

## Acts Chapter 23

1. **Act 23:1** Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

A. Then Paul,

B. looking earnestly at the council,

1. **looking earnestly**- Gr. **atenzio**- *to fix one's eyes upon, look steadily, gaze intently*

2. **council**- Gr. **sunedrion**

a. The Sanhedrin

C. **said**- Gr. **epo**

1. *In no other Sanhedrin session does the person being questioned commence the proceedings with a speech of his own. Jewish Commentary*

2. This session was informal and called by the Roman government.

D. **Men and brethren**,

1. **Men**- Gr. **aner**

2. **brethren**- Gr. **adelphos**

a. Paul is siding with these men as being one with them in being a Jew.

b. *These people are still Sha'ul's brothers (compare [Act 22:1](#)). However, this is not a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, for "Brothers" is not a mode of address appropriate for a court in regular session (rather, it is appropriate for old friends; see above paragraph). Instead, this is the gathering summoned by the Roman commander ([Act 22:30](#)). -Jewish Commentary*

c. *Customarily, members of the Sanhedrin were addressed as "fathers." Referring to them as "brethren" implies that before his conversion, Paul had himself been a member of this auspicious body. -Courson Commentary*

E. **I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day**

1. **lived**- Gr. **politeuomai**- *to live as a law abiding citizen*

a. *Lit., have lived as a citizen, with special reference to the charge against him that he taught men against the law and the temple. He means that he has lived as a true and loyal Jew. -*

*Vincent Word Studies*

2. **good**- Gr. **agathos**- *intrinsic good*

a. This is good that comes from God as it's source. It is divine good.

**3. conscience-** Gr. **sunedeisis-** *to know jointly*

a. This was a priority for Paul. [Heb. 13:18](#), [Acts 24:16](#)

b. Our conscience became a part of us when Adam and Eve partook of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is what our conscience is, the knowledge of good and evil.

c. We should not violate our conscience, but we are to live on a higher plane than just the conscience, we are to be led by the Holy Spirit, by the inward witness of the Spirit.

d. *"Conscience" is one of Paul's favorite words; he used it twice in Acts ([Act 23:1](#); [Act 24:16](#)) and twenty-one times in his letters. The word means "to know with, to know together." Conscience is the inner "judge" or "witness" that approves when we do right and disapproves when we do wrong ([Rom 2:15](#)). Conscience does not set the standard; it only applies it.* -Wiersbe NT Commentary

**4. day-** Gr. **hemara**

**2. And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.**

**A. high priest-** Gr. **archiereus**

**B. Ananias**

1. *Ananias was high priest A.D. 47-52 and about 53-59. Thus Paul here meets Ananias shortly before Agrippa II would remove him (see comment on [Act 24:27](#)). Ananias was a Roman vassal, known for his greed and for stealing the tithes belonging to the poorer priests.* - Bible Background Commentary

2. *A multimillionaire by today's standards, Ananias was one of the worst high priests in the history of Israel. He had worked out a deal with the priests so that animals brought to the temple for sacrifice would conveniently be found flawed upon inspection. "Can't use this one," the priest would say. "This sheep is blemished. But this is your lucky day. We just happen to have some sheep over here you could purchase." "Really?" the relieved supplicant would say. "How much?" "Well, they're a little pricy—but they're worth it," the priest would answer. "They've already been preapproved." Through such deals,*

*Ananias gouged the people and pocketed huge amounts of money. No wonder that, after serving twelve years as high priest, he was assassinated by his own countrymen. - Courson Commentary*

C. **commanded-** Gr. **epitasso-** *to enjoin upon, order, command, charge*

1. Even though this was a Roman hearing, the Jewish leader acted as if he was in charge in this case.

D. **stood by-** Gr. **paristemi-** *to stand by*

E. **strike-** Gr. **tupto-** *smite with the hand*

G. **mouth-** Gr. **stoma**

1. *To stop him from speaking; to express their indignation at what he had said. The anger of Ananias was aroused because Paul affirmed that all he had done had been with a good conscience. Their feelings had been excited to the utmost; they regarded him as certainly guilty; they regarded him as an apostate; and they could not bear it that he, with such coolness and firmness, declared that all his conduct had been under the direction of a good conscience. -Barnes Commentary*

2. This happened to Jesus at his trial as well. [Joh 18:22](#)

**3. 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?"**

A. **Then Paul said to him,**

1. **said-** Gr. **epo**

B. **God will strike you,**

1. **strike-** Gr. **tupto**

a. *Paul spoke prophetically, because God did indeed smite this wicked man. When the Jews revolted against Rome in the year 66, Ananias had to flee for his life because of his known sympathies with Rome. The Jewish guerrillas found him hiding in an aqueduct at Herod's palace, and they killed him. It was an ignominious death for a despicable man. -Wiersbe NT Commentary*

C. **you whitewashed wall**

1. **whitewashed-** Gr. **koniao**

2. **wall-** Gr. **toichos**

a. *A "whitewashed wall" was one whose weakness or ugliness might be concealed—but not changed—by a veneer of*

*whitewash: an appropriate condemnation of Israel's leaders (Eze 13:10-11). Walls facing the street in the eastern Mediterranean were often whitewashed. -Bible Background Commentary*

3. Paul was like us. He still was not perfected. He had a temper. When Jesus was hit at his trial he did not threaten back like Paul did here. There is hope for all of us!

**D. For you sit to judge me according to the law,**

1. **sit-** Gr. **kathemai**
2. **judge-** Gr. **krino**
3. **law-** Gr. **nomos**

a. Actually, the high priest did not have jurisdiction at this trial since it was under Roman control and was called by them.

