



CONTROVERSY IN THE COURTS

Open it

1. Describe a time when you had to completely change your strategy for addressing a particular situation because you realized what you had been doing just wasn't going to cut it.

Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 22:22–23:11

2. How would you summarize this passage?
3. What would you say are a couple of the key ideas in this passage?
4. Why do you think Paul said what he said during his meeting with the Sanhedrin (the counsel)?
5. | What encouragement do you think the words of the Lord held for Paul in verse 11?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: REJECTION OF TRUTH

Read Acts 21:27–29

If you remember from the last study, we learned about how Paul was sharing his testimony of how God had called him to serve as an apostle to the Gentiles! He broke his story down and shared all the details of his calling with them. Despite spelling it all out and providing clear evidence for it, these Jews still wanted nothing to do with Paul. They rejected his story and wanted to see him dead. How could they reject such a testimony?

Just because you may be certain of God's calling for your life, and you may be convinced of His work in your life, doesn't always mean that others will see it the same way or come to the same conclusions as a result of it. Sometimes they may even reject it straight up.

6. **How convinced are you of God's calling in your life—not necessarily what job you'll have, but the calling He has put on your life to be a child of God? What makes you certain of this calling?**

7. **What would you do if people began rejecting and criticizing this calling? How would you respond? What would you think? How would you stay committed to your calling despite all the opposition?**

8. **Why would some people reject your testimony of God's work in your life? How does thinking through their perspective help you respond in a way that could help them believe?**

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- For certainty and confidence in your calling as a Christian
- For courage to stand firm in that calling despite others' opposition and lack of faith
- For those who you know are rejecting Christ right now who you'd like to see come to faith in Him!

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: THE RIGHTS OF A ROMAN

Read Acts 22:23–29

After the commotion broke out again, the Roman tribune had had enough. He needed to know what all this rioting was all about. Since Paul had been speaking in Arabic/Hebrew, it's likely the Roman tribune didn't understand well what Paul was saying to the crowds. So in order to get to the bottom of this, he ordered Paul to be flogged to get the truth out of him. But before Paul was beaten, he spoke up and declared himself a Roman citizen.

Upon hearing this, the whole situation ground to a complete standstill, and fear overcame the tribune. Why? Because Roman citizens had strong rights, such as they were not to be bound without being charged with a crime, and they should never be beaten without being convicted. This really changed things for this Roman officer.

9. Certainly, it's no coincidence that Paul happened to be a Roman citizen. How does God use this to protect Paul?

10. How do you reconcile God's using human law to protect Paul, yet seemingly not intervening in other situations where His people were tortured or even killed for their faith? How can God let both things happen and still be fair and still be good?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

For those who are suffering for their faith all around the world, that God would grant them strength and peace. Pray that God might even deliver them from their suffering.

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: CONFUSION IN THE COURT

Read Acts 22:33–23:10

What a scene this is! Paul is brought before the council, which is made up of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, for questioning so that the Roman tribune can once again try to get down to the bottom of this whole ordeal. Well, by this point Paul has realized that his tactics of sharing his testimony and personal calling in life are not getting through to these people. So instead, he decided to switch things up and change the tone of his message to the hope that is found in Christ for all Israel and all the Gentiles—the resurrection. You've heard the saying, "The Sadducees were sad-you-see, because they didn't believe in the resurrection from the dead." So this statement by Paul did not go over well in this council, and the two sides—the Sadducees and the Pharisees—began arguing with each other about the resurrection. Upon this, the Pharisees actually started to side with Paul, "What if an angel or spirit has spoken to him?"

Well, apparently, this whole argument got pretty heated and things started to turn violent enough that the tribune, fearing for Paul's life, removed him from the scene. Wow! What an experience. You have to imagine this tribune is scratching his head wondering what in the world is wrong with these Jews!

11. Paul brings up the resurrection of Jesus Christ in his defense before the council. Why is the resurrection so important for us? Why is it our source of hope? (Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 for more explanation on this.)

12. How can we be sure that Jesus truly has been raised from the dead?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- For boldness to share the good news of Christ's resurrection with those who need to hear it.
- Thank God for raising Jesus from the dead and so giving us eternal life when we trust in Him!


Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: OBJECTIVE COMPLETE

Read Acts 23:11

God had called Paul to return to Jerusalem and preach the good news of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. Paul has done that and completed the calling God put before him. It could seem so discouraging as you might expect to see some sort of revival take place in Jerusalem as a result of Paul's ministry there. But right now, that's just not the case. It seems more like Paul is being driven from town! But nevertheless, God says that Paul has completed his objective and now he will go on to do the same in Rome itself. Paul's not done yet!

13. How should we respond when we are faithful to do what God has called us to and we see little to no fruit from the ministry we have done? Have you ever experienced this in your life? Maybe on a mission trip or serving somewhere in the church or maybe even sharing the gospel with a friend!

I HAVE A QUESTION!  Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- That God would make His mission for you clear and that He would protect you and equip you to do all the work He has called you to!