourging (22:25-29).
- ⇨ The next day, Paul having been loosed, was brought down to appear before the Jewish council (22:30).
- ⇨ Paul begins speaking to the council, and Ananias commands that he be struck on the mouth (23:1-2).
- ⇨ Paul rebukes the high priest, and is upbraided for speaking in such a manner to "God's high priest" (23:3-4).
- ⇨ Paul acknowledges that it is improper to speak evil of the rulers, yet does not

retract what he said, apparently not perceiving Ananias as being "God's high priest" (23:5).

- ⇨ Perceiving that the crowd is divided between Sadducees and Pharisees, Paul sets them against one another by saying he has been called into question concerning the hope of the resurrection (23:6).
- ⇨ The crowd is divided, and a tumult arises that requires the rescue of Paul from being torn in two (23:7-10).
- ⇨ Our text records the events of the second night of Paul's incarceration, and preparations for the third day of the whole affair.

Now, how does your latest trial look compared to this solitary experience of Paul – which was by no means the most grievous of his trials? **Learn from the text that Christ being with you does not translate into ease and convenience.** The words of Eliphaz to Job are certainly applicable here: "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (Job 5:19). Sometimes the appointed path of the people of God leads through rivers and fire (Isa 43:2). For some, it leads them through the Red Sea and a scorching desert. For others, the appointed path leads through a lions den or a furnace of fire.

**It will require diligence and spiritual discipline, but the people of God must extricate themselves from the misconception that the blessing of the Lord always means exemption from trouble.** Sometimes it means being sustained through trouble – traveling through the sea and desert, and spending the night in prison, with your feet in stocks.

### APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO PAUL

This is not the first or last time the Lord appeared to Paul. Few souls have been visited as frequently by the glorified Christ!

⇨ **APPEARED TO HIM ON THE ROAD TO**

**It will require diligence and spiritual discipline, but the people of God must extricate themselves from the misconception that the blessing of the Lord always means exemption from trouble.**

**DAMASCUS PRIOR TO HIS CONVERSION**  
(Acts 9:3-22; 22:4-19; 26:13-15).

⇒ **APPEARED TO HIM IN THE TEMPLE** (Acts 22:17-21).

⇒ **STOOD BY HIM WHILE IN CONFINEMENT**  
(Acts 23:11).

⇒ **JESUS TELLS PAUL HIS GRACE IS SUFFICIENT** (2 Cor 12:8-9).

Actually, the Lord was with Him all along, for we have been called into His fellowship. However, because of the extensiveness and vital nature of Paul's ministry, these special appearances were granted. This is not the ordinary lot of those who are believers, but is reserved for those who have been called into unusual activity for the Lord. Those who boast of having Jesus talk to them, yet who are not engaged in a lofty work for the Lord, have probably not told the truth. That simply is not how Jesus has been revealed to us in Scripture.

**BE OF GOOD CHEER**

“ . . . and said, *Be of good cheer, Paul . . .*” Other versions read, “*take courage,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*Keep up your courage,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*be constant,*”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “*don't lose your courage,*”<sup>GWN</sup> “*be strong,*”<sup>MRD</sup> “*don't worry,*”<sup>CEV</sup> “*don't be afraid,*”<sup>GNB</sup> “*Be cheered,*”<sup>LITV</sup> and “*it's going to be all right.*”<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

⇒ Matt 14:27; Mk 6:50: “*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid*” (Mat 14:27; Mk 6:50).

⇒ Mark 10:49: “*And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee*” (Mark 10:49).

⇒ John 16:33: “*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33).

⇒ Acts 23:11: “*And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul*” (Acts 23:11).

**Being of good cheer relates to having confidence, being courageous in the face of trouble or sorrow, and not being afraid.** It has to do with going forward when the winds of adversity are against you, and possessing a stabilizing hope when circumstance appears to contradict the logic and expectation of hope.

This is a word – “*Be of good cheer*” – that reminds the hearer that **the Lord is in control**, and that nothing is too hard for Him. It relates to Him fulfilling His purpose even though it seems everything is working against it. It is a call to look away from the

*also at Rome.”*

**One of the things that is clarified in the Scriptural presentation of Paul is that he thought in concert with the Lord.** He did not suffer the distractions of professionalized religion and purely selfish ambition. When he confessed, “*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (Phil 1:21), he was telling the truth. Again he confessed, “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*” (Gal 2:20). **In our time, this is an exceedingly rare posture of life.** Yet, it is really the only one that is acceptable. After all, Jesus “*died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again*” (2 Cor 5:15). It is staggering to the sensitive soul to hear preachers and teachers **accenting what people want to do:** the fulfilling of their dreams, etc. This is a fulfillment of the apostolic warning, “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears*” (2 Tim 4:3). In other words, the time when preachers will deliver the message that is desired by men. That day has surely arrived! The fare that is being served up ranges from purely sectarian interests, to addressing subjects that have gained the attention of covetous people and those anchored firmly to this world .

**As Thou Hast Testified**

Other versions read, “*But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*As you have testified for Me in Jerusalem,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*as you have borne a faithful witness to Me in Jerusalem,*”<sup>CJB</sup> and “*You've told the truth about Me in Jerusalem*”<sup>GWN</sup> **Candidly, that is not the way Jesus speaks to those who are disobedient and out of His will!**

Remember, when Paul had determined to go to Jerusalem, some brethren had attempted to dissuade him from going.

⇒ “*And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem*” (Acts 21:4).

⇒ “*And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem*”

**One of the things that is clarified in the Scriptural presentation of Paul is that he thought in concert with the Lord. He did not suffer the distractions of professionalized religion and purely selfish ambition.**

The words “*be of good cheer*” are translated from a single Greek word: **Θάρσει**. The lexical meaning of the word is, “*be of good courage, be of good cheer,*”<sup>THAYER</sup> “*don't be afraid, take courage,*”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “*cheer up,*”<sup>UBS</sup> and “*to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing - 'to be courageous, to have courage, to be bold'*”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

This expression is used eight times in Scripture.

⇒ Matthew 9:2: “*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*” (Matt 9:2).

⇒ Matthew 9:22: “*Daughter, be of good comfort . . .*” (Matt 9:22; Lk 8:48).

circumstances to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who is bringing us to glory, and working all things together for our good. It reminds us that it is God's purpose that is being brought to completion, not the projects and intentions of men. Every other will, whether it be that of our adversary the devil, or our peers, is subject to the will of God. That is simply the truth of the matter. When the Lord said to Paul, “*Be of good cheer,*” it was a revelation that he was in the center of the will of God, and therefore had no reason to fear the reappraisals of men.

**YOU MUST BEAR WITNESS AT ROME**

“ . . . for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness

(Acts 21:12).

Reasoning on these texts, some have affirmed that Paul was out of the will of God by going to Jerusalem. **However, this was not the case as the word before us confirms.** The Lord Jesus Himself stood by Paul and told him that he was going to testify in Rome, just as he had done in Jerusalem. It is inconceivable that the glorified Christ would have spoken in this manner if Paul had been out of his will in going to Jerusalem. The truth of the matter is that Paul had more understanding of that trip than those who sought to convince him he should not go. From the higher vantage point, their words had to do with the adversity he would face in Jerusalem. It was, in a sense, a test to Paul, to see if he was wholehearted in his commitment to serve the Lord. His response confirmed that he was.

We know from Paul's letter to the Philippians that he was resolved to participate in the sufferings of Christ. *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death"* (Phil 3:9-10). Here, being conformed to Christ's death has to do with crucifying the flesh – **choosing Christ's interests over personal interests.** That is precisely what Paul did when he went to Jerusalem.

By saying Paul would testify in Rome in the same manner as he did in Jerusalem, Jesus meant that the testimony would be attended by suffering, just as it was in Jerusalem, and other places where he had ministered.

