



THE HOLY BOOK OF ACTS

CHAPTER 23

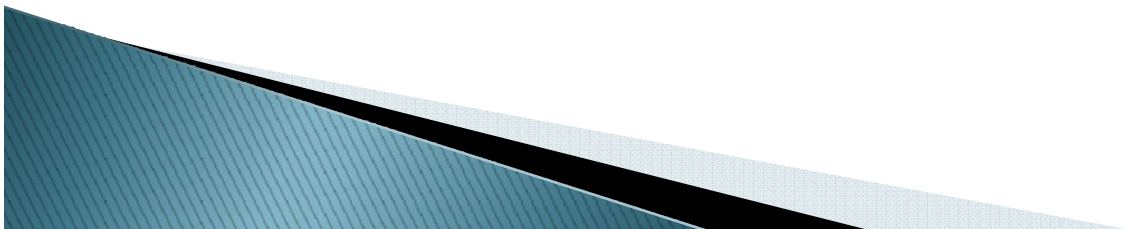
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Introduction

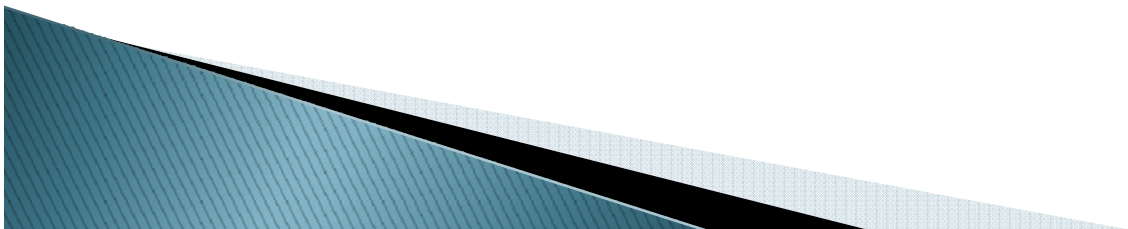
Chapter Outline:

- St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)
- The Jewish Plot Against St. Paul (11-22)
- Sent to Felix (23-35)



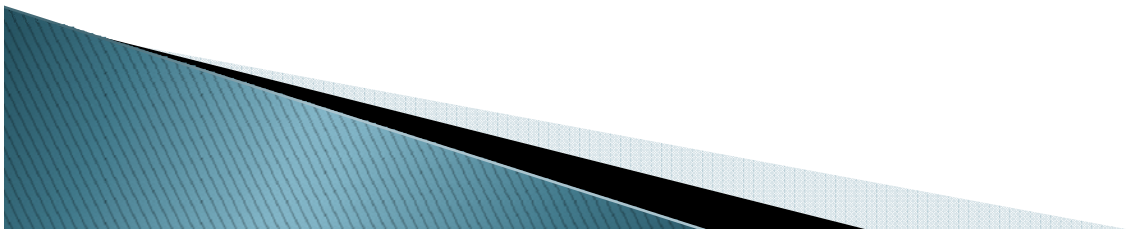
St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- This Chapter opens with St. Paul giving his defense in front of the Sanhedrin
- St. Paul repeatedly affirmed that he had always maintained a good conscience in the sight of God (1 Corinthians 4:4), (2 Timothy 1:3)
- Ananias commanded that St. Paul be struck on the mouth
- It was an arrogant and illegal display of prejudice and unscrupulous hatred toward Paul



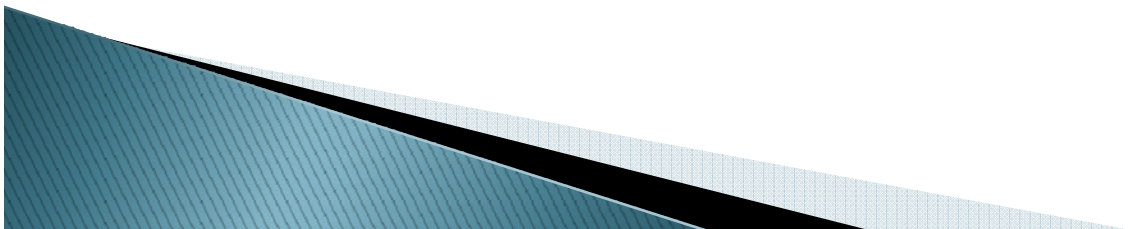
St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- St. Paul's reputation preceded him
- They knew that he was converting a lot of Jews to Christianity
- St. Paul said, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!"
- St. Paul noted that he had commanded him to be struck contrary to the law
- God may have been using St. Paul's outburst to level a prophecy against Ananias
- Ananias was appointed by Herod in 47 AD