**E. and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law**

1. **command-** Gr. **keleuo**
2. **struck-** Gr. **tupto**
3. **law-** Gr. **nomos**

a. [Deu 25:1-2](#)

**4. And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"**

**A. And those who stood by said,**

1. **stood by-** Gr. **paristemi**

a. There are always those who just stand by and criticize you. Those that criticize you have never done more than you. Only those who are merely standing by are critics of others.

2. **said-** Gr. **epo**

**B. Do you revile God's high priest?**

1. **revile-** Gr. **loidereo-** *to revile, rail at, abuse*
2. **high priest-** Gr. **archiereus**

**5. 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.'"**

**A. Then Paul said,**

1. **said-** Gr. **epo**

**B. I did not know,**

1. **know-** Gr. **eido**

a. *St. Paul did not know that Ananias was high priest; he had*

*been long absent from Jerusalem; political changes were frequent; the high priesthood was no longer in succession, and was frequently bought and sold; the Romans put down one high priest, and raised up another, as political reasons dictated.*

-Clarke Commentary

b. Some try to make this say that Paul have a bad eye disease where he could not see clearly. Baloney...

C. **brethren**- Gr. **adelphos**

D. **that he was the high priest,**

1. **high priest**- Gr. **archiereus**

E. **for it is written,**

1. **written**- Gr. **grapho**

a. [Exo 22:28](#)

F. **You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people**

1. **speak evil**- Gr. **ereo kakos**

2. **ruler**- Gr. **archon**

a. This is something every Christian and church needs to hear and understand. I hear so much evil spoken over the president and other governmental leaders, especially those who are in office that Christians disagree with strongly.

b. We don't have to agree with leaders, but that does not give us a license to ridicule and demean them either.

3. **people**- Gr. **laos**

**6. 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!"**

A. **But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees,**

1. **perceived**- Gr. **ginosko**- *to know or recognize*

a. This was by the Spirit or by some natural distinguishing factor.

2. **part**- Gr. **meros**

3. **Sadducees**- means *followers of Zadok*

a. *A religious party, or school, among the Jews, at the time of Christ, who denied that the oral law was a revelation of God to*

the Israelites. And who deemed the written law alone, to be obligatory on the nation, as of divine authority. Except on one occasion. [Mat 16:1](#); [Mat 16:4](#); [Mat 16:6](#), **Christ** never assailed the Sadducees with the same bitter denunciations, which he uttered against the Pharisees. The origin of their name is involved in great difficulties, but the most satisfactory conjecture is that the Sadducees, or Zadokites, were originally identical with the sons of Zadok, and constituted what may be termed a kind of sacerdotal aristocracy, this Zadok being the priest who declared in favor of Solomon, when Abiathar took the part of Adonijah. [1Ki 1:32-45](#). To these sons of Zadok were, afterward, attached all who, for any reason, reckoned themselves as belonging to the aristocrats; such, for example, as the families of the high priest, who had obtained consideration under the dynasty of Herod. These were for the most part judges, and individuals of the official and governing class. This explanation elucidates at once, [Act 5:17](#), the leading tenet of the Sadducees was the negation of the leading tenet of their opponents. As the Pharisees asserted, so the Sadducees denied, that the Israelites were in possession of an oral law transmitted to them by Moses, see **Pharisees**. In opposition to the Pharisees, they maintained that the written law alone was obligatory on the nation, as of divine authority. The second distinguishing doctrine of the Sadducees was the denial of man's resurrection after death. In connection with the disbelief of a resurrection by the Sadducees, they likewise, denied there was "angel or spirit," [Act 23:8](#), and also the doctrines of future punishment and future rewards. Josephus states that the Sadducees believed in the freedom of the will, which the Pharisees denied. They pushed this doctrine so far as almost to exclude God, from the government of the world. Some of the early Christian writers attribute to the Sadducees, the rejection of all the sacred Scriptures except the Pentateuch; a statement, however, that is now generally admitted to have been founded on a misconception of the truth, and it seems to have arisen from a confusion of the Sadducees with the Samaritans. An important fact in the history of the Sadducees is their rapid

*disappearance from history, after the first century, and the subsequent predominance among the Jews of the opinions of the Pharisees.* - Smith Bible Dictionary

4. **Pharisees**- means separated or set apart ones

a. *A religious party or school among the Jews at the time of **Christ**, so called from **perishin**, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word, **perushim**, "separated". The chief sects among the Jews were the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, who may be described respectively as the Formalists, the Freethinkers and the Puritans. A knowledge of the opinion, and practices of the Pharisees, at the time of **Christ**, is of great importance, for entering deeply into the genius of the Christian religion. A cursory perusal of the Gospels is sufficient to show that **Christ's** teaching was, in some respects, thoroughly antagonistic to theirs. He denounced them, in the bitterest language; See [Mat 15:7-8](#); [Mat 23:5](#); [Mat 23:13-15](#); [Mat 23:23](#); [Mar 7:6](#); [Luk 11:42-44](#) and compare [Mar 7:1-5](#); [Mar 11:29](#); [Mar 12:19-20](#); [Luk 6:28](#); [Luk 6:37-42](#). To understand the Pharisees is, by contrast, an aid toward understanding the spirit of uncorrupted Christianity. The fundamental principle of all of the Pharisees, common to them with all orthodox modern Jews, is that, by the side of the written law, regarded as a summary of the principles and general laws of the Hebrew people, there was an oral law to complete, and to explain the written law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and transmitted by him by word of mouth. The first portion of the Talmud, called the **Mishna** or "second law", contains this oral law. It is a digest of the Jewish traditions and a compendium of the whole ritual law, and it came at length to be esteemed far above the sacred text. While it was the aim of **Jesus** to call men to the law of God itself as the supreme guide of life, the Pharisees, upon the pretence of maintaining it intact, multiplied minute precepts and distinctions, to such an extent that the whole life of the Israelite was hemmed in, and burdened on every side, by instructions so numerous and trifling, that the law was almost if not wholly lost sight of. These "traditions" as they were called, had long been gradually accumulating. Of the trifling*

