



The Acts of the Apostles

The Journey – 2020
Jim Hoffman

1



2

48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 15:36
49 AD	Paul in Philippi	Acts 16
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens	Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 - 23
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 26
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:11

3

The Acts of the Apostles

Many believe the theme of Acts is "getting the gospel to the center of world" and that what we read in the book are the many machinations of moving the gospel out from Jerusalem to Rome.

We have seen the Providence of God at work as that has happened and we will see it again today.

4

4

The Providence of God

• In Genesis 50:20 there is one event, a sin, that was "meant" for two competing purposes.

• "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

• How can it be that God can ordain the use of sin for His purposes without commanding it or approving of it?

5

5

The Providence of God

• Romans 8:28 And we know that **God causes all things to work together** for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. NASB

• Words matter whether they happen to fit into our self-constructed doctrinal boxes or not.

• God "**causes all things**" does not mean He causes some things it means all things.

6

6

The Providence of God

- Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him **who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.** NASB
- Here again we see it – God works “**all things after the counsel of His own will**” (not ours).
- This means that God uses all of the activities in the universe to achieve His purposes.

7

7

The Providence of God

- Eccl 8:17 **I also saw all that God has done. Nobody can understand what God does here on earth.**
- The providence of God is one of those things that will first stretch you, and then perhaps tie you into a knot, before showing itself to be the “soft pillow” God intends it to be.
- Whatever God does is right whether we understand it or not. Moses wrote, “**shall not the Judge of all the earth do right**”.

8

8

The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 23:1 Gazing intently at the high council, Paul began: “Brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience!” 2 Instantly Ananias the high priest commanded those close to Paul to slap him on the mouth. 3 But Paul said to him, “God will slap you, you corrupt hypocrite! What kind of judge are you to break the law yourself by ordering me struck like that?” 4 Those standing near Paul said to him, “Do you dare to insult God’s high priest?” 5 “I’m sorry, brothers. I didn’t realize he was the high priest,” Paul replied, “for the Scriptures say, ‘You must not speak evil of any of your rulers.’” 6 Paul realized that some members of the high council were Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead!” NLT

9

9

The Acts of the Apostles

The Great Sanhedrin was the supreme court of ancient Israel, made up of 70 men and the high priest. In the Second Temple period, the Great Sanhedrin met in the Temple in Jerusalem. The court convened every day except festivals and on the Sabbath. The Sanhedrin as a body claimed powers that lesser Jewish courts did not have. As such, they were the only ones who could try the king or extend the boundaries of the Temple and Jerusalem, and were the ones to whom all questions of law were finally put. The last binding decision of the Sanhedrin was in 358, when the Hebrew calendar was adopted. The Sanhedrin was dissolved after continued persecution by the Roman Empire. Over the centuries, there have been attempts to revive the institution, such as the Grand Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon Bonaparte.

10

10

The Acts of the Apostles

- The Pharisees and Sadducees made up the high council, but there were actually four types of religious Jews.
 - **Pharisees** – the most fundamentally sound of the council, but oh so legalistic. (strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel types)
 - **Sadducees** – the liberals who didn't believe in miracles, angels, resurrection of the body, or the old testament beyond the Torah.
 - **Essenes** – the "monks" of their day who lived along the Dead Sea and authored the Dead Sea scrolls.
 - **Zealots** – basically a violent doomsday cult dedicated to bringing about the end of the world.

11

11

The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 23:1 **Gazing intently at the high council, Paul began: "Brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience!"** 2 Instantly Ananias the high priest commanded those close to Paul to slap him on the mouth. 3 But Paul said to him, "God will slap you, you corrupt hypocrite! What kind of judge are you to break the law yourself by ordering me struck like that?" NLT
- Have you ever wondered why this little exchange with the high priest ordering Paul slapped went as it did?

12

12

The Acts of the Apostles

- To say that Paul didn't take it well would be an understatement – this shows that Paul had a bit of a feisty side to him, especially when it came to the Jews.
- Here is what was probably going on – the fact that Paul addressed the Sanhedrin as “brothers” as though he were their equal irritated the high priest.
- Ananias the high priest wanted to be addressed in the proper way as shown by Peter in Acts 4:8 “**Rulers and Elders**”. 😊

13

13

The Acts of the Apostles

- To fully understand this you have to know that this meeting wasn't taking place in the temple where the high priest would have worn his robes.
- Without the official garb, so to speak, there would be no way for Paul to know who was of what rank on the council.
- In addition, it is very likely that many of the Sanhedrin he was standing before were former classmates of Paul's under Gamaliel.

