

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

29. Christ's Oversight Of Paul's Secret Foes So He Could Fulfill His Mission

(Acts 23:11-35)

I. Introduction

- A. A believer may understand how to deal with openly hostile foes to his fulfilling his calling from God, but dealing with secret opposition is a much more complicated and often more dangerous concern!
- B. Paul faced lethal secret foes to his calling from God, but Christ's oversight countered this problem so he could fulfill God's will, providing direction and encouragement for us to do the same (as follows):

II. Christ's Oversight Of Paul's Secret Foes So He Could Fulfill His Mission, Acts 23:11-35.

- A. Christ clarified that as Paul had testified of Him in Jerusalem, he would also witness in Rome, Acts 23:11.
- B. However, Acts 23:12-13 then reveals that a secret group of Paul's foes then banded together, taking an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed him!
- C. They then devised a cunning plan to achieve their goal: they would get the Sanhedrin to ask the Roman official in charge of Paul to bring him again before the Sanhedrin the next day with the pretense of questioning him more closely so they might ambush Paul and kill him, Acts 23:14-15.
- D. Since this movement was made to prevent Paul from defending himself or escaping from them, and to circumvent what protection he might find under Roman law as a citizen of Rome (cf. Acts 22:25-29), Christ moved to **SIDESTEP** the efforts of these evil plotters, Acts 23:16-35:
 1. The Lord had arranged for Paul's parents to have produced another sibling, a sister, and for her to have married and born a son, Paul's nephew, who would also then remain loyal to Paul, Acts 23:16a.
 2. God also arranged for this youth to hear of the plot against Paul so he could tell him about it, 23:16b.
 3. Realizing the importance of the information, and of the need for it to be sent to the head official whom Paul knew had not wanted him as a Roman to be harmed under his watch until he had been tried (Acts 22:29), Paul informed a nearby centurion that his nephew had news for the official, Acts 23:17.
 4. When the centurion took Paul's nephew to the head official and explained he had a message from Paul to share with him, the official took the youth aside to learn of his news in private, Acts 23:18-19.
 5. Upon hearing about the plot against Paul, the official told Paul's nephew to tell no one that he had told him about the plot in an effort to upstage the plotters and protect Paul from them, Acts 23:20-22.
 6. Thus, before the Jews could ask him the next day to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin, the official arranged for him to be sent by night under heavy guard to the seacoast town of Caesarea to be judged by Felix, Roman procurator of Judaea, Acts 23:23-24; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., ftn. to Acts 23:24.
 7. The official sent Felix a letter with this convoy, explaining that Paul was a Roman citizen, and of the tumult he had faced from his countrymen in Jerusalem that appeared to be baseless, and that he was shifting Paul to Felix's jurisdiction that he might handle Paul's case when his Jewish prosecutors came down to Caesarea to press charges against him there, Acts 23:25-30.
 8. When Paul arrived at Caesarea and was presented before the king, Felix read the letter, and asked Paul from what province he hailed, Acts 23:31-34a.
 9. Learning he was from Tarsus, a part of Cilicia, and since Felix was a deputy of the legate of Syria and Cilicia, he agreed to hear Paul's case! Paul could choose to be tried in the court at Caesarea or in his home province, and Felix had jurisdiction in both locations, Acts 23:34b-35; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to Acts 23:34. "Such a detail is strong proof that Luke was with Paul at the hearing" as an eyewitness.

Lesson: When Paul face forty secret foes who plotted to kill him, since their plan **COUNTERED GOD'S WILL** for Paul to **WITNESS** in **ROME**, **CHRIST** arranged for Paul's supportive **NEPHEW** to **LEARN** of the plot, and to **TELL** him of it so Paul could use his Roman citizenship and the law-abiding Roman official to transport him out of harm's way and closer to his future divine assignment in Rome!

Application: May we not become fearful about the secret intentions of foes we face, for **NOTHING** can divert us from the will of God in our lives if we busy ourselves with **HEEDING** it, **Proverbs 21:30 NIV**.