St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- He proved himself one of the most corrupt and manipulative thieves to serve in the post
- Ananias stole tithes from other priests
- He cared more about the Roman overlords than Israel
- When the Jews later revolted against Rome, the Jewish rebels burned down Ananias' house
- He was assassinated by his own people



St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- St. Paul did not know that he was the high priest
 - It was contrary to the law of Moses to revile one in high authority (Ex 22:28)
 - St. Paul was willing to apologize
 - It was wrong for the high priest to strike him
 - St. Paul was probably aware of Ananias' reputation
 - He focused on his error, which was speaking against God's appointed leader, no matter how bad that leader is
 - St. Paul apologized for his error, expecting nothing in return.
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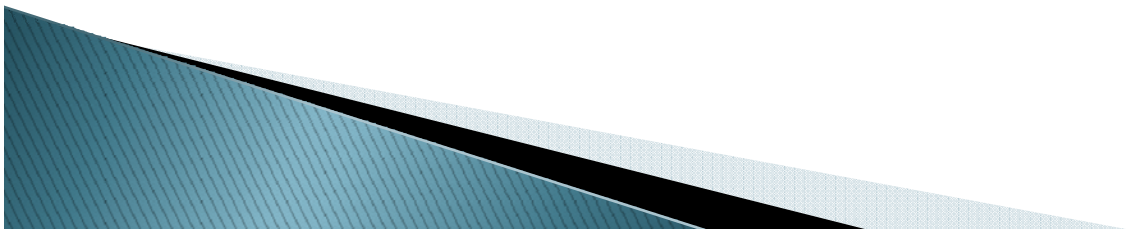
St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- All prospect for a fair trial was hopeless
- St. Paul recognized that there were Sadducees and Pharisees present in the Sanhedrin
- He well knew the schismatic condition of the Sanhedrin and very wisely took advantage of it in order to save his own life
- St. Paul, himself once a Pharisee, now preaching a gospel of which the great fact is the resurrection, not only avails himself of the opportunity to proclaim the fundamental truth of Christianity, but in so doing divides his enemies



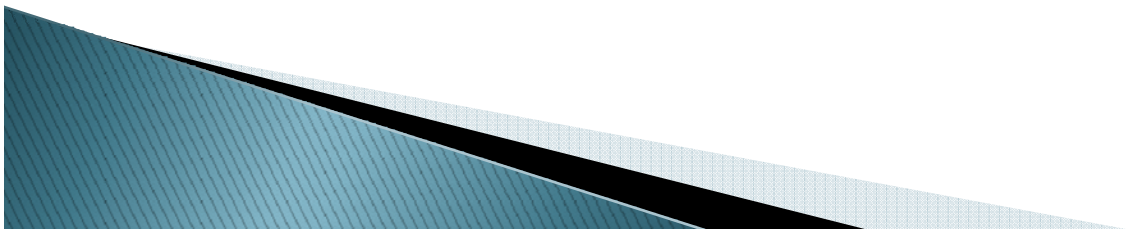
St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- This caused a dissension among the Sanhedrin
- The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection
- The Pharisees did believe in the resurrection
- The scribes of the Pharisees spoke out that they found nothing evil in St. Paul
- The Pharisees were at once reminded that St. Paul was with them in their great ground of contention with the Sadducees



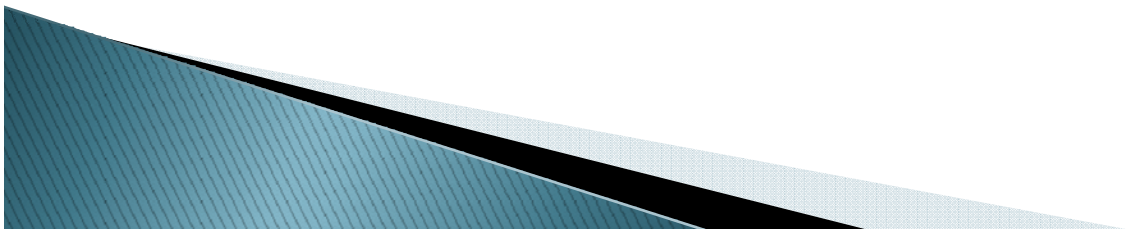
St. Paul before the Sanhedrin Council (1-10)

