

Comfort in Adversity

Revelation Encourages Paul

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What We Will Learn

- The Lord appeared to Paul
- During his persecution in Jerusalem
- Encouraged Paul
- Revealed a purpose of the persecution
- He will testify in Rome as he did in Jerusalem
- God brings comfort during adversity
- At his time and in his way
- Acts 23:1–11

Judicial Hearing in Jerusalem

Paul Before the Sanhedrin

- Convened by Roman commander
- Council of chief priests and the Sanhedrin
- Paul released from chains
- Brought before council for hearing
- Acts 22:30

Acts 22 (NIV)

30 The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Confrontation with High Priest

- High priest reacted angrily
- To Paul's claim of perfection
- Paul returned the anger
- But quickly withdrew from the confrontation
- Acknowledged he should not be disrespectful to the high priest
- Acts 23:1–5

Acts 23 (NIV)

1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.”

2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth.

Acts 23 (NIV)

3 Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!”

Acts 23 (NIV)

4 Those who were standing near Paul said, “How dare you insult God’s high priest!”

5 Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’”

- Ordeal of the Jerusalem persecution maybe starting to affect Paul’s human interaction

Paul's Defense Causes Dispute Among Jewish Factions

- Paul announced he was a Pharisee
- And on trial because of belief in resurrection
- His statement stirred up arguments
- Between Pharisees and Sadducees
- And growing disorder
- Commander dismissed the assembly
- Acts 23:6–10

Acts 23 (NIV)

6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.”

7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

Acts 23 (NIV)

8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.)

9 There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. “We find nothing wrong with this man,” they said. “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?”

Acts 23 (NIV)

10 The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

- Paul apparently tried to exploit differences between Pharisees and Sadducees
- Another evidence the ordeal of the persecution was getting to him

The Lord Appears to Paul

- The Lord stood beside Paul that night
- Encouraged Paul
- Revealed a purpose of the persecution
- He will testify in Rome
- As he did in Jerusalem
- Acts 23:11

Acts 23 (NIV)

11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

- Encounter conveyed comfort and assurance
- God is with you
- Have faith
- Use best judgment and Godliness

Paul's Encounter with God

A Message to All

- God is with you in your adversity
- Will comfort you in his way
- And will guide you to his purpose
- Have faith
- Use best judgment
- Based on living in the image of God

What We Learned

- The Lord appeared to Paul in adversity
- With message of comfort and assurance
- Based on faith and living in the image of God
- His encounter with God
- Conveys message to all
- God is with you and will guide you to his purpose even in adversity