

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ACTS 23****Acts 23**

Notice Luke gives us the storyline that leads to getting Paul out of Jerusalem and to the Roman capital of Judea, Caesarea by the Sea. The text reads, ***"The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear and brought Paul down and set him before them. Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you; you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law? And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest? Then Paul said, 'I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"*** (Acts 22:30-23:5)

Paul now deals with the Jewish religious leaders while the Romans watch the proceedings. They would not intervene unless warranted since it was a discussion of Jewish religious matters and not a violation of Roman law. Someone may say Paul should have known who the high priest was, but you must understand that there were periods during this era when who served as high priest changed without fanfare. It was more of a political position than a religious one handed down from the tribe of Levi and of the lineage of Aaron.

During this period, the priests were Sadducees who did not believe in the supernatural for the most part. The Apostle Paul realized that the body he was sitting before, the Sanhedrin, consisted of part Sadducees, who had their own belief system, and the Pharisees, who had their own belief system.

The Pharisees, of which Paul was a proponent, believed in angels, the resurrection, and the supernatural elements of the Bible. He used this to his advantage and cried out, I am being held in contempt because I am a pharisee and because of my belief in what our fathers believed and preached, the resurrection from the dead. That did it! The council was now divided, and this brought on absolute chaos. The watching Romans intervened and took Paul away from them by force. He was brought into the garrison (as house arrest) for his protection. That must have been a harrowing night for Paul because the Lord let him know that he had a plan and purpose for all of this, and this very incident set the course for the rest of the Apostle's next season of life and his ultimate journey to Rome. ***"But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."*** (Acts 23:11).

Prayer and Action Steps

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Emphasis mine) Lord, Thank You for this promise! Amen