



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Acts 23
- Romans 1:7-15; 8:28-39

GREAT PURPOSE

- Let the Trial Begin
- If God is For Us...

“Be of good cheer.” Has anyone ever said that to you? Well, maybe not using that specific wording, which is more biblical in nature. But, perhaps something more like, “Look up; look on the bright side; think positive; put your chin up; it will all work out; this too shall pass; cheer up, it’s not that bad, etc.” You all know what that feels like, as there is not one of you who has not been at rock bottom when some chipper person, with all the best intentions, comes along and looses one or more of those affirmations in your presence. And you all thought the same thing. “It’s easy for you to say; you’re not the one with the problem.” Or, possibly you pondered something not quite as nice as that, a thought that would be completely inappropriate to record here! Either way, you know the feeling.

But, what if it was the Lord speaking and you were altogether confident it was true; you could, should, “Be of good cheer!” He

does tell us precisely that you know. "You will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He makes this promise so we can experience supernatural peace in the midst of dreadful circumstances. And sometimes we receive this word even before we are in such circumstances, as preparation for the inevitable.

You are called to a great purpose in the Lord and undoubtedly that calling will be fraught with dangers and difficulties. But along with that calling He says, "Be of good cheer!" Sure, the Holy Spirit may say to you one day, "In every city chains and tribulations await." But His calling always comes with a promise, "All things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose," and a guarantee, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Now, if God promises that when you love Him and follow His purpose for you as one of "the called" it will always work out in your favor, and He guarantees to be on your side every time, then certainly you can "Be of good cheer!" even when chains and tribulations await.

PROPHETIC SEED:

"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 NKJV

PROPHETIC FRUIT:

“So, as much as is in me, **I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome** also.” Romans 1:15 NKJV

“And we know that **all things work together for good** to those who **love God**, to those who are the called according to His **purpose.**” Romans 8:28 NKJV

“What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?**” Romans 8:31 NKJV

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

Introduction

Last week in [Forgiven... yet Liable](#) Paul was ready to head back to Jerusalem. He was warned not to go; it would be too dangerous. But, he was intent on going, even if it would cost him his life. We saw what Paul was really made of as he testified to his friends.

“You’re compassion touches my heart, but you must know this about me. I am ready to be locked up again for Christ and die for Christ if I must!”

Paul arrived in Jerusalem and was welcomed as he testified about the fruit of his ministry. He met with James and the other elders and reported the testimonies of what God had done with the

Gentiles. That was when Paul heard he was being accused of teaching Jews against circumcision and the law! James made Paul an offer that would prove otherwise. James explained that Jewish believers remained fervent about obeying God's laws, even after they had come to faith in Y'shua, and they wanted to know Paul's stance on this issue. James also reminded Paul, who was there at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, that there were even Torah commands that Gentiles must adhere to once they come to faith: no idolatry, no unclean foods, no sexual immorality! Ironically, Paul was actually the one charged with sharing the ruling of that Council among the Gentiles on his following mission trip. Paul accepted James' offer and his choice told the whole world this one thing: the accusations against him are not true and that he actually still keeps the law himself.

However, his claim did not matter to the unbelieving Jews who continued to accuse him of teaching men everywhere things contrary to the Jews, contrary to the temple, and contrary to the law. Obviously that was not true, but one other accusation they made was true: he brought Greeks into the temple, which would be perfectly fine if those Greeks were God-fearers who were in various stages of conversion to Judaism. But, these Greeks were not; they were Gentiles who had encounters with God via a born-again experience with Christ, and Jewish tradition had no protocols in

place for that. But let's be clear. Even though Paul did do that, he violated no Torah command, only Jewish tradition. And as we know from much past experience in the Gospels and in Acts, religious Jews are easily moved to violence when you mess with their tradition. And that is precisely what happened.

They arrested Paul. The mob-like crowd of unbelieving Jews literally wanted to kill him, but the local Roman military commander [Claudius Lysias] got wind of the what was happening and he took some soldiers and intercepted the mob as they were beating Paul. The commander had Paul chained and then inquired about the charges. The crowd could give no coherent answers, so he took Paul into the nearby outpost headquarters to question him. The crowd was so invasive that the soldiers must carry Paul away.

Paul eventually spoke to the commander and then he addressed the entire raucous crowd in Hebrew and he explained his whole road-to-Damascus-conversion-experience. But when he got to the end of his testimony and told them that in his early days of believing, the Jews in Jerusalem gave him a hard time and he left Jerusalem to go to the Gentiles, it made them wild with anger. They responded like savages, tearing their own cloths and throwing dirt in the air! The commander was forced to bring Paul back inside to question him and decided that if he did so while whipping him, it would extract the truth. Paul had been here before and he was just

not up for another scourging, so he revealed something to the soldier, who was about to whip him, that alters the entire situation. "I am a Roman citizen." This halted the whole process because punishing a Roman, before proper legal proceedings are conducted, is illegal! So, instead of beating him, he was released to the Jewish courts! The chief priests and all their council appeared as Paul sat in hot seat. Let the trial begin!

This week Paul begins his testimony before the Sanhedrin. He stands with a clear conscience and this infuriates the high priest who has Paul slapped in the face! Paul's reflex response is to rebuke the man who ordered such an unrighteous act, only to realize that it was the high priest. Paul knows the Torah forbids such disrespect, even if the high priest showed blatant disregard for the law.

Paul shifts strategies as he perceives the makeup of the room is both Sadducees and Pharisees and he knows they have issues with each other. He uses their differences to divide the room by identifying himself as a Pharisee and then he inserts the knife. He knows the Sadducees and Pharisees differ in their belief on a few big doctrinal issues: resurrection, angels and spirits. So, he inserts his claim that he is being persecuted over the belief in the resurrection of the dead. That immediately draws the Pharisees to his aid and they quickly wish to dismiss the charges. That literally escalates a fight and Claudius Lysias is worried they will tear Paul

apart in the midst of their infighting, so he has his military return him to the Roman headquarters.

