

God the Protector Acts 23:12-35

Keywords and Phrases*

Antipatris (v. 31)	Centurion (vv. 17, 23)
Horsemen (vv. 23, 32)	Kill(ed) (vv. 12, 14, 15, 21, 27)
Oath (vv. 12, 14, 21)	Praetorium (v. 35)
Roman citizen (v. 27)	Soldiers (vv. 23, 31, 32)
Spearmen (v. 23)	

*Keywords may vary depending on Bible translation

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is ironic about the plot to assassinate Paul (see Exodus 20:13, 16; Deuteronomy 5:17, 20; Acts 23:3-3; 12-15)?
2. What is the significance of a centurion helping Paul's nephew stop the assassination attempt? (see Luke 7:2, 6; 23:47; 10:1; 21:32; 22:25-26; Acts 23:17; 27:43)?
3. What parallels exist between this passage and the trials of Jesus (compare Matthew 27:27; Luke 23:15, Acts 23:29, 35)?
4. How does God intervene in this passage to safeguard Paul and ensure his arrival in Rome?
5. Why did God intervene to protect Paul from the Jews in this instance yet allowed Stephen and James to be martyred? (see Acts 7:57-60; 12:1-3)?

Reflection Question

How do the roles of various characters—such as the nephew, the centurion, and the conspirators—illustrate the complexity of God's intervention in the lives of believers?

Analyze the Text

Plot Against Paul

- Forty Jews took a vow to kill Paul (vv. 12-13)
 - They planned with the chief priest and elders to lie (vv. 14-15)

Paul's Nephew

- Heard of the assassination plot (v. 16)
- Visited Paul in the barracks and informs him (v. 16)
- Paul instructed one of the centurions to take his nephew to the commander (vv. 17-18)
- The nephew told the commander (18-21)
- The commander urged the nephew to keep the information secret (v. 22)

The Commander's Response

- Arranged a military escort for Paul (v. 23)
 - Ordered two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to leave at night (v. 23)
 - Provided a horse for Paul to ride on (v. 24)

Letter to Felix

- Commander wrote to Felix explaining the situation (v. 25)
 - Described the plot against Paul's life (vv. 27-28)
 - Outlined that the accusations against Paul are not crimes worthy of death (v. 29)
 - Gave reason for his decision to send Paul to Rome (vv. 30)

Paul's Arrival in Caesarea

- The soldiers escorted Paul to Antipatris at night (v. 31)
 - They returned after delivering Paul and let the horsemen take Paul to Caesarea (vv. 32-33)
- Felix read the letter and inquired about Paul's origin (v. 34)
 - Learned Paul is from Cilicia (v. 34)
 - Decided to wait for Paul's accusers to arrive (v. 35)
- Paul was placed under guard in Herod's Praetorium (v. 35)

*"I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment."
(Acts 23:29 ESV)*