

Saturday, July 15, 2023 ▫ Read Acts 22:22–23:10

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the mob now repeat (v22, cf. 21:36)? Now what do they do (v23)? What does the commander now order (v24)? Ostensibly, to learn what? What were they doing in v25? To whom does Paul speak this time? What does he ask about? What information does he give him? To whom, then, does the centurion speak (v26)? What does he tell him? Now to whom does the commander speak (v27)? What does he ask about? What does Paul answer? What does the commander share about himself in v28? How does Paul respond? Who then respond in what way (v29)? And how does the commander feel about this? Why (cf. 21:33)? How does the commander decide to get to the bottom of it instead (v30)? What does Paul say about himself in 23:1? Who commands what, in v2? How does Paul answer (v3)? Who say what, then, to Paul (v4)? What does Paul say he didn't know (and imply he wouldn't have done, v5)? Why not? What does he perceive now (v6)? What does he cry out, rather than trying to make a case according to the law? What result did this outburst have (v7)? What two things do Sadducees deny (v8)? But who confess both? What did the Pharisees conclude about Paul, and what were they actually concerned about at this point (v9, cf. Ac 5:39)? Meanwhile, how did the commander respond to the great dissension (v10)?

What sorts of things might the Lord use to take His servants where He wants them to go? Acts 22:22–23:10 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these nineteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **believers are freed to serve God with a clear conscience by the confidence that the Lord orders literally everything for their good and for their service to Him.**

What sorts of things does the Lord use for His people's good and their service to Him?

The rage of their enemies. The Jews going even more nuts in vv22–23 is essential to triggering the interaction in vv24–29. It's tempting to be anxious or intimidated when the Lord's enemies and ours get themselves worked into a rage against us. But they are just so many Hamans and Jewish mobs—bringing guilt upon themselves while being used to do us good and facilitate our service to Him.

Unjust authorities... and conscientious authorities... and fearful authorities. The commander knew that Paul was from Cilicia (cf. 21:39), but he didn't take the time to ascertain his citizenship. Granted, he was busy stopping a massive riot mob, but getting this right would have mattered to Paul a great deal more than it mattered to the commander. And Paul himself correctly makes a charge of injustice against the high priest at his Jewish trial in 23:2–3. Believers often find that their wellbeing or rights aren't cared for by authorities so much as they should be.

As Paul is about to be “examined” by scourging, he gets his chance to go over the commander's head and talk to the centurion (v25). To the centurion, the citizenship matters, and he instructs the commander accordingly (v26). He's a conscientious leader. In v29, we discover that the commander (like his men) is not only unjust but fearful—a combination often found in lower level authorities. Authorities may be unjust, conscientious, fearful, or otherwise. Let believers remember that the Lord is employing them to do us good and facilitate our service to Him.

The location of our birth and the nation of our citizenship. Before Paul was born, the Lord was arranging for his transport to Rome for the sake of the gospel, thought it would not come for decades. Not only did He give to Paul to be born in Cilicia so that he would be proficient in Greek language and culture, something very useful both for ministering to Gentiles and for interacting with Romans. But the Lord also gave him to have a Roman citizenship by that birth. God has appointed the time and boundary of our dwelling (cf. Ac 17:26).

Some people think that their generation and their birthplace and their nationality has been a curse; but let those who are believers remember the goodness and wisdom that have selected these for them. Others are proud of the time and place and nationality of their life; only let them remember that the One Who has selected these has done so for His own good purposes, and let them use their advantages in His service.

Believers' own conscientiousness. Paul begins making his case from his conscientiousness before God. In his defense, he starts (v1) similarly to 22:3. And he immediately goes on to prove both his knowledge of the law and submission to that law in v5. 1Pet 2:12–17 and 3:13–17 urge this as a rule for all believers. When we are faithful and obedient and conscientious, we honor God in multiple ways—as the God Who gave us that character in Christ, and the God Who rules and overrules the evil that is done to us for good, and the God Who is perfectly just in the end, and often even as the God Who has ordered His world so that wisdom and godliness are generally fruitful. Loving the glory of God's goodness and wisdom in His providence is an incentive to conscientious living, not a disincentive.

