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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 47

THE JOURNEY TO ROME – PART 1

ESCAPE TO CAESAREA

The day following Paul's appearance at the Sanhedrin Council, certain Jews banded together under an execration. An execration is an oath, or a vow, or a curse that they would neither eat nor drink anything until they had killed Paul (Acts 23:12).

This was to be a curse against themselves if they failed to kill him. Their pledge to each other and their absolute fasting sealed the execration (curse). There were more than forty of them.

They came to the Temple's chief priests and the Sanhedrin's elders to report their vow to kill Paul, and ask them to request of Claudius Lysias, the Chief Roman Captain, that he call for Paul to be sent to him again. They would lay in wait to ambush the guards and kill Paul while enroute to the captain.

Paul's young nephew learned of the plan, and he found Paul and told him. Paul called over a centurion and requested that he take the boy to the Chief Captain because they boy had something to tell him.

When the boy was escorted to the castle, the captain took him aside privately. The boy told him of the plot. The captain accepted the boy's story and sent him away with instructions to tell absolutely nobody about it. (Acts 23:13-33.)

This turned out to be the last day of Paul's twelve days in Jerusalem. The Chief Captain was not going to let these Jews murder a Roman citizen. He waited until nightfall to get Paul out of the city. At the third hour of the night, he put together a small army of soldiers to escort Paul to Caesarea. It included two centurions, seventy calvary men, and two-hundred-foot soldiers with spears. Paul was given a beast to ride.

Claudius Lysias sent with them a letter to Caesarea's governor, Felix detailing the matter. Their first stop was at Antipatris. Now removed from danger in Jerusalem, the foot soldiers returned to the captain's castle. The next day the seventy calvary men continued on with Paul to Caesarea.

Upon arrival, Felix was given the letter. Upon learning that Paul was a citizen of the Roman province of Cilicia, he told Paul that he would hear and judge his case once his accusers arrived from Jerusalem. Paul was then held in the judgment hall awaiting trial.

This was the start of Paul's two-year journey to Rome interrupted by numerous challenging events. There will be lessons for you and me to learn from the challenges he faced on this trip.