

# *Journey to Ceasarea*

△ Acts 23:23-35

## Introduction

Last week Peter took you all through the plot to kill Paul

With the cliffhanger of

What happened to the men who vowed not to eat and drink until Paul was killed?

That does not get resolved here, either!

This week we see Paul being transferred from Jerusalem to Ceasarea

See map

From religious capital to Roman city

Seat of Felix, Roman Governer of the area

## Prophecy

This story also shows how God is moving in the background

<sup>11</sup> The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said "Take courage! As

you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

△ Acts 23:11

But Paul does not have to do much in order for this to happen

It is as the events morph around God's objective to send Paul to Rome

And the first is to make Paul save from Jewish religious leader's attacks to transfer him away from Jerusalem

The discovery of the plot to kill Paul is the fire started to these events

The tribune who oversees his centurions does not disregard the threat, but acts very decisively

After his own interrogations (which were quite harsh) and discovering that Paul is a Roman citizen, he is perhaps keen to make amends

But the protection he sends with Paul with a full company of soldiers (200), 70 horsemen and spearman (200) seems over the top

It is to keep to ensure that Paul gets

is he keen to ensure that Paul gets away from Jerusalem safely and quickly

So that no one can accuse him of treating a Roman citizen unfairly?

Or is God putting an urgency in his heart that he did not have before?

Or perhaps a bit of both?

Another motivation is to keep the peace in Jerusalem, as more than 40 Jewish men were planning to kill Paul

So Paul is whisked away, overnight to first Antipratis and the next day to Caesarea

The effect is that Paul suddenly gets also celebrity status

He receives good treatment

He gets multiple horses - was he permitted to take his own luggage?

The letter the Tribune wrote to him is factually accurate

Desolving Paul from any crimes according to Roman law

At least ones that warrant imprisonment or death penalty

Although it absolves the tribune and underplays his own role in the

## arrest of Paul

Harsh interrogations and a threat of flogging turned into a 'rescue'.

## And Paul gets the right to a fair trial

Away from the scene of the alleged crimes

And the Jewish religious authorities have to go to Felix at Caesarea to make their charges

## Presenting to Felix

After all the rushed journeying this seems a bit of anticlimax

Yes, Felix reads the letter and quickly interrogates Paul

But then decides to wait until his accusers arrive

Cilicia is the province in current day south turkey on the Mediterranean

Tarsus, where Paul is born is in that province

This gives Felix another reason to detain him, with him, as Paul citizen's jurisdiction would not fall under Herod, who was officially in charge of the region

# Save under guard in Herod's headquarters

Paul is now safe

Still imprisoned

But in relative comfort

Ironically in a Jewish owned palace, but under protection of the Roman Governor

God's plan for Paul to testify in Rome has been put into action

Will everything go swimmingly?

Felix is not to be underestimated!

## What we know about Felix

Co-procurator of Roman Palestine

Governor of Judea

A freedman with considerable influence on the emperor

With all cruelty and lust [he] wielded the power of a king, with the mentality of a slave

He married well and often

1. unknown

2. granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra

3. Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa the First

Was also an anti-semite

especially against Zealots

And he was dismissed as procurator in 60 Ad

So at the end of our passage we have another cliff hanger!

What will happen to Paul from now on!

## What can we learn

God's plans are different then ours

Would Paul have known that when at the beginning of Ch 23 he would be arrested and be in captivity until he got to Rome?

Maybe God's plans are different from our plans

We tend to plan our lives carefully

Perhaps already planning for retirement or later in life

Are we open to God's plans for us though?

Paul did not have a choice now.

But he had a choice when he was told that he would be arrested

And he still continued on to Jerusalem

Jesus did not have a choice when he was arrested

But he did have a choice in the Garden of Olives where he prayed that God

would take this cup from him

God would not

And Jesus continued in that

Is God calling one of us to something we have not planned?

Is not on our agenda?

But is on his agenda?

Are we open to a making a life changing decision like Paul and Jesus?

Amen