character of these regulations, innumerable instances are to be found in the Mishna. Such were their washings before they could eat bread, and the special minuteness with which the forms of this washing were prescribed; their bathing when they returned from the market; their washing of cups, pots, brazen vessels, etc.; their fastings twice in the week, [Luk 18:12](#), as were their tithing; [Mat 23:23](#), and such, finally, were those minute and vexatious extensions of the law of the **Sabbath**, which must have converted God's gracious ordinance of the Sabbath's rest, into a burden and a pain. [Mat 12:1-13](#); [Mar 3:1-6](#); [Luk 18:10-17](#). It was a leading aim of the Redeemer to teach men that true piety consisted, not in forms, but in substance, not in outward observances, but in an inward spirit. The whole system of Pharisaic piety led to exactly opposite conclusions. The lowliness of piety was, according to the teaching of **Jesus**, an inseparable concomitant of its reality; but the Pharisees sought mainly to attract the attention, and to excite the admiration of men. [Mat 6:2](#); [Mat 6:6](#); [Mat 6:16](#); [Mat 23:5-6](#); [Luk 14:7](#). Indeed, the whole spirit of their religion was summed up, not in confession of sin and in humility, but in a proud self righteousness, at variance with any true conception of man's relation, to either God or his fellow creatures. With all their pretences to piety, they were, in reality, avaricious, sensual and dissolute. [Mat 23:25](#); [Joh 13:7](#). They looked with contempt upon every nation, but their own. [Luk 10:29](#) Finally, instead of endeavoring to fulfill the great end of the dispensation whose truths they professed to teach, and thus, bringing men to the Hope of Israel, they devoted their energies to making converts to their own narrow views, who with all the zeal of proselytes were more exclusive, and more bitterly opposed to the truth, than they were themselves. [Mat 22:15](#). -Smith Bible Dictionary

**B. he cried out in the council,**

1. **cried out-** Gr. **krazo**

2. **council-** Gr. **sunedrion**

a. Paul knew that he was not going to get a fair trial seeing his mouth got slapped after his first sentence. Therefore, he saw



how he could be delivered from this ungodly group of men by pitting them against one another doctrinally.

**C. Men and brethren,**

1. **men-** Gr. **aner**
2. **brethren-** Gr. **adelphos**

**D. I am a Pharisee,**

1. When speaking to the Jews, he became like the Jews. Paul still had his old Pharisee membership card and flashed it. However, in reality he was no longer a practicing member of the party.

**E. a son of a Pharisee,**

1. **son-** Gr. **uihos**
  - a. Paul's father was a Pharisee. He was submerged in their doctrine from the earliest childhood.

**F. concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged**

1. **hope-** Gr. **elpis**
2. **resurrection-** Gr. **anastasis**
  - a. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection but the Pharisees did.
3. **dead-** Gr. **nekros**
4. **judged-** Gr. **krino**

**7. And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.**

**A. And when he had said this,**

1. **said-** Gr. **laleo**

**B. a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees,**

1. **dissension-** Gr. **stasis-** *a standing (properly the act), that is, (by analogy) position (existence); by implication a popular uprising; figuratively controversy*

**C. and the assembly was divided**

1. **assembly-** Gr. **plethos-** *a fulness, large number*
2. **divided-** Gr. **schizo-** *to split or sever*
  - a. Legalism will always produce division based upon various points of doctrine.

**8. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.**

**A. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection**

**1. say-** Gr. **lego**

a. You can say something all you want, it does not make it true. That is happening today. Many are saying marriage is not only between a man and a woman. They are saying that you can change your gender or there are more genders other than male and female. They are saying this over and over, but it does not make what they say any more true. What they are saying is a lie and a delusion.

**2. resurrection-** Gr. **anastasis**

a. Jesus wisely dealt with the Sadducees about the resurrection during His ministry. [Mar 12:18-27](#)

**B. and no angel or spirit,**

**1. angel-** Gr. **aggelos**

**2. spirit-** Gr. **pneuma**

a. The Sadducees were naturalists. They only believed in what they could see with their physical eyes. There is a whole spirit realm that exists beyond our natural vision. Part of us is in that realm right now. Our spirit is in this spirit realm.

b. There are also good and bad angels and fallen spirits called demons in this realm.

**C. but the Pharisee confess both**

**1. confess-** Gr. **homologeō-** *say the same thing*

a. Jesus pointed out many flaws in the Pharisees belief system, but they got this right. There are angels and spirits.

