

Acts 23 – 18 October 2020

“A Boy’s Influence Among Men”

Introduction

*In Acts 21-22 – Paul’s been beaten by the Jews & arrested by the Romans, BUT given the chance to speak openly to his people!

The Jews rejected that the Gospel was to go to the Gentiles and the Romans would have scourged him to find out why the Jews were so enraged, but Paul called out his Roman citizenship.

Romans STILL want to know why this man has caused such uproar; they call the Jewish Sanhedrin

Today, we’ll examine 3 supporting people today, and one of them is a very young man

“A Boy’s Influence Among Men”

As we look at these 3 supporting people to the story today, we’ll see 3 ways to be influential regardless of you position

1st way to be influential (regardless of position) is to live a consistent life accepting of truth (Chap 23:1-11)

The High Priest – High position, No influence

Read Vs 1-2

1. Paul doesn't mean he's been perfect, just that he constantly lives in view of God's will
2. Smiting an uncondemned man is against Law
3. This Ananias was a greedy selfish man
4. Ends up betrayed by Jewish to death
5. What power and influence he could have had
 - a. But he lived an inconsistent life
 - i. Sometimes obeying Law, sometimes not
 - ii. Sometimes helping others, but only when it helped him
 - b. Wasn't led by truth but greed

Read Vs 3-5

1. This is 1 of those times it would be helpful to know how he said it. (Sarcasm, anger, sincerity?)

2. “Whited wall” – clean outside, dirty inside
3. Paul was correct that Law was violated
4. Paul was also correct to apologize
 - a. Respect the position, even if horrible man
 - b. H.P. was changed every 1-3 years at this point, likely Paul didn’t know it was him.
5. The reaction the H.P. is getting aren’t ones of admiration leading to influence
 - a. Demanded respect but didn’t deserve it

Read Vs 6-10

1. Like Paul does, he tries finding common ground & Pharisees believe in resurrection!
2. Paul put attention on a truly central issue!
 - a. Paul is consistently pushing truth claims
3. As the dispute rises, what’s missing?
 - a. The High Priest – he’s a Sadducee
 - b. He has no influence to add truth or speak from a respected position.

4. Paul divided Jews by ONE WORD
 - a. In Act 22:21 – one word was “Gentiles”
 - b. Now here it’s “resurrection”
 - c. Those two words will preach
 - i. Gentiles – Gospel is for the whole world!
 - ii. Resurrection – Gospel is powerful/effective

Read Vs 11

1. What an encouragement!
2. Even though Paul went to Jerusalem, got his chance of a lifetime & “blew it”, God has more!
3. Paul is in a lonely, dark place
 - a. God didn’t take Paul out of it
 - b. Jesus met with Paul “in” his circumstance

2nd way to be influential (regardless of position) is to be brave with your convictions (Chap 23:12-22)

Paul's Nephew – Low position, High influence

Read Vs 12-15

1. Conspiracy of the 40 Jews to kill Paul
2. They have zeal to serve God but not according to knowledge (Rom 10:2)
3. Can't serve God accurately or completely unless you know that Word of God
4. You have to know ALL OF God's Word or you can end up like these men.

Read Vs 16-19

1. How brave do you have to be for this!!
2. Clearly, he was a young man for the captain Lysias to take him by the hand
3. You won't take great risks unless you have great convictions. REPEAT
4. His love for uncle, propelled him to bravery

5. When you think of brave, young men of the Bible, whom do you think of?
 - a. David standing against Goliath
 - b. Daniel +3 standing against idolatry & king
 - c. Joseph standing against adultery
 - d. Young lad who gave his lunch standing for Jesus in faith
6. What do they have in common?
 - a. There's a conviction of belief
 - b. And a bravery to act

Read Vs 20-22

1. He must now go back and hope none of the enemies of Christ saw him in the act of aiding Paul.
2. Remember Paul's nephew the brave
3. Teach your young kids and nephews about Paul's nephew the brave

3rd way to be influential (regardless of position) is to be reasonable, willing to get all the info (Chap 23:23-30)

Captain Claudius Lysias-Mid-position, little influence

Read Vs 23-25

1. Captain commanded Paul to be taken safely to Governor Felix
 - a. Third hour of night = 9 PM
 - b. Lysias would have commanded 600-1,000
 - i. This is a large commitment of soldiers
2. Lysias has a great opportunity here to advance the Gospel but didn't.
 - a. Lysias was tied down, as many, worrying about themselves, earning his own way
 - b. Acts 22:28 – He bought his Roman“ness”
3. You could become a Roman in 4 main ways
 - a. Be born to 2 Roman parents (as Paul)
 - b. Serve 20 years as a soldier
 - c. Buy it when you have influence
 - d. Sometimes Emperor would bestow it

4. Although Lysias didn't advance the Gospel, he didn't stomp it out either...he got rid of it.
 - a. Passed the buck to the governor
 - b. He was at least reasonable & willing to get all the info on the matter for a decision.

Read Vs 26-30

1. So, the letter to Felix
2. Notice Lysias covers over the fact that he beat him before knowing that Paul was Roman.
 - a. Want to be influential? Get the facts before you make decisions.

Read Vs 31-32

1. 1st half (25 miles) dangerous, inhabited by Jews
2. Rest was flat land and mostly Gentiles

Read Vs 33-35

1. Felix will "take the case" hearing both sides
2. Will he choose to be a man of influence?

Conclusion

So What human has the greatest influence on the events of Acts 23?

1. **Was it the High Priest Ananias? No**
 - a. He needed to have a consistent life, ordered by truth, but he didn't
 - b. He had great position, but no influence
2. **Was it the Roman Captain Lysias? No**
 - a. He needed to be reasonable, willing to get all the info. Sometimes he was, sometimes not.
 - b. He had a good position but little influence
3. **Was it a pre-teen boy, Paul's nephew? Yes**
 - a. He needed to be brave & act on convictions
 - b. He had a very low position, but great influence
 - i. Influence in Paul's life
 - ii. Influence in advancing the Gospel
 - iii. Influence by experience to do it again later!