The Lord appears then to Paul, while he is being held in the barracks, and tells him that the persecution he is dealing with is all by grand design. The ultimate purpose is for him to bring his testimony to Rome! Meanwhile, back on the religious front, forty Jewish men are scheming a conspiracy for how they can assassinate Paul, including the story they will tell Claudius Lysias to get him to bring Paul back into the council for further questioning. However, Paul's nephew is nearby and overhears the sinister plot and he goes to Paul, who sends him to tell Claudius Lysias, who then makes an elaborate plan to protect Paul and move him over to Caesarea to be heard by Governor Felix. He transports Paul using an extravagant military escort, along with a letter to Felix explaining the situation. Paul is safely delivered to Felix in Caesarea who questions him and determines that in order to make a proper determination he must hear further from Paul's accusers. Let the trial continue...

Acts 23

Paul begins his testimony before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1-5)

1. Paul stands before the Jewish Courts

- (a) Paul says, "My conscience is clear."
- (b) Immediately that irritates Ananias, the high priest.

- (c) He orders Paul to be slapped in the face!
- (d) Paul reacts instantly with a nasty rebuke.
 - 1) He calls the one who gave the order a hypocrite. He says:
 - 2) “God will strike you for your blatant disregard of the law.”
 - 3) “How dare you claim to judge me according to the Torah, while you simultaneously violate the Torah to do so?”
- (e) Paul is reprimanded for his disregard of the high priest.
 - 1) Paul quickly turns to Torah as guidance, and accepts his correction, realizing that what he said was dishonoring to the Jewish leader and was clearly wrong.
 - 2) But, then he makes this odd admission; “I did not know the man who gave the order was the high priest.”

Paul perceives the makeup of the room and shifts strategies (Acts 23:6-10)

- 2. Some were Sadducees and some were Pharisees. Paul knows they have serious issues with each other. He uses their differences to divide the room.
 - (a) Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee, coming from a lineage of a Pharisees.
 - (b) Then he inserts the knife, knowing that one great contention between these two leading religious factions is over belief in the resurrection of the dead.

- 1) "You see," as Paul twists the knife, "I am being persecuted because I believe in the resurrection."
 - 2) This deflects the attention away from himself and the two groups start their predicted infighting over their doctrines on resurrection, angels and spirits.
- (c) Paul is a Pharisee and Pharisees believe in the resurrection, so the Pharisees immediately move for a verdict.
- 1) "This guy is clearly innocent; if he says a spirit or an angel spoke to him, who are we to refute that?"
- (d) The commander (Claudius Lysias), fearing they will tear Paul apart in the midst of their violent infighting, removes Paul using his military and returns him to the Roman barracks.

The Conspiracy to Kill Paul (Acts 23:11-22)

3. Not every conspiracy is a theory, some are facts.
- (a) When you are so religious that you are willing to violate your own religion to eliminate someone who opposes you, you will resort to heinous crimes.
- 1) The Lord appears to Paul and tells him that the persecution he is dealing with is all by grand design.
 - 2) God will use this to bring Paul's testimony to Rome!
- (b) Meanwhile, back on the religious front, forty Jewish men are scheming a conspiracy for how they can assassinate Paul.

- 1) They commit to eliminate him and they enter a covenant to fast from food and water until Paul is murdered.
 - 2) They go to the lead priests and elders and reveal their plan and their level of commitment.
 - 3) They explain the proposed role of leaders and council in their master plan.
 - 4) “You ask Claudius Lysias to send Paul back to the council for further questioning and when they escort him out of the barracks, we will ambush them and kill him.”
- (c) However, Paul’s nephew is nearby and overhears the sinister plot and he goes to Paul.
- 1) Paul asks the guard to bring his nephew to Claudius Lysias.
 - 2) The young man tells Claudius Lysias everything he heard and asks him to please not comply with the request of the religious leaders for another inquisition.
 - 3) The commander sends Paul’s nephew away with strict instructions to speak to no one about what he knows and about what he informed the commander!

Claudius Lysias is now determined to adhere to Roman legal protocols. (Acts 23:23-35)

4. Preparations to protect and transport Paul, along with a letter to Felix explaining the situation (Acts 23:23-30)

- (a) A large entourage is prepared to protect and deliver Paul to Felix, the Roman governing authority over the region.
 - (b) Claudius Lysias instructs two centurions to assemble a small army of 470 men to safely transport Paul to Felix, the governor in Caesarea (by the sea). Think about it:
 - 1) 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen are used to move Paul, also on a horse, in the dark of night (9:00pm).
 - 2) All this urgency to protect Paul from 40 men!
 - (c) In his letter to Felix Claudius Lysias says...
 - 1) The Jews arrested this guy and were about to execute him.
 - 2) I saved him because he was a Roman citizen.
 - 3) Once I realized he was a Roman, I sent him back to the Jewish council to have him questioned.
 - 4) He was actually being accused of breaking Jewish law which they claimed deserved execution, but he was obviously not guilty of violating any Roman laws.
 - 5) Then I came to know that they crafted a plot for me to send him into their council again for further questioning, but what they really wanted to do is ambush my transport team and execute him along the way.
 - 6) That is why I sent him to you and I ordered his accusers to go state their case before you! Sincerely, Claudias Lysias
5. Paul is delivered to Felix in Caesarea (Acts 23:31-35)

- (a) The soldiers delivered Paul to Felix with the letter.
- (b) Felix questions Paul about where he was born and when he realizes he is from Cilicia (that is where Tarsus is), he determines to hear from Paul's accusers.
- (c) Let the trial continue...

LET THE TRIAL BEGIN

1. Protected by Rome!?

A. Covered by ~~the blood~~ Roman Law

(1) Sitting before the Sanhedrin (**Acts 22:30**)

(a) Face-to-Face with his Accusers (*backwards one verse*)

1. "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.**" Acts 22:30 NKJV
2. After Claudius Lysias is informed that Paul is a Roman citizen and that he can no longer legally hold him, he still wanted to know the nature of the accusations, so he brought in the Jewish leadership.
 - a) Paul's case must be removed from the Roman legal system because they had already violated the law.