**9. 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."**

**A. Then there arose a loud outcry,**

**1. arose-** Gr. **ginomai**

**2. loud-** Gr. **meγas-** *great*

**3. outcry-** Gr. **krauge-** *outcry, clamor, shouting*

**B. And the scribes of the Pharisees party arose and protested,**

**1. scribes-** Gr. **grammateus**

a. *Anciently held various important offices in the public affairs of the nation. The Hebrew word so rendered (sopher) is first*

used to designate the holder of some military office ([Jdg 5:14](#); A.V., “pen of the writer;” R.V., “the marshal's staff;” marg., “the staff of the scribe”). The scribes acted as secretaries of state, whose business it was to prepare and issue decrees in the name of the king ([2Sa 8:17](#); [2Sa 20:25](#); [1Ch 18:16](#); [1Ch 24:6](#); [1Ki 4:3](#); [2Ki 12:9-11](#); 18:18-37, etc.). They discharged various other important public duties as men of high authority and influence in the affairs of state. There was also a subordinate class of scribes, most of whom were Levites. They were engaged in various ways as writers. Such, for example, was Baruch, who “wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord” ([Jer 36:4](#), [Jer 36:32](#)). In later times, after the Captivity, when the nation lost its independence, the scribes turned their attention to the law, gaining for themselves distinction by their intimate acquaintance with its contents. On them devolved the duty of multiplying copies of the law and of teaching it to others ([Ezr 7:6](#), [Ezr 7:10-12](#); [Neh 8:1](#), [Neh 8:4](#), [Neh 8:9](#), [Neh 8:13](#)). It is evident that in New Testament times the scribes belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, who supplemented the ancient written law by their traditions (Matt. 23), thereby obscuring it and rendering it of none effect. The titles “scribes” and “lawyers” (q.v.) are in the Gospels interchangeable ([Mat 22:35](#); [Mar 12:28](#); [Luk 20:39](#), etc.). They were in the time of our Lord the public teachers of the people, and frequently came into collision with him. They afterwards showed themselves greatly hostile to the apostles ([Act 4:5](#); [Act 6:12](#)).

b. There were Scribes in the sanhedrim, and these were some of them on the side of the Sadducees, and some on the side of the Pharisees; though, generally speaking, they agreed with the latter, and are often in Scripture mentioned with them, and for them: however, that part in this sanhedrim that were on their side rose up from their seats. - Gill Commentary

**2. Pharisees**

**3. party- Gr. meros**

a. This party strongly held to the resurrection.

**4. arose- Gr. anistemi**

5. **protested**- Gr. **diamachomai**- *to fight fiercely*

C. **saying**- Gr. **lego**

D. **We find no evil in this man,**

1. **find**- Gr. **heurisko**

a. They had barely heard anything Paul said and believed and proclaimed quite forcefully, "We have found no evil in this man!" They said this just because Paul had sided with their most important pet doctrine. Hypocrites!

2. **evil**- Gr. **kakos**

3. **man**- Gr. **anthropos**

a. This is quite humorous. Just before they were ready to see Paul die and not worthy of living and now that Paul aligned with their pet doctrine, he was A-OK! How fickle man is, especially religious man!

E. **but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him,**

1. **spirit**- Gr. **pneuma**

a. Jesus Himself had spoken to him.

2. **angel**- Gr. **aggelos**

3. **spoken**- Gr. **laleo**

F. **let us not fight against God**

1. **fight against God**- Gr. **theomacheo**

a. Now all of a sudden they are on God's side. Religious people believe that others are on God's side when they believe what they believe. If not, you are against God. There is no one with perfect doctrine. We can be faulty on some of our doctrine and still be on God's side. To be on God's side we must believe Jesus was God, born of a virgin, died for our sins on the cross, and was raised from the dead. These are cardinal truths of the faith.

10. **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.**

A. **Now when there arose a great dissension,**

1. **arose**- Gr. **ginomai**

2. **dissention**- Gr. **stasiastes**- *a standing (properly the act), that is, (by analogy) position (existence); by implication a popular uprising;*

*figuratively controversy*

a. I think Paul thought at this point, "What did I get myself into!"

**B. the commander,**

1. **commander-** Gr. **chiliarchos**

**C. fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them,**

1. **fearing-** Gr. **eulabeomai-** *to be moved or impressed with a natural or religious fear*

2. **pulled to pieces-** Gr. **deaspao-** *to pull apart, dismember*

**D. commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them,**

1. **commanded-** Gr. **keleuo**

2. **soldiers-** Gr. **strateuma**

3. **go down-** Gr. **katabaino**

4. **take by force-** Gr. **harpazo**

a. This is the same word used for the rapture of the church. It is translated as caught up in [1 Thess. 4](#). Paul got a natural rapture by the soldiers!

**E. and bring him into the barracks**

1. **bring-** Gr. **ago**

2. **barracks-** Gr. **parembole**

**11. 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."**

**A. But the following night the Lord stood by him and said,**

1. **night-** Gr. **nux**

a. The Lord gave Paul a whole day to think about the situation he had gotten himself into.

2. **Lord-** Gr. **kurios**

3. **stood by-** Gr. **ephistemi**

a. No matter if we fail the Lord and mess up, He will still stand by us to help us through it all.

4. **said-** Gr. **epo**

**B. Be of good cheer,**

1. **good cheer-** Gr. **tharseo-** *be of good cheer, have courage, spoken by way of encouragement*

- a. Some say because the Lord did not chide Paul for coming to Jerusalem, that this proves he was in the will of God doing so. I have a question for you. When you have blown it big time, how many times has the Lord jumped on your case about it? Did he condemn you or say I told you so, or did he encourage you? That is what the Lord is doing here for Paul.
- b. Why would Paul need to be of a good cheer? It is because he was down right now. He knew he had missed it. He needed encouragement from the Lord.

**C. Paul**

**D. for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem,**

- 1. **testified-** Gr. **diamarturomai**
- 2. **Jerusalem**

a. This was not condoning Paul's trip to Jerusalem. He merely is saying that as he witnessed in Jerusalem, he was to do it Rome.

