

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ACTS 24****Acts 24**

Religious fever pitch is displayed in living color, as witnessed by the Apostle Paul in Jerusalem. When Paul was successful in dividing the religious council in Jerusalem, drastic measures were undertaken to murder him. A plot was hatched, and some of the Jews bound themselves with an oath to kill Paul. Forty men had conspired together to attack the Romans en route to another council meeting. Paul had a sister, and the sister had a son who was privy to this plot and came to the garrison and reported the ambush to his uncle Paul. Paul wisely had the younger man sent to the commander, who took the information seriously and gathered two Centurions, that is, two hundred seasoned Roman soldiers, to escort Paul to Felix, the governor of the area, during this period. The commander was Claudius Lysias, and he sent the **following letter with the centurions to Governor Felix:**

"Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings. "When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. "And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment. "When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you." (Acts 23:23-27)

According to Acts 23:31, the commander had Paul escorted to Caesarea. They stopped at Antipatris, one of the primary stops as they made their way to Caesarea. This was a main stopping point along the Via Maris, the coastal road that led from the continent of Africa to the north, where a traveler could choose to go north and east to Mesopotamia or north and west to what is modern-day

Turkey. This was an important site as well during the days of Samuel, when God gave a victory to the Israelites, and Samuel said, "Here is the **"Stone of Help"** Hebrew **"Ebenezer."**

When Paul arrived at Caesarea, he was kept in **"Herod's Praetorium"** or his **"Headquarters."** Recent excavations in Caesarea have uncovered the quarters where most likely, political or non-threatening prisoners would have been kept. Fascinating. The place is under the palace that Herod built. Many of you have walked the grounds of the palace and walked to the Mediterranean Sea front of the Palace and looked at "Cleopatra's Pool" jutting out into the Mediterranean. The entrance has been found, and hopefully, soon, we will be able to see the rooms where men like Paul would have been kept.

In less than a week, the high priest, elders, and an eloquent spokesperson made the 70-mile journey from Jerusalem to testify against Paul and seek to silence him once and for all time. It is a glimpse into the court systems of the Romans as accusations are made, and then a rebuttal is given by the defendant, Paul. Paul astutely declares his innocence and details with great care the good intentions he had in coming to Jerusalem and that he had been there nearly two weeks and the religious leaders never minded him until he did something that they didn't like. What he was saying was not against the Torah or the teachings of his ancestors but rather was a matter of interpretation. The elders, meanwhile, had made somewhat of an accusation against the commander, so Felix used that to postpone and stall any decision about Paul and treated him well. He even gave Paul the freedom to relax and have visitors as he wished to come and go. God had a plan.

Prayer and Action Steps

Father in heaven, thank You for always having a plan and a purpose in all You allow to come into our lives. Thank You for being able to take what the enemy means for evil and harm and use that to accomplish Your purpose in Your children's lives. Amen