



Power From on High

Series: Power From On High

Text: Acts 23:12-18

Title: Ordinary Means, Extraordinary
Providence

Date: May 10, 2026

Lesson: 130

Acts 23:11 But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, **“Take courage;** for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”

He was anchoring Paul’s _____ in God’s sovereign purpose.

The logic of the Lord’s promise.

for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.

'must' / “guarantee”

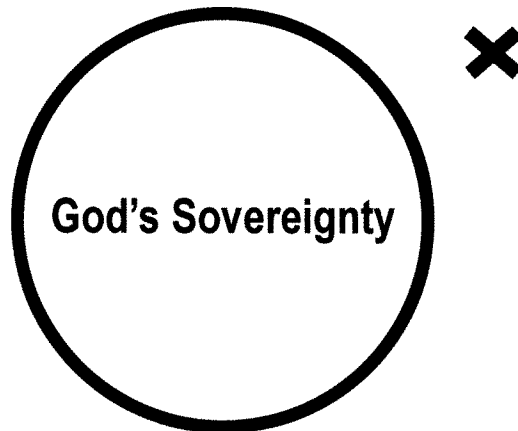
God’s call to 'take courage' is the anchor for our confidence, reminding us that our future is not a matter of chance, but the guaranteed protection of His sovereign appointment.

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Definition - God's providence is His continual, sovereign work of sustaining, governing, and directing all things according to His will.

“all things”



Psalm 103:19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens,
And His sovereignty rules over all.

Isaiah 46:9–10 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God,
and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10
Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things
which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

Five ways God's providence works on our behalf:

1. He sees all _____ threats.

Acts 23:12–35 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.

The timing is interesting.

The conspirators were serious.

Why did they hate Paul so much?

Why did they come up with an assassination plot?

1. They were under Roman occupation.
2. Paul was a Roman citizen.
3. They needed legal cover for their plot.

13 There were more than forty who formed this plot.

Why forty?

1. That number represented overwhelming odds for an assassination.
2. The number “forty” has symbolic significance.
3. To show that they were irrelevant up against God.

In the face of God's unseen providence, man's hidden schemes are _____.

Psalm 33:10 The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples.

Job 5:12 "He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success.

Proverbs 21:30 There is no wisdom and no understanding And no counsel against the Lord.

Psalm 2:2-4 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul.

"chief priests / elders"

The conspirators were incredibly shrewd in an unholy way.

15 "Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more

thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place.”

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

Hebrews 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Did the Sanhedrin agree to this plot?

2. He protects us through _____ people.

16 But the son of Paul’s sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul.

This verse helps reshape how we think about God’s protection

This shows how God uses people to fulfill His will.

“heard”

“Hearing” often becomes a narrative device that reveals God’s hidden providence where He ensures that an ordinary person hears a crucial secret that alters the course of history.

Genesis 18:10 — Sarah overhears the promise of Isaac’s birth.

Genesis 27:5 — Rebekah overhears Isaac’s plan concerning Esau.

Judges 7:13 — Gideon overhears the Midianite dream.

Esther 2:21 — Mordecai overhears the assassination plot.

Acts 8:30 — Philip overhears the Ethiopian reading Isaiah.

17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him.”

God orchestrates _____ lives, in perfect sequence, at the right moment, to fulfill His purposes.

18 So he took him and led him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you.”

So often God’s plans are ironic.

- The Oath of those who wanted to kill Paul became a Death Sentence.
- The secret sophisticated, high-level plot was undone by

a young man who was a nobody.

- The commanding officer served Paul, the prisoner.

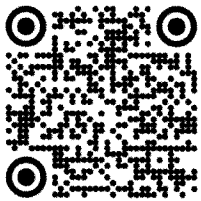
Implications

- 1. We can “take courage” in times of difficulty because God has already _____ the end of our story.**

- 2. We want to see God in the spectacular, but true faith hears Him in the quiet rhythm of the _____ life.**

Discussion Guide

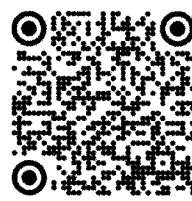
1. According to Acts 23:11, why could Paul “take courage” even while surrounded by danger and uncertainty?
2. How does God’s providence in Acts 23 challenge the idea that events in our lives are random or accidental?
3. Why is it significant that God used an unnamed young man—Paul’s nephew—to protect the apostle instead of using a miracle or angel?
4. How does the word “must” in Acts 23:11 strengthen our confidence that God’s purposes for our lives cannot be thwarted by opposition, fear, or human schemes?



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ANSWERS: future, Providence, hidden, powerless, unlikely, multiple, predestined, everyday