### You Must Bear Witness in Rome

Other versions read, *"so will you be My witness in Rome,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"you must testify also in Rome,"*<sup>ESV</sup> *"Now you must tell the truth about Me in Rome,"*<sup>GWN</sup> *"so also art thou to testify at Rome,"*<sup>MRD</sup> *"now you must do the same in Rome,"*<sup>NJB</sup> *"so it behoveth thee also at Rome to testify,"*<sup>YLT</sup> and *"You must also go to Rome to do the same thing there!"*<sup>IE</sup>

**This is the language of Divine appointment.** The word "must" is translated from the Greek word *dei*. The meaning of this word is, "it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper,"<sup>THAYER</sup> "as expressing compulsion, necessity, or inevitability in an event

it is necessary, one must, one has to,"<sup>FRIBERG</sup> "be necessary, must; should, ought; be proper; impf. had to, should have,"<sup>UBS</sup> and "be necessary, must; should, ought; be proper; impf. had to, should have."<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

Resident in the word "must" is Divine appointment, obedience, willingness, and requirement. **It is a strong word that reflects the reality of Divine government and direction.** The very use of the word assumes a certain sensitivity on the part of the hearer, which brings assurance to him.

Some of the blessed promises that are fulfilled in this text are as follows.

- ⇒ *"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He **teach His way**"* (Psa 25:9).
- ⇒ *"I will instruct thee and **teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye**"* (Psa 32:8).
- ⇒ *"The steps of a good man are **ordered by the LORD**: and he delighteth in his way"* (Psa 37:23).
- ⇒ *"In all thy ways **acknowledge him, and He shall direct thy paths**"* (Prov 3:6).
- ⇒ *"**Man's goings are of the LORD**; how can a man then understand his own way?"* (Prov 20:24).
- ⇒ *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, **This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left**"* (Isa 30:21).
- ⇒ *"Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which **leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go**"* (Isa 48:17).
- ⇒ *"O LORD, I know that **the way of man is not in himself**: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer 10:23).
- ⇒ *"And we know that **all things work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"* (Rom 8:28).

There is a sense in which God's path is in the sea (Psa 77:19). That is, it is not clear or discernible to those who live at a

distance from Him, choosing not to live by faith and walk in the Spirit. However, for those who crucify the flesh, forget the past, and faithfully press toward the mark, **the will of the Lord becomes more**



**apparent through the ministry of the Lord.** That is, Divine direction takes place **while we are involved** in what we do know. For example, when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, and as he traveled, he was given further directions. The same was true when he was commanded to offer up Isaac. He learned where he was going only after he had set out on the journey. When Israel came out of Egypt, they received further directions as they journeyed.

It is precisely at this point that many professing Christians are confined to ignorance concerning the will of the Lord. That, of course is the point of Romans 12:1-2. *"I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to **make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].**"*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Legion is the name of those poor souls who remain shackled to the affairs of this world, when they have been called to higher things. They wander in a state of perpetual spiritual confusion, never sure of

what they are to do, and falling into one pit after another. They do not know that when a person walks in the dark, they stumble

because they do not know where they are going. Jesus said, *“he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth”*

(John 12:35). And again, *“But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him”* (John 11:10).

## THE JEWS BIND THEMSELVES UNDER A CURSE

*“<sup>12</sup> And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.<sup>13</sup> And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.”*

The aggression of the enemies of the saints is a matter with which they must learn to contend. Some may labor under the

⇨ *“In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me”* (Psa 142:3).

Notable servants of God have endured persecution, and even martyrdom. The list includes

⇨ Abel (Gen 4:8)

⇨ Daniel (Dan 6:1-28)

⇨ John the Baptist (Matt 14:3-12)

⇨ James (Acts 12:2)

⇨ Simon Peter (Mk 15:21)

⇨ Peter and John (Acts 4:6-21)

⇨ Lazarus (John 12:10)

⇨ Stephen (Acts 6:9-15; 1:1-60)

⇨ Paul (2 Cor 4:8-12; 11:24-33)

⇨ Silas (Acts 16:23-25)

⇨ Timothy (Heb 13:23)

⇨ John the beloved (John 1:9)

⇨ Antipas (Rev 2:13).

**The aggression of the enemies of the saints is a matter with which they must learn to contend. Some may labor under the misconception that God will always see to it that our enemies do not assert themselves – but that is only an imagination that has to be cast down.**

misconception that God will always see to it that our enemies do not assert themselves – but that is only an imagination that has to be cast down. The “sweet psalmist of Israel” frequently spoke to the Lord about his enemies.

⇨ *“Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength”* (Psa 31:4).

⇨ *“For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul”* (Psa 35:7).

⇨ *“They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul”* (Psa 56:6).

⇨ *“The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts”* (Psa 119:110).

⇨ *“The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah”* (Psa 140:5).

⇨ Lot (Gen 19:9)

⇨ Moses (Ex 2:15; 17:4)

⇨ David (Psa 31:13; 59:1)

⇨ Gideon (Judges 6:28-32)

⇨ Elijah (1 Kgs 18:10; 19:1-21; 2 Kgs 1:9; 2:23)

⇨ Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:26; 2 Chron 18:26)

⇨ Elisha (2 Kgs 6:31)

⇨ Hanani (2 Chron 16:10)

⇨ Zachariah (2 Chron 24:21; Matt 23:35)

⇨ Job (Job 13:4-13; 16:1-4; 17:2; 19:1-5; 30:1-10)

⇨ Jeremiah (Jer 15:10,15-23; 26:1-24; 37:1-21; 38:1-6)

⇨ Urijah (Jer 26:23)

⇨ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 3:8-23)

No believer should draw back when facing opposition, regardless of its source. **God does not guarantee a life of ease, and we ought not expect such a condition.** Of course, it is one thing to say this, it is quite another thing to behold it being lived out as it is in Paul.

### CERTAIN OF THE JEWS BANDED TOGETHER

*“And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul . . .”*

Other versions read, *“formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“made a plot and bound themselves by an oath,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“They asked God to curse them if they ate or drank anything before they had killed Paul,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“made a vow,”* <sup>TNT</sup> *and “did anathematize themselves.”* <sup>YLT</sup>

**As tutored by the Law, a certain sobriety existed in the Jewish community that is strange to the**

**culture of our time.** Although they were driven by hatred, and were wrong in their intentions, it was a corrupted view of religion that drove them. This, in my estimation, is the worst of all delusion, transcending political misconceptions, social delusions, and a view of life that accents this present evil world. **The reason for the seriousness of religious delusion is that it acts as a kind of blanket that, in the eyes of those who are deceived, justifies what they are doing.** It is like a spiritual narcotic that has put them to sleep, and allows them to oppose the truth and malign the saints with an uncondemning conscience.

**THEY WERE MORE THAN FORTY**

“And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.” Other versions read, “about forty.”<sup>TNT</sup> The rest of the versions read “over forty.” These words are translated from two Greek words. πλείους

**To participate in evil causes will result in the sharing in their judgment. That was taught under the Law, confirmed by Jesus, and taught by the apostles.**

(“greater in quantity . . . more than”),<sup>THAYER</sup> τεσσαράκοντα (“as a cardinal number forty”).<sup>FRIBERG</sup>

These men doubtless thought themselves capable of carrying out their diabolical scheme. Unwittingly, they had set themselves in opposition to what was contained in their Scripture, “*Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered*” (Prov 11:21). And again,

“*Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished*” (Prov 16:5). Again, the Law contained this warning, “*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment*” (Ex 23:2). To participate in evil causes will result in the sharing in their judgment. That was taught under the Law, confirmed by Jesus, and taught by the apostles.

**THE JEWS GO TO THE JEWISH COUNCIL WITH THEIR PLAN**

“<sup>14</sup> **And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.** <sup>15</sup> **Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.**”

**THEY CAME TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS**

“And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul . . .”

Other versions read, “We have taken a solemn oath,”<sup>NIV</sup> “We have strictly bound ourselves,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “We have taken a great oath,”<sup>BBE</sup> “We have cursed ourselves with a curse,” “We have asked God to curse us,”<sup>GWN</sup> “We have bound ourselves with imprecations,”<sup>MRD</sup> “With an anathema we did anathematize ourselves,”<sup>YLT</sup> and “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath and under a curse.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

It is to be assumed that these Jews were members of the Sadducees party, since the scribes, speaking for the Pharisees, had said that no longer were willing to pursue

charges against Paul. However, even though the Sadducees had apparently been quelled by the removal of Paul into the protection of a Roman “army” or “troops”<sup>NASB</sup> (Acts 23:27), these enemies formed something like a special hit squad who was determined to kill Paul before they ate or drank again.