- b) Any escalation that might cause the news to reach Rome would reflect poorly on Claudius Lysias and who knows what would be the ramifications.
- c) The chief priests and their council members appear as Paul sits in the hot seat for questioning.
- d) The Blood of Christ has secured Paul's eternal destiny, but it does not stop religious persecution.
- e) See: [Forgiven... yet Liable](#) to better understand how God's eternal forgiveness of sin does not prevent the earthly consequences of that sin.
- f) Paul must eventually appeal to Rome, at least for temporary protection! Let the trial begin!

(2) Paul Testifies before the Jewish Courts (**Acts 23:1-10**)

- (a) Like Y'shua in Matthew 26, and the Apostles in Acts 4-5, and Stephen in Acts 6-7, Paul stands before the Jewish Religious council to testify.

1. "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.'** " But when Paul perceived that **one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees**, he cried out in the council, **"Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"** And when he had said this, a **dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees**; and the **assembly was divided**. For **Sadducees say that there is no resurrection**—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the **Pharisees'** party arose and protested, saying, **"We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."** Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks." Acts 23:1-10 NKJV

2. Paul begins his testimony before the Sanhedrin. (Acts 23:1-5

- a) He says, "My conscience is clear."
 - b) Instantly this does not go over well with the high priest Ananias.
 - c) He orders Paul to be slapped in the face!
 - d) Paul immediately reacts with an angry rebuke.
 - e) He calls the one who gave the order a whitewashed wall and declares how God will strike him for his blatant disregard for the law.
 - f) How dare you claim to sit as my judge according to the Torah as you simultaneously violate the Torah while doing so?
- 1) Paul sees the Jewish religious leaders similarly to how Y'shua did when He rebuked them for their blatant hypocrisy.
 - 2) **Paul:** *"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?**" Acts 23:3 NKJV*
 - 3) **Y'shua:** *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **cleanse the outside** of the cup and dish, **but inside they are full of***

extortion and self-indulgence. *Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like **whitewashed tombs** which indeed **appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones** and all uncleanness. Even so you also **outwardly appear righteous** to men, but **inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**”* Matthew 23:25-28 NKJV

- 4) See [The Hypocrisies](#) for a full teaching on Matthew 23.
- 5) **Food for thought:** Maybe Paul (Saul) was there when Y’shua was rebuking the religious leaders in Matthew 23! We have no direct evidence, but indirectly we might make a good argument. Paul was certainly in the council meeting that condemned Stephen in Acts 6-7. And Gamaliel (Paul’s Rabbi) was certainly in the council meeting in Acts 5. Paul was Gamaliel’s greatest protégé, so it is not beyond reason to think he was present at council meetings with Gamaliel to learn from his mentor. And so we have

proffered in the past that both Gamaliel and Paul could have even been present at Y'shua's trial in Matthew 26. Maybe they were also both present during Y'shua's scathing rebuke of the Jewish leadership in Matthew 23 and Paul used one of Y'shua's examples as he now stands trial himself in front of the same council.

- g) Immediately Paul is reprimanded for his disregard of the high priest.
- h) Paul quickly **turns to the Torah for inner guidance*, and accepts his correction, realizing that what he has said was dishonoring to the high priest and how it was clearly wrong to do so.
 - 1) **"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."* Exodus 22:28 NKJV
- i) But then he makes this odd admission. He did not know that the man who gave the order was the high priest.
 - 1) This opens up questions for contemplation.
 - 2) How could he not recognize the high priest?
 - 3) Was the council so perverted that it was unrecognizable?

3. Paul perceives the makeup of the room and shifts strategies (Acts 23:6-10)
 - a) Some were Sadducees and some were Pharisees and Paul knows they have issues with each other and he uses their differences to divide the room.
 - 1) Learn more about the differences between the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians in [Mic Drop](#) in Matthew 22.
 - b) Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee, coming from a lineage of a Pharisees.
 - 1) *“I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,”* he says, just as he later wrote to the Philippians
 - 2) *“...If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; **concerning the law, a Pharisee;** concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”*
Philippians 3:4-6 NKJV
 - c) And then he inserts the knife, knowing one great contention between the two leading religious factions is about the resurrection of the dead.

- d) You see, Paul makes known, as he twists the knife, I am here being persecuted because I believe in the resurrection.
- e) This deflects the attention away from him and the two groups start their predicted infighting over their doctrines on resurrection, angels and spirits.
- f) Paul is a Pharisee and Pharisees believe in the resurrection, so the Pharisees in the council immediately move for a verdict.
- g) This guy is clearly innocent. If he says a spirit or an angel spoke to him, who are we to refute that?
- h) Now, the commander (Claudius Lysias), fearing they might tear Paul apart in the midst of their violent arguments with one other, removes Paul using his military and returns him to the headquarters where he previously questioned him.

B. The Plot Against Paul

(1) The Conspiracy to Kill (Acts 23:11-22)

- (a) Not every conspiracy is a theory, some are facts!
 - 1. “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.**” And when it was day, some of the

Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Now there were more than **forty** who had **formed this conspiracy**. They came to the **chief priests and elders**, and said, “We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. Now you, therefore, together with the council, **suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.**” So when **Paul’s sister’s son** heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “**Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.**” So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.” Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?” And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask that you

bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. **But do not yield to them,** for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.” So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, **“Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.”**”

Acts 23:11-22 NKJV

2. When your are so religious that you are willing to violate your own religion to eliminate someone who opposes you, you will resort to heinous crimes.
 - a) The Lord appears to Paul, while he is being held in the barracks, and tells him that the persecution he is dealing with is all by grand design.
 - b) The ultimate purpose is for him to bring his testimony to Rome!
 - 1) Paul later remembers this prophecy over his life when he appeals to Felix to appear before Caesar in Rome! *“So Paul said, **“I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged.** To the Jews I have done no wrong, as*

*you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. **I appeal to Caesar.***” Then Felix, when he had conferred with the council, answered, *“**You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!**”*” Acts

25:10-12 NKJV

- 2) Had he not appealed to appear before Caesar in Rome, he would have later been released by Agrippa— *“Then Agrippa said to Festus, “**This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.**”*” Acts 26:32 NKJV
- c) Meanwhile, back on the religious front, forty Jewish men are scheming a conspiracy for how they can assassinate Paul.
- d) They are so committed to eliminate him that they willingly enter a covenant to fast from food and water until they murder him.
- e) They go to the lead priests and elders and reveal their plan and their level of commitment.

