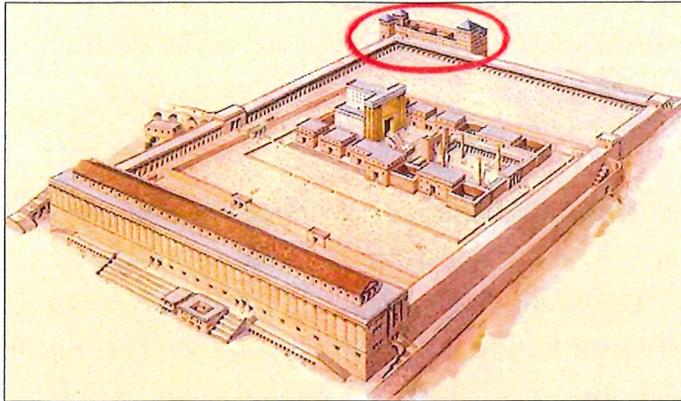
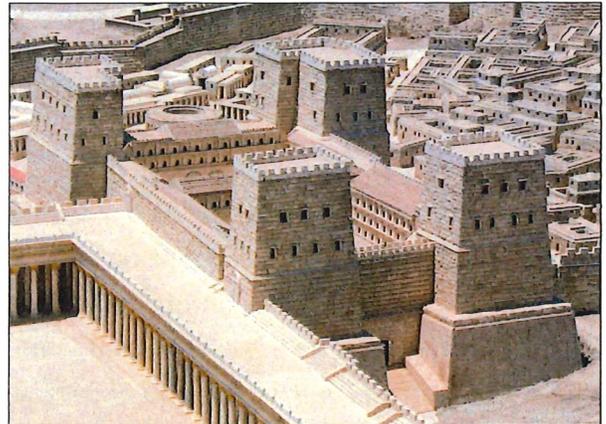


**Acts 23**  
**Paul's Mess: God's Assurance & Sovereignty**  
**Jay Hofeler**



The Temple Complex in Jerusalem



Antonia Fortress

Rank / Class	Examples of Titles / Offices
Emperor / Imperial	Augustus, Imperator, Caesar, Princeps, Pontifex Maximus
Senatorial	Consul, Praetor, Quaestor, Censor, Senator
Equestrian	Prefect, Procurator, Tribune; part of Roman elite
Military	Legatus, Tribunus, Praefectus Castrorum, Centurion, Miles
Local / Civic	Decurion, Duovir, Aedile
Religious	Pontifex, Augur, Flamen, Vestal Virgin
Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection from degrading punishment</li> <li>• Right to due process</li> <li>• Right of appeal to the emperor</li> <li>• Exemption from summary justice (judgment w/out full trial)</li> <li>• Political rights</li> <li>• Legal protection throughout the empire</li> <li>• Social status</li> </ul>
Slaves	No legal rights; property of owner

**Acts 22**  
**Paul and the**  
**Roman**  
**Tribune**

**22 Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a**

**fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."** <sup>23</sup> **And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,** <sup>24</sup> **the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this.** <sup>25</sup> **But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?"** <sup>26</sup> **When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen."** <sup>27</sup> **So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes."** <sup>28</sup> **The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth."** <sup>29</sup> **So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.**

## Paul Before the Council

<sup>30</sup> But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

23 And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." <sup>2</sup> And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. <sup>3</sup> Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?" <sup>4</sup> Those who stood by said, "Would you revile God's high priest?" <sup>5</sup> And Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

<sup>6</sup> Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial." <sup>7</sup> And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. <sup>8</sup> For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. <sup>9</sup> Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, "We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?" <sup>10</sup> And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.

<sup>11</sup> The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."

The Sanhedrin (70 member Jewish Leadership, including the Chief Priest)

- Made up of two parties: Pharisees & Sadducees

	PHARISEES	SADDUCEES
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled local synagogues</li> <li>• Proudful; hypocritical</li> <li>• Viewed as righteous &amp; respected among ordinary Jews</li> <li>• Maintained ritual purity</li> <li>• Applied Law to everyday life</li> <li>• Resisted Hellenization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elitist, Aristocratic, Wealthy</li> <li>• Controlled Temple in Jerusalem</li> <li>• Held majority of seats in Sanhedrin</li> <li>• Friendly with Rome; preserved status quo</li> <li>• Goal: keep the peace &amp; retain status/positions</li> <li>• Embraced Hellenization</li> <li>• Disappeared after AD 70 (destruction of Temple)</li> </ul>
<b>THEOLOGY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative</li> <li>• Strict observers of the Law</li> <li>• Teachers of the Law</li> <li>• Evangelical</li> <li>• Spiritual Realm (Angels &amp; Demons)</li> <li>• Final Judgment</li> <li>• Resurrection of the Dead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal</li> <li>• Only Torah was authoritative (Gen - Deut)</li> <li>• Focus: Temple worship &amp; sacrifices</li> <li>• Little spiritual beliefs; strong earthly focus</li> </ul> <p><u>Reject:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resurrection of the dead (afterlife)</li> <li>• Unseen spiritual realm (angels, miracles, etc) even though they are throughout the Torah</li> </ul>

Look at v 11:

**11 The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."**

**The METHOD of Jesus' visit? Why?**

**The MESSAGE? (2-3 messages)**

### Principle #1

Jesus' assurance:

- ✓ Comes at the right time
- ✓ Comes in the right way
- ✓ Is meant to last. Remember it. It will endure with us in the face of:
  - Uncertainty in the future
  - Suffering
  - Confusion
  - No relevant resources
- ✓ Tells us the Lord is in this.
  - If He says, "Yes", we can rest.
  - If says, "No", we can rest.
  - If He says, "Later", we can rest.

Be looking for it. It's from Him.

## A Plot to Kill Paul

<sup>12</sup> When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. <sup>13</sup> There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. <sup>14</sup> They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. <sup>15</sup> Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

<sup>16</sup> Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. <sup>17</sup> Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." <sup>18</sup> So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." <sup>19</sup> The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" <sup>20</sup> And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. <sup>21</sup> But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent." <sup>22</sup> So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things."

## Paul Sent to Felix the Governor

<sup>23</sup> Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. <sup>24</sup> Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor." <sup>25</sup> And he wrote a letter to this effect:

<sup>26</sup> "Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. <sup>27</sup> This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. <sup>28</sup> And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. <sup>29</sup> I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. <sup>30</sup> And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."

**31 So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. 33 When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. 34 On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.**

**Question: HOW can God preserve Paul's life here?**

1. God alone
2. God alone, using secondary causes

### Westminster Confession of Faith

#### Chapter 3; Section 1

Original 17 <sup>th</sup> Century Text	Modern Version*
God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeable ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; <b>nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.</b>	From all eternity and by the completely wise and holy purpose of His own will, God has freely and unchangeably ordained whatever happens. This ordainment does not mean, however, that God is the author of sin (He is not), that He represses the will of His created beings, <b>or that He takes away the freedom or contingency of second causes. Rather, the will of created beings and the freedom and contingency of secondary causes are established by Him.</b>

\* The Summertown Company  
Douglas F. Kelly, Hugh W. McClure III, Phillip Rollinson

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

#### Principle #2

God can work all things together for good ---but only if He is sovereign!

- If He's not sovereign over details—God could not promise to work all things together for good

#### Principle #3

If we believe God is sovereign over ALL THINGS, it should impact our way of thinking regarding:

- Suffering
- Persecution
- Unfairness
- Health
- Circumstances & experiences of all kinds

We can trust He is working all things together for good by His hand and through secondary causes. This allows us to "testify about Him" in Dallas—even while we hurt and don't know the future.