

Acts 23 “God Behind the Scenes”

Acts 23:11-34

May 10, 2026

Acts 23:11-35

11 The following night, the Lord stood by him and said, “Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome.”

12 When it was morning, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who had formed this plot. 14 These men went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn curse that we won’t eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 So now you, along with the Sanhedrin, make a request to the commander that he bring him down to you as if you were going to investigate his case more thoroughly. But, before he gets near, we are ready to kill him.”

16 But the son of Paul’s sister, hearing about their ambush, came and entered the barracks and reported it to Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander, because he has something to report to him.”

18 So he took him, brought him to the commander, and said, “The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to tell you.”

19 The commander took him by the hand, led him aside, and inquired privately, “What is it you have to report to me?”

20 “The Jews,” he said, “have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as though they are going to hold a somewhat more careful inquiry about him.

21 Don’t let them persuade you, because there are more than forty of them lying in ambush—men who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they have killed him. Now they are ready, waiting for your consent.”

22 So the commander dismissed the young man and instructed him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have informed me about this.”

23 He summoned two of his centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready with seventy cavalry and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Also provide mounts to ride so that Paul may be brought safely to Felix the governor.”

25 He wrote the following letter:

26 Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings.

27 When this man had been seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, I arrived with my troops and rescued him because I learned that he is a Roman citizen.

28 Wanting to know the charge they were accusing him of, I brought him down before their Sanhedrin. 29 I found out that the accusations were concerning questions of their law, and that there was no charge that merited death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed that there was a plot against the man, I sent him to you right away. I also ordered his accusers to state their case against him in your presence.

31 So the soldiers took Paul during the night and brought him to Antipatris as they were ordered. 32 The next day, they returned to the barracks, allowing the cavalry to go on with him. 33 When these men entered Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 After he read it, he asked what province he was from. When he learned he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will give you a hearing whenever your accusers also get here." He ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

A plan is being worked out.

Paul helps show us the Christian life.

Chance. Karma. Fate.

The Bible represents God as if God knows what He is doing.

Genesis 50:20

20 You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.

"God is always doing 10,000 things, you may be aware of three of them." - John Piper

"Evil is not the problem because God is too small, though doing his best, but because God is so great that we cannot be expected to know what he is doing." - C.S. Lewis

We don't always know what God is doing but we know why we trust him.

Acts 4:27-28

27 "For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, 28 to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place.

God is accomplishing a good plan.

Life Group Discussion Questions

- 1.) What did God say to you through His Scriptures during our Sunday gathering?
- 2.) Read Proverbs 19:21, Proverbs 16:9, and Job 42:2. What are these Scriptures expressing? Are there other Scriptures you know like these? What comfort is derived from these Scriptures?
- 3.) Chance, karma, and fate perspectives are everywhere. In what ways does our culture endorse these different views? In what ways do they miss the more beautiful and involved perspective of the Bible?
- 4.) How are we tempted to judge God through our circumstances rather than judge our circumstances through our understanding of God's character? Can you give an example from your own life?

- 5.) Discuss C.S. Lewis' remark and what it means. "Evil is not the problem because God is too small, though doing his best, but because God is so great that we cannot be expected to know what he is doing."
- 6.) If God's plan was the cross of Christ and all events and players involved (Acts 4:27-28), then how are we to understand evil? How are we to understand evil and suffering in our own lives in the light of the cross?
- 7.) Spend some time praying for one another, for the difficulties being experienced and the good that God can bring through them.