- “if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him” referring, perhaps, to his trance in the temple, of which he had told them (Ac 22:17)
- They throw this out as a defense to the Sadducees who denied both angel and spirit
- The Roman commander became afraid that harm would come to St. Paul
- The commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul back to the barracks



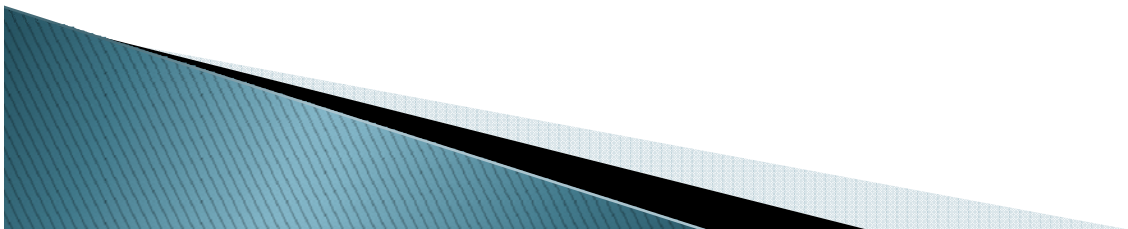
The Jewish Plot Against St. Paul (23:11-22)

- The Lord appeared and spoke to St. Paul the following night
- St. Paul seemed lonely and hopeless
- He needed comfort
- Christ himself comforted and strengthened his apostle
- Encouraged him, reminded him that he already had "testified for [Him] in Jerusalem" (Acts 23:11) and made him look forward to being His "witness at Rome" (Acts 23:12) as well



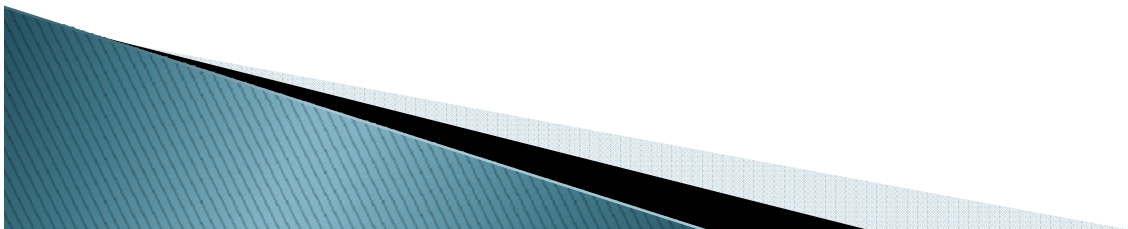
The Jewish Plot Against St. Paul (23:11-22)

- The plot to kill St. Paul was skillfully designed
- More than forty Jews banded together and took an oath to kill him before they ate or drank anything
- Their purpose was to induce the chief priests, who were Sadducees, to have St. Paul appear before the Sanhedrin the next day, and then they would murder him
- The plotting Jews went to the chief priests and elders to present their plan



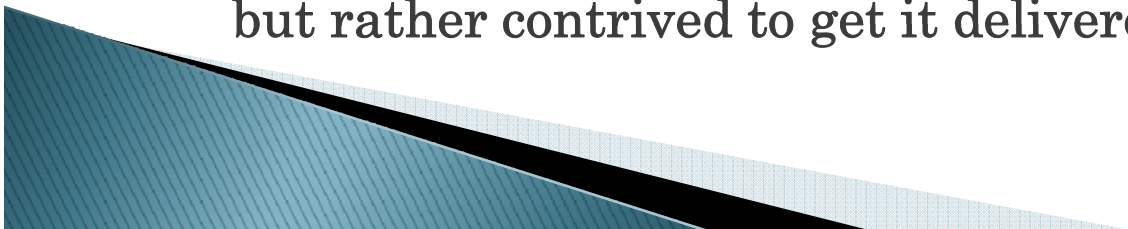
The Jewish Plot Against St. Paul (23:11-22)

- Perhaps these Jews were of the bitter enemies from Asia who had laid hands on him in the temple
- They may have belonged to a wild fanatical association of Jewish assassins, who, a few years later, played a prominent part, called Sicarii



