



ACTS

Disciples Making Disciples

Acts 22:22-23:35 (God at work)

God is at work – In All Things!

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Acts 22:22-23:35

Outline

God at work – in Paul's protection

- From being tortured by the Romans (22:22-29)
- From being torn apart in the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:10)
- From being ambushed in transit (23:12-22)

God at work – in Paul's peccability (23:3-5, 11)

God at work – in Paul's purpose (23:11; 23-35)

Paul's journey to Jerusalem

²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

Acts 20:22-23 (ESV)

Paul's journey to Jerusalem

a story of God at work in all things...

- In saving Paul from the riotous mob in the temple (21:27-35)
- In giving Paul an opportunity to share his testimony with the crowd (21:37-22:21)

²² Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” ²³ And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this.

Acts 22:22-24 (ESV)

²⁵ But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?” ²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.” ²⁷ So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.” ²⁸ The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.” Paul said, “But I am a citizen by birth.” ²⁹ So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

Acts 22:25-29 (ESV)

God at work – In Paul's protection

From being tortured by the Romans (22:22-29)

- Roman Tribune seeks to examine Paul by flogging
- God works to protect Paul from injury (possibly even death) because of his upbringing.
- As a Roman citizen by birth, Paul was entitled to a trial before any punishment could be given.

God was at work in Paul's life even before he came to faith in Jesus!

God at work – In our lives

- David acknowledged God at work in his life even before he was born (Psalm 139:13-16)
- Paul acknowledged God at work before the creation of the world (Eph 1:3-5)

Do you acknowledge God at work in your life?

Do you glorify God & give thanks to Him for this?

¹ But And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” ² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” ⁴ Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God's high priest?” ⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

Acts 23:1-5 (ESV)

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹ Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” ¹⁰ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks

Acts 23:6-10 (ESV)

God at work – In Paul's protection

From being torn apart in the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:10)

- Roman Tribune still seeks answers - sends Paul to the Sanhedrin (22:30)
- Violent dissension arose, again Paul is in danger (23:9-10)
- Roman Tribune commanded his soldiers to take Paul by force into the barracks. (23:10)

God was at work using the pagan gentiles (Roman military) to protect Paul & advance the gospel.

God at work – In Paul's protection

From being ambushed in transit (23:12-22)

- Roman Tribune gets wind of an assassination attempt by some zealous Jews. (v19-21)
- More than 40 men involved in the conspiracy, along with the chief priests & elders. (v12-15)
- Roman Tribune arranged for 400 soldiers & 70 horsemen to take Paul safely to Felix the governor at night. (v23-35)

God was at work using the pagan gentiles (Roman military) to protect Paul & advance the gospel.

God at work – In all things

- God has used King Cyrus of Persia to build the 2nd temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:2; Isaiah 44:28)
- God used a donkey to get the prophet Balaam's attention. (Numbers 22:21-32)
- God used Joseph's being sold into slavery to bring about the preservation of his family. (Gen 50:20)
- God used the death of Jesus to bring about salvation for all who would believe. (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2)

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Proverbs 19:21

God at work – In our challenges

- God is at work in the challenges and difficulties of our lives.
- God is at work in our suffering.
- God is at work in all things.

“When I understand that everything happening to me is to make me more Christlike, it resolves a great deal of anxiety.”

A.W. Tozer

God at work – In Paul's Peccability

Acts 23:3-5, 11

Peccable = liable to sin or error

- Paul was human, thus liable to sin
- He was a sinner, saved by grace – just like us!

Notice Paul's harsh response to the High Priest in v.3

And his apology in v.5

³ Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?”

⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

Acts 23:3, 5 (ESV)

God at work – In Paul's Peccability

Acts 23:3-5, 11

Possible interpretations:

1. Paul was simply calling out the hypocrisy of the High Priest.
2. Paul lost his cool. Responded in anger!
3. Paul really didn't know who spoke because his vision was poor. (cf. 2 Cor 12:7-10; Gal 4:15; Gal 6:11)

God at work – In Paul's Peccability

And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day."

Acts 23:1 (ESV)

God at work – In Paul's Peccability

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly, To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8 (NKJV)

God at work – In Paul's Peccability

And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God **in all good conscience** up to this day." **Acts 23:1 (ESV)**

My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. **1 Cor 4:4 (NIV)**

So I always take pains **to have a clear conscience** toward both God and man. **Acts 24:16 (ESV)**

God at work – In Paul's Peccability

¹⁸ ...For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ **So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.** ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

Romans 7:18-23 (NIV)

¹¹ The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”

Acts 23:11 (ESV)

God at work – In Paul's Purpose

Acts 23:11, 23-35

- Jesus graciously appears to Paul (v.11)
- Jesus reaffirmed Paul's calling & purpose.
- God again uses the Roman military to see Paul safely transported to the governor. (v.23-35)

Amidst all the challenges Paul was facing – God is at work!

God at work – In our lives

- What challenges are you facing?
- Where might we have failed to honour God with our thoughts and actions this week?

Will you look to Jesus and the grace He gives?

Will you trust that in all things God works?