Here is another example of people who are fundamentally disagreed joining together in their opposition to the servants of God. This same circumstance attended the rejection of Jesus (Matt 26:3; 27:1), Peter and John (Acts 4:13-20), and the Apostles as a whole (Acts 5:18-34). This confirms that the wicked, no matter how diverse they may appear to be, are united in their insurrection against the Lord and His Christ. Even though there may appear to be some who favor the elect, yet they do not step forward to defend them. Their supposed friendliness is only in word, not in action. **In reality, the wicked have one heartbeat.** Any apparent distinctions between them is only on the surface.

**SIGNIFY TO THE CHIEF CAPTAIN**

“Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him . . .”

Other versions read, “as though

you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “were going to make further inquiries,”<sup>NASB</sup> “the pretext of wanting more accurate information,”<sup>NIV</sup> and “as if you were going to investigate his case more accurately.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**There is a certain naivety in the flesh that is most uncomely.** These men assume that the captain will not see through their schemes, or that they will not in some way be interrupted. Of course, the captain had become acquainted with their devious ways, and would at least be suspicious of their intentions. This is not to consider the God of heaven who does “according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,” with none being able to “stay His hand, or say unto Him, ‘What doest Thou’” (Dan 4:35).

**In other words, “the flesh” thinks that it is invincible, and can carry out its intentions.** Like Israel of old they reason, “They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; **neither** shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine” (Jer 5:12). The wicked man imagines, “I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity” (Psa 10:6). Notice with what confidence these opponents of the Lord and His Christ speak. Yet, their words are nothing more than puffs of smoke.

**WE ARE READY TO KILL HIM**

“... and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.” Other versions read, “slay him before he comes near the place,” NKJV and “before he gets here.” NRSV

Not only have these men hatched a plan, they are convinced they are fully competent to carry it out. They have a certain ignorance of God that does allow

them to think soberly and soundly. They cannot imagine they will be thwarted in their plans.

Learn that the enemy is aggressive. The arch foe, the devil, “as a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet 5:7). He can disguise himself as an “angel of light,” and “his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of

righteousness” (2 Cor 11:14-15). In our text, his servants were leading religious men who operated in the name of the Lord.

If you are not aggressive Godward, taking the Kingdom by violence, there is no hope of you winning the good fight of faith. **Many a poor soul has been cast down because they simply were too casual and uninvolved.**

**PAUL'S NEPHEW HEARS THE PLOT**

“<sup>16</sup> And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.”

Never underestimate how the Lord can work in your behalf. In this case, a young man overhears the plot of some wicked men, **and knows how to react to it.** This, of course, was all orchestrated by the Lord. He can use a flying bird to blaze abroad a matter (Eccl 10:20). Truly, the “camp” of God “is very great” (Joel 2:11). In Joel’s prophecy that camp included “the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm.” God refers to these as “my great army which I sent among you” (Joel 2:25). In this text, the Lord’s army includes a young man, probably a boy.

**PAUL'S SISTER'S SON**

“And when Paul's sister's son . . .” Other versions read, “Paul's nephew.” GWN/NLT

This is the only place in the

us to believe that he was rather young. Later, when he reports to the captain, it is written he took this boy “by the hand,” suggesting that he was but a youth.

We are given no information concerning how or why this young man was in Jerusalem. Perhaps he had been following the events concerning Paul, or was being schooled in Jerusalem. The thing to be seen here is the Headship of Christ, who is protecting His servant Paul.

**HE HEARD OF THEIR LYING IN WAIT**

“... heard of their lying in wait . . .” Other versions read, “heard of their ambush,” NASB “heard of this plot,” NIV and “heard of their intended attack.” AMPLIFIED

What a remarkable thing! This young man gained knowledge about the wicked plot of these Jews. They doubtless thought the whole matter was secret. However, the Lord controlled the situation so their plans would be thwarted by the activity

suggests his interest in Paul, as well as his familiarity with the leadership of the Jews.

The whole event stirs up memories of young Miriam, who was placed in charge of watching her infant brother when he was placed in a basket, and positioned among the reeds along the banks of the Nile. There this young girl watched, and upon seeing Pharaoh’s daughter take up young Moses, went to her and asked if she should go to get a nurse of the Hebrew women to nurse the child for her (Ex 2:3-9).

There is also the record of a young boy Samuel, who was given a message from God to deliver to Eli, the priest who was tutoring him, and under whom he served in the tabernacle (1 Sam 2:18-3:19).

Another similar incident took place when Naaman, captain of the host of king of Syria, had leprosy. A certain captive girl served Naaman’s wife. This young maiden told Naaman’s wife, “Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.” This set in motion a series of events that led to the healing of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:3-14).

All these young people were taught of the Lord from their youth, and were used at a tender age. Each of them was discerning, and acted appropriately, confirming that God used them for His own glory.

**The modern church is not producing children like this.** Further, it is tragically true that many Christian parents do not raise their children to actually **serve** the Lord. They are not taught to be alert, nor can they be trusted to think and act correctly. Such things ought not to be. Admittedly, these were probably unusual children, but who are we to imagine that such children cannot be placed in our care? They are, after all, “the heritage of the Lord.”

**This is the only place in the Scriptures where these two people are mentioned: Paul's sister and her son. Neither one of them are identified by name. We learn from this that Paul had no doubt witnessed powerfully to his family, so that at least some of them were inclined to him.**

Scriptures where these two people are mentioned: Paul’s sister and her son. Neither one of them are identified by name. **We learn from this that Paul had no doubt witnessed powerfully to his family, so that at least some of them were inclined to him.**

What is said of Paul’s nephew leads

of a youth. Of course, we learn something about Paul’s nephew as well. For one thing, he was apparently not among his peers when he gained this knowledge. He was either privy to the original discussion of these Jews, or somehow gained knowledge of their caucus with the chief priests and elders. This

**HE TOLD PAUL**

“... he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.” Other versions read, “he went and entered the barracks and told Paul,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “he went and gained entrance to the barracks and told Paul,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “he came into the army building and gave news of it to Paul,”<sup>BBE</sup> “came and entered into the fortress and reported it to Paul,”<sup>DARBY</sup> and “he went and got into the barracks and told Paul.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

How did Paul’s nephew get into barracks? The Jews were denied entrance,

for it was a place of protection for Paul. **First, the Lord was behind this, bringing it all to pass.** That is why Solomon wrote, “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD” (Prov 21:30). Again Isaiah prophesied, “Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us” (Isa 8:10). The Lord brings the “counsel of the heathen to nought” (Psa 33:10). Thus did Isaiah write, “That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh

*their knowledge foolish*” (Isa 44:25). Here He did it with the hearing and response of a young boy.

Someone had to admit the boy to the barracks, for it was not accessible to everyone. Nor, indeed, could someone sneak into that area. I thus conclude that Paul’s nephew was given favor in the sight of those who were securing the barracks. No one suspected he was intending to do Paul harm. Thus, we see that the Lord made a way where there was no way, using a servant that would have been overlooked by men.

**THE COUNSEL OF PAUL**

**“<sup>17</sup> Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.**

<sup>18</sup> So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. <sup>19</sup> Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? <sup>20</sup> And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. <sup>21</sup> But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. <sup>22</sup> So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.”

Conducting his life as a king and a priest, you sense there is a way in which Paul is in charge of the situation. He is given wisdom, and is therefore able to handle the situation in an expeditious manner. That is one of the marvelous results of living by faith and walking in the Spirit. It is also the outcome of maintaining the fellowship with Christ into which God has called us (1 Cor 1:9). This is also an example of what happens when men “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7). It ought to be noted that many professing

Christians are confused by life’s circumstances because they do not walk in the light. They are too close to the world.

**PAUL CALLED ONE OF THE CENTURIONS**

“Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this

somewhere after puberty, and prior to marriage. At the least it would be around fourteen years of age, and at the most, the early twenties.

Something of the nature of trials of faith is seen in this text. **Sometimes it is necessary to assess the situation, and**

**When an individual lives by faith and walks in the Spirit, their own spirit is sensitized to Divine direction. When anyone fails to live in this manner, they have cut themselves off from God, for faith and the Spirit are the appointed means through which the Lord directs one’s life for the good.**

young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him . . .” Other versions read, “Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him,”<sup>NASB</sup> “Take this youth to the chiliarch, for he has something to report to him,”<sup>DARBY</sup> and “Take this boy to the commander. He has something important to tell him.”<sup>LIVING</sup>

The words “young man” are translated from the Greek word *νεανίας*, which has the following lexical meaning: “used of an older boy, young (unmarried) man,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “a young man beyond the age of puberty, but normally before marriage,”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> and “children, youth,”<sup>LEH</sup>

There is no certain way of determining the age of Paul’s nephew. It was

**take an action that is compatible with holiness, and to the maintenance of our calling.** Answers to a dilemma do not always lie on the surface of life. There are also times when it is inappropriate to seek counsel from another. Some trials are designed for the individual to work them out, calling upon the resources that faith has brought.

