

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

### SESSION 71 ACTS 23:6-22

#### ACTS 23:1-10 | PAUL SPEAKS TO THE JEWISH LEADERS

- Verses 1-5 included in session 70
- Verse 6 –
  - Paul is being “wise as a serpent, gentle as a dove.”
  - He **perceived** (using the Greek word for experiential knowledge).
    - Knowing that both Pharisees and Sadducees were in the room, and that they were “strange bedfellows,” he decided to bring disunity among his accusers.
    - The Sadducees were an almost secular political sect of Jews, while the Pharisees were deeply committed to their religion.
    - Knowing that the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, Paul made resurrection to be the central issue, saying, **of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question**. This, of course, put all of the Pharisees on trial along with Paul.
- Verses 7-8 –
  - Paul was successful at dividing the enemy. The Sadducees reject anything spiritual and supernatural, the Pharisees **confess both** but had rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah.
  - Point of discussion: *if the election were held today, would you vote for a Sadducee or a Pharisee?*
    - While this is not directly related to this passage, Paul basically has just that scenario. He “votes” for the Pharisee.
    - I would do the same. Why?
      - First, the *rule of law* matters to them, thus some kind of decent trial has potential.
      - Second, a rejection of the spiritual world is going to put the future at the whim of collective human thinking rather than revelation. Such has never turned out well.
- Verses 9-10 –
  - The **scribes** were the γραμματεῖς [grammateus].
    - They not only wrote scripture, but also (and therefore) were thoroughly versed in its content.
    - Their conclusion was that Paul had no **evil**, using the word κακός [kakos]. They might not have agreed, but they recognized he was not a lawbreaker.
  - Because they so quickly came to this conclusion, they must have known the accusations were false from the beginning.
  - Whether or not Paul intended to cause the **great dissension** so as to not give opportunity to finish his defense is unknown.

#### ACTS 23:11-22 | A PLOT ON PAUL'S LIFE

- Verse 11 –
  - This was clearly *still* an era in which the Lord was appearing in person and communicating directly. One of the following must be concluded:

- That the manifest presence of Jesus Christ is part of the age of grace, and believers can expect such today.
  - That the manifest presence of Jesus Christ was part of the age of grace, but later ceased. As simple as this sounds, there is no good basis upon which to establish the cessation (thus logical covenant theologians and/or traditional dispensationalists end up being *continuationists* in their understanding of manifestations and related gifts.
  - That the manifest presence of Jesus Christ was part of the Kingdom Gospel, and taking place here because such Gospel was still being proclaimed.
    - If so, that the message of the mystery had not yet been revealed.
    - Or that the Gospel of Grace (the message of the mystery) and the Gospel of the Kingdom had a period of overlap.
- As for me, I believe that the mystery was revealed (Acts 13:38-39) and that the Kingdom was still being offered. I see no viable alternative. I also believe that the failure to see an overlap is one of the most fundamental errors of theology today.
- Verses 12-15 –
  - The moral state of the nation at the time is seen here. Men were willing to state, in a semi-public manner, there pledge to kill a man without trial.
  - Their attempt was to bring the entire Sanhedrin together to carry out the facade. The fact that they were not summarily sentenced for conspiracy tells us that both these 40 men as well as the men of the council were theologically and morally corrupt.
- Verse 16.-
  - This is the first (and last) that we hear that Paul had a sister, as well as a nephew.
  - We are left wondering how he **heard of their lying in wait**, as well as how he **entered into the castle** into Paul's presence.
  - The Scripture is amazingly focused on the events that relate to the greater issue, leaving other topics to be lost into the ages.
- Verses 17-22 –
  - The nephew was able to convey the story to the **chief captain**, and therefore spoil the plot. While the captain moves Paul to a safe location (perhaps his last time to be in Jerusalem), there is no record of addressing the illegal activity in the Jewish council.
  - The young man was used providentially to fulfill the Lord's message of verse 11. Often those doing the Lord's bidding had no idea that they were an instrument of divine will.