**E. so you must also bear witness at Rome**

- 1. **bear witness-** Gr. **martureo**
- 2. **Rome**

a. Paul had just wrote the book of Romans. In this letter, he said he felt called to come to Rome, but he had a strong desire to come to Jerusalem first. Well, he will indeed now head to Rome, but not as a free man, but as a chained prisoner. Paul could have gone there as a free man, but because of his hard headed persistence to go to Jerusalem, he will go there as a prisoner.

**12. 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.**

**A. And when it was day,**

- 1. **day-** Gr. **hemera**

**B. some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath,**

- 1. **banded together-** Gr. **poieo sustrophe-** *made a a twisting together, that is, (figuratively) a secret coalition*
- 2. **bound under an oath-** Gr. **anamathetizo-** *to declare or vow under*

*divine punishment*

a. *The Greek is, "they anathematized themselves"; that is, they bound themselves by a solemn oath. They invoked a curse on themselves, or devoted themselves to destruction, if they did not do it. Lightfoot remarks, however, that they could be absolved from this vow by the rabbis if they were unable to execute it. Under various pretences they could easily be freed from such oaths, and it was common to take them; and if there was any difficulty in fulfilling them, they could easily apply to their religious teachers and be absolved.* -Barnes Commentary

b. The oral law said vows could be absolved by rabbi's but God's Word said they were binding. [Num 30:2](#), [Jdg 11:35](#)

**C. saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul**

1. **saying-** Gr. **lego**

2. **eat-** Gr. **phago**

3. **drink-** Gr. **pino**

a. They would fast food and water until they had carried out their plot to kill Paul. If not absolved of this vow these men died of lack of water. Undoubtedly, the religious leaders absolved them of this vow.

4. **killed-** Gr. **apokteino**

**13. Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.**

**A. forty-** Gr. **tessarakonta**

1. Even though they had more than forty in on this plan it was a very fool hardy plan. The odds of them overcoming the Roman guards in taking Paul was slim, and if they failed they surely would have been put to death.

2. Vows are usually made by emotion and with lack of forethought in making them and they lead to very unwise decisions. [Jdg 11:35](#) Don't make vows!

**B. formed this conspiracy-** Gr. **poieo sunomosia-** *making a swearing together, that is, (by implication) a plot, conspiracy*

**14. 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.**

**A. They came to the chief priests and elders,**

1. **came-** Gr. **proserchomai**
2. **chief priests-** Gr. **archiereus**
3. **elders-** Gr. **presbuteros**

a. There is no mention of the priests and the elders rejecting this plan. This speaks of corruption in government. It was back then, and unfortunately, it is still with us today.

**B. and said,**

1. **said-** Gr. **epo**

**C. We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul**

1. **bound ourselves with a great curse-** Gr. **anathamatizo anathama-**  
*we have anathematized ourselves with an anathema*

2. **eat-** Gr. **geuomai-** *to taste food*

a. After their rash vow, they lowered it to just eat and left out drink. Sorry boys! You vowed not drinking, so you don't get to lower the bar now.

3. **killed-** Gr. **apokteino**

**15. 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."**

**A. Now you,**

**B. therefore,**

**C. together with the council,**

1. **council-** Gr. **sunedrion**

**D. suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow,**

1. **suggest-** Gr. **emphanizo-** *to indicate, disclose, declare, make known*

2. **commander-** Gr. **chiliarchos**

3. **brought down-** Gr. **katago**

a. *That he bring him from the castle to the usual place of the meeting of the Sanhedrin. As this was at some distance from the castle of Antonia, where Paul was, they supposed it would be easy to waylay him and take his life. -Barnes Commentary*

4. **tomorrow-** Gr. **aurion**

**E. as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him;**

1. **inquiries-** Gr. **diagnosko-** *in a legal sense, to examine, determine,*



*decide, to know accurately, ascertain exactly*

**F. but we are ready to kill him before he comes near**

1. **ready-** Gr. **hetoimos**

2. **kill-** Gr. **anaireo**

a. Again, no mention is made of the council rejecting this plan or reprimanding these men for this plan. This was a complete subversion of justice. This shows corruption in government here. We still have the same today unfortunately.

3. **comes near-** Gr. **eggizo**

**16. So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.**

**A. So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush,**

1. **sister's son-** Gr. **adelphe uihos**

a. This was Paul's nephew.

2. **heard-** Gr. **akouo**

a. *If he was at this time residing at Jerusalem for his education, like Paul himself, he may have got at the schools those hints of the conspiracy on which he so promptly acted.* -JFB  
Commentary

3. **ambush-** Gr. **enedron-** *a lying in wait for, an ambush*

a. When we are trusting the Lord He will deliver us from the secret counsels of the enemy. [Isa 8:10](#)

**B. he went and entered the barracks and told Paul**

1. **went-** Gr. **paraginomai**

2. **entered-** Gr. **eiserchomai**

3. **barracks-** Gr. **parembole**

4. **told-** Gr. **apaggello**

a. *His nephew was able to see him, even though Paul was in protective custody, because Roman prisoners were accessible to their relatives and friends, who could bring them food and other amenities.* -Life Application Notes

**17. 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."**

**A. Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said,**

1. **called-** Gr. **proskaleomai**

2. **centurions-** Gr. **hekatontarches-** *ruler over a hundred*
3. **said-** Gr. **epo**

**B. Take this young man to the commander,**

1. **young man-** Gr. **neanias**
2. **commander-** Gr. **chiliarchos**

**C. for he has something to tell him**

1. **tell-** Gr. **apaggello**

- a. Notice here the natural working with the supernatural. Paul did not just say to himself, "Well, God is my defender, I will just pray about this and trust God." No, he used common sense in having the young man go to the commander with the information. We are to do what we can in the natural that is in line with common sense, but then trust God for his working. God puts His super on the natural and it becomes supernatural!
- b. The wise will hide if they see evil coming. They don't just expose themselves foolishly. [Pro 22:3](#)

18. 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."