Paul immediately knows what to do. He is aware that this is not something he can resolve on his own. I do not question that the Lord provided the answer to him at that very hour. This is what happens when a person lives “unto Him which died for them and rose again” (2 Cor 5:15). When an individual lives by faith and walks in the Spirit, their own spirit is sensitized to Divine direction. When anyone fails to live in this

manner, they have cut themselves off from God, for faith and the Spirit are the appointed means through which the Lord directs one's life for the good.

**HE TOOK HIM TO THE CHIEF CAPTAIN**

*"So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee . . ."*

**It is remarkable how there is a total absence of obstacles in this account.** Paul's nephew enters and speaks to Paul. Paul calls one of the centurions and asks him to take the young man to the captain. The centurion then presents the young man to the chief captain, who cordially welcomes and listens to him.

**DO NOT YIELD TO THEM**

*"Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? <sup>20</sup> And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. <sup>21</sup> But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee . . ."*

The young nephew does not forget a single thing that he had heard, but gives a thorough report to the captain. **So far as the text is concerned, Paul did not spell out what the young man was to say to the captain.** He even delivers an exhortation to the captain to see to it that he does not yield to the request of the chief priests and elders. Notice the details of the report.

- ⇒ The Jews agreed to ask the captain to bring Paul into the council.
- ⇒ The Jews left the impression that their desire was to inquire further into the circumstances of Paul's arrest.
- ⇒ The nephew then admonished the captain not to yield to the request of these Jews.
- ⇒ More than forty men were lying in wait for Paul, ready to kill him.
- ⇒ These Jews had bound themselves with an oath not to eat nor drink until they

had killed Paul.

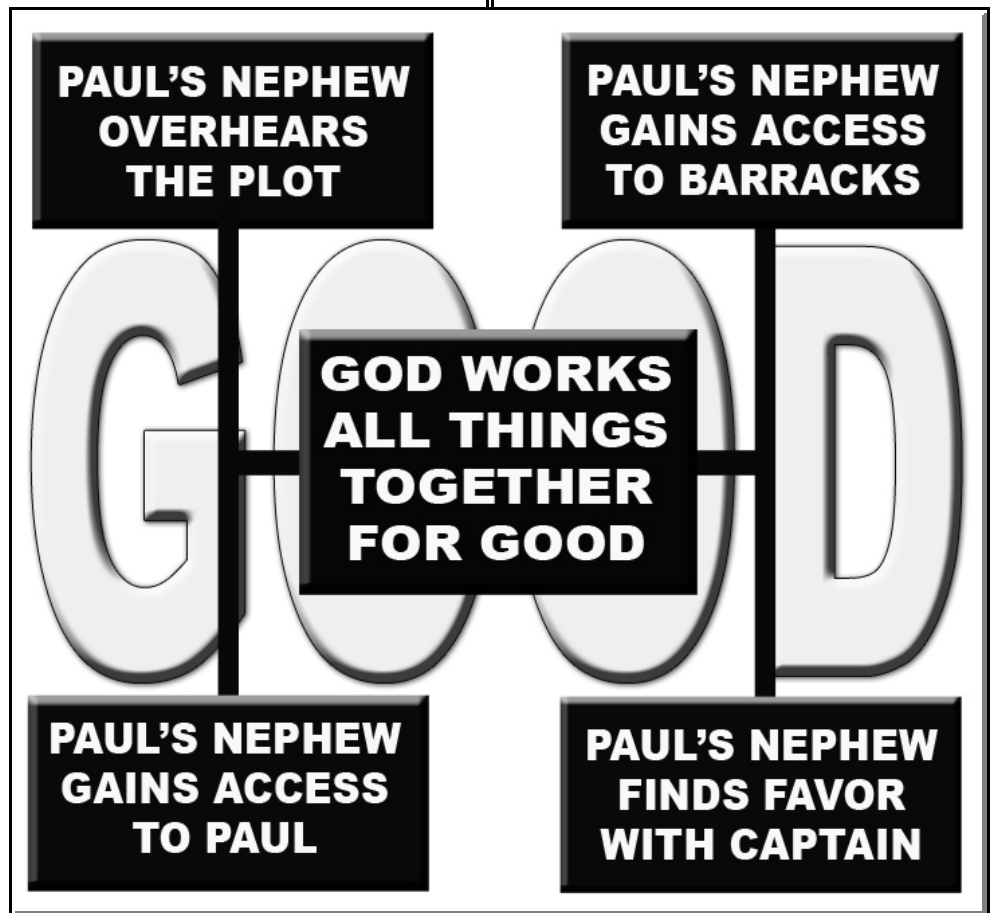
- ⇒ These Jews were fully prepared and awaiting a promise from the captain. Then they would set their plan in motion, they thought, and rid themselves of Paul and his influence.

**Behind the circumstances, the Lord was at work, causing all things to harmoniously work for the ultimate good of Paul.** This kind of working, we are told, is in the behalf of those who *"love God, to them who are THE called according to His purpose"* (Rom 8:28). It is axiomatic that

details of such marvelous working, and we do well to take note of them.

**TELL NO MAN**

*"So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me."* Other versions read, *"Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me,"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"notified me of these things,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"reported this to me,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"informed me of this,"*<sup>NRSV</sup> and *"Do not disclose to anyone that you have given me this information."*  
AMPLIFIED



such people are actually involved in the working of the purpose of God. For such precious souls, the Lord turns everything into an ultimate advantage. If the work of such an individual is not yet concluded, the Sovereign Lord will see to it that it is completed. If those opposing that individual appear to be gaining the upper hand, their cause will be overridden by the Lord, and cast down to the ground. Wherever required, others will rise to the defense of the Lord's workman.

Our text is providing some of the

**There are some things that the general populous do not need to know.** Such decisions are made in the interest of the truth and the will of the Lord. There is no room for naivety in such matters. The Gospel's contain eight references to Jesus saying, *"Tell no man"* (Matt 8:4; 16:20; Mk 7:36; 8:30; 9:9; Lk 5:14; 8:56; 9:21). In each case Divine intention was the fundamental thing. In the above cases, there would come a time when it would be appropriate to disclose the information of reference. That disclosure, however, must not be premature. In this text, it would be years later that the

details described would be revealed in the writing of Luke. But at the time these things were occurring, what was told must **not** be made known to anyone. Such knowledge would turn to the disadvantage of Paul.

Here we also see another facet of Divine working. Although the Lord is fully able of subduing all enemies, His will does not always center in such marvelous capability. **Some matters are left to be worked out in the crucible of human**

**conflict.** In this way the circumstances may be studied with a mind to behold the working of the Lord according to what God has revealed of Himself.

**Part of the newness of life is a proper assessment of circumstance.** The people of God are not to be simple in this assessment. That is precisely why Jesus said, *“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment”* (John 7:24). That word postulates that circumstance can

appear to contradict the truth of the matter. Yet, when the condition is duly considered, faith will enable the believer to see behind the scenes that all things are being worked together for the good of the people of God. Of course, such a circumstance requires a working knowledge of the Word of God, and a familiarity with the ways and purpose of the Lord. **Where this kind of awareness is not found, a sound judgment is not possible. Confusion, in such a case, is inevitable.**

## THE CHIEF CAPTAIN ACTS IN FAVOR OF PAUL

*“<sup>23</sup> And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;<sup>24</sup> And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.”*

The captain acts on this new knowledge immediately – which itself is a most marvelous thing. He engaged in a rather complicated procedure on the word of a young man – a young man he apparently did not know. Furthermore, he came to know of Paul’s nephew in the hour of crisis, which is not always conducive to soundness of thought. The captain is not a Jew, and he is not a Christian. His primary interest is in his responsibilities as a Roman military leader. **Yet, he treats the word of Paul’s nephew just as though it had come down from Caesar himself.** This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

The Lord deals with the hearts of

wrote, *“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD”* (Prov 16:33). The Amplified Bible reads, *“The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him].”* Thus, we have an inspired interpretation of the events of this text. God is at work, carrying out His own purpose in the midst of human circumstance.