14

14

The Acts of the Apostles

- Possibility #2 - Paul did know who was who on the council but wanted to show his disdain for his former classmates who were not his intellectual equal.
- So, Paul's tone may have been something like, “I didn't know they would let someone like you be the high priest”. 😊
- Either way, this meeting did not get off to a great start.

15

15

The Acts of the Apostles

- And there is yet another possibility here – **what if Paul could not see well?**
- Gal 4:13 **Surely you remember that I was sick when I first brought you the Good News.** 14 But even though my condition tempted you to reject me, you did not despise me or turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God or even Christ Jesus himself. 15 Where is that joyful and grateful spirit you felt then? **I am sure you would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible.** NLT
- Gal 6:11 **Notice what large letters I use as I write these closing words in my own handwriting.** NLT

16

16

The Acts of the Apostles

- “4 Those standing near Paul said to him, “Do you dare to insult God’s high priest?” 5 “I’m sorry, brothers. I didn’t realize he was the high priest,” Paul replied, “for the Scriptures say, ‘You must not speak evil of any of your rulers.’”
- Because he immediately apologized for his disrespect, it would seem the most likely reasons Paul retorted as he did was that due to the unclear garb of the council or his poor eyesight.

17

17

The Acts of the Apostles

- What we see Paul do next is no doubt due to his belief that he was not going to get a fair trial before this group.
- He understands the makeup of the council and decided to try to split them based on their own doctrine.
- “Paul realized that some members of the high council were Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead!”

18

18

The Acts of the Apostles

- He cries out that he believes in a resurrection of the dead just as the scriptures teach.
- The Pharisees, for all of their downsides, really did try to follow the scriptures and the scriptures undeniably teach a resurrection of the dead.
- Paul probably oversimplifies a bit when he claimed that the only reason he was on trial was because he believed in a resurrection. (sort of left out the part about Jesus)

19

19

The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 23:7 **This divided the council—the Pharisees against the Sadducees— 8 for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, but the Pharisees believe in all of these. 9 So there was a great uproar. Some of the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees jumped up and began to argue forcefully. “We see nothing wrong with him,” they shouted. “Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him.” 10 As the conflict grew more violent, the commander was afraid they would tear Paul apart. So he ordered his soldiers to go and rescue him by force and take him back to the fortress. NLT**

20

20

The Acts of the Apostles

You can pretty much rely on unsaved men to behave like unsaved men. 😊

21

21

The Acts of the Apostles

- His strategy works because the Pharisees start to say things like, **"We see nothing wrong with him," they shouted. "Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him."**
- And in no time at all Claudias Lysias sees this isn't going to work and has to send his men in to extricate Paul.
- Because of what happens next it seems that at this time Paul is a bit discouraged and may even have thinking he should have heeded the warnings about going to Jerusalem.

22

22

The Acts of the Apostles

- **11 That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, "Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well."** NLT
- The Lord appeared to Paul 5 times and each and every time was a case where Paul was either discouraged or in the midst of a crisis.
- Acts 9, 16, 18, 23, and 27 – this appearance in Chapter 23 was the 4th such time.

23

23

The Acts of the Apostles

- The encouragement here was, **"Paul, you are going to Rome!"** – the very place he has been meaning to go, but just hasn't had the time. 😊
- Acts 19:21 **Afterward Paul felt compelled by the Spirit to go over to Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem. "And after that," he said, "I must go on to Rome!"** NLT
- He probably never imagined having the Roman government pay for his trip!

24

24

The Acts of the Apostles

- In Acts 12 Peter was released from the same prison Paul was in but Paul wasn't... different wills for different men.
- The gospel was advanced by **Peter being released** while the gospel was advanced by **Paul not being released**.
- This too is the providence of God – he was working behind the scenes accomplishing the supernatural through the natural.

