

Acts 23

Paul arrived in Jerusalem, met with the elders there, and joined 4 men as they completed their Nazarite vow.

1. At the conclusion of the 7 days necessary for the completion of the Nazarite vow, Paul is falsely accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple...and everything erupts!
2. He is arrested by the Tribune, in order to save his life and stop the ruckus.
3. He hushes the crowd and shares his testimony with them...until he mentioned the unmentionable word: Gentiles.
4. The riot begins again and Paul is brought into the barracks where he avoids a flogging when it is learned that he is a Roman citizen.

That is where we left him, and where we will pick up the story this morning in Acts 23.

1. I have divided the narrative of chapter 23 into 4 major sections for us to consider.
2. Then I want us to drive home one important point that is hidden in the text.

We see 4 major things as we read through the text.

I. A Rotten Ruler

1. He was rotten v1-3

Matthew 23:27-28

2. But he was still a ruler v4-5

- a. Ex 22:28 *You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people*
- b. Matthew 23:2-3
- c. His role demanded a proper response even if 'he' didn't.

3. 1 Timothy 2:1-4

II. A Religious Riot v6-11

1. Sadducees vs. Pharisees
2. Pharisees: Matthew 23:13-31
3. Sadducees: Liberals of the day.
4. Can you imagine the animosity between the 2 groups.

III. A Rash Vow v12-22

1. Numbers 30:2 *If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth*
2. Deuteronomy 23:21 *When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you*
3. Judges 11:29-40

IV. A Rescue Mission v23-35

1. 200 soldiers, 75 horsemen, and 200 spearmen
2. An army for 1 little missionary!
3. 2 Kings 6:15-17

verse 11

The Lord stands by

1. When you are persecuted by evil men
 - a. Verse 11
 - b. Acts 12:7 *And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands*
2. When you are prosecuted by the evil one
 - a. Zechariah 3:1-5
 - b. *In a dream, Martin Luther found himself being attacked by Satan. The devil unrolled a long scroll containing a list of Luther's sins, and held it before him. On reaching the end of the scroll Luther asked the devil, "Is that all?" "No," came the reply, and a second scroll was thrust in front of him. Then, after a second came a third. But now the devil had no more. "You've forgotten something," Luther exclaimed triumphantly. "Quickly write on each of them, 'The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanses us from all sins.'"*
3. When you are proclaiming the good news
 - a. 2 Timothy 4:17 *But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.*
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20

Now...what if we just believed it!?!?