### HE CALLED TWO CENTURIONS

*“And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night . . .”*

The Amplified Bible reads, *“Have two hundred footmen ready by the third hour of the night (about 9:00 p.m.) to go as far as Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen.”*

The captain immediately makes provision for the transfer of Paul. He knows there are forty man awaiting an opportunity

Jews in comparison to that? These Jews are not like Samson or Gideon’s small army. They are set in opposition to Christ Jesus and His servant Paul. They could not win against Paul’s nephew, let alone four hundred and seventy trained and seasoned soldiers.

God has thus marshaled an impressive army to deliver Paul, and they will move out at nine o’clock in the evening, putting the Jews at an even great disadvantage.

### BRING HIM SAFE TO FELIX THE GOVERNOR

*“And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.”* Other versions read, *“and provide mounts to set Paul on,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“mounts for Paul to ride,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> and *“Also provide beasts for mounts for Paul to ride.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**Notice with what care Paul is transferred to Felix the governor.** It does not appear that this was always the manner in which prisoners were treated. Neither Pilate nor Herod had such care when the Lord Jesus was in their custody. Herod did not take special precautions when James was in his care, and then Peter. In Philippi, which was a Roman province, Paul and Silas were beaten and placed in an inner prison with their feet in stocks. Later, Felix would leave Paul bound in prison for two full years (Acts 24:27). Thus we see that government officials did not always have such care for Paul and others who preached the Gospel.

**The special treatment of Paul was owing to Divine intervention.** The Lord had appeared to Paul telling him he would bear witness of Him in Rome, just as surely as he did in Jerusalem. This promise

**The Lord deals with the hearts of men, turning them when He wills to do so, even if the person is a king (Prov 21:1). On the surface, it often appears as though men have the total responsibility.**

men, turning them when He wills to do so, even if the person is a king (Prov 21:1). On the surface, it often appears as though men have the total responsibility. Yet the Lord Himself works out the matter. Thus Solomon

to kill Paul. **He offsets their presence with an impressive number of soldiers.** Two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen – **four hundred and seventy in all.** What are forty angry

now is attended by the hearts and minds of men being impacted by the Lord Himself. Thusfar, the thinking and conduct of the following people have been impacted.

⇒ The Pharisees disagreeing with the Sadducees.

- ⇒ The captain favoring Paul.
- ⇒ Paul's nephew overhearign a plot.
- ⇒ A Centurion who listens to Paul.
- ⇒ The soldiers assigned to protect Paul.

**In each case, there was an accelerated concern for Paul – a concern that flesh could not possibly have anticipated.** God was working in the behalf of His servant, ensuring that His will would be done. The exalted Christ had determined that Paul would testify of Him in Rome, and nothing could deter it!

## THE ACCOMPANYING LETTER

***“<sup>25</sup> And he wrote a letter after this manner: <sup>26</sup> Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. <sup>27</sup> This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. <sup>28</sup> And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: <sup>29</sup> Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. <sup>30</sup> And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.”***

The orderliness of this whole affair is interesting to ponder. The opposition that was raised against Paul was characterized within the context of chaos and irrationality.

- ⇒ The Jews stirred up the people with irrational and uninformed speech (Acts 21:27-29).
- ⇒ The city was in a state of uproar, and Paul was dragged out of the Temple (Acts 21:30a).
- ⇒ The Temple doors were shut (Acts 21:30b).
- ⇒ All Jerusalem was in an uproar (Acts 21:31).
- ⇒ When Paul was rescued by an army, discordant cries erupted from the people with some crying one thing, while others cried another (Acts 21:34A).
- ⇒ There was a tumult among the people (Acts 21:34b).

- ⇒ When Paul delivered his first defense to the people, they responded by casting off their clothes and throwing dust into the air (Acts 21:23).
- ⇒ A dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the opposing multitude “*was divided*”(Acts 23:7).

Divine workings, as well as the mode of working that characterizes our adversary the devil.

**One other thing needs to be noted. If a heathen captain went to such a great extent to deliver Paul safely to the appointed destination, what care must the Lord Jesus take in bringing “*many sons to glory*” (Heb**

**Once again, I want to emphasize that the historical accounts of Scripture are more than a mere record of the activities and responses of men. The truth of God is lived out in these accounts, revealing the manner of Divine workings, as well as the mode of working that characterizes our adversary the devil.**

- ⇒ An even greater dissension took place when some of the Pharisees spoke in defense of Paul (Acts 23:10).

Thus, the words of James were fulfilled in Paul's accusers: “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work*”(James 3:16).

By way of comparison, the heathen, as represented by the Captain and his army, go about things in a very orderly and thoughtful manner. In them the word of Jesus is fulfilled: “*the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*”(Luke 16:8).

**Once again, I want to emphasize that the historical accounts of Scripture are more than a mere record of the activities and responses of men.** The truth of God is lived out in these accounts, revealing the manner of

2:10a). What of the considerate care of the “*Good Shepherd*,” who is also “*the Captain of*” our “*salvation*” (John 10:11,14; Heb 2:10b).

### HE WROTE A LETTER

“*And he wrote a letter after this manner . . .*” Other versions read, “*He wrote a letter having this form,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*He wrote a letter to this effect,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*having written a letter, couched in this form,*”<sup>DARBY</sup> “*wrote a letter . . . with the following message,*”<sup>GWN</sup> and “*having written a letter after this description.*”<sup>YLT</sup>

The purpose of this section is not to supply a verbatim account of the letter written by the captain. It is rather to give the sense and thrust of the letter: “*after this manner.*” These are the exact words Jesus said in answer to the disciples request to teach them to pray: “*After this manner therefore pray ye*”(Matt 6:9; Lk 11:1). When

the brethren in Jerusalem wrote letters to the Gentile believers concerning the matter of circumcision, Luke reports, *“and they wrote letters by them **after this manner**”* (Acts 15:23). **This language does not suggest a human interpretation of the message of reference.** Rather, it emphasizes the intent of the letter of reference. It is not meant to be a word-for-word report, but is intended to promote an understanding of what was written. On a practical level, this suggests that extended personal greetings and references would not be included in their entirety.

**CLAUDIUS LYSIAS**

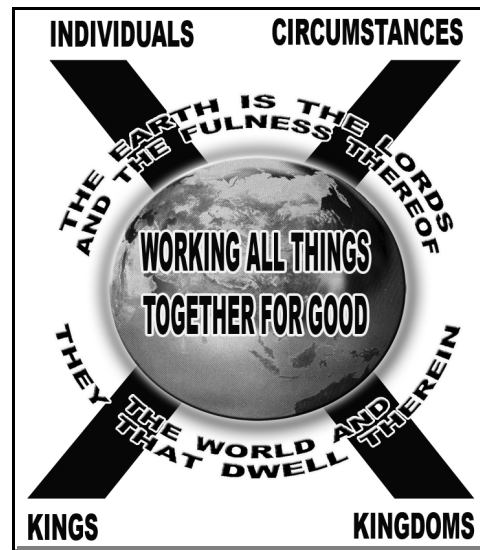
*“Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting . . .”* Here the captain is first identified by name. Later, he is mentioned twice more (Acts 24:7,22). He is the *“chief captain”* referenced seventeen times in Acts 21:31,32,33,37; 22:24,26,27,28,29; 23:10,15,17,18,19,22; 24:7,22. **He is certainly a key figure in this phase of Paul’s ministry.** Although a heathen that did not know God, he was used by God to ensure the safety of Paul, and that he would arrive safely in Rome where he would bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has often used heathen people to protect His own people.

- ⇒ Abraham was sustained in Egypt ( ).
- ⇒ Joseph was exalted to prominence in order to save his own people alive during the time of famine (Psa 105:17).
- ⇒ The Pharaoh of Egypt gave Israel the land of Goshen, and nourished them during the time of famine (Gen 45:-9-11).
- ⇒ Moses was raised by Pharaoh’s daughter (Ex 2:10).
- ⇒ Israel developed as a nation in Egypt (Ex 1:7; Psa 105:24).
- ⇒ God used Nebuchadnezzar to chasten Israel, referring to this heathen king as His *“servant”* (Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10)
- ⇒ Daniel received favor from the Babylonian that was appointed over him and other Jewish captives (Dan 1:9).
- ⇒ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were exalted sustained in Babylon (Dan 1:19).

