

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

JUDGED (ACTS 22:30–23:11) THE NEXT DAY

After finding out that Paul was a Roman citizen, the commander spent what was probably a sleepless night wondering what to do next.

- The next morning, he decided to find out exactly what Paul was being accused of by calling an unscheduled meeting with the Sanhedrin to get the truth.

GETTING STRUCK

Feeling like Paul was claiming a holiness that no one could attain, Ananias ordered that Paul be hit directly in the mouth.

- Paul's response was quick and sharp. He knew the law and that striking an accused man was against the law.
- **It's hard to take a hypocrite seriously. They are easy to identify, unless they are in the mirror.**

"I DID NOT KNOW"

After being called out for disrespecting the office of high priest, Paul sort of apologized.

- He recognized that respect should be given to any position of authority. But Luke also leaves room for us to wonder if Ananias was so far away from acting like a high priest that Paul truly couldn't see what he was supposed to represent.
- **Titles alone won't make us recognizable.**

"THE ASSEMBLY WAS DIVIDED"

Seeing the Sanhedrin assembled, Paul cried out to his former gang and declared that he was simply being judged for believing what they believed: the resurrection.

- The Sadducees didn't believe in the afterlife or even in spirits, like angels. The Pharisees did.
- An old debate arose and quickly turned into violence. So, the commander moved Paul back to the safety of the barracks.

HEARING JESUS

In the safety of the barracks, Paul gathered his thoughts, rested, and prayed.

- At a time when accusations and fists were flying, Jesus showed up to encourage Paul.
- Paul had been faithful to proclaim the gospel all throughout Asia and even in Jerusalem. Jesus said Paul would also testify in Rome.
- **God may take us on long roads to get us where we need to be.**

CONSPIRACY (ACTS 23:12–22)

A NEW CONSPIRACY

Jesus had made a promise and so had over 40 angry men.

- They were so committed to eliminating Paul that they made a covenant to not eat or drink until he was dead.
- Without shame, they told the high priest and religious leaders their plan and even enlisted their help.
- It seems that everyone was ready to kill Paul.

A NEPHEW GETS INVOLVED

The plot was shared with all the conspirators, and Paul's nephew happened to hear about the planned ambush.

- He did the right thing and reported to Paul, who sent him directly to the commander.
- Knowing that he was dealing with a sensitive situation, he asked the boy to privately reveal the evil plan.

"DON'T LET THEM PERSUADE YOU"

Paul's nephew also recognized the seriousness of the situation, and he pleaded with the commander to stay strong and not give in to evil.

- He dismissed the young man and prepared to do his duty.
- It wasn't to appease the crowd. The commander was there to protect Roman citizens and ensure real justice, whatever the cost.

DELIVERED (ACTS 23:23–35) EXTREME MEASURES

The commander took the word of this plot very seriously. He was under obligation to look after this Roman citizen in his charge, especially since he had already made some errors of his own.

- To him, it seemed that an entire city was set on killing Paul.
- He called 470 armed Roman soldiers to face 40 "hangry" men under the cover of night.

THE LETTER TO FELIX

The commander recounted the recent events with a few exclusions.

- He was quick to declare how well he had been doing his job of protecting Rome and keeping order.
- Having done his job well, he sent Paul up the chain of command, along with his accusers.
- The whole thing was a powder keg, and now it would be the governor's problem.

VERIFYING HIS RESPONSIBILITY

Paul was carefully shuttled to Caesarea, where he stood before Felix.

- After reading the letter, he asked what province Paul was from.
- Felix could see the problem brewing in Jerusalem, and although it was 75 miles away, he knew it would be on his doorstep soon.
- Because Paul was under his rule, he would oversee his trial.

TRIALS

- Life is full of trials.
- **Being unfairly judged feels most unfair.**
- **We know we aren't perfect, but when we are accused of something we didn't do or intend to do, we become defensive—sometimes to the point of lashing out in sinful anger.**

OVERWHELMED

- The blows don't stop just because we feel defeated.
- **It feels like we get hit harder and faster when we are already down.**
- **We become overwhelmed and feel like it's a conspiracy against us. It is not what we think it is. We are not alone. God is with us. He sends people into our lives. What are we looking for—trials or help?**

RESCUED

- We want help!
- **Help is available.**
- **Our problem is the way we define help. If we expect help to remove trials, troubles, circumstances, and even weakness, we will face more defeat. Paul was delivered from the mob, but he would stay in captivity. He would still be in God's will. We will live as overcomers when we realize that God gives us strength to endure trials, wisdom to live above our circumstances, and the humility to recognize His power in our weaknesses. So, how will we live?**