25

25

The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 23:12 The next morning a group of Jews got together and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty of them in the conspiracy. 14 They went to the leading priests and elders and told them, "We have bound ourselves with an oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 So you and the high council should ask the commander to bring Paul back to the council again. Pretend you want to examine his case more fully. We will kill him on the way." 16 But Paul's nephew—his sister's son—heard of their plan and went to the fortress and told Paul. 17 Paul called for one of the Roman officers and said, "Take this young man to the commander. He has something important to tell him." 18 So the officer did, explaining, "Paul, the prisoner, called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." NLT

26

26

The Acts of the Apostles

- So 40 Jews make what one might call a stupid oath – by that I mean "what do you do if you fail?". ☹️
- They swore an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul – so I ask again, "what if you fail?".
- Even with the high council's help when they asked for another meeting with Paul to draw him out into open the "Fab 40" failed.

27

27

The Acts of the Apostles

- **“But Paul’s nephew—his sister’s son—heard of their plan and went to the fortress and told Paul.”**
- Wait a minute, what, - Paul has a sister!? Paul has a nephew!? Who just happened to be in the courtroom?
- Again, we see the providence of God – I mean what are the chances (in the natural) that Paul’s nephew would be in the courtroom and privy to such information!

28

28

The Acts of the Apostles

- **Paul called for one of the Roman officers and said, “Take this young man to the commander. He has something important to tell him.”**
- How is that Paul can summon a centurion to deliver a message for him – what makes a lowly prisoner think he can order a Roman officer around?
- It was a privilege that came with Roman citizenship – the Roman government’s laws were the grandfather of human rights.

29

29

The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 23:19 **The commander took his hand, led him aside, and asked, “What is it you want to tell me?” 20 Paul’s nephew told him, “Some Jews are going to ask you to bring Paul before the high council tomorrow, pretending they want to get some more information. 21 But don’t do it! There are more than forty men hiding along the way ready to ambush him. They have vowed not to eat or drink anything until they have killed him. They are ready now, just waiting for your consent.” 22 “Don’t let anyone know you told me this,” the commander warned the young man. 23 Then the commander called two of his officers and ordered, “Get 200 soldiers ready to leave for Caesarea at nine o’clock tonight. Also take 200 spearmen and 70 mounted troops. 24 Provide horses for Paul to ride, and get him safely to Governor Felix.” 25 Then he wrote this letter to the governor: NLT**

30

30

The Acts of the Apostles

- Claudius Lysias is desperate for info on Paul so he is very gentle with Paul's nephew.
- Caesarea (65 miles away) was the HQ of the Roman government so Paul will get a protective detail of 470 men to see him safely there.
- So again we see God, in his providence, working out his supernatural will using natural means – he is able to move the hearts and minds of men for his purposes.

31

31

The Acts of the Apostles

- So why was Claudias Lysias so intent on quelling the uproar over Paul in Jerusalem? (at least from his perspective)
- As it turns out the Jews were a very hard people to rule and despite the concessions the Romans gave them they were still intent on self determination.
- Its AD 59 and the area was ready to explode into a revolt which eventually does happen and causes Rome to come and crush them and their temple in 70 AD.

32

32

The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 23:26 "From Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings! 27 "This man was seized by some Jews, and they were about to kill him when I arrived with the troops. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I removed him to safety. 28 Then I took him to their high council to try to learn the basis of the accusations against him. 29 I soon discovered the charge was something regarding their religious law—certainly nothing worthy of imprisonment or death. 30 But when I was informed of a plot to kill him, I immediately sent him on to you. I have told his accusers to bring their charges before you." 31 So that night, as ordered, the soldiers took Paul as far as Antipatris. 32 They returned to the fortress the next morning, while the mounted troops took him on to Caesarea. 33 When they arrived in Caesarea, they presented Paul and the letter to Governor Felix. 34 He read it and then asked Paul what province he was from. "Cilicia," Paul answered. 35 "I will hear your case myself when your accusers arrive," the governor told him. Then the governor ordered him kept in the prison at Herod's headquarters. NLT

33

33

The Acts of the Apostles

• **“I will hear your case myself when your accusers arrive,” the governor told him. Then the governor ordered him kept in the prison at Herod’s headquarters.”**

• Paul was ordered to be kept in Herod's palace prison until his accusers arrive.

• **Spoiler alert** - Paul never gets out of prison until he is beheaded around AD 67 under Nero.

34

34

Questions

35

35