**A. So he took him and brought him to the commander and said,**

1. **took-** Gr. **paralambano**

- a. This was God's favor that the centurion decided to take the young man to the commander. He could have refused the request.

2. **brought-** Gr. **ago**

3. **commander-** Gr. **chiliarchos**

4. **said-** Gr. **epo**

**B. Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you.**

1. **prisoner-** Gr. **desmios**

2. **called-** Gr. **proskaleomai**

3. **asked-** Gr. **erotao-** *in NT to ask, request, beg, beseech*

4. **bring-** Gr. **ago**

5. **young man-** Gr. **neanias**

**C. He has something to say to you.**

1. say- Gr. laleo

19. **Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"**

A. **Then the commander took him by the hand,**

1. **commander-** Gr. chiliarchos

2. **took-** Gr. epilambanomai- *to take hold upon*

3. **hand-** Gr. cheir

a. The wrist was considered part of the hand. I imagined he took hold of his wrist and not held hands with him.

B. **went aside-** Gr. anachoreo- *to withdraw*

C. **and asked privately,**

1. **asked-** Gr. punthanomai

2. **privately-** Gr. kata idios- *by himself*

a. This was wisdom on the commander's part.

D. **What is it that you have to tell me**

1. **tell-** Gr. epaggello

20. **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.**

A. **And he said,**

1. **said-** Gr. epo

a. This young man accurately reported what he had heard.

B. **The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow,**

1. **agreed-** Gr. suntithemai

2. **ask-** Gr. erotao

3. **bring down-** Gr. katago

4. **council-** Gr. sunedrion

5. **tomorrow-** Gr. aurion

C. **as though they were going to inquire more fully about him.**

1. **inquire-** Gr. punthanomai

2. **more fully-** Gr. akribestrion

21. **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."

A. **But do not yield to them,**

1. **yield-** Gr. **peitho**

a. This is quite bold for this young man to tell this commander what to do. He had the authority of the Lord in his words. We can be quite bold when we have God's words in our mouth!

B. **for more than forty of them lie in wait for him,**

1. **forty-** Gr. **tessarakonta**

2. **lie in wait-** Gr. **enedreuo-** *to lie in wait or ambush for, to endeavor to entrap*

C. **men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him,**

1. **men-** Gr. **aner**

2. **bound by an oath-** Gr. **anathematizo**

3. **eat-** Gr. **phago**

4. **drink-** Gr. **pino**

5. **killed-** Gr. **anaireo**

D. **and now they are ready,**

1. **ready-** Gr. **hetoimos**

E. **waiting for the promise from you**

1. **waiting-** Gr. **prosdechomai**

2. **promise-** Gr. **epaggelia**

22. **So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him*, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."**

A. **So the commander let the young man depart,**

1. **young man-** Gr. **neanias**

2. **depart-** Gr. **apoluo**

B. **and commanded him,**

1. **commanded-** Gr. **paraggello**

C. **Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me**

1. **tell-** Gr. **eklaleo-** *to speak out*

2. **revealed-** Gr. **emphanizo-** *exhibit, disclose*

a. Loose lips sink ships. Oh, what problems we bring on ourselves when we fail to keep our mouths shut! [Ecc 3:7](#)

23. **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;**

**A. And he called for two centurions,**

1. **called-** Gr. **proskaleomai**
2. **two centurions-** Gr. **duo hekatontarches**

**B. saying-** Gr. **epo**

**C. Prepare two hundred soldiers,**

1. **prepare-** Gr. **hetoimazo**
2. **two hundred-** Gr. **diakosioi**
3. **soldiers-** Gr. **stratiotes**

**D. seventy horsemen,**

1. **seventy-** Gr. **hebdomekonta**
2. **horsemen-** Gr. **hippeus**

a. This was calvary troops.

**E. and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night**

1. **spearmen-** *throwing with the right hand, a slinger, an archer, javelinmen*

a. These were light armed troops.

b. *Four hundred and seventy soldiers seems to have been a large force to have guarded a single prisoner from the murderous design of forty Sicarii, but the disturbed uneasy state of the entire country must be borne in mind, and the Roman commander in Antonia was perplexed and alarmed about the whole matter. He suspected there was more in the charge against Paul than met the eye, and was anxious to deliver the accused safe into the hands of the superior authority at Cæsarea.* -Popular NT Commentary

c. *“Did ever a preacher have such an escort? Here are four hundred and seventy Roman soldiers, armed to the teeth, with Paul sitting on a horse in the midst of them... Preachers still need protection today. They need to be surrounded by the prayers of their people, by the love and cooperation of their flock. If your pastor is a true man of God, be jealous for his good name. Give him all the protection he needs, and so help him to do a greater work for the Lord.”* -Ford Commentary

d. Having a security team at a church and to protect a pastor is

scriptural.

## 2. Caesarea

a. *Which was formerly called Strato's tower, a sea port town, where Felix the Roman governor now was; it was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles from Jerusalem. -Gill*

*Commentary*

b. *Caesarea was a fairly new city. It was built just two decades before the birth of the Lord Jesus. At this time the city would have been around 70 to 80 years old. The city was 60 to 65 miles Northwest of Jerusalem. Caesarea became the Headquarters for Roman governors of the region of Judea. The city was a port city on the coast of Israel. Herod the Great spared no expense in the construction of a magnificent artificial harbor that protected the ships that sailed from incoming storms. A massive aqueduct also ran down from Mt. Carmel 20 miles that brought fresh water to the city. -Andrews*

*commentary*

c. This was the Roman seat of government in the area.

