

Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter 23

- In verse 1 we see Paul standing before the Sanhedrin.
 - What term does he use to address them?
 - Did he consider himself separate from them or part of them?
 - What was his public claim regarding how he had conducted his life to that very day?
 - If he had truly rejected the authority of the Torah, as he was charged with doing, could he have made this statement truthfully?
- In verse 2, what do we see the high priest do?
- What was Paul's response in verse 3?
 - Do you see a parallel here to Stephen's rebuke in Acts 7:53?

- After being informed in verse 4 of the identity of the high priest what was Paul's response in verse 5?
 - As Paul quotes the Torah in Exodus 22:28, does this further establish his commitment to the authority of the Torah?
- In verses 6-9 we see Paul applying the wisdom of the "divide and conquer" strategy.
 - According to verse 6, what did Paul perceive was the "political makeup" of this Sanhedrin?
 - What was the one card he could play to garner support?
 - What did Paul cry out to the council?
 - Did he claim that he "was" or "had been" a Pharisee or that "I am a Pharisee"?
 - Why would his continued identification as a Pharisee be critical to his claims to garner support?
 - If he had disclaimed "being" a Pharisee, would his tactic have worked?
 - Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrec-

tion, the existence of angelic beings, heaven, hell or the supernatural world, what does Paul claim that fueled support from the Pharisees?

- What do you think was the motivation of the Pharisees who stood up and publicly supported Paul?
- Due to this wise political maneuvering, Paul had a victory in these proceedings by essentially “splitting the vote” across party lines.
- According to verse 10, was the issue peacefully resolved? What happened?
- According to verse 11, how was Paul comforted?
 - Paul had previously desired to go to Rome and now he saw how his prayers would be answered.
 - As Paul underwent his future trials, how do you think this vision of his destiny would support him and give him courage and direction?
- In verses 12-15, we learn of a plot to kill Paul by a group of lawless conspirators.
 - According to verse 12, what was the level of commit-

ment these conspirators had?

- According to verse 13, how many people were complicit in this conspiracy?
- According to verse 14, who else was complicit?
- What does this say about the level of corruption in the Sanhedrin of that day?
- In verses 16-19 we learn of Paul's nephew's intervention to inform on this conspiracy.
 - What do you make of the wisdom of the commander in listening to the young man "privately"?
- In verses 20-22, the young man accurately relates the details of this conspiracy.
 - In verse 22, why did the officer charge the young man to keep this a secret?
- Being charged with keeping civil order in Jerusalem, why did the officer see the need to disallow such a lawless murder to occur "on his watch"?
 - In verses 23-24, how did the officer quickly respond to this threat?

- In verses 25-35, we see how the story continues.
 - This officer writes a detailed letter to Felix, the governor.
 - In verse 27, he relates the story of how Paul had been seized by the Judeans and almost killed. He also claims that he rescued Paul “having learned that he was a Roman”.
 - How truthful was this account by the officer?
 - Did he leave anything out of his report?
 - Was there anything self-serving in his “spin” of the account?