- f) They explain the proposed role of leaders and council in their master plan.
- g) You tell Claudius Lysias that you want him to bring Paul back into the council for further questioning and when they are escorting him out of the barracks, we will ambush them and kill him.
- h) However, Paul's nephew is nearby and overhears the sinister plot and he goes to Paul.
- i) Paul asks the guard to bring his nephew to Claudius Lysias and he does.
- j) The young man tells Claudius Lysias everything he heard and asks him to please not comply with the request of the religious leaders for another inquisition.
- k) The commander sends Paul's nephew away with strict instructions to speak to no one else about what he knows and about what he informed the commander!

C. Sent to Felix

- (1) Claudius Lysias is now determined to adhere to Roman legal protocols. **(Acts 23:23-35)**

(a) A large entourage is prepared to protect and deliver Paul to the Felix, the Roman governing authority over the region, who governs from Caesarea (by the sea).

1. “And he called for two centurions, saying, “**Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night;** and provide mounts to set Paul on, and **bring him safely to Felix the governor.**” He wrote a letter in the following manner: **Claudius Lysias**, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. **This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them.** Coming with the troops I rescued him, **having learned that he was a Roman.** And **when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains.** And when **it was told me that the Jews lay in wait** for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and **also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him.** Farewell. Then **the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to**

Antipatris. The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. When they **came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him.** And when **the governor had read it,** he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, he said, **“I will hear you when your accusers also have come.”** And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.” Acts 23:23-35 NKJV

2. Preparations to protect and transport Paul, along with a letter explaining the situation. (Acts 23:23-30)
 - a) Claudius Lysias instructs two centurions to assemble a small army of 470 men to safely transport Paul to Felix, the governor in Caesarea.
 - b) Think about it, two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen are called to move Paul, also on a horse, in the dark of night (9:00pm).
 - c) All this protection and urgency to guard Paul against 40 men!
 - 1) It seems he is quite concerned to help Paul get proper justice after he himself almost had a Roman citizen illegally flogged.

- 2) I am sure he does not want Paul to say anything about how far the process went before Claudius Lysias corrected his approach to comply with Roman law.
- d) In the letter to Felix he writes...
 - 1) The Jews apprehended this guy and were about to execute him.
 - 2) I saved him because he was a Roman citizen.
 - a. This is not an altogether accurate account of the order in which things occurred.
 - b. He did rescue Paul from a beating to question him, but not because he was a Roman.
 - c. Claudius Lysias did not realize Paul was a Roman until he was about to have him flogged himself, when Paul warned the guard about to strike him that he was a Roman citizen.
 - 3) Felix writes... When I realized he was a Roman, I sent him back to the Jewish council to have him questioned. (That part is accurate.)
 - 4) He was actually being accused of breaking Jewish law which they claimed deserved

execution, but he was obviously not guilty of violating any Roman laws.

- 5) Then I came to know that they crafted a plot for me to send him into their council again for further questioning, but what they really wanted to do is ambush my transport team and execute him along the way.
- 6) That is why I sent him to you and I ordered his accusers to go state their case before you!
- 7) Sincerely, Claudias Lysias

3. Paul is delivered to Felix in Caesarea. (Acts 23:31-35)

- a) The soldiers delivered Paul to Felix in Caesarea with the letter.
- b) Felix questions Paul about where he was born and when he realizes he is from Cilicia (the region of Paul's birth city of Tarsus), he determines to hear from Paul's accusers.
- c) Let the trial continue...

IF GOD IS FOR US...

2. Whatever is necessary to fulfill his purpose in you your life!

A. The Progression of a Great Calling

- (1) Let's follow Paul, starting soon after he was called...

(a) Paul was informed, by Ananias via prophecy from the Lord, **to whom** he would go and **how much** it would cost!

1. "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for **he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer** for My name's sake."" Acts 9:15-16 NKJV

2. Prophecy

a) You will go to the Gentiles and to kings (hint: Agrippa and Caesar).

b) Your assignment will not be easy nor pleasant (hint: all the persecution and lies).

(b) Paul had planted in his heart to get to Rome somehow!

1. "**To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that **without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers**, making request if, **by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of**

God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that **I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now),** that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, **I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”** Romans 1:7-15 NKJV

2. Whatever it takes and whenever I’m permitted, I am getting to Rome!
 - a) Paul is obviously writing the letter to the Romans BEFORE he has ever been there.
 - 1) Towards the end of Paul’s third missionary Journey, before he headed to Jerusalem, Romans was written from the Greek city of Corinth (Circa AD 54/55).
 - b) He prays for the people of Rome constantly.
 - c) In those prayers are requests to God that it is His will to send him to Rome.

- d) Paul has made many plans to go, but has been prevented each time, as of the writing of the letter.
- e) He is ready to go at any moment, if God opens the door.

(c) Paul is headed to Jerusalem!

1. **“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem,** not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that **the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.** But **none of these things move me;** nor do I count my life dear to myself, **so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel** of the grace of God.

“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom **I have gone preaching the kingdom of God,** will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.” Acts

20:22-26 NKJV

2. Prophecy

- a) I am going to Jerusalem no matter what.
- b) I am not 100% certain what exactly awaits, but I know this... the Holy Spirit says it involves arrests and persecution.

- c) None if it phases me!
 - d) My physical life means nothing to me!
 - e) What does mean something is completing the great calling I have from the Lord.
 - f) I will preach the kingdom of God in every city God sends me and then I will die!
 - g) One more thing I know for certain, the blood of those who hear and don't believe is on them!
- (d) For sure Jerusalem is not the last stop!
1. **Right before Paul gets to Jerusalem...** "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and **deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.**' "" Acts 21:11 NKJV
 2. **Right before Paul leaves Jerusalem...** "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 NKJV
 3. How does Paul know? More prophecy!
 - a) The Lord told him he would testify in Rome just like he did in Jerusalem.
 - b) And we know Paul had not been to Rome yet!
 - c) But, how will he eventually get there?