- ⇒ Daniel was exalted and favored by Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar Darius, and Cyrus (Dan 2:48; 5:29; 6:1-2,28).
- ⇒ Nehemiah was cared for in the court of king (Neh 1:1; 2:1-8).
- ⇒ Esther was protected as the wife of king Ahasuerus, who reigned *“from India to Ethiopia”* (Esth 1:1; 2:17).
- ⇒ In the capacity of the king’s wife, Esther was used to save the Jews from extinction (Esth 8:1-17).
- ⇒ Cyrus was used to initiate and fund the rebuilding of the Temple (2 Chron 36:22-23). God referred to Cyrus as *“My shepherd”* (Isa 44:28).
- ⇒ Darius and Artaxerxes joined with Cyrus in commanding the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 6:14).

The above circumstances are a confirmation of the truth Paul wrote to Timothy: *“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and **some to honor, and some to dishonor**”* (2 Tim 2:20). Truly, *“The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein”* (Psa 24:1). **The perception of this will produce a strong confidence in the hearts of God’s people.**



It is not possible to overstate the practical value of knowing God is working all things together for the good of those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose. The supporting pillars of that knowledge include that fact that God is, in fact, *“the Governor among the nations”* (Psa

22:28), and that He works His will *“in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth”* (Dan 4:35). Add to that the fact that Satan, our *“adversary”* is controlled by God to such an extent that he cannot lift a finger against the saints of God without Divine approval. This is clearly confirmed in the inspired record of Job (Job 1:1-2; 2:1-7).

**Our text provides the outworking of Divine purpose, and the fact of God’s Sovereignty.** In the blazing glory of the New Covenant, it is not necessary for Luke to affirm that God is behind Paul’s protection. In Christ, and in strict accord with the New Covenant itself, the saved *“know”* the Lord, and are able to recognize His working. It is quite true that the Roman captain, *“Claudius Lysias”* does not speak of the hand of the Lord – but that is only because he was not able to see it. His reports confirm that he thought he was acting strictly by his own volition and understanding.

**I RESCUED HIM**

*“This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman . . .”*

Given the original circumstances of this case, it could have been concluded that Paul would be safely delivered from the Jews, and actually go forward in carrying out the will of God. However, when the Jews found Paul in the Temple, and dragged him out, shutting the Temple doors, and commencing to beat him, **it appeared as though they were in charge.** When the captain sought to identify the situation, and was only met with angry Jews and a noisy tumult, **it appeared as though things were out of control.** When forty angry Jews conspired to kill Paul, hatching a supposedly fool-proof scheme, **it appeared on the surface as though a tremendous obstacle was introduced.** However, what appears as a crisis on the earth, does not so appear in the heavenly realms. Concerning those who oppose the Lord’s Christ and those who are in Him, their oppositions are viewed like this by the Lord of glory: *“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision”* (Psa 2:4).

Notice the accuracy of this letter. The facts are not embellished, but the report perfectly agrees with the inspired report of Luke (Acts 21:31-23:24). Carnal embellishment is never in order when reporting matters related to the Lord and His servants.

**I WOULD HAVE KNOWN**

*“And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council . . .”* Other versions read, *“when I wanted to know the reason,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“wanting to ascertain the charge,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“I wanted to know why they were accusing him,”*<sup>NIV</sup> and *“wishing to know the exact accusation which they were making against him.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The captain wanted to establish the

The captain approached his duties with integrity, and in conformity with the laws of the land. He saw that Paul had done nothing in violation of Roman law, and so he candidly acknowledged that this was a matter pertaining to Jewish law. Yet, his accusers *“laid nothing to his charge worthy of death or bonds.”*

**It is a sad day when the heathen who “know not God” (1 Thess 4:5), are more discerning of right and**

church, the more spiritually illogical and unreasonable it becomes. **The input of worldly wisdom causes a lessening of sound reasoning, and pushes holy interests into the background.**

**I GAVE COMMANDMENT TO HIS ACCUSERS**

*“And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.”*

Politically speaking, Lysias appealed to a higher power when his own aptitude became limited. He was not willing to let this whole matter go, as Pilate did with Jesus. He did not allow the Jewish council to have their own way, but insisted they present their cause to a higher court. His quest was for justice to be properly administered. Too, in the presentation of the matter, he confined himself to the facts and an accurate portrayal of them. He is an example of a faithful steward – someone who faithfully fulfilled his responsibility.

In this, Claudius Lysias is a most excellent example of Christ’s own good and faithful stewards. Such carry out their responsibilities even though it may have to be done in the midst of difficulty and tumult. **They also know how to cast their burden upon the Lord without abandoning their own responsibility.** See, even in the account of a gentile captain, there is a kind of exhortation embedded in the report that speaks to the heart of the people of God.

Knowing how to interact with appointed authorities is a matter in which the people of God should obtain some level of expertise.

**It is a sad day when the heathen who “know not God,” are more discerning of right and wrong than those who are in covenant with God. Those who have been identified with religious institutions can testify to the continuance of this kind of thing.**

legitimacy of the charges being brought against Paul. Therefore, he called the council to have them give an accounting of their cause. It was an honest effort to do what was right. However, he soon discovered the remarkable degree of prejudice and hatred that existed among Paul’s accusers. However, he did not wash his hands like Pilate, and back away from the whole incident, giving place to the contentious Jews. He rather pursued justice. Although he was himself unaware of it, the Lord was directing this whole affair.

**ACCUSED OF QUESTIONS OF THEIR LAW**

*“Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds . . .”*

**wrong than those who are in covenant with God.** Those who have been identified with religious institutions can testify to the continuance of this kind of thing. From experience, I can tell you that the most unfair and unreasonable opposition I have experienced has been from the professed church and the institutions associated with it. The number of people that I personally know who have experienced the same is staggering for size. **The religious landscape is cluttered with broken hearts and wounded spirits that have been battered by sectarian Christianity.**

This kind of thing is owing to the stultifying effects of religious institutionalism. The more humanly-devised organization is found in the professed

**THE SOLDIERS DELIVER PAUL SAFELY TO THE GOVERNOR**

*“<sup>31</sup> Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. <sup>32</sup> On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: <sup>33</sup> Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. <sup>34</sup> And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; <sup>35</sup> I*

*will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s judgment hall.”*

Again, we have an example of faithful service. Those who offer convenient excuses for being unfaithful or retarded in their service have stooped beneath the level of the heathen of this text.

**BROUGHT BY NIGHT TO**

**ANTIPATRIS**

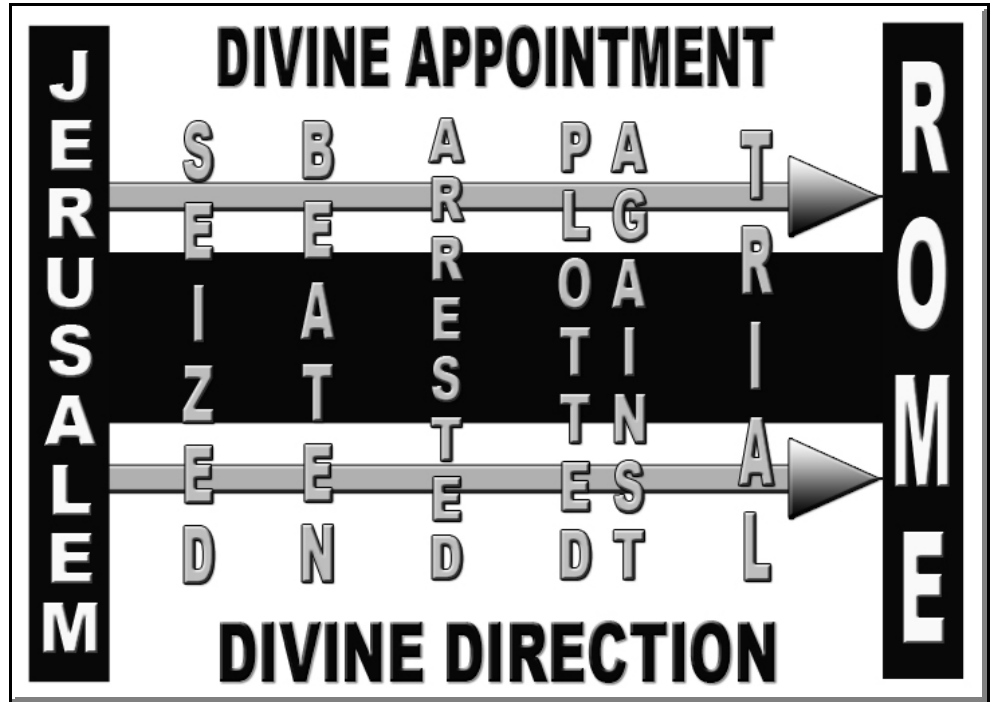
*“Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris . . .”*

Remember the disorder that had characterized the Jews’ confrontation of and opposition to Paul.

