

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=

Lesson 23

God's Way of Getting Paul to Rome - Acts 24, 25, 26

AIM: to teach my pupils the miraculous way that God works.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the pupils how many of them believe they have found God's will for their lives. Ask how they found it and when they found it. Share for a few moments the will of God in the lives of the pupils. You might even discuss briefly the matter of the perfect will of God and the acceptable will of God [X] the perfect will of God being done by a person who all of his life stays in the will of God and never forfeits the perfect will, and the acceptable will of God being done by a person who has forfeited his chance to do the perfect will of God. For example, suppose God called a man to preach in early life. Then he married and divorced several times and refused the call of God and did other things that would forfeit his right to be a pastor. He could not be in the original perfect will of God, but he could find an acceptable will of God. This would be true concerning someone who married the wrong person, someone who wrongly divorced and remarried, etc.

INTRODUCTION: Read to the class Acts 23:11. God promised that Paul would preach in Rome. Now this is certainly an unlikely possibility. How in the world could Paul get to Rome? Here is a man practically penniless, a prisoner, with people trying to kill him; and yet God promises him that he will preach in Rome. Consequently, he will preach at Rome. How will it come about? Humanly, this is impossible. God will have His way, however. Let us see how God worked to get Paul to Rome.

- I. THE THREAT OF HIS ENEMIES. Acts 23:12-14 tells us of the conspiracy to kill Paul.
- II. PAUL'S DELIVERANCE FROM THIS CONSPIRACY AND HIS TRIP TO CÆSAREA. See Acts 23:16, 17, 23, 24. The chief captain, upon hearing of Paul's danger, secretly sent him to Cæsarea to be judged by Felix. (Look at the map in the back of the Bible and show the class where Cæsarea was located.)
- III. PAUL STANDS TRIAL BEFORE FELIX, THE GOVERNOR.
 1. His accuser was Tertullus, an orator. (Acts 24:1)
 2. Tertullus certainly used his oratorical ability in appealing to the vanity of Felix. In Acts 24:2-4, notice the swelling words of this orator and how he "battered up" Felix.
 3. Paul showed his respect for rulers and political leaders. (Acts 24:10)
 4. Paul was not a demonstrator or a debater. (Acts 24:12)
 5. Paul could not, however, deny his faith in Christ. (Acts 24:14, 15)
 6. Paul told Felix the plan of salvation and the way Christians ought to live. (Acts 24:25a)
 7. Felix was convicted. Notice in verse 25 the words, "Felix trembled."
 8. Felix was going to be saved at a more "convenient" time. In Acts 24:25, notice the words, "...when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."
- IV. PAUL BEFORE FESTUS. Paul had been in Cæsarea two years, probably having liberty under Felix. Felix, however, wanting to leave office with the favor of the Jews, left Paul in bonds; and Festus, who succeeded Felix, found Paul in bonds.
 1. Festus suggested Paul go to Jerusalem to be judged. Read Acts 25:9.
 2. Paul appealed to be judged by Cæsar. Notice Acts 25:10, 11. We are now entering into a little light concerning what was going to happen. Bear in mind, Cæsar was in Rome. Not long ago it seemed impossible that Paul would ever get to Rome to preach, being a prisoner in Jerusalem; but now we are seeing the will of God about to unfold.
- V. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA (HEROD).
 1. Agrippa and Bernice came to Cæsarea to see Festus. (Acts 25:13)
 2. Festus told him about Paul. (Acts 25:14)
 3. Festus told Agrippa that he was thinking of sending Paul to Caesar in Rome. (Acts 25:25)
 4. Paul was brought before Agrippa. (Acts 25:26, 27)

VI. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA.

1. Paul had respect for rulers. (Acts 26:1-3)
2. Paul told of his past. (Acts 26:5, 10, 11)
3. Paul told of his wonderful conversion experience. (Acts 26:12-23)
4. Festus accused Paul of being out of his mind. (Acts 26:24)
5. Paul almost converted Agrippa. (Acts 26:28, 29)

VII. PAUL ON HIS WAY TO ROME. (Acts 26:31-27:1) What a beautiful story! God took a little fellow like Paul, with no money, and caused him to turn rulers inside out and caused Paul to be on his way to Rome to preach the Gospel. It had always been Paul's desire to go to Rome. God had promised him that he would, and there he went.

VIII. SOME CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS.

1. God brings about His will. Surrender to God's will, and He will take care of working out the details.
2. Live one day at a time. Go one step at a time, but always go toward the goal. Do not expect to reach the goal today or tomorrow, but always make some progress toward the goal.
3. When things seem to be going wrong, God is oftentimes bringing in the right.
4. We should always respect those who have authority over us.
5. We should always be willing to give our testimony, regardless of where we are.
6. Doing right is always the right thing to do. We cannot see the end of the road. God will bring right out in the end.

MEMORY VERSE: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," Romans 12:1.