

# ACTS: ALIGNING WITH GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF DISCIPLING

## LVI. Relying On God's Reassuring Guidance In Crises

(Acts 22:24-23:35)

### I. Introduction

- A. The book of Acts explains "the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 351. We can thus learn much about aligning our ministry efforts with God's sovereign work from studying the book of Acts.
- B. Acts 22:24-23:35 records how Paul experienced one life-threatening, stressful crisis after another, but how the Lord in the midst of it all stabilized his heart by giving Paul reassuring guidance. This passage thus reveals that God gives His servants reassuring guidance so they can handle every trial they face and fulfill God's will.
- C. We thus view Acts 22:24-23:35 for our insight and edifying application (as follows):

### II. Relying On God's Reassuring Guidance In Crises, Acts 22:24-23:35.

- A. Paul faced the life-threatening crisis of nearly being beaten to death in Acts 22:24-29:
  - 1. After Paul's address to his fellow countrymen in the temple had only roused their fury, the Roman commander ordered Paul to be flogged to learn the real cause for the riot he had caused, Acts 22:23-24.
  - 2. Roman flogging differed from Paul's other beatings, for a "Roman scourge was inflicted with shorter whips embedded with pieces of metal or bones and attached to a strong wooden handle," and it "could kill a man or leave him permanently crippled," *Ibid.*, p. 418-419.
  - 3. As Paul was about to be flogged, he revealed that he was a Roman citizen, and as it was illegal to beat or bind a Roman without trial, the commander kept Paul from being flogged, Acts 22:25-29; *Ibid.*, p. 419.
- B. Paul faced the life-threatening crisis of nearly being pulled apart in the Sanhedrin in Acts 22:30-23:10:
  - 1. The Roman commander still wanted to know why Paul was accused by the Jews, so the next day he had the Jewish Sanhedrin convene and brought Paul to the meeting to observe their interaction, Acts 22:30.
  - 2. When Paul began to say that he had served God with all good conscience to that day, the high priest Ananias ordered those members of the Sanhedrin who stood by Paul to strike his mouth, Acts 23:1-2.
  - 3. Paul did not know that Ananias was then the high priest, so he charged that God should smite him for sitting in judgment of him and commanding him to be struck in violation of the Mosaic Law, Acts 23:3.
  - 4. When those near him asked Paul if he reviled God's high priest, Paul said that he did not know that he was the high priest and that Scripture forbade him from speaking evil of him, Acts 23:4-5 with Exodus 22:28.
  - 5. To get out of this tense situation, Paul quickly took advantage of the division of Pharisees and Sadducees in the Sanhedrin to call out that he was on trial as a Pharisee for his belief in the resurrection, Acts 23:6.
  - 6. This statement strongly pitted the Pharisees and Sadducees against each other, with the dissension being so great that the Roman commander ordered his soldiers to take Paul by force from the meeting to the fortress since he was in danger of being physically pulled apart by the disturbance that had erupted, Acts 23:7-10.
- C. Paul faced the life-threatening crisis of nearly being ambushed to death by spiteful enemies in Acts 23:12-35:
  - 1. The next day, over forty of Paul's countrymen banded together and put themselves under a divine curse that they would not eat or drink until they had killed him, Acts 23:12-13.
  - 2. They then informed the religious leaders about their oath and told them to ask the Roman commander to bring Paul again to the Sanhedrin for further interrogation so they could kill him along the way, v. 14-15.
  - 3. Paul's nephew learned of the plot, so he visited Paul in the Roman fortress prison to inform him of it, and Paul in turn directed him to inform the Roman commander about the plot, Acts 23:16-19.
  - 4. Thus informed, the commander covertly sent Paul under heavy guard to Caesarea with a letter to Felix, the procurator of Judaea, for him to handle Paul's case, v. 20-35; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 23:24.
- D. However, in the midst of these life-threatening crises, the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to Paul to give him reassuring guidance so that he could continue to fulfill the calling he was assigned by Christ, Acts 23:11 NIV:
  - 1. The night following Paul's stressful meeting with the Sanhedrin, the Lord Jesus stood by him, saying, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."
  - 2. Paul was thus (a) encouraged by Christ to take courage, (b) he was told that he would testify of Christ in Rome as he had in Jerusalem, and (c) informed that he done well in his witness in spite of the bad reaction!

**Lesson:** *Amid facing life-threatening crises, the Lord gave Paul reassuring guidance to equip him to handle it all.*

**Application:** *If we face dire crises in life and ministry, may we rely on the Lord to provide His reassuring guidance.*