

Introduction:

I would remind you of verses 1 and 2 of Chapter One of Acts: "1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:" (Ac 1:1-2) The Gospel of Luke contain the record of what Jesus began both to do and teach. It isn't the only record, because we also have Matthew, Mark, John and the other Scriptures that give us information about those days. But Luke is speaking of his own writing. This is the point, Acts contains the things that Jesus did from heaven after the in which He was take up after He had given instructions to them by the Holy Ghost. This was to His chosen apostles. The first part of Acts is about the witness to Israel of the Twelve, of whom Peter was chief; the last part of Acts is about Paul founding the Gentile churches. When their work is finished, the apostles fade from the scene, but Christ continues His work through the ordinary officers.

In the sermons that I began to preach last week, we are going to see the events of the last days of Paul, recorded by Luke. It is not a complete history, according to modern scientific practice, and does not answer all the questions that we may have, but it is complete as far as Luke's purpose is concerned, which is to extol Christ, edify, the Church, and reveal the power of Christ working in frail human beings. Secular histories also are complete as far as secular purposes are concerned, which are to enclose God in the universe and the supernatural. They follow their own biases and produce students who do not fear God nor keep His commandments.

So we are going to see the Power of Christ at work in this second sermon on Paul's Witness at Jerusalem. I have named the sermon: "Above All, the Lord Jesus in Power" The three main headings of the sermon are printed on page two of the insert in your bulletin.

- I. Jesus Christ, Above the Gangster, Apostate Church. Acts 23:1-10 There are several things here
 - A. Their opposition and hatred of the Candle of the Lord. Conscience is the witness of natural revelation, and the bigotry of the priests denied that there could be any such thing.
 1. Luke 11:29ff . The heathen, such as Nineveh, bore witness against Israel, though Israel had much light and they had little.
 2. Romans 2:12-16
 3. 2Co 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness.
 4. handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
 - B. This led to brutality and injustice. There are two sides of humanism
 1. Pharisees: That which denies the light of nature: Pharisees. Blind leader of the Blind. What good is the light if you have no eyes. They made void the law by their traditions, as if God were absent until Moses came along. Moses must be read in terms of Genesis 3: 15 AND in terms of John 1:17. Moses was not the beginning; nor was Moses the end: Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith.
 2. Sadducees: That which denies the light of Scripture. Naturalists.
 3. Christ triumphs over both.

- a. All they could do was to rail on Paul, even those who stood by, for the lawlessness of the crowd supported and demanded the lawlessness of the rulers There was no soundness anywhere. Paul was delivered by the secular power. That which the Pharisees despised was used of Jesus to save Paul: Jesus is Lord of All.
- b. Notes:
 - (1). Paul's rebuke of the High Priest. Paul was correct in both.
 - (2). He rebuked the lawlessness, not the office.
 - (3). We are to respect the office, even if it is necessary to rebuke the lawlessness.
 - (4). Paul took the thing in which the Pharisees were right and used that to divide his accusers. Jesus said that they sat in Moses' seat; do what they said, but not what they did. The Pharisees were caught in their own hypocrisy.

II. Jesus Christ, Above the Conspiracies of Wickedness. Acts23:11-24

- A. Paul's vision and instructions from the Risen Christ. Vs. 11 To strengthen him for the trials ahead: that he might know that God was directing his way.
- B. Conspiracies: no where to stand.
 1. Took an oath: to defeat the decree of God? How foolish is that. The only standing of an oath is the will and purpose of God: "If God wills....we shall do this or that." Given over to madness.
 2. "There is no wisdom," saith Solomon, "there is no counsel against the Lord," Proverbs 21:30.
 3. Hannah: ISamuel2:1-8 read
- C. Chief priests and elders: Religious bosses.
 1. Because they had no faith, they descended to conspiracy and murder. "Well, it had to be done" would be the justification. "Sometimes you have to do nasty things."
 2. Trust God and do what Scripture and conscience requires is the right way.
- D. Paul's sister's son: his nephew.
 1. God has more resources for delivering His people than you can imagine: 2Pe2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:
 2. Gave him favor with the magistrate. Vs. 19. Again. The Lord from heaven uses the civil power to reprove and thwart the wicked designs of the apostate church.
- E. Conspiracy theory is often the disguise for devil worship: as if the devil is in charge of everything. Men preach the doctrines and glory of the devil. We should be obsessed with the power and glory of Jesus Christ and now the power and glory of the devil and his fallen kingdom.

III. Jesus Christ, Above the Civil Power: Acts23:25-35

- A. The letter of Claudius Lysias to Felix, removes Paul from Jewish jurisdiction. Rome left the trying of religious matters to the local religious authorities. But Paul was a Roman citizen.
- B. Claudius preys upon Felix's disgust with the Jews so that he will be predisposed to hear Paul's case. The Jews had powerful friends at Rome, so it would be a delicate task.
- C. The ruler is the minister of God. Romans 13: It is permitted to speak truth to power, but not to resist the office. Compare this with Paul before the high priest. Jesus is Lord of All, even the secular power.
 1. He rules the apostate church.
 2. He rules providence and all conspiracy.

3. He rules the secular power.

Conclusion:

I If God be for us, who can be against us. Do not fear the instruments of the Lord.

A. all the weapons belong to God: Isaiah 54:11following.

B.2Ch32:8With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

C. Jer 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

II. 2Cor. 10: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.