

## **Acts 23:1-35**

### **“Paul and the Jews - Part II”**

#### **Summary**

- Paul is in custody of the Romans
- Paul makes an appearance before the Sanhedrin

#### **Outline**

- I. Paul and the High Priest - vs. 1-5
  - A. Paul's opening remark - vs. 1
  - B. Paul smitten - vs. 2-5
- II. Paul divides the crowd - vs. 6-10
  - A. Pharisees vs. Sadducees - vs. 6-8
  - B. An unlikely ally in the Pharisees - vs. 9
  - C. Paul is removed from the scene - vs. 10
- III. God reveals His plan to Paul that night- vs. 11
- IV. The plot to kill Paul - vs. 12-15
  - A. The forty conspirators - vs. 12-13
  - B. The plan to kill Paul - vs. 14-15
- V. Paul's nephew reveals the plot - vs. 16-22
  - A. Paul is informed of the plot - vs. 16-17
  - B. The captain is informed - vs. 18-22
- VI. Paul to be transferred to Caesarea - vs. 23-24
- VII. The letter to governor Felix - vs. 25-30
- VIII. Paul is brought to Caesarea - vs. 31-35

## **Notes**

#### **Pharisees**

- Means “separated ones”
- Very popular with the common people, who made up their ranks
- Traditionalists who carried out the Law to the extreme
- Believed:
  - Divine Providence and human responsibility
  - Believed in resurrection/life after death
  - Accepted the Written Law and also the Oral Law - traditions and interpretations

#### **Sadducees**

- Means “righteous ones”
- Often wealthy and aristocratic
- Believed:
  - Free will with no Divine Providence
  - No resurrection or life beyond the grave
  - Accepted only the Written Law as authoritative, rejected traditions

## Notes

### The Sanhedrin

- Called “council” in 23:1
- Made up of 70 men plus the High Priest or *Nasi* (prince)
- A “Lesser Sanhedrin” of only 23 members could also meet
- Functions:
  - Acted as a Supreme Court for appeals and questions of the law
  - Only court that could try a king
  - Could extend boundaries of the Temple and Jerusalem
- The High Priest or *Nasi* was its head and cast tie breaking vote
- Second in command was the *Av Beit Din* (head of the Court)
- Shimon ben Gamliel (son of Paul’s mentor Gamaliel) was the *Nasi* at this time

### Felix

- Marcus Antonius Felix (Felix means “happy” or “lucky”)
- Roman procurator of Judea from 52 to 58 A.D.
- His older brother was Pallas, secretary of the treasury under Claudius
- Wife is Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1)
  - Drusilla and a son died in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79
- Reputation for being cruel, oppressive, and open to bribes

### Misc. Notes

- Takes place around the year 58
- vs. 2 - Ananias - Ex-High Priest Ananias ben Nebedeus, evidently filling in for absent High Priest. The High Priest himself was probably busy with the Feast of Pentecost.
- vs. 3 - “against the law” - the law required justice - Exodus 23:1-2
- vs. 5 - Paul probably didn’t recognize Ananias, or at least that he was in charge
- vs. 10 - castle - Fortress Antonia
- vs. 12-14 - these was active a group of Jewish assassins called the *Sicarii*, who targeted Jews and not Romans
- vs. 23 - Caesarea - Roman capital of Judea
- vs. 23 - 200 soldiers + 70 cavalry + 200 spearmen - all to guard one man!
- vs. 23 - third hour of the night = about 9:00 p.m.
- vs. 26 - we finally learn the chief captain’s name - Claudius Lysias
- vs. 31 - Antipatris - town between Jerusalem and Caesarea
- vs. 35 - The trial date is set...
- Those forty men that vowed to not eat or drink until Paul was dead... did they starve to death?????