## 3. third hour- Gr. tritos hora

a. This was 9pm in the evening.

b. *No one could pursue until the gates were open at 6:00 a.m., so they would be well on their way if it was discovered that Paul had departed. -Dake Commentary*

## 4. night- Gr. nux

24. and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor."

A. and provide mounts to set Paul on,

1. provide- Gr. paristemi

2. mounts- Gr. ktenos

a. *Since Paul was chained to a soldier, another animal would be required for baggage. It was also seventy miles and a change of horses might be needed. -Robertson's Word Pictures*

3. set- Gr. epibabazo- to cause to ascend or mount

B. and bring him safely to Felix the governor

1. bring safely- Gr. diasozo- to bring safely through; to convey in safety

## 2. **Felix**- means *happy*

a. *The career of this powerful and unprincipled man, who, owing to his meeting with the despised Jew Paul, has obtained a conspicuous niche in history, is principally interesting to us as affording a good instance of the way in which high position and great dignity were acquired under the rule of the Cæsars in the first and second centuries of the Christian era. Felix and his brother Pallas were originally slaves, and then freedmen in the house of a noble Roman lady, Antonia, mother of the Emperor Claudius. Pallas became the favourite and subsequently minister of the emperor. He procured for his brother Felix the important post of procurator of Judæa about A.D. 52. The historian Tacitus writes of him as one who, trusting to his brother's powerful influence at court, knew he could commit any wrong with impunity. He was notoriously avaricious, cruel, and licentious, but withal a man of great energy and talent, wielding, however, as Tacitus tells us, 'the power of a tyrant with the temper of a slave.'* According to Josephus, he was one of the most corrupt and oppressive governors ever despatched from Rome to rule over Judæa. Suetonius, in his history of Claudius, mentions this Roman official as the 'husband (in succession) of three queens:—(1) Drusilla, the daughter of Juba, king of Mauritania, and Selene, the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. (2) Another princess of the same name—Drusilla—the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and sister of Herod Agrippa II.; she left her first husband Azizus, king of Emesa, to marry Felix. The name of the third royal lady who married this Roman is unknown. Felix reigned over Judæa some seven or eight years until he was recalled by Nero, who replaced him by Festus, A.D. 60. He owed his deposition to the fall of his brother Pallas, who was subsequently put to death, A.D. 63. -Popular NT Commentary

## 3. **governor**- Gr. **hegemon**- *one who leads*

### 25. **He wrote a letter in the following manner:**

A. **wrote**- Gr. **grapho**

B. **letter**- Gr. **epistole**

1. *This was in strict accordance with the Roman law, which directed a subordinate official, in sending a prisoner to the higher authority for trial, to send a written statement, termed an 'elogium,' of the whole case. On this occasion, the 'elogium' was rather a letter in favour of Paul than a formal accusation.* -Popular NT Commentary

**26. Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings.**

**A. Claudius Lysias-** means *lame releaser or dissolver*

1. Here we see the name of the commander that arrested Paul and also protected him.

2. *The first of these names is a Roman one, which he obtained by purchasing his citizenship, and which he might take from the Emperor Claudius, for he was not a Roman born; and the latter seems to be a Greek name, and was his proper name, and, he himself very likely was a Greek, since he purchased his freedom with money.* -Gill Commentary

**B. most excellent-** Gr. **kratistos-** *strongest; in NT a term of respect, most excellent, noble, or illustrious*

1. *Which was a title of honour that belonged to him as a governor; the same is given to Theophilus, [Luk 1:3](#) sendeth greeting; or wishes all health and prosperity.* -Gill Commentary

**C. governor-** Gr. **hegemon**

1. Felix, governor of Judaea and Samaria, held the position once held by Pontius Pilate.

**D. Greetings-** Gr. **chairō-** *to rejoice, be glad, be joyful, be full of joy*

1. In writing a superior the lower officer would often make themselves look in the best light. You will notice that there is no mention that he had bound Paul and was about to beat him!

**27. 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.**

**A. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them.**

1. **man-** Gr. **aner**

2. **seized-** Gr. **sullambano-** *taken together*

3. **killed-** Gr. **anaireo**

a. This part was true.

**B. Coming with the troops I rescued him,**



1. coming- Gr. ephistemi
2. troops- Gr. strateuma
3. rescued- Gr. exaireo

**C. having learned that he was a Roman**

**1. learned- Gr. manthano**

a. *Actually, Lysias did not find this out until after he arrested Paul ([Act 22:25-26](#)). Lysias sought to portray himself in the best possible light before the governor. For that reason, he also neglected to mention his order to have Paul scourged ([Act 22:24](#)), and his mistaken assumption that he was the notorious Egyptian assassin ([Act 21:38](#)). -MacArthur Commentary*

2. The commander was covering his backside here. He did not stretch the truth, he lied about learning he was a Roman before he rescued him. He did not want Felix to know he had broken Roman law by binding a Roman before he was tried.

**2. Roman**

**28. And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council.**

**A. And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him,**

1. wanted- Gr. boulomai- *to resolve*
2. know- Gr. ginosko- *to know through acquired knowledge*
3. reason- Gr. aitia- *a cause, reason*
4. accused- Gr. egkaleo- *to call in, bring into account*

**B. I brought him before the their council**

1. brought- Gr. katago- *to bring down*
2. council- Gr. sunederion

**29. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains.**

**A. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law,**

1. found out- Gr. heurisko
2. accused- Gr. egkaleo
3. questions- Gr. zetema- *a search, a questioning*
4. law- Gr. nomos

**B. but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains**

1. **charged**- Gr. **egklema**- *an accusation, charge, crimination*
2. **deserving**- Gr. **axios**
3. **death**
4. **chains**

a. Lysias gives his opinion that Paul is not guilty, which would be counsel that Felix would take into account.

