

Paul taken into custody of the Roman Empire

The Jews of Jerusalem didn't receive the words of the Apostle Paul. They didn't want to know or learn his gospel message, and were demonstrating their urge to kill him here in ACTS 22:22 & 23. ACTS 22:22 *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,....* . Had not the Roman soldiers been bound to the Apostle Paul by two chains (ACTS 21:33), this would have been the end of him. Many times in recent years, and in centuries past, zealous Jews had repeated this same kind of action against the prophets, including Jesus, and in their immediate past even the Apostle Paul had been persecuted. As it turned out here, this was the last chance that the Jews of Jerusalem ever got to hear the voice of the Apostle Paul. The prophet Jeremiah had once spoken the following words unto the children of Israel from the court of the Lord's house: JEREMIAH 26:15 *But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.* Again back in JEREMIAH 6:19 we read these words: *Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.* Essentially this again is what happened here in Jerusalem, for the children of Israel once again rejected words spoken by a devout servant of the Lord, which in this case was the Apostle Paul. This was the last time the Apostle Paul ever got to visit Jerusalem.

(And approximately twelve years later the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, and the majority of the Jews who lived in Jerusalem were scattered throughout the rest of the world. MATTHEW 24:2 records: *And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* Literally every stone of the temple building was pried apart one from the other, for the Jews had stored their silver and gold in the temple for safe keeping, but when the Romans destroyed the temple by fire in 70 A.D., the melted gold and silver ran down between the stones, and the Roman soldiers out of greed pried the stones apart to get to the melted gold and silver. Thus as Jesus had stated earlier: *There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*)

In EPHESIANS 2:10 Paul writes: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* The steps ordained of the Lord for Paul to walk in were now taking him in a different direction, and if one phrase could sum up this direction, it would be the phrase "a prisoner of Jesus Christ." History tells us that the Apostle Paul lived approximately ten years from this point, and Conybeare and Howson show that he was in custody of the Roman Empire for the next five years at least, with certain freedoms being awarded to him because of his Roman citizenship, which we will discuss shortly in more detail.

Note in the following passages of scripture how the Apostle Paul acknowledged the Lord in this new endeavor of his life. In EPHESIANS 4:1-3 Paul writes: *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* In EPHESIANS 3:1 Paul again acknowledges that he is right where the Lord wanted him: *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,....* . In the little epistle unto PHILEMON Paul twice states that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ, (see verses 1 & 9). In COLOSSIANS 4:18 Paul states: *...Remember my bonds.* In EPHESIANS 6:19 & 20 Paul requests prayer *...for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* Not one time does Paul ever give credit to any one other than the Lord for being prisoner. Thus we see that his focus was always clearly on the Lord, knowing that: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way...* (PSALMS 37:23). Paul also knew that the Lord *...hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee...* (HEBREWS 13:5).

Such is the heart attitude of a full overcomer, always focused upon the Lord, and giving the Lord credit for every step of every day.

During these next ten years Paul will write his prison epistles, which include PHILEMON, COLOSSIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, 1 & 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS, and an unsigned letter addressed unto the HEBREWS, from whom he has just received this unkind treatment. We find in the above listed epistles deep truths that were revealed unto Paul, some of which he had not yet experienced. And for the most part these epistles were written unto the Gentiles. Simply put, the Apostle Paul reached multiplied more Gentiles while a prisoner than he ever did as a free man, because of his epistles! New Testament believers have been studying Paul's letters for nearly two thousand years now, and some of the millions who have grasped the deep truths contained in Paul's writings will be among those found qualified to be in that bridal company of full overcomers from this church age.

With this background information in mind, let's get back to studying what happened next to Paul on this most eventful day when he was taken into the custody of the Roman Empire. Paul has just been interrupted in his testimony speech given in Hebrew unto the Jewish audience celebrating the feast of Pentecost there in Jerusalem, and they quietly listened until he said the word "Gentiles." ACTS 22:22-24 continues: *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.*

Our focus turns to verse 24 where we again read of Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, who was in charge of the Roman soldiers stationed in Jerusalem. Paul was already bound with two chains according to ACTS 21:33, so there was no way he was going to escape, even if he wanted to. Again PSALMS 37:23 states: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way...* and the Apostle Paul knew this to be true, even though he was in a tough situation right now. This particular day was a turning point in Paul's life, that is why there is so much scripture written about the events of this one day. To us it may seem that every thing that could go wrong, did go wrong, yet at the end of this day, and all throughout this day, every thing, and every event that took place in Paul's life was ordered of the Lord, *...For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them....* (EPHESIANS 2:10).

