

Acts of Jesus, Lesson 48: The Sovereignty of God

God doesn't just work around circumstances and situations He even works through them

- ✓ We see this wonderfully illustrated in the life of Paul.

Acts 22:21-23

- ✓ It's important to not only have the right friends, but also the right enemies.
- ✓ How would the world react to your stance on the Gospel???

Verse 25

- ✓ Most probably you just simply have a display of Roman heavy handedness...rules of interrogation or steps of getting at the truth were unknown to them—they just jumped to the final step.
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Verses 26-29 – Roman Law explicitly prohibited the binding of Roman citizen without due process.

- ✓ A Roman citizen was not to be beaten under any circumstances even if convicted...the penalty for breaking this law was death!
 - ✓ Paul was sort of an upper class Roman citizen having been born such.
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Acts 22:30-23:5 – A couple things to look at here:

1. Ananias = someone you need to know
 - ✓ High priest and a Sadducee appointed as High priest by Rome.
 - ✓ According to Josephus, a wicked man
 2. This makes Paul's apology stand out even more boldly.
 - ✓ Nowhere does the Bible allow us to disrespect authority
 - ✓ All Authority is from God
 - Bad authority God gives as a form of judgment.
 - Good as a form of blessing
 - All authority is from Him.
 - ✓ You can't disrespect authority without in some way disrespecting God.
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Acts 23:6-11 – So Paul lobbs this theological grenade into the group knowing what it would do.

- ✓ From here, he is protected by the Romans both in Jerusalem and Caesarea and is ultimately transported to Rome where he testifies faithfully to the risen Christ.
 - ✓ He does all this under great opposition and makes it by the skin of his teeth through a string of incredible coincidences. **Or are coincidences?**
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Acts 1:8, 9:15-16 (predicted here 30 yrs. before that he would testify before kings and it would come through suffering on his part).

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Verse 11

Is this a string of coincidences or is the work of the Sovereign God who knows all things?

- ✓ Paul just happened to be Pharisee.
 - ✓ He just happened to have an ancestor who was declared a Roman citizen
 - ✓ He just happened to speak Greek that impressed the Roman soldier and Hebrew that impressed the crowd.
 - ✓ It just happened that the Jews who were supposed to bear the testimony of the Living God to world in their rejection of God, sent out the church by persecuting it which resulted in it bearing witness to God.
 - ✓ It just happened that the pagan empire of Rome footed the bill for the whole thing by protecting one of their citizens and paying his way to Rome, thus guaranteeing that the gospel goes everywhere.
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Too many coincidences!

Bottom line is this: People think they do what they want and to some extent they do, but in everything God is still accomplishing His will.

- ✓ Lesson: God is in control.
 - ✓ Safest place to be is in the middle of His will: may not make sense, may not be fun, may be hard, but it is safe.
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