

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 46

LAST TRIP TO JERUSALEM – PART 4

AT THE SANHEDRIN

When morning came, the chief captain of the Roman guard, Claudius Lysias, had Paul put in front of the Jewish religious governing body, the Sanhedrin to be examined by them. This was clearly a religious matter and not the breaking of any civil law (Acts 23:1-10).

As Paul began his defense, the high priest Ananias commanded those near Paul to smite him in the mouth, an act forbidden by Mosaic law. Paul rebuked Ananias. They accused Paul of speaking disrespectfully to the high priest. Paul replied in verse 5 (NIV), ***“I did not realize that he was the high priest, for it is written...”*** And Paul explained how this man had just violated the very scripture (Exodus 22:28) that a high priest should have obeyed.

Then Holy Spirit reminded Paul that this ruling body was composed of both Pharisees and Sadducees, he was inspired to declare his belief in the resurrection of the dead was the reason that he was on trial. This divided the Sanhedrin, and they began fighting among themselves. The Pharisees defended Paul since they believed in the resurrection, and he was a Pharisee like them.

The Sadducees opposed Paul because they did not believe in a future resurrection of the dead. They also did not believe in angels or any kind of spirit.

Because of the fight at the Sanhedrin, Claudius Lysias sent soldiers to fetch Paul and bring him into the safety of the castle. That night the Lord stood by Paul and told him in verse 11, ***“Be of good cheer, Paul. For as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”***

Paul only had one more day in Jerusalem before making his fourth and final missionary journey with the destination of Rome.

The division of doctrine in the Sanhedrin that caused much argument is still seen today as people of different churches also argue their doctrine. God desires unity among His believers, not strife or arguing. Jesus' command to love one another should allow us to accept those who differ with us without causing open disputes.

“Love conquers all.” Love identifies us as His followers. In John 13:35 Jesus said, ***“By this shall all (people) know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”***