

# STOP CASTING

Acts 22:30 – 23:35 / June 57 A.D.

Jesus teaches a parable in the Sermon on the Mount that many Christians have found hard to understand.

MATTHEW 7:6 (ESV)

*"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.*

Jesus is teaching there comes a time when we stop talking to another person (or persons) about spiritual things. When is that time? It is time to stop talking to a person about spiritual things when they clearly demonstrate they have no interest in spiritual things. They show themselves to be like dogs and pigs in their lack of capacity to discern what is holy and valuable. This does not mean we reject that person or that we stop praying for them; we just stop talking to them about spiritual things until they're interested. In our story today, Paul himself will put this parable in practice.

## **Acts 22:30–23:11 Defense Before the Sanhedrin**

Given Claudius Lysias (the Tribune), a gentile, was barred from entering the Chamber of Hewn Stones which was inside the Temple barricade, we believe Claudius insisted the Sanhedrin assemble at the base of the stairs to the Antonia Fortress under the North Portico. In this way Claudius could observe the proceedings and learn the Sanhedrin's accusation against Paul. This location also explains how soldiers could intervene quickly enough to again save Paul's life when members of the Sanhedrin attacked Paul. We further believe members of the Sanhedrin were in their "street clothes" in this setting.

This Ananias is one we've never met before. Ananias, son of Nedebaeus, was appointed priest in A.D. 48 and held that office for approximately ten years. He was famous for bribery and plunder of temple offerings; he was assassinated by Jewish guerrillas in A.D. 66. His order to strike Paul on the mouth was illegal since, before the Sanhedrin as before our own western courts of law, the prisoner was innocent until proven guilty.

We believe in this instance Paul lost his cool. He had to be incredibly sore and bruised from the previous days' beating. A fist to the mouth would have busted open his lips even more from the day before. And a punch to the mouth was illegal. Paul really didn't know the command came from the High Priest. He knew the High Priest by name but probably didn't know him by sight especially if they were dressed in street clothes. His apology further convinces us Paul lost his cool for which he was genuinely sorry.

But that action by the High Priest and a member of the Sanhedrin willing to carry it out told Paul all he needed to know about this proceeding – it was a waste of time.

Paul intentionally sabotaged this meeting. He knew there was zero interest in the truth or justice. Nothing good was going to come from this meeting. So, he brought up the issue of the resurrection to provoke a fight between Pharisaic and Sadducean members of the council. It worked and they went after each other like kids on the playground. For a second time the Tribune had to rescue Paul.

The next night while Paul was in the barracks of the Antonia Fortress, Jesus appeared to him (23:11). For some time, Paul has desired to preach the Gospel in the city of Rome. He expressed this desire a year prior in 56 A.D. in his letter to the Church of Rome (Romans 15:22ff). He now receives confirmation from Jesus that he will get his wish.

### **Acts 23:12-22 Plot Against Paul**

Claudius Lysias had to take this information seriously. Paul was an uncondemned Roman citizen for whom Claudius was responsible. If any harm came to Paul, Claudius would be held responsible. And after what he had seen the previous two days a plot like this was completely believable. Claudius Lysias didn't take any chances protecting Paul as we see in verses 23-35.

### **Acts 23:23-35 Transfer to Caesarea**

King Herod the Great built for himself a beautiful seaside palace in Caesarea. It came with a theater and a horse track and gorgeous views of the Mediterranean Sea. This is where Paul was housed for nearly two years.

If, as we believe, Luke wrote Acts as an *amicus brief*, a friend of the court document on Paul's behalf at his trial in Rome, this episode again shows that Paul is no threat to the Roman government. His opponents are his fellow Jews, not Roman authorities.

As to what Paul did in sabotaging the proceeding with the Sanhedrin – that appears to us as Paul deciding to no longer attempt to share the gospel with these who have proven they have no interest in spiritual truth or factual evidence of any kind.

We may find ourselves in similar circumstances. If someone repeatedly rejects listening to anything spiritual you have to say, stop casting. Keep praying for them. Keep caring for them. Do not reject them. But stop casting. Entrust them to God and be at peace.

---

**Voice of the Martyrs Needs for December: fleece blankets and hairbrushes.**

**Save on postage! Use our Christmas Card Exchange to send Christmas cards to fellow members of Grace Church.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 3:00P & 4:30P**

**NO SERVICES CHRISTMAS DAY, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>. ENJOY CHRISTMAS WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!**