Others' errors and common-grace wisdom. The Sadducees were in significant error—believing only in what's material and only for this life. The Pharisees not only had more correct theology, but even their teaching tradition included Paul's teacher, who was the source of the same wisdom that we see in v9 (cf. 5:34–39). Paul might not have known that they would refer to Gamaliel, but he certainly seems to have expected in v6 the ensuing scene in v7–9. Paul would have loved for both Sadducees and Pharisees to come to faith in Jesus Christ. 21:20 was such good news precisely because he had the Rom 9:3–5 love for Jews. Yet, he could not fail to see how God's wisdom used even their errors in His mercy toward Paul and toward all who would believe the gospel in Rome and beyond.

Where and when were you born? Who has mistreated you? What authorities have been unjust toward you? Whom do you wish you could bring to faith or to sound doctrine? What is God doing through all of these things? What opportunity does this give you for how you live, and how you serve and glorify Him?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You for Your almighty rule and perfect wisdom. Thank You for using it for Your glory, and our good, and to free us for serving You with a good conscience. Give us to remember this, and trust You, and love You, and serve You with all that we are, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH256 “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”

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Acts 22. Beginning in verse 22 and going through 23 in verse 10. These are God's words. And they listen to him until this word and then they raised their voices and said away, was such a fellow from the earth for he is not fit to live.

Then as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air. The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks and said, he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know. Why they shouted so against him? But as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man? Who is a Roman And unconded. Well, the centurion heard that he went, and told the commander saying, take care what you do for this man as a Roman. Then the commander came and said to him, tell me. Are you a roman?

He said, yes. Commander inserted with a large sum, i obtained the citizenship. Paul said, but i was born a citizen. Then immediately those who are about to examine him with drew from him. And the commander was also afraid after he found out, he was a Roman because he had bound him.

The next day because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews. He released him from his bonds and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear. And brought paul down and set him before them. Then paul looking earnestly at the council set and brethren.

I have lived in all good conscience before god, until this day. Than the high priest and an ice. Commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. When Paul said god will strike you, you whitewashed wall. For you. Sit to judge me according to the law to you, command me to be.

Struck contrary to the law. And those who stood by said, do you reviled god's high priest? Then paul said, i did not know brethren. But he was the high priest or it is written. You sold out speak evil of a ruler of your people. But when paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other part Pharisees, he cried out in the council men and brethren.

I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead. I am being judged. When he had said this, it is engineer rose between the pharisees and the sadducees. And the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say there is no resurrection. No, angel or spirit.

With the pharisees confess both. Then there are rows allowed outcry. The scribes of the pharisees party arose and protested. Say we find no evil in this man. But if a spurred or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against god. Now, when there are rows a great detention the commander, Fearing lest paul might be pulled two pieces by them.

Command of the soldiers to go down and take him by force. From among them and bring them into the barracks.

And then so far, The reading of god's inspired in an errant word. There are many differences. Between an earthly ruler or commander or centurion.

There are many differences between And earthly ruler, or commander, or centurion? And, The king of heaven. And one of those great differences is that the king of heaven has never frustrated. That he rules and overrules even through. Everything that everyone does. There are many people who are frustrated and angry.

And trying to get their way and failing in this passage. But even the commander whose will, from a human perspective is controlling these things. Remember the whole thing Uh, So far even going into previous week's passages. That has been the commander trying to figure out why the Jews were so upset.

But he, Doesn't get an answer. And in fact, every time, Um, you know whether it's letting paul. Address the crowd or whether bringing paul and putting him before the council before the Sanhedron. Um, The. Only thing he seems to get is Uh, new and Very intense chaos. And yet the point, Of all of this is actually found.

In verse 11, we're dividing up. Passage that is probably several chapters long. It's basic. And it's basic theme. That god is taking Paul to Rome. So that his gospel, Will go to the ends of the earth, or that's the That's the overall outline structure. Theme of the book of Acts.