⇨ The Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple and stirred up the people (Acts 21:27-28).

- ⇒ “All the city” of Jerusalem was adversely moved, and the frenzied people “ran together,” seized Paul, dragging him out of the Temple, and shut the Temple doors (Acts 21:30).
- ⇒ The Jews “went about to kill” Paul (Acts 21:31a).
- ⇒ “All Jerusalem was in an uproar” (Acts 21:31b).
- ⇒ The Jews were beating Paul when they were interrupted by a Roman army (Acts 21:31-32).
- ⇒ When the Roman captain inquired concerning the cause, “some cried one thing, some another,” and a tumult ensued (Acts 21:33-34).
- ⇒ As Paul was carried away to a place of safety, the Jews followed “crying, ‘Away with him’” (Acts 21:35-36).
- ⇒ After hearing Paul speak in his own defense, and upon hearing him say the word “Gentiles,” the Jews “cast off their clothes” to stone him, “and threw dust into the air” (Acts 21:22-23).
- ⇒ At Paul’s second defense, when he said he was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and had been called into question concerning resurrection of the dead, the multitude of Jews “was divided” (Acts 22:6-8).
- ⇒ There was a “great cry” among the people, and when certain scribes spoke in defense of Paul, “a great dissension” resulted among the Jews (Acts 22:9-10).
- ⇒ Fearing that Paul would be “pulled in pieces,” the captain had him removed to the interior of the barracks (Acts 22:10).
- ⇒ Certain of the Jews, more than forty in number, banded together and took an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul (Acts 22:12-13).

It is no wonder that James wrote, “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16). **By way of comparison, the Roman captain maintained thoughtful composure, taking care not to violate any of the Roman laws.** He acted wisely in protected Paul without breaking the law, doing so in the interest of justice.



In this case, someone with less knowledge, who did not know God, conducted himself more honorably than those who had been designated as stewards of the things of God. It is said of the Jews, “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom 9:4-5).

I do not doubt that this Roman captain and those who were under him will rise in the judgment with the Queen of Sheba and Nineveh to testify against those who claimed to know God, yet conducted their lives in an unacceptable manner.

#### As It Was Commanded Them

This group of soldiers did exactly as they were told, working together in a common cause – four hundred and seventy men: 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen. This entire group did “as it was commanded them.” Two centurions were commanded to assemble the troops, provide mounts for Paul, and “bring him safe unto Felix the governor” – and they did so.

One would be hard pressed to find a group of professing Christians that size who were doing what the Lord had commanded, and doing so with harmony and exactness. There are some who think that

special training is required to accomplish such a feat. Yet, this very incident testifies to the natural capacities of the only creation made in the image, and after the similitude, of God (Gen 1:27; 9:6; James 3:9).

That capacity is elevated in Christ Jesus, so that it is possible for those in Him to be “of one mind” (Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 1:27; 2:2; 1 Pet 3:8). This is precisely why believers are admonished to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor 1:10). Early believers are described as being “of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32), and “of one accord” (Acts 5:12). **It is a transgression of the greatest magnitude when professing Christians learn to live with division as though it was sanctioned by the Lord.** Even a heathen government like Rome saw the value and necessity of its constituents being of one accord.

#### Brought Him By Night

During the night, when society was generally inactive, Paul was taken safely to the appointed destination. From the standpoint of the Roman captain, this whole thing was a requirement to establish the facts in the case. However, from the heavenly vantage point, this was the appointed means of getting Paul to Rome, where he would testify of Christ.

To this point, there were several barriers raised up, designed by the wicked

one to stop the spread of the Gospel. Paul was seized in the Temple, and supposedly taken out of activity. He was beaten, which would have been a great discouragement to many. He was arrested, which appeared to be successful deterrent. A plot was calculated against him that appeared to be foolproof. Now he is scheduled for a trial before Felix the governor. Charges will be leveled against him in a professional manner. Everything seems to be working against Paul testifying of Christ Jesus in Rome. But that is only

travelers remained in Antipatris, but it could not have been long. They probably traveled through most of the night, finishing the trip the next day. Any way you look at it, it was an aggressive trip. Like the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, Paul's deliverance was certainly not attended with ease and comfort. It seems to me that this is not uncommon in the working of the Lord.

Now Paul is presented before the governor. The text reads as though this was

country with which Paul was identified. He doubtless asked so he could determine whether or not Paul was from a country that was under his jurisdiction.

Notice that although the charges brought against Paul originated in Judea, yet Paul's country is reckoned to be the one in which he was born, and which was properly called his country. He would be judged as a citizen of Rome by the procurator that was responsible for that region. We know from the answer of Felix, that he was that ruler.

Paul answers that he was from Cilicia, where Tarsus was located. This was apparently a region that was under Felix.

There is a parallel here with life in Christ Jesus. In the final judgment, men will be judged in accordance with the kingdom with which they are identified, whether it is the domain over which Satan rules, or the Kingdom of Christ. **Just as it was in our text, the determination will be made according to where a person was born.** The eighty-seventh Psalm refers to this principle in these words: *"I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know Me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest Himself shall establish her"* (Psa 87:4-5).

#### I WILL HEAR

*"I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall."* Other versions read, *"kept in Herod's Praetorium,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"in Herod's palace,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"guard in Herod's headquarters,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> and *"And he ordered that an eye be kept on him in Herod's palace (the Praetorium)."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Thus the stage is set for the next phase of this event. To guarantee Paul's safety, he is kept in Herod's headquarters, which doubtless was guarded well. The "praetorium" was the place where judgment was rendered. Hence the Authorized refers to it as *"Herod's judgment hall."*

**It is important to remember that there is a place where ultimate judgment will be made of every man.** Scripture refers to it as *"the judgment seat of Christ"* (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10). It is so identified because God *"will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31).

**Ponder how Moses, and the judges who later joined him, had to respond to the many cases that were brought to them (Ex 18:13-26). Recall how Solomon had to react immediately to two women who claimed the same child as their own (1 Kgs 3:17-28). Ponder how Peter had to discern and act quickly in reference to Ananas and Sapphira.**

appearance, and men are not to judge according to appearance (John 7:24). **The closer men live to the surface of life, the more apt they are to be deceived.** The more they are enamored of, or devoted to, appearance, the more they are prone to error.

Antipatris was "a station between Jerusalem and Caesarea where the soldiers left Paul, after their night march, in charge of the horsemen who were to take him forward to Caesarea on the morrow." <sup>McCLINTOK & STRONGS'</sup> It was apparently far enough away to be safe from the Jews who were laying in wait for Paul elsewhere.

#### THEY DELIVERED THE EPISTLE TO THE GOVERNOR

*"On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle."<sup>33</sup> Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him . . ."*

After a night's rest, the horsemen, and possibly the spearmen, continued on, taking Paul to Felix the governor.

Faithful to their charge, they have kept the letter to Felix safe, and deliver it with Paul to the governor, their mission being accomplished. Caesarea was about seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem. A days journey by horseback was six to eight hours in length, and twenty-five to thirty miles. We do not know how long the

done immediately. First, however, they delivered the letter the captain had written to the governor to familiarize him with the case. He had no advance warning of this, so had to react in an impromptu manner. That is, I have observed, a mark of true leaders. If this is true in the world, it is even more true in matters pertaining to life and godliness.

Ponder how Moses, and the judges who later joined him, had to respond to the many cases that were brought to them (Ex 18:13-26). Recall how Solomon had to react immediately to two women who claimed the same child as their own (1 Kgs 3:17-28). Ponder how Peter had to discern and act quickly in reference to Ananas and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). Jesus once said to His disciples, *"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak"* (Matt 10:19).