Claudius Lysias didn't understand one word of Paul's speech, nor did any of the Roman soldiers stationed at Jerusalem, because Paul gave the speech in Hebrew according to ACTS 22:2. However Claudius Lysias observed that the great silence that had been given to Paul while he spoke, was broken by near riot because of something Paul had said, and he needed to get to the bottom of who Paul was, what he had done, and why the people in Jerusalem were so upset with him. So ACTS 22:24 again tells us: *The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.*

Paul, you will recall, had already much experience with scourging, and has already written in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:24 *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned...* After writing 2 CORINTHIANS Paul wrote the epistle unto the GALATIANS, and in GALATIANS 6:17 he writes: *From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* The Greek word translated "henceforth" here comes from a Greek word found only this one time in the New Testament, which is number 3064 in The Strongs Greek Concordance, *loipou* {loy-poo'}, meaning: for the future, or hereafter. One translation of this verse reads: "Let nobody interfere with me after this, for I bear on my body the scars that mark me as a slave of Jesus." Obviously this was a desire in the heart of the Apostle Paul, not to have any more trouble from any man, yet the Lord ordained it otherwise, as we have seen here in Jerusalem. Reading the above two portions of scripture from 2 CORINTHIANS 11, and GALATIANS 6, we see that the Apostle Paul had been there, and done that when it came to scourging, and had learned that he actually did have some rights as a Roman citizen, which we read about in ACTS 22:25 *And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful*

for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? Obviously the Holy Ghost had given the Apostle Paul clear thoughts about his present circumstance, and the right words to speak. When Paul asks: *Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?...* he was stating here to the Roman centurion that he was a Roman citizen. Some of the privileges of Roman citizens were: the exemption from scourging, and except in extreme cases, the freedom from arrest, the freedom from being bound, and the right of appeal from the magistrate to the Emperor.

In our previous studies, we learned back in ACTS 16:37 that beating an uncondemned Roman citizen carried with it severe penalties. The magistrates of Philippi who had administered the unjust treatment of Paul and Silas were then subject to the same treatment themselves. Roman law stated that the punishment for those who transgressed the Roman law in such a manner was death, and the confiscation of his property. Additionally there was a potential loss of freedom for the families of those responsible for the unjust punishment. The same thing would apply here at Jerusalem if Roman citizens, such as Claudius Lysias were to allow Paul to be beaten by the Roman soldiers. Actually the chief captain Claudius Lysias was in violation of Roman law by having Paul bound with chains in the first place. ACTS 22:29 tells us this of Claudius Lysias: *...the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.* When Claudius Lysias later wrote a letter unto the governor Felix, he made sure he didn't mention the fact that he had Paul bound with chains. We read this in ACTS 23:27 *This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.* So we see it wasn't until the time frame of ACTS 22:25-29 that the chief captain Claudius Lysias knew that Paul was a Roman citizen. And further more Claudius Lysias knew that no man would assume the right of citizenship if that right didn't really belong unto him.

ACTS 22:25 *And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.*

As I study the Bible I am amazed at all the marvels of The Word of God, which really is Jesus portrayed unto us according to REVELATION 19:13. The Word of God is really inexhaustible, and very much a living Word. We can study the scriptures, and keep peeling away different layers, probe their depths, and still never run out of thoughts to pursue. In scripture we find the phrase "a Roman," meaning a Roman citizen, used five times, all in reference to the Apostle Paul. Four of the five times are in the text above, and the one other scripture that references the Apostle Paul as "a Roman" is in ACTS 23:27, also noted above. By now we know five is the number of GRACE. So obviously the Lord is trying to teach us a lesson or two more about GRACE here in this portion of scripture.

One thing to note about the phrase "a Roman" being used five times here, is that it's relevance in our text coincides with freedom. But GRACE coincides with freedom too, and freedom coincides with liberty. Keep these thoughts in mind as we consider again what is said in ACTS 22:28 -- *And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.* Both Paul, and Claudius Lysias were speaking here of their freedom afforded them because of their Roman citizenship. Paul was saying he was born of a father who was a Roman citizen, and Claudius Lysias was noting that he had bought his Roman citizenship with a great deal of money. Both men were Roman citizens never the less, and both men knew the importance of this citizenship, because their Roman citizenship brought them greater freedoms, and liberty than non-Romans. Many, if not all, wars have been fought for liberty and freedom, that's how important freedom and liberty are to the natural man.