(e) Paul was arrested in Jerusalem as prophesied, but it does not end there!

1. “So Paul said, **“I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged.** To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. **I appeal to Caesar.”**”

Acts 25:10-11 NKJV

2. “Then Agrippa said to Festus, **“This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”**”

Acts 26:32

3. It’s a long story which we will get to in detail over the next few weeks, but this is a quick summary.
 - a) We already saw in this chapter (Acts 23) that Paul was arrested and beaten by the Jews in Jerusalem.
 - b) The Roman commander halted the beating to question Paul and he too was ready to flog him.
 - c) Paul used his Roman citizenship to at least temporarily stop the scourging.
 - d) As a citizen, he is sent on to the Roman governor in Caesarea (Felix) for further processing.

- e) Through a series of other trials and testimonies that we will soon see, Paul eventually appeals his case to Caesar in Rome because he is confident that there is absolutely nothing he is guilty of under either Jewish or Roman law.
- f) Paul wanted to eventually get to Rome by any means possible, and so off to Rome he is sent!
 - 1) **As Paul desired...** *“making request if, by some means, now **at last I may find a way** in the will of God to come to you.” “So, as much as is in me, **I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome** also.” Romans 1:10, 15 NKJV*
 - 2) **And as the Lord said...** *“for **as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.**” Acts 23:11*
- (f) Paul arrives in Rome
 - 1. “Now when **we came to Rome**, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was **permitted to dwell by himself** with the soldier who guarded him.” Acts 28:16 NKJV
 - a) Paul is placed under house arrest—certainly better than a prison cell!
- (g) Paul finally gets to testify in Rome!

1. “And it came to pass after three days that **Paul called the leaders of the Jews together.** So when they had come together, he said to them: “**Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers,** yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had **examined me, wanted to let me go,** because there was no cause for putting me to death. But **when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar,** not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, **because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.**”” Acts 28:17-20 NKJV

2. Like I've been saying all along...

- a) I've been accused of teaching against Jewish law since my final visit to Jerusalem, but it's all lies.
(See [Forgiven... yet Liable](#))
- b) I was even tried by the Romans and they were willing to release me, but I had already appealed to Caesar, so they had to follow through.
- c) But that is perfect, because that is what God used to fulfill both my desire, and His prophecy over my

life (my great purpose!). *“I will be chained, suffer, and preach in Rome!”*

(h) The Jews in Rome want to hear what Paul has to say...

1. “Then they said to him, “**We neither** received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. But **we desire to hear** from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.” So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, **to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets**, from morning till evening. And **some were persuaded** by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.” Acts 28:21-24 NKJV
2. The Jews in Rome know nothing about Paul nor the accusations against him.
 - a) They also know nothing about the “Christian sect,” other than they’ve heard that it existed.
 - b) They do want to know more.

- c) Paul preaches about the kingdom and convinces many that Y'shua is the Messiah using the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Also...
 - d) *"Therefore let it be known to you that **the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles**, and they will hear it!" Acts 28:28 NKJV*
- (i) Two years under house arrest...
- 1. "Then Paul dwelt **two whole years** in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, **preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ** with all confidence, no one forbidding him." Acts 28:30-31 NKJV
 - 2. Persecution and chains leads to a dream come true!
 - a) Paul was able to preach for two years in Rome, about both the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the kingdom.
 - b) Paul was executed in Rome in around AD 67
 - c) **Paul was ready to die for the cause...** ...*"I am ready not only to be bound, but **also to die** at Jerusalem **for the name of the Lord Jesus.**" Acts 21:13 NKJV*
 - d) **And even death is good when you are called for a purpose...** *"And we know that **all things work***

*together for good to those who **love God**, to those who are the **called according to His purpose.**"*

Romans 8:28 NKJV

B. Is Paul's story your story?

(1) Be of Good Cheer!

(a) Paul's Story: be of good cheer!

1. "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 NKJV

2. I am sending you on a mission to testify for me!

a) "*And we know that **all things work together for good to those who **love God**, to those who are the **called according to His purpose.*****" Romans 8:28

(b) Your Story: be of good cheer!

1. "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may **have peace**. In the world you will have tribulation; but **be of good cheer**, I have overcome the world." John 16:33 NKJV

2. Your journey will be wrought with trials, but have peace...

- a) “we know that ***all things work together for good*** to those who ***love God***, to those who are the ***called according to His purpose.***” Romans 8:28

(2) Your Story?

- (a) You will stand before governors and kings...

1. “But **beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you** in their synagogues. **You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.** But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. **“Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.** But he who endures to the end will be saved.”
Matthew 10:17-22 NKJV
2. Persecution is coming but you will testify before the leaders of the world if you don’t quit!

- a) You don't even need to worry about what to say; the Holy Spirit will inspire your words in the moment you need to speak.
- b) You will be betrayed by the closest people in your life, and hated. But don't worry...
- c) ***“all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*** Romans 8:28

(b) Of course you will be hated!

1. **“If the world hates you,** you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. **Yet because you are not of the world,** but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ **If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.” John 15:18-20 NKJV
2. They hated Christ; they are sure to hate those who serve Christ.
 - a) The world loves those who are worldly and hates those who are Godly. You are Godly so of course you are hated.

- b) If they persecuted your master, of course they will persecute you. But don't worry...
- c) ***"all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*** Romans 8:28

C. All things work together for good...

(1) When do all things work together for good?

(a) Love God and live according to His purpose.

1. "And we know that **all things work together for good** to those who **love God**, to those who are the **called according to His purpose.**" Romans 8:28 NKJV

2. What does it mean to love God?

a) "If you love Me, **keep My commandments.**" John 14:15 NKJV

b) "**He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.** And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."" John 14:21 NKJV

c) "Jesus answered and said to him, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;** and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. **He who does not love Me does not keep My words;** and the word which you hear

is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." John
14:23-24 NKJV

1) Love equals obedience!