#### OF WHAT PROVINCE

*"And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia . . ."* Other versions read, *"What part of the country do you come from?"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"asked of what eparchy he was,"* <sup>DARBY</sup> and *"he asked of what country he was."* <sup>TNT</sup>

A "province" is defined as "the region subject to a prefect; a province of the Roman empire." <sup>THAYER</sup> Felix knew from Lysias' letter that Paul was a Roman, but he did not know the

Jesus Himself affirmed, *“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son”*(John 5:22). Of course, there is a distinction in the day of judgment over which Jesus will reside.

**Those who have lived by faith will have no accusers.** However, those who have had unique privileges and advantages, yet lived in contradiction of them, will have accusers like the Queen of Sheba and Nineveh (Lk 11:31-

32). Their testimony will not determine the judgment rendered toward the slothful. It will, however, justify God by corroborating the judgment determined against them. It is good to prepare for that appointed time.

## CONCLUSION

The government of Jesus is seen in this whole event. Various vessels are used for His glory – some are vessels *“to honor,”* and some are vessels *“to dishonor”*(2 Tim 2:20).

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A NET.** Jesus taught that the kingdom of God was like a net which caught fish *“of every kind.”* At the conclusion of the expedition, the net was drawn to shore: *“Which, when it was full, was drawn to shore,”* and *“they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away”*(Matt 13:47-48).

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A FIELD OF MIXED SEED.** Again, the kingdom of God is likened to *“a man sowed good seed in his field.”* At night, while men slept, an enemy came in and *“sowed tares among the wheat.”* The field remained under the management of the owner until *“the time of harvest.”* Then, Jesus said, *“I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn”*(Mat 13:30).

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.** Again, the Kingdom of God is like *“unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom”* (Matt 25:1). The *“foolish”* were not fully exposed until the Bridegroom appeared. It was at that time that they were eliminated, although they were under His supervision all along (Matt 25:2-12).

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A VINEYARD WITH UNFAITHFUL STEWARDS.** The Kingdom is also like a *“certain householder”* who *“planted a vineyard, preparing it adequately, and then leaving for a “far country.”* The vineyard was left in the care his servants, some of whom were wicked. Although they were under the government of the owner of the vineyard, they were not exposed and removed until he returned (Matt 21:33-41).

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL STEWARDS.** Again, the Kingdom of God is like a man who

distributed his goods to his servants to manage them until he returned from a far country. One of those servants was unfaithful, even though he received a portion of his master’s goods to manage. That servant was exposed and eliminated when the owner returned (Matt 25:14-30).

**In each of these parables the Kingdom is depicted as under the control of the Lord, even though wicked, slothful, and unfaithful men**

- ⇨ Centurions (Acts 21:32b; 23:10,23).
- ⇨ A multitude of Jews crying out different things when asked by the captain the reason for the tumult (21:33-34).
- ⇨ A centurion to whom Paul spoke, asking if it was lawful to scourge a Roman when he was uncondemned (Acts 21:25).
- ⇨ The chief priests (Acts 22:30a).

**In each of these parables the Kingdom is depicted as under the control of the Lord, even though wicked, slothful, and unfaithful men were involved in His work. However, the time of reckoning came when they faced the ultimate Owner, to whom they had to give an account. Not a single unfaithful servant gained the master’s approval, and there was not a faithful servant who did not. This is the manner of the Kingdom.**

were involved in His work. However, the time of reckoning came when they faced the ultimate Owner, to whom they had to give an account. Not a single unfaithful servant gained the master’s approval, and there was not a faithful servant who did not. This is the manner of the Kingdom.

The principle made known in these parables is lived out in our text. Ponder all of the people who were involved.

- ⇨ Jews from Asia (Acts 21:27a).
- ⇨ Jews in the Temple who were stirred up by the Jews from Asia (Acts 21:27b).
- ⇨ All the city of Jerusalem who ran together and took Paul out of the Temple (Acts 21:30).
- ⇨ A chief captain of the Roman government (Acts 21:31).
- ⇨ The soldiers that were marshaled by this captain (Acts 21:32a).

- ⇨ The Jewish council (Acts 22:30b).
- ⇨ Ananias the high priest (Acts 23:2).
- ⇨ The one who struck Paul on the mouth at the command of Ananias (Acts 23:2-3).
- ⇨ Those who *“stood by,”* who asked Paul why he dared to revile God’s high priest (23:4).
- ⇨ Sadducees (Acts 23:6a,7).
- ⇨ Pharisees (Acts 23:6b,7).
- ⇨ Scribes (Acts 23:9).
- ⇨ Forty Jews who bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul (Acts 23:12-13).
- ⇨ The Jewish elders (Acts 23:14).
- ⇨ Paul’s nephew – his sister’s son (Acts 23:16-17).

- ⇒ A specific centurion whom Paul told to take his nephew to the chief captain (Acts 23:17).
- ⇒ Two hundred soldiers (Acts 23:23a).
- ⇒ Seventy horsemen (Acts 23:23b).
- ⇒ Two hundred spearmen (Acts 23:23c).

⇒ Felix the governor (Acts 23:33-35).

**There are twenty-four classes of individuals and groups involved in two or three days of activity.** They differed in theology, rank, and responsibility. Yet, one senses a certain order in the events in which they took part. **There was a very definite sense in which they were all vessels in the Lord's house.** Some of

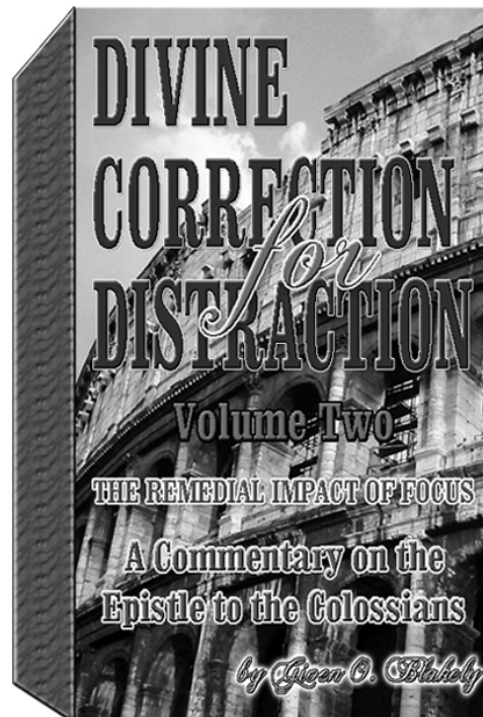
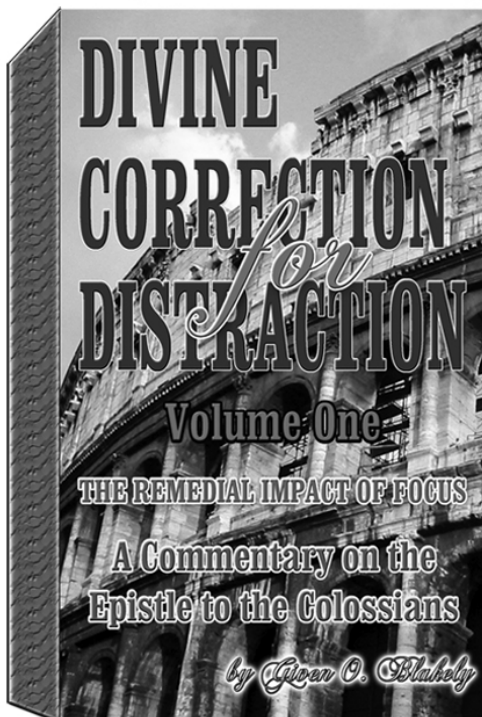
them would eventually be cast away, while others would be identified with the One who governs the kingdom. None of them used the Lord, but the Lord used them.

It is comforting to know that the same Lord is working all things together for our good (Rom 8:28). That is not as possibility, it is the guarantee Divine posture of those who love God and are the called.

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/21/10. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The ninety-fifth lesson will cover verses 1 through 13 of the twenty-fourth chapter: "THE CHARGES AGAINST PAUL." Ananias the high priest comes with a noted orator who will speak for the council concerning the charges against Paul. He charges Paul with being a mover of sedition, stirring up the Jews throughout the whole world. Paul is then permitted to answer for himself, and commences his defense. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.**

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