But Roman citizen Paul on the road to Damascus was born again. This new birth by the GRACE of God afforded him even greater freedom and liberty than he ever held as

a Roman citizen, and much greater liberty and freedom than he ever experienced as a strict law keeping Pharisee. Our King James translation of Paul's statement in ACTS 22:28 tells us: *...But I was free born...* which carries with it a double meaning; first, Paul was a free born Roman citizen, and second, Paul was a born again citizen of heaven, forever set free from the bondage of sin, forever given liberty in Christ Jesus, and not to be ever entangled again with the yoke of bondage. In GALATIANS 5:1 Paul has already written: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* We are talking about spiritual freedom here, which is kind of ironic since Paul here at Jerusalem has just been arrested and bound with two chains. He was physically bound, yet spiritually free, which is a great part of why Paul had a clear mind to ask in ACTS 22:25 above: *...Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?*

Let's examine this thought of spiritual freedom a little more. In the verses just previous to this statement in GALATIANS 5:1 Paul wrote a great deal contrasting law and grace. And he used Abraham as an example, noting in GALATIANS 4:22 *...that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.* Paul was talking here about two women: Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah, and Sarah Abraham's wife. GALATIANS 4:23 continues: *But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.* Ishmael was born to Hagar, an Egyptian, in GENESIS 16, and Isaac was promised unto Sarah in GENESIS 17, and born unto her in GENESIS 21. GENESIS 16:12 records this of Ishmael: *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* Thus Ishmael figures the character of all who are born after the flesh, wild, selfish, and self willed. Isaac, on the other hand, was born of promise unto Sarah. ROMANS 9:8 tells us: *...They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* Isaac was born unto Sarah when she was ninety years old, well past the age of child bearing, (see GENESIS 17:17). Isaac was the off spring of divine promise. HEBREWS 11:11 tells us: *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

Paul had already written in ROMANS 4 some more things about this promise. ROMANS 4:13 *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Back to GALATIANS 4. The Apostle Paul uses the mother's of these two children of Abraham as he continues in GALATIANS 4 to contrast law and grace. He calls it an allegory in verse 24, which is a story with a symbolic meaning, and then explains the meaning in terms these Galatian readers could relate to. GALATIANS 4:24 *Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* In other

words Hagar pictures the law of Moses given him from Mount Sinai in Arabia, which contains a list of rules that no man was ever justified by. ROMANS 3:20 tells us: *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* GALATIANS 2:16 repeats this theme: *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* Again in GALATIANS 3:11 Paul wrote: *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* Paul finishes this part of his allegory concerning the law by comparing the Jerusalem of his day with Mount Sinai, for at that time Jerusalem was subject to the Roman government, and her laws. The point Paul was getting to here is expressed like this in ROMANS 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

The other half of this allegory revolves around Sarah, the free-woman of GALATIANS 4:22. Sarah is a type here of Jerusalem which is above, the heavenly Jerusalem. Sarah here pictures grace. GALATIANS 4:26 *But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.* Brother Copley wrote this concerning verse 26: "The heavenly Jerusalem, the city of Grace, from which the promise came, is indeed the mother of all who believe on Jesus Christ." {End of quoting Brother Copley}. Simply put to the believer, Grace is the mother of us all. Paul continues his allegory: GALATIANS 4:27 *For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.* 28 *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.* 29 *But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* 30 *Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.* 31 *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.* 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* The Apostle Paul had been set free from the yoke of bondage of the law, and sin, and death when he got saved on the road to Damascus.

Paul didn't get to hear the following words of Jesus first hand, but he believed them in his heart. We read this about Jesus in JOHN 8. JOHN 8:30 *As he spake these words, many believed on him.* 31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;* 32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* 33 *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?* 34 *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* 35 *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.* 36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* Here at Jerusalem in ACTS 22, Paul knew he was free indeed, free from sin, free from the law, even though he remained bound for the time by the Romans.

Paul wrote in ROMANS 6:17 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.* 18 *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* 19 *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.* 20 *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.* 21 *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.* 22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* 23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

We have been discussing that statement in ACTS 22:28 where Paul states unto Claudius Lysias: *...But I was free born,...* and how this equates in one respect unto GRACE, the grace of God, and how GRACE relates unto the spiritual freedom and liberty that we have in Christ Jesus. No other author in scripture mentions the word "grace" more than the Apostle Paul. In total the word "grace" is found 170 times in scripture, 99 times in Paul's writings, and 9 more times in the book of ACTS in association with the Apostle Paul. We noted earlier that the Apostle Paul began most all of his epistles with a

salutation of grace, and ended all of his epistles with a exhortation of grace. {See page 752 of these notes}. Paul was a grace Apostle, a grace preacher, a grace teacher, a man who had been taught by Jesus Christ, grace. Paul wrote in GALATIANS 1:15 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,* 16 *To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;*... . And what did Paul preach more than any other gospel writer? GRACE.