The lord taking his Gospel from Jerusalem into judea and Samaria. And to the ends of the earth. And you see in verse 11, next week, the lord jesus stands by him. And says be a good cheer Paul for as you have testified for me in jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.

This is something that paul knew. That jesus is. This is something that paul knew that jesus is ruling and overruling all things. Uh, to not only glorify himself christ and not only for paul's good as one who belongs to christ, but also for paul's service. That the service to which pole is called to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

The lord jesus would do everything that is necessary. Ruling it over rolling. Um, so many different things. In order for paul, to be able to finish, The course that the lord has marked out for him in this world. And this is a great comfort for everyone of us. That there's a course of service under God.

There's a course of service unto christ. That he has marked out for each of us in this world. And that god is ruling and over ruling everything that they do and even using what we do. As we'll see in this passage Not only for his glory and for our good.

But also to, To bring us into and carry us through. That service unto him. That he has appointed for us. As this people. So what sorts of things? Does the lord use? Is the Lord using in this passage? As he is bringing Paul to Rome. To witness for himself.

What is the Lord jesus using? First thing we see him using is the rage of his enemies. We've seen that. A few times throughout the book, but In this particular case, They get so angry. When he says, That not only is their unbelief, something that is under jesus's control.

But the gentiles belief is something that's going to be an under jesus's control. That he is going to send paul to the gentiles. Where the lord jesus will give repentance and faith. Through his ministry. Telling him to get out of jerusalem because he's not giving them. Repentance in faith.

And so they become so enraged. And they don't just say away with him, they embellished completes that statement away with such a fellow from the earth. For he is not fit to live. And they start tearing their clothes. And here. Um, The. Not just tearing but tearing pieces of their clothes, to throw it in.

They're tearing and throwing. Um, And that's It's quite the show of. Of rage and hatred. And yet. This was one of the things that The lord used. And the course of the events. To bring him to the place that he was. And verse 11, basically, the the verse right after our passage The lord jesus appears to Paul and says, even through all of this, Everything is.

All right on schedule. It is just, you know, it is working. As intended. So, we should not be. Intimidated when the lord said enemies into ours. Get themselves, worked

into a rage against us. Whether the Jewish mob here, or your member Hamans. Rage and hatred. For the juice house.

The Lord actually used him to exalt Mordecai and to eliminate not just Tamam, but other enemies of the Jews. And so it's worth

those who hate the Lord and his people. Are not just bringing guilt on themselves. Uh, but they're also being used to do us. Good. And facilitate our service into Christ. So he uses a rage of enemies. He uses authorities of all sorts. The, you know, sometimes authorities are unjust. The commander does not seem to have been.

Um, hostile to Paul, but he certainly was more interested in getting his job done. Then he was in Paul's rights. He was trying to figure out. If? If Paul had committed a crime, but he was already doing things to him. That would not be appropriate for a Roman. Those uncondemned.

He knew that Paul was from Salicia. He didn't check into his legal status. Well, so often there are authorities that just aren't doing right by us. They're unjust. And there are also authorities that are conscientious. Yeah, the centurion. Uh, for instance, when Paul takes advantage of his opportunity and the he's being bound.

And not sure if it's required for this century and I didn't see this in any of the commentaries for him to be there. If there's a vlogging. But he is going to be flogged. He's going, he's going to be whipped. Um, this was his. Examination by scourging. And then he sees the centurion there.

And yes. Is it lawful for you to scourge a man? Who is a Roman and uncondemned? And the centurion. Gives instruction to the commander. Who is?

Who is beneath him? And, so you have this combination of unjust authority and sometimes the word uses conscientious authority, this interior and didn't have to be a man who follows the rules. In this case, Uh, the Lord uses that. The Lord even uses. Uh, cowardice. In authorities, cowardice, and authority is Um,

that can be a very harmful thing. But these these people. Seems to be bullies, but turned out. To be fearful. Not only those who are about to examine him a draw from universe 29. But the commander is afraid. Because he has bound him. Um, you'll notice that.

When it. When it comes time to. Send him.

Sorry, the commanders above the century. When it comes time to send him to Felix. That he conveniently. Leaves out the part. That he had bound Paul. And so you have Uh, you have authorities of all different sorts. We do want authorities to honor Christ. And we want to warn them.