**30. 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.**

**A. And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man,**

1. **told**- Gr. **meneuo**- *to disclose what is secret*
2. **lay in wait**- Gr. **epiboule mello eimi**- *to plan or plot against one about to be*
3. **man**- Gr. **aner**

**B. I sent him immediately to you,**

1. **sent**- Gr. **pempo**

**C. and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him**

1. **commanded**- Gr. **paraggello**
2. **accusers**- Gr. **kategoros**- *against one in the assembly, that is, a complainant at law*
3. **state**- Gr. **lego**

**D. Farewell**- Gr. **rhonnumi**- *to strengthen, render firm; to be well, enjoy firm health*

**31. Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.**

**A. Then the soldiers,**

1. **soldiers**- Gr. **stratiotes**

**B. as they were commanded,**

1. **commanded**- Gr. **diatasso**- *to arrange, appoint, ordain, prescribe, give order*

**C. took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris**

1. **took**- Gr. **analambano**- *to take up*
2. **brought**- Gr. **ago**
3. **night**- Gr. **nux**

a. The journey to **Antipatris** from Jerusalem was more than 35 miles. This must have been a forced march because they arrived by **the next day**. The terrain from Jerusalem to Lydda or Joppa (modern-day Lod; cf. [Act 9:32-43](#)), seven or eight miles before Antipatris, was difficult and would provide suitable cover for an ambush party. Once the entourage was in Antipatris the soldiers were no longer needed. The remaining 27 miles to Caesarea could be traversed with less danger. - Bible Knowledge Commentary

4. **Antipatris**- means *against the father or country*

a. This place, according to Josephus, *Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 23*, was anciently called *Capharsaba*, and is supposed to be the same which, in *1 Maccabees 7:31*, is called *Capharsalama*, or *Carphasalama*. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and denominated *Antipatris*, in honor of his father *Antipater*. It was situated between *Joppa* and *Caesarea*, on the road from *Jerusalem* to this latter city. Josephus says it was fifty stadia from *Joppa*. The distance between *Jerusalem* and *Caesarea* was about seventy miles. -Clarke Commentary

b. It was situated in a very fruitful plain, watered with many springs and rivulets, and pretty near the mountains, in the way from *Jerusalem* to *Caesarea*. -UCRT

32. **The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks.**

A. **next day**- Gr. **epaurion**

B. **left**- Gr. **eao**- *to permit or leave alone*

1. *That is, the two hundred soldiers, and the two hundred spearmen, who were all on foot, left the seventy horsemen to conduct Paul to Caesarea; for being come to Antipatris, all danger from the Jews was over:* -Gill Commentary

C. **horsemen**- Gr. **hippeus**

D. **go**- Gr. **poreuomai**

E. **returned**- Gr. **hupostrepho**

F. **barracks**- Gr. **parembole**

33. **When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor,**

they also presented Paul to him.

A. When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor,

1. **came-** Gr. **eiserchomai**

2. **Caesarea**

a. *Caesarea was now the political capital and home of the governor instead of Jerusalem. Being a seaport town it could speed communication with Rome. It flourished also as a Christian center of that vicinity until the seventh century. The city has long been destroyed even its ruins have disappeared. -*

*Dake Commentary*

3. **delivered-** Gr. **anadidomi-** *to give up or over*

4. **letter-** Gr. **epistole**

5. **governor-** Gr. **hegemon-** *leader*

B. they also presented Paul to him

1. **presented-** Gr. **paristemi**

34. And when the governor had read *it*, he asked what province he was from.

And when he understood that *he was* from Cilicia,

A. And when the governor had read it,

1. **read-** Gr. **anaginosko**

B. he asked what province he was from,

1. **asked-** Gr. **eperotao-** *to request, require*

2. **province-** Gr. **eparchia-** *a province of the Roman empire, either a larger province, or an appendage to a larger province, as Palestine was to that of Syria*

a. *Since he perceived by the letter he was a Roman, and that he might know whether he was under his jurisdiction, and whether the hearing of his case belonged to him; and it should seem that it rather belonged to the governor of Syria; but that the crimes he was charged with were committed in Judea, particularly that of profaning the temple. -Gill Commentary*

C. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia

1. **understood-** Gr. **punthanomai-** *to ascertain by question*

2. **Cilicia-** means *land of Celix*

a. *Judea and Cilicia were at that time both under the legate of Syria, so Felix had the authority to hear his case. -MacArthur*

35. he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

A. he said,

1. said- Gr. **phemi**

B. I will hear you when your accusers also have come

1. hear- Gr. **diakouomai**- *to hear one through, hear to the end, hear with care*

2. accusers- Gr. **katagoros**- *against one in the assembly, that is, a complainant at law*

3. come- Gr. **paraginomai**

C. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium

1. commanded- Gr. **keleuo**

2. kept- Gr. **phulasso**

3. Herod's- means *hero*

a. *This was the palace built by Herod the Great for his own residence; it now was used as the official dwelling of the Roman governor. -Popular NT Commentary*

4. Praetorium- Gr. **praitorion**

a. *Most likely some portion of it was set apart as the lodgings of state prisoners. We know later that during the imprisonment at Cæsarea, Paul had many privileges rarely accorded to one in his condition. His friends were allowed to visit him as they pleased (chap. [Act 24:23](#)). -Popular NT Commentary*