3. How do you walk according to His purpose, so all
things work together for good?

a) "By this we know that we love the children of
God, when **we love God and keep His
commandments. For this is the love of God, that
we keep His commandments. And His
commandments are not burdensome. For
whatever is born of God overcomes the world.**
And this is **the victory that has overcome the
world—our faith.** Who is he **who overcomes the
world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of
God?"** 1 John 5:2-5 NKJV

1) Love equals obedience!

2) Obedience equals faith!

3) Faith equals the victory that overcomes the
world!

4) And the world hates you (John 15:18-20), but
what does that matter when you have the
victory!?

(2) What does that victory look like?

- (a) God is always on your side!
 - 1. “What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?**” Romans 8:31 NKJV
- (b) No charge against you can stand!
 - 1. “**Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?** It is God who justifies.” Romans 8:33 NKJV
- (c) Nothing can separate you from the love of Christ!
 - 1. “**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Romans 8:35 NKJV
 - 2. “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, **nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus** our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39 NKJV
- (3) So... if **all things work together for good** to those who **love God**, to those who are the **called according to His purpose...**
 - (a) Be anxious for nothing and have peace!
 - 1. “**Be anxious for nothing**, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **and the peace of God**,

which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

2. **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”** John 14:27 NKJV

3. The perfect formula when your calling seems frightening and overwhelming...
- a) Pray and surrender to God instead of giving yourself over to anxiety.
 - b) A supernatural peace will overtake you!
 - c) Realize that it is His peace, not a type of peace you can get from anything the world can offer you.
 - d) Then relax and realize that with God in charge trouble and fear cannot take root in your heart.
4. So, when God CALLS you to for a GREAT PURPOSE to... *“testify for Him in somewhere and also bear witness for Him somewhere.”*
5. Don’t worry one bit... *“you know that all things work together for good to those who LOVE God and are THE CALLED according to His purpose. Plus, if God is for you, who can be against you?”*

Summary: LET THE TRIAL BEGIN

1. Protected by Rome!?

A. Covered by ~~the blood~~ Roman Law

(1) Sitting before the Sanhedrin (**Acts 22:30**)

(a) Face-to-Face with his Accusers (*backwards one verse*)

1. After Claudius Lysias is informed that Paul is a Roman citizen and that he can no longer legally hold him, he still wanted to know the nature of the accusations, so he brought in the Jewish leadership.

- a) Paul's case must be removed from the Roman legal system because they had already violated the law.
- b) Any escalation that might cause the news to reach Rome would reflect poorly on Claudius Lysias and who knows what would be the ramifications.
- c) The chief priests and their council members appear as Paul sits in the hot seat for questioning.
- d) The Blood of Christ has secured Paul's eternal destiny, but it does not stop religious persecution.
- e) See: [Forgiven... yet Liable](#) to better understand how God's eternal forgiveness of sin does not prevent the earthly consequences of that sin.
- f) Paul must eventually appeal to Rome, at least for temporary protection! Let the trial begin!

(2) Paul Testifies before the Jewish Courts (**Acts 23:1-10**)

(a) Like Y'shua in Matthew 26, and the Apostles in Acts 4-5, and Stephen in Acts 6-7, Paul stands before the Jewish Religious council to testify.

1. Paul begins his testimony before the Sanhedrin. (Acts 23:1-5

a) He says, "My conscience is clear."

b) Instantly this does not go over well with the high priest Ananias.

c) He orders Paul to be slapped in the face!

d) Paul immediately reacts with an angry rebuke.

e) He calls the one who gave the order a whitewashed wall and declares how God will strike him for his blatant disregard for the law.

f) How dare you claim to sit as my judge according to the Torah as you simultaneously violate the Torah while doing so?

1) Paul sees the Jewish religious leaders similarly to how Y'shua did when He rebuked them for their blatant hypocrisy.

2) **Paul:** "***you whitewashed wall ...you command me to be struck **contrary to the law?*****"

- 3) **Y'shua**: “you are like *whitewashed tombs...*
inside you are full of hypocrisy and
lawlessness.”
- 4) See [The Hypocrisies](#) for a full teaching on Matthew 23.
- 5) **Food for thought**: Maybe Paul (Saul) was there when Y'shua was rebuking the religious leaders in Matthew 23! We have no direct evidence, but indirectly we might make a good argument. Paul was certainly in the council meeting that condemned Stephen in Acts 6-7. And Gamaliel (Paul's Rabbi) was certainly in the council meeting in Acts 5. Paul was Gamaliel's greatest protégé, so it is not beyond reason to think he was present at council meetings with Gamaliel to learn from his mentor. And so we have proffered in the past that both Gamaliel and Paul could have even been present at Y'shua's trial in Matthew 26. Maybe they were also both present during Y'shua's scathing rebuke of the Jewish leadership in Matthew 23 and Paul used one of Y'shua's examples as he now stands trial himself in front of the same council.

- g) Immediately Paul is reprimanded for his disregard of the high priest.
 - h) Paul quickly **turns to the Torah for inner guidance*, and accepts his correction, realizing that what he has said was dishonoring to the high priest and how it was clearly wrong to do so.
 - i) But then he makes this odd admission. He did not know that the man who gave the order was the high priest.
 - 1) This opens up questions for contemplation.
 - 2) How could he not recognize the high priest?
 - 3) Was the council so perverted that it was unrecognizable?
2. Paul perceives the makeup of the room and shifts strategies (Acts 23:6-10)
- a) Some were Sadducees and some were Pharisees and Paul knows they have issues with each other and he uses their differences to divide the room.
 - 1) Learn more about the differences between the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians in [Mic Drop](#) in Matthew 22.
 - b) Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee, coming from a lineage of a Pharisees.

- 1) *"I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,"* he says, just as he later wrote to the Philippians.
- c) And then he inserts the knife, knowing one great contention between the two leading religious factions is about the resurrection of the dead.
- d) You see, Paul makes known, as he twists the knife, I am here being persecuted because I believe in the resurrection.
- e) This deflects the attention away from him and the two groups start their predicted infighting over their doctrines on resurrection, angels and spirits.
- f) Paul is a Pharisee and Pharisees believe in the resurrection, so the Pharisees in the council immediately move for a verdict.
- g) This guy is clearly innocent. If he says a spirit or an angel spoke to him, who are we to refute that?
- h) Now, the commander (Claudius Lysias), fearing they might tear Paul apart in the midst of their violent arguments with one other, removes Paul using his military and returns him to the headquarters where he previously questioned him.