That they will. Stand before Christ. And answer for how they have conducted themselves. But they have it that some of us that we're all tempted, Uh, to be in. Of. Continually judging the authorities and having.

Having our fear or hope. Or anxiety, or the stability of our responses.

Say this.

Many of us are, we're all tempted to put too much stock into how the authorities are conducting themselves. And not enough. And what the Lord is doing. By means of the authorities. And so, we would do well here to notice. That even through all the different types of responses of authorities, even unjust and wicked authority, like Ananias who commands him to be struck through all of that.

Um, the Lord. Is bringing Paul. To his service. In Rome. Another thing that we see the Lord uses is, the location and time and nationality. Of Paul's birth. He's born in Salicia, he's born at the time, that brings in to be Uh, where he is now. He's you got this Roman citizenship that is that is from his birth.

Long before. Um, this day before, even Paul was born. The Lord was arranging for his transport to Rome for the sake of the gospel. It was arranging that he would, that Paul would be that Jesus's witness in Rome. As he has been at Jerusalem. And there's even implication in that verse 11.

Uh, from next week's portion. That these trials and testimonies before mobs and so forth is Uh, kind of a new Uh, phase impulse ministry that this is going to be one of the primary ways that he testifies as someone who is a prisoner because this is how he's testified at Jerusalem.

He wasn't permitted to testify at Jerusalem before. When he had first gotten converted and now, he's gotten to testify for Christ at Jerusalem as a result of being banned and arrested. And he is going to get to testify to Christ that way. In Rome as well. Some people think that, the time and place and nationality.

Of their birth has been a curse. This is. This is a temptation, if we. Live in. Um, there are from a poor nation. Or a particularly wicked. And unjust nation. But if we're a believer, we know that all of those things are appointed in order to bring us to faith.

And if we're a believer, we know that all of those things were appointed particularly for the for the particular service. Which are redeemer has called to Uh, for himself. Was also true that others are proud of. And grateful for rightly. So, the time and place and nationality of their birth.

But let us remember if we are Uh, if we have been given such advantages like we have. Like, we have been given. That these advantages have been given to us, not just for our earthly comfort. For a few decades. On this planet. But these things have been given to us.

First that we might be brought to know Christ. But then now, and, for our consideration as we. Continue to live before him. That these things were given. As. The the way by which we would be brought into the service that he has for us. And so, whatever. Nationalism we have we ought to have gratitude towards Christ for it.

And employ. Uh, whatever rights we have in the service of Christ. Which is. Which is what Paul does here. He makes use of. His Roman. Citizenship. Another thing that we see the Lord drooling in over ruling, Uh, in order to give his Uh, servant good testimony. Own service. Is his living with a good conscience?

Is able to. To give good testimony. That. He has lived in all good conscience before God until this day, in verse 1. And then, even when He doesn't realize that the one who has commanded him to be struck was the high priest. He basically admits in verse 5 or confesses and verse 5 that was wrong to do and he quotes from the Bible, the reason that it was wrong for him.

To speak that way. To a ruler of the people. And He might have made much legitimate argument. Against. Whether Ananias's properly in the office of high priest and so forth. But he is living carefully, conscientiously according to God's word, so that when he is attacked, that, before the face of God, it reflects.

It reflects against his attacker. And not against him. And sometimes this is even true before, before the eyes of men, and the Lord teaches us about that in first Peter 2. Verse 12, through 17 and 1st Peter 3. Verse 13 through 17 urging upon all believers. What is the case for Paul here?

That we should conduct ourselves righteously and uprightly. That we should be the best citizens. There are. And that. That when we suffer. Persecution. Or injustice. That we would do. So for having done, what is good? And not having done. What is evil? And so we have an opportunity. Then don't we?

To participate in the Lord ruling and over ruling, all things as we make display of what it looks like when Jesus saves someone. And he makes us. Holy. And our walking

before God and holy and righteous in our interaction with others. And then, He works all things together. Not only for the good of our knowing Him but also for our good and serving Him because that's good for us to do. With that, that we would serve.

