

Paul's 1st trial and the Aftermath

Notes for 18 Nov

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Read: [Acts 22:30-23:35](#)

This trial took place around 59CE. Paul was converted around 34CE. During this period Paul had written the huge majority of his books. As we have studied, his theology had developed to the point that it completely undermined the traditional Jewish perspective. Paul was highly regarded by a number of Jewish Christian communities, as well as Gentile Christian communities. He was also very influential. From the Sanhedrin's point of view, Paul must have been regarded as very dangerous because of his 'subversive' activities and views.

This trial occurred just 7 years prior to the siege of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was in turmoil, with the Pharisees, Sadducees and Zealots having major disagreements with each other to such an extent that they resorted to violence on occasions. The Roman authorities were obviously very concerned, because the stability of their empire was always dependent on law and order being maintained.

Discussion

1. Jewish theology was primarily based on the 613 laws, which not only incorporated statements on theology, but also on the criminal and civil code, as well as agriculture and other matters. They were paramount. How did Paul's teachings undermine the Jewish perspective on these laws?
2. "I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God". Should we add qualifications to this statement?
3. What can you find out about the nature and purpose of the Sanhedrin? "Do you dare insult God's High Priest?" Why was Paul apologetic after he was challenged?
4. Paul managed to sow dissension among the judges. Why do you think this was a good defensive strategy of Paul's? Do you think it would have been impossible to convict Paul, laying aside the advantage of being a Roman citizen?
5. We will touch upon the escort of nearly 500 soldiers, because that must tell us something about Paul and his mission. It's clear that God also wanted Paul to testify in Rome. Why do you think this was? Can you discover the difference of the position of Roman religious law vis-a-vis the whole of Roman law compared with that of Jewish law?