Here is just a sampling of what Paul wrote concerning GRACE: ROMANS 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;*... . ROMANS 6:14 *...for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9 *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work;*... . GALATIANS 2:21 *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* EPHESIANS 2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,* 5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* 6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:* 7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* 8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:* 9 *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* EPHESIANS 3:1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,* 2 *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:* 3 *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,* 4 *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)* 5 *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;* 6 *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:* 7 *Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.* 8 *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*... . EPHESIANS 4:7 *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* COLOSSIANS 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* COLOSSIANS 4:6 *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* 2 THESSALONIANS 2:16 *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace;*... . 2 TIMOTHY 2:1 *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,* 12 *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;* 13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;* 14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* TITUS 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* HEBREWS 13:9 *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.* HEBREWS 13:25 *Grace be with you all. Amen.*

To conclude our thoughts here about GRACE, and the liberty, and freedom we have in Christ Jesus, let's go back and review a statement found in ACTS 20, which Paul made unto the Ephesian elders a couple of months before our time frame of ACTS 22. ACTS 20:22 *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:* 23 *Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.* 24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* Verse 24 clearly shows the heart attitude of a full overcomer, as we have noted before. And we

have seen that Paul did indeed make it to Jerusalem, and that bonds did await him there, but he never wavered from preaching and testifying about the grace of God. Paul knew the facts of HEBREWS 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* Even though circumstances change from day to day, the fact still remains *...Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* Here in Jerusalem in ACTS 22, with Paul now in the custody of the Roman empire we find that Paul's heart attitude still echoes this same theme: *...none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* And if Paul was allowed to speak once again unto his traveling companions he would tell them the same thing he told the Ephesian elders in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

ACTS 22:29 *Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.* With these words ends a most eventful day in the life of Paul. This day had started out back in ACTS 21:26. He has been accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple, almost killed by the riotous Jews, violently "rescued" by the Roman soldiers, arrested, bound with two chains, hauled off into the castle known as Fort Antonia, where as many as 10,000 Roman soldiers may have been stationed. On his way into the Fort Paul was given liberty to speak unto the Jews, giving his testimony in Hebrew, where he set off another uproar after using the word "Gentiles," and afterwards was taken into the Fort where he was about to be scourged until he announced he was a Roman citizen. Which brings us to this verse, which essentially ends this most eventful day. ACTS 22:29 *Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.* Paul started out this day as a free man, and ended with him being taken into custody of the Roman Empire, who will hold him for the next five years.

Paul brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin Council

Claudius Lysias, the Roman chief captain, still is unclear as to whom Paul was, and what he was accused of doing by the Jews. Since he couldn't legally beat this information out of Paul, because of Roman law, and since water boarding had not yet been invented, Lysias decided that Paul should the next day appear before the Jewish Sanhedrin council of Sadducees and Pharisees, and their chief priests, with the hope of finding out who Paul was, and what he had done to create such an uproar. After all Claudius Lysias was the Roman soldier in charge of keeping peace at Jerusalem, and there certainly had been much disturbance created here in Jerusalem because of Paul. ACTS 22:30 records it like this: *On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.*

This verse contains several things to consider. Let's start with the fact that Paul was loosed from his bands. Obviously Lysias believed Paul's story of the fact that he was a Roman citizen. For Claudius Lysias to leave Paul bound would have meant serious consequences for Lysias himself, which we noted above included such penalties as death, and the confiscation of his own property, and loss of citizenship for the rest of his family. So Claudius Lysias loosed Paul from his bands, yet retained custody of him, not yet knowing who he was, nor what he had done. To get to the bottom of this topic, Lysias was relying on the Jewish Sanhedrin council for help.

The Jewish Sanhedrin council had power to judge Jewish matters, but were supposedly powerless to decide between life and death. Life and death judgments were the responsibility of the Roman governor. Scripture records several instances of where Christians were brought before this Jewish Sanhedrin council, and in most instances they received unjust treatment. Let's trace these accounts in scripture.