Then He is much glorified and magnified. Both in how the providence works out in this life. And in the vengeance and justice. That He gives at the end. The last thing that we see. The Lord using here. Is the errors of the Sadducees and even the common grace, and we say it that way, because they do not seem for the greater part to have been converted the Pharisees.

The Sadducees. And the Pharisees Paul. Changes his tactic. After. After he realizes that, he's not actually going to be examined. According to whether his conduct has been righteous by the law of God. He sees that one part Sadducees and the other part Pharisees, and it tells the truth, He's on.

He is being judged. Because he has hope in the resurrected Lord, Jesus. That the one who, who addressed him from the sky was the one who was from Nazareth and had died on the cross. And, His shouting this out really driving home. That this was something this hope of the resurrection was not something new when he came to know.

Jesus Christ. What was new is that Jesus is the hope of the resurrection. But He, He says, I was on the Pharisee, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. And He, He drives home that. This is a point of difference between them and He does seem to expect, I think that there will be a contention between them. Not sure if He expects that the Pharisees are going to quote His master Gamaliel.

Remember He testified in the previous chapter that? He was brought up. Under the teaching of Gamaliel. Very well trained. Um, And by Gamaliel, And Gamaliel was the one who all the way back in chapter 5, I think. Yes, chapter 5 verses 34 through 39. Um, had warned them when they were.

When the church was first starting to grow. That if this was not of God, that it would fail, but that it was of God, they would find themselves fighting against God. And so this was done, obviously was something that the Pharisees have maintained. Because not only do they decide?

That Paul should be acquitted in verse 9. Um, but they even use that language, if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him. Um, they say let us not fight. Against God. Now, Paul would have wanted Um, the Sadducees to not be an error. And, Even the Pharisees.

But here exercising common grace wisdom. Not recognizing that. Jesus is the God, man. Um, but at least exercising the common grace, wisdom to say that. The similar thing, the Malleon had said and chapter 5, Paul would have wanted. For the Pharisees to be converted as well. He loved his nation.

And He loved them with a love that desired that they would be saved. You remember in Romans 9 saying He wished that He could even be a curse. He could be cut off for their sake. If He could trade His own salvation, for the end gathering, the spiritual and gathering of the Jews to Christ.

He would do so. And so, it's not that He takes any pleasure in. The Sadducees error or the fact that even the Pharisees wisdom is sub-Christian. But surely you can see. How? Leaving unto God. The freedom because it belongs to Him. Him, He will save. We can yet see some of the wisdom and some of His good purposes.

In this case, using this situation with these agencies and Pharisees. To take Paul to Rome where he's going to preach the gospel. And where people are going to respond. And be converted. And then we also don't know. Who might have been? Eventually converted from this day. But Well, that's one of the hardest things I think in the Christian life.

Is loving people, wanting them to be saved. Having to now, submit ourselves. To the good pleasure of a God, who Um, He shows Himself. In comprehensibly, merciful. With every single one. Then He brings to repentance. And faith. So submit ourselves to His will. But we also, understand that. The history of what He does, even among and through those who are not believing.

Or who are in theological error? It's aimed especially at those whom He is bringing to faith. That He was through all of this. Bringing His apostle. This servant to Rome. Where He was going to. Be His witness there. And so let us learn from all of this to trust God with His providence.

And His purposes in it. And, to look at, you know, several things in this passage. Um, that are specific things that we trust to God and have confidence that He is using not only for His glory and our good, but also very specifically to bring us into the specific opportunities that He has assigned for us.

In which to serve Him. Spread.

Father, we pray that you would help us to make the connections and draw the correct conclusions about our own life.

That we would know. Whatever, and whoever is against us. And however, our authorities are conducting themselves and even. When our desires for others. To be saved or to be sound. Are not fulfilled. That in all of this, you are continuing to give us opportunity to walk with a clear conscience before you opportunity to serve you both now and in that future service into which you are shortly steadily.

Bringing us according to your will. So help us by your spirit, we pray to respond well to your providence. And grant that we would serve Christ. Or whatever comes. And we ask it in His name.