B. The Plot Against Paul

- (1) The Conspiracy to Kill (**Acts 23:11-22**)

- (a) Not every conspiracy is a theory, some are facts!
1. When you are so religious that you are willing to violate your own religion to eliminate someone who opposes you, you will resort to heinous crimes.
 - a) The Lord appears to Paul, while he is being held in the barracks, and tells him that the persecution he is dealing with is all by grand design.
 - b) The ultimate purpose is for him to bring his testimony to Rome!
 - 1) Paul later remembers this prophecy over his life when he appeals to Felix to appear before Caesar in Rome!
 - 2) Had he not appealed to appear before Caesar in Rome, he would have later been released by Agrippa—
 - c) Meanwhile, back on the religious front, forty Jewish men are scheming a conspiracy for how they can assassinate Paul.
 - d) They are so committed to eliminate him that they willingly enter a covenant to fast from food and water until they murder him.
 - e) They go to the lead priests and elders and reveal their plan and their level of commitment.

- f) They explain the proposed role of leaders and council in their master plan.
- g) You tell Claudius Lysias that you want him to bring Paul back into the council for further questioning and when they are escorting him out of the barracks, we will ambush them and kill him.
- h) However, Paul's nephew is nearby and overhears the sinister plot and he goes to Paul.
- i) Paul asks the guard to bring his nephew to Claudius Lysias and he does.
- j) The young man tells Claudius Lysias everything he heard and asks him to please not comply with the request of the religious leaders for another inquisition.
- k) The commander sends Paul's nephew away with strict instructions to speak to no one else about what he knows and about what he informed the commander!

C. Sent to Felix

- (1) Claudius Lysias is now determined to adhere to Roman legal protocols. **(Acts 23:23-35)**

- (a) A large entourage is prepared to protect and deliver Paul to the Felix, the Roman governing authority over the region, who governs from Caesarea (by the sea).
- 1. Preparations to protect and transport Paul, along with a letter explaining the situation. (Acts 23:23-30)
 - a) Claudius Lysias instructs two centurions to assemble a small army of 470 men to safely transport Paul to Felix, the governor in Caesarea.
 - b) Think about it, two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen are called to move Paul, also on a horse, in the dark of night (9:00pm).
 - c) All this protection and urgency to guard Paul against 40 men!
 - 1) It seems he is quite concerned to help Paul get proper justice after he himself almost had a Roman citizen illegally flogged.
 - 2) I am sure he does not want Paul to say anything about how far the process went before Claudius Lysias corrected his approach to comply with Roman law.
 - d) In the letter to Felix he writes...

- 1) The Jews apprehended this guy and were about to execute him.
- 2) I saved him because he was a Roman citizen.
 - a. This is not an altogether accurate account of the order in which things occurred.
 - b. He did rescue Paul from a beating to question him, but not because he was a Roman.
 - c. Claudius Lysias did not realize Paul was a Roman until he was about to have him flogged himself, when Paul warned the guard about to strike him that he was a Roman citizen.
- 3) Felix writes... When I realized he was a Roman, I sent him back to the Jewish council to have him questioned. (That part is accurate.)
- 4) He was actually being accused of breaking Jewish law which they claimed deserved execution, but he was obviously not guilty of violating any Roman laws.
- 5) Then I came to know that they crafted a plot for me to send him into their council again for further questioning, but what they really wanted

to do is ambush my transport team and execute him along the way.

6) That is why I sent him to you and I ordered his accusers to go state their case before you!

7) Sincerely, Claudias Lysias

2. Paul is delivered to Felix in Caesarea. (Acts 23:31-35)

a) The soldiers delivered Paul to Felix in Caesarea with the letter.

b) Felix questions Paul about where he was born and when he realizes he is from Cilicia (the region of Paul's birth city of Tarsus), he determines to hear from Paul's accusers.

c) Let the trial continue...

Summary: IF GOD IS FOR US...

2. Whatever is necessary to fulfill his purpose in you your life!

A. The Progression of a Great Calling

(1) Let's follow Paul, starting soon after he was called...

(a) Paul was informed, by Ananias via prophecy from the Lord, **to whom** he would go and **how much** it would cost!

1. Prophecy

- a) You will go to the Gentiles and to kings (hint: Agrippa and Caesar).
 - b) Your assignment will not be easy nor pleasant (hint: all the persecution and lies).
- (b) Paul had planted in his heart to get to Rome somehow!
1. Whatever it takes and whenever I'm permitted, I am getting to Rome!
 - a) Paul is obviously writing the letter to the Romans BEFORE he has ever been there.
 - 1) Towards the end of Paul's third missionary Journey, before he headed to Jerusalem, Romans was written from the Greek city of Corinth (Circa AD 54/55).
 - b) He prays for the people of Rome constantly.
 - c) In those prayers are requests to God that it is His will to send him to Rome.
 - d) Paul has made many plans to go, but has been prevented each time, as of the writing of the letter.
 - e) He is ready to go at any moment, if God opens the door.
- (c) Paul is headed to Jerusalem!
1. Prophecy
 - a) I am going to Jerusalem no matter what.

- b) I am not 100% certain what exactly awaits, but I know this... the Holy Spirit says it involves arrests and persecution.
 - c) None if it phases me!
 - d) My physical life means nothing to me!
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 - f) I will preach the kingdom of God in every city God sends me and then I will die!
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- 1. How does Paul know? More prophecy!
 - a) The Lord told him he would testify in Rome just like he did in Jerusalem.
 - b) And we know Paul had not been to Rome yet!
 - c) But, how will he eventually get there?
- (e) Paul was arrested in Jerusalem as prophesied, but it does not end there!
- 1. It's a long story which we will get to in detail over the next few weeks, but this is a quick summary.
 - a) We already saw in this chapter (Acts 23) that Paul was arrested and beaten by the Jews in Jerusalem.