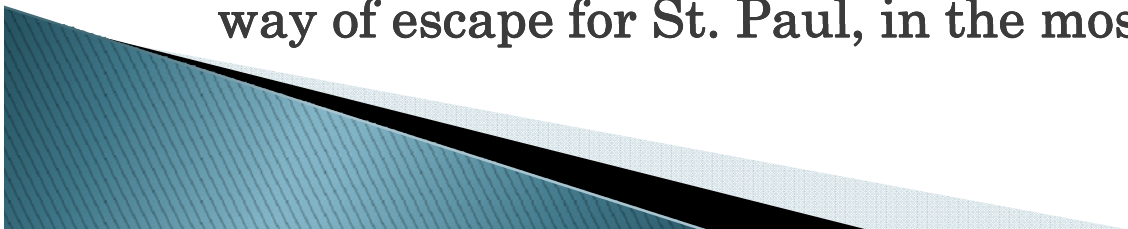
The Jewish Plot Against St. Paul (23:11-22)

- St. Paul's nephew heard of the ambush plot
- This is all we know of St. Paul's family
- He went to St. Paul in the barracks and told him what he had heard
- There was no difficulty of access, for St. Paul was a Roman, and would be treated with courtesy
- St. Paul had his nephew taken to the commander
- Note that St. Paul did not trust the centurion with the message but rather contrived to get it delivered to the chief captain

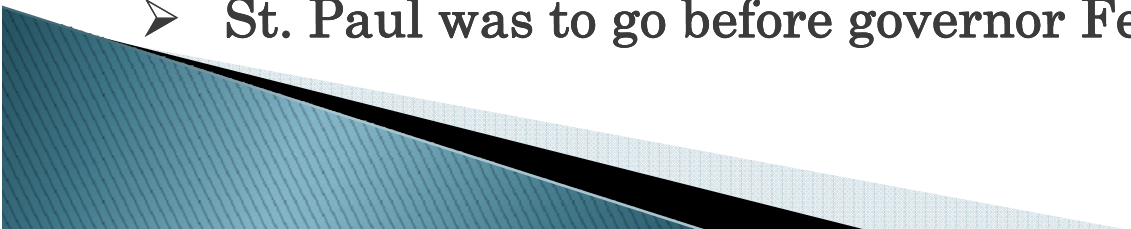


The Jewish Plot Against St. Paul (23:11-22)

- The commander took him aside and heard the plot
- The commander told the young man to tell no one that they had spoken about the plot
- It was a right and wise thing to conceal this matter
- Should it have been known that their plot was discovered, they would have entered upon new measures
- St. Paul's nephew departed from the commander
- God didn't prevent the conspiracy ("free-will"), but God made a way of escape for St. Paul, in the most unlikely of ways

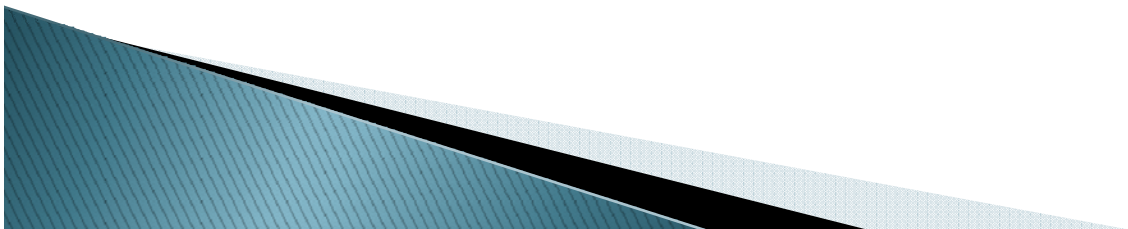


Sent to Felix (23:23-35)

- The whole force was 470 men
 - The size of the escort was large enough to kill any thought of the forty conspirators of following it
 - They were to take St. Paul to Caesarea at the third hour of the night
 - Or, 9PM, long after sunset when the streets of Jerusalem would clear so that St. Paul and his escort could leave the city with as little disturbance as possible
 - St. Paul was to go before governor Felix
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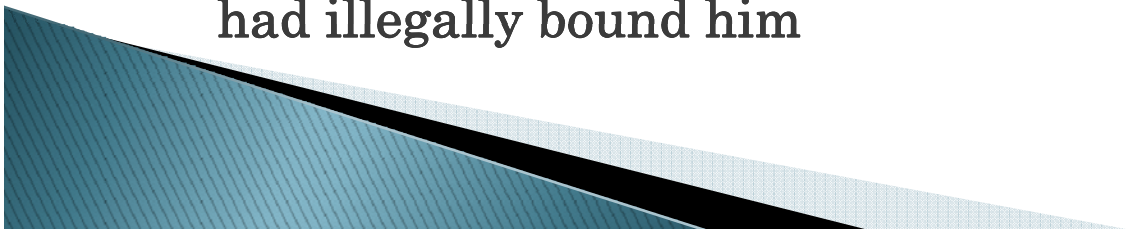
Sent to Felix (23:23-35)

