

“TAKE COURAGE”

Acts 22:30–23:35

Key Verse: 23:11

1. Why is Paul brought before the Jewish council (22:30)? What does he do and say first (23:1)? What does it mean to “live my life before God in all good conscience” (2 Cor.1:12; 4:2)? Why do all witnesses of Jesus need to live with a good conscience (1 Tim.1:5,19; 1 Pet.3:16)?
2. How does the high priest respond to Paul, and why (2)? What does Paul say, and why (3; Matt.23:27–28)? What does he learn (4), and what is his response (5)¹? Why must all Jesus’ witnesses live in subjection to authorities (Rom.13:5; 1 Pet.2:18–21)?
3. What does Paul suddenly cry out (6)? Why does he identify with the Pharisees and their hope in the resurrection (8; 24:14–16,20–21)? In the midst of persecution, why do witnesses of Jesus need to focus on this hope?
4. What happens in the assembly (7–9)? What does the tribune do (10)? What happens the following night (11)? What does he mean by “Take courage”? How would these words help Paul? How do they help all witnesses of Jesus (Matt.28:20b; John 16:33)?
5. Who plots against Paul (12–15)? Who intervenes to help (16–22)? How would Paul be transferred to Caesarea (23–24)? What does the tribune write (25–30)? When Paul is presented to him in Caesarea, what does Felix ask (33–34)? Where does Paul stay until his accusers arrive (35)? How is God’s hand seen in all these things?

References:

Q1: 2 Cor.1:12: “For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.”

4:2: “But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.”

¹ Ex.22:28.

1 Tim.1:5: "The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

1:19: "...holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith..."

1 Pet.3:16: "...having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."

Q2: Matt.23:27–28: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

Rom.13:5: "Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."

1 Pet.2:18–21: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you might follow in his steps."

Q3: Acts 24:14–16: "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down in the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man."

24:20–21: "Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: 'It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.'"

Q4: Matt.28:20b: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

John 16:33: "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."