- b) The Roman commander halted the beating to question Paul and he too was ready to flog him.
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- d) As a citizen, he is sent on to the Roman governor in Caesarea (Felix) for further processing.
- e) Through a series of other trials and testimonies that we will soon see, Paul eventually appeals his case to Caesar in Rome because he is confident that there is absolutely nothing he is guilty of under either Jewish or Roman law.
- f) Paul wanted to eventually get to Rome by any means possible, and so off to Rome he is sent!
- (f) Paul arrives in Rome
 - 1. Paul is placed under house arrest—certainly better than a prison cell!
- (g) Paul finally gets to testify in Rome!
 - 1. Like I've been saying all along...
 - a) I've been accused of teaching against Jewish law since my final visit to Jerusalem, but it's all lies.
(See [Forgiven... yet Liable](#))

- b) I was even tried by the Romans and they were willing to release me, but I had already appealed to Caesar, so they had to follow through.
 - c) But that is perfect, because that is what God used to fulfill both my desire, and His prophecy over my life (my great purpose!). *“I will be chained, suffer, and preach in Rome!”*
- (h) The Jews in Rome want to hear what Paul has to say...
- 1. The Jews in Rome know nothing about Paul nor the accusations against him.
 - a) They also know nothing about the “Christian sect,” other than they’ve heard that it existed.
 - b) They do want to know more.
 - c) Paul preaches about the kingdom and convinces many that Y’shua is the Messiah using the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Also...
- (i) Two years under house arrest...
- 1. Persecution and chains leads to a dream come true!
 - a) Paul was able to preach for two years in Rome, about both the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the kingdom.
 - b) Paul was executed in Rome in around AD 67
 - c) Paul was ready to die for the cause...

- d) And even death is good when you are called for a purpose...

B. Is Paul's story your story?

(1) Be of Good Cheer!

(a) Paul's Story: be of good cheer!

- 1. I am sending you on a mission to testify for me!

(b) Your Story: be of good cheer!

- 1. Your journey will be wrought with trials, but have peace...

(2) Your Story?

(a) You will stand before governors and kings...

- 1. Persecution is coming but you will testify before the leaders of the world if you don't quit!

- a) You don't even need to worry about what to say; the Holy Spirit will inspire your words in the moment you need to speak.

- b) You will be betrayed by the closest people in your life, and hated. But don't worry...

(b) Of course you will be hated!

- 1. They hated Christ; they are sure to hate those who serve Christ.

- a) The world loves those who are worldly and hates those who are Godly. You are Godly so of course you are hated.
- b) If they persecuted your master, of course they will persecute you. But don't worry...

C. All things work together for good...

(1) When do all things work together for good?

(a) Love God and live according to His purpose.

1. What does it mean to love God?

a) Love equals obedience!

2. How do you walk according to His purpose, so all things work together for good?

a) Love equals obedience!

b) Obedience equals faith!

c) Faith equals the victory that overcomes the world!

d) And the world hates you (John 15:18-20), but what does that matter when you have the victory!?

(2) What does that victory look like?

(a) God is always on your side!

(b) No charge against you can stand!

(c) Nothing can separate you from the love of Christ!

(3) So... if **all things work together for good** to those who **love God**, to those who are the **called according to His purpose...**

(a) Be anxious for nothing and have peace!

1. The perfect formula when your calling seems frightening and overwhelming...
 - a) Pray and surrender to God instead of giving yourself over to anxiety.
 - b) A supernatural peace will overtake you!
 - c) Realize that it is His peace, not a type of peace you can get from anything the world can offer you.
 - d) Then relax and realize that with God in charge trouble and fear cannot take root in your heart.
2. So, when God CALLS you to for a GREAT PURPOSE to... *“testify for Him in somewhere and also bear witness for Him somewhere.”*
3. Don’t worry one bit... *“you know that all things work together for good to those who LOVE God and are THE CALLED according to His purpose. Plus, if God is for you, who can be against you?”*

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. In Acts 23:1-10, Paul begins his testimony before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Council).

- A. What angers the high priest and what does he order?
- B. How does Paul respond?
- C. What does Paul do when he is corrected and what law does he refer to, specifically (chapter & verse)?
- D. How is Paul's response in Acts 23:3 similar to Y'shua's rebuke of the religious leaders in Matthew 23:25-28?

2. Not every conspiracy is a theory, some are facts! In Acts 23:11-22, forty Jewish men plot to kill Paul.

- A. What precisely is their scheme and how is it discovered?
- B. What prophecy do we see over Paul's life that makes us confident that this effort to kill him will not be successful?

3. Claudius Lysias is determined to adhere to Roman legal protocols in Acts 23:23-35.

- A. What extraordinary preparations does the Roman leader make to prevent the conspirators from succeeding?
- B. Why does it seem a bit over the top?
- C. Do you believe Claudius Lysias is making an extra effort to protect Paul because of his own egregious error of nearly flogging Paul (a Roman citizen) without a trial in Acts 22? Why or why not?

4. Describe the letter Claudius Lysias sends to Governor Felix in Caesarea?

A. What about it is not completely honest?

5. Write a short narrative describing the progression of Paul's great calling.

A. Body: Use the following passages (in order) to guide your response. (See: Acts 9:15-16; Romans 1:7-15; Acts 20:22-26; Acts 21:11; Acts 23:11; Acts 25:10-11; Acts 26:32)

B. Conclusion: (See: Romans 1:10-15; Acts 23:11; Acts 28:16-28; Acts 21:13; Romans 8:28)

6. How is Paul's story your story?

A. Paul's Story: (See Acts 23:11)

B. Your Story: (See: Romans 8:28; John 16:33; Matthew 10:17-22; John 15:18-20)

7. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

A. What does it mean to love God? (See: John 14:21; 14:23-24)

B. How do you walk according to His purpose, so all things work together for good? (See I John 5:2-5)

C. What does that victory look like? (See: Romans 8:31-39; Philippians 4:6-7; John 14:27)