- Felix was originally a slave, but had risen to a high position.
- His brother Pallas was the emperor's favorite, and secured the important post of governor for Felix in A.D. 52

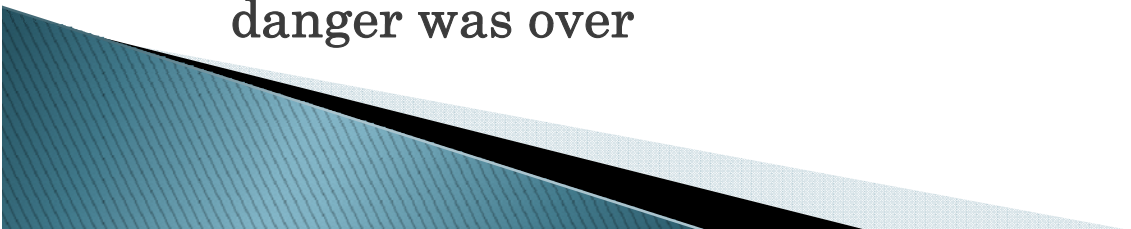


Sent to Felix (23:23-35)

- The commander wrote a letter to Felix to accompany St. Paul
- Roman law required that when a prisoner was sent by a lower official to a higher for trial, a letter should be sent stating the charges
- The letter summarized the situation with St. Paul
- St. Paul is sent to Felix, not as a criminal, but as a fellow citizen rescued
- Lysias did not even know that he was a Roman until after he had illegally bound him



Sent to Felix (23:23-35)

- The soldiers, horsemen, and spearmen took St. Paul by night to Antipatris
 - Antipatris was about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem
 - The march was not probably made by night, but begun at night and was completed the next day
 - The next day, the horsemen continued, and took St. Paul to Caesarea, while the soldiers and spearmen returned
 - Caesarea was now only twenty-six miles distant, and the danger was over
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Sent to Felix (23:23-35)

- They presented St. Paul and the letter to Felix
- Felix was governor of Judea under the proconsul of Syria
- Had he found the prisoner to be of some other province under the proconsul, he would probably have turned him over to its governor, but when he found he was of Cilicia, a distant part of the empire, he retained him
- He had Paul held in Herod's Praetorium
- The palace built by Herod the Great in Caesarea for his own residence, but now occupied by Felix

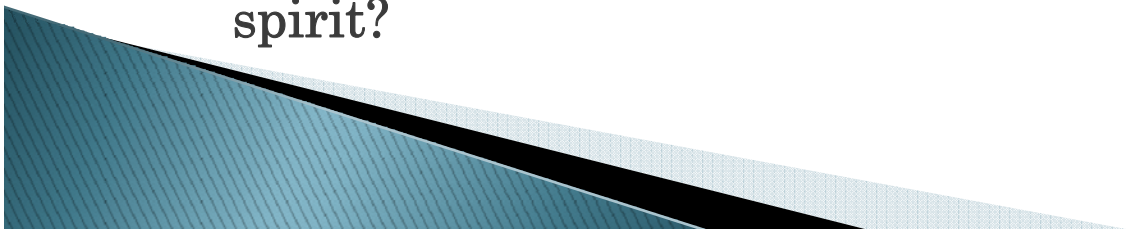


Conclusion

- What did the high priest command? Why?
- What wisdom did St. Paul apply to his speech ? Acts 23:6-10
- Fill in the blanks in this passage

“But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Men and brethren, I am a _____, the son of a _____; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!’

- Which group believed in both the resurrection and angels and spirit?



Conclusion

- How did the Lord strengthen St. Paul ? Acts 23:11 On the night after St. Paul appeared before the Sanhedrin, where did the Lord tell him that he would bear witness?
- What danger did Jews in Acts 23:12 present to St. Paul ?
- How did God deliver St. Paul from their plot ? Acts 23:12
- Did the "high priests and elders" agree to the conspiracy to murder St. Paul?

