

PAUL BEFORE THE JEWISH COUNCIL
Acts 23:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Paul was arrested in the temple
 - 1) He was there to complete a vow
 - 2) Four others were with him
- B. Paul spoke to the mob
 - 1) At first they listened attentively
 - 2) Upon Paul's saying "gentile", they attempted to pull him apart.
 - 3) Paul was taken to safety
- C. The military leader did not know Paul was confused about his person vs. 30
 - 1) He loosed Paul from his bands

I. Paul's Opening Statement vs. 1

- A. "And Paul earnestly beholding the council"
 - 1) "earnestly beholding" = atenizo = "to fix the eyes intently upon", "to look straight in the face"
 - 2) Paul probably knew many of these 70 men.
 - 3) They had commissioned his attack upon the church.
- B. "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day"
 - 1) "lived" = politeuo = "to be a citizen" (a free man), in a free state", "to live as a free and a good citizen in a state"
 - 2) "good" = agathos = "worthy of admiration"
 - 3) "conscience" = suneidesis = "the being one's witness", "the inner testimony of one's self to one's self"
- C. Paul has always been a good citizen. He has never plotted violence against the Sanhederin or the Roman Empire. God is his witness that he is a good citizen. He does not speak of his relationship to God but his relationship to government. This is why he is before the council. He is here to answer the charges of the Jews against him as a citizen of Rome. This is the reason that Claudius has brought him here. Their charge is seen in Acts 24:5.

II. The Anger of the Council vs. 2

- A. "And the High Priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth"
 - 1) "commanded" = epitasso = "to appoint over", "to put upon one as a duty"

- 2) "smite" = tupto = "to beat", "strike"
- 3) He struck Paul on the mouth because what he had said was considered to be a lie.

B. Paul's response vs. 3

- 1) "God shall (in the future) smite thee"
- 2) "thou whited wall" - The wall where men came to urinate. When it was severely fouled with urine, it was white-washed.
- 3) His command was hypocritical and illegal

III. Paul and Respect for Authority vs. 4 - 5

A. "And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's High Priest?"

- 1) "revilest" = loidoreo = "to rail at", "abuse"
- 2) They used this at their convenience.

B. Paul's answer, right or wrong?

- 1) Was it sarcasm?
- 2) Was it poor eyesight?
- 3) Was it apology after the fact? irony
- 4) It is possible that Paul was unaware of this man filling the office, since he had been away many years. He may be saying, I do not recognize you as such.
- 5) Paul affirmed his respect for the office if not for the office holder. Exodus 22:28

IV. Paul Set His accusers to Fighting Among Themselves-vs. 6-10

A. Paul knew the council

- 1) The Sadducees, No resurrection, no angels, no spirit
- 2) The Pharisees, Paul's sect

B. He aroused their hatred of one another to prove to Claudius Lysias that their outburst against him was based on religion and not civil disobedience.

- 1) Acts 23:28-29
- 2) His letter to Governor Felix explaining why he had sent Paul to Caesarea.

C. Paul's strategy worked well vs. 7

- 1) "dissension" = stasis = "a setting up", "controversy with idea of violence"
- 2) "divided" = schizo = "to split", "rend", "cleave as wood", "to divide with violence"

- D. The argument of the Scribes and the Pharisees vs. 8-9
- 1) No resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit
 - 2) "let us not fight against God"

- E. The near death of Paul vs. 10
- 1) The dissension increased
 - 2) They would have pulled Paul to pieces
 - 3) He was taken to the barracks

V. The Lord Stands By Paul vs. 11

- A. "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said",
- 1) Paul must have been despondent
 - 2) There had been no Pentecost as when Peter had preached!

- B. "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."
- 1) "good cheer" = tharseo = "Have courage", "be strong", "continue to have boldness"
 - 2) Paul must do the same in Rome
 - 3) The time for doing God's work and suffering the consequences has now come.