



Power From on High

Series: Power From On High

Text: Acts 23:23-35

Title: Ordinary Means, Extraordinary
Providence, Part 3

Date: May 24, 2026

Lesson: 132

“Divine Irony”

Divine irony is God’s sovereignty working through providence to overturn human expectations in unexpected ways that accomplish His will and bring Him glory.

“ _____ servants ”

All accurate theology has _____.

Good theology does not remove the mystery within tension, it _____ it.



God's sovereignty <-----> Human will

Six ways God's providence works on our behalf:

- 1. He sees all hidden threats.**
- 2. He uses unlikely people.**
- 3. He operates with perfect timing.**
- 4. He enlists secular power,**
- 5. He provides abundant _____.**

There were three providential reasons Paul had to be sent out of town.

- 1. To protect Paul's life**
- 2. To protect his own career**
- 3. To bring about justice.**

Acts 23:23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen.”

“centurions”

“third hour of the night”

The Romans divided nights into four watches:

First Watch (Evening): 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Second Watch (Midnight): 9:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Third Watch: 12:00 AM – 3:00 AM

Fourth Watch (Morning): 3:00 AM – 6:00 AM

So Lysias ordered the departure at _____ at the beginning of the second watch.

Why 9:00 at night?

“two hundred soldiers”

“seventy horsemen”

“two hundred spearmen”

24 They were also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor.

“mounts”

“Felix the governor”

25 And he wrote a letter having this form: 26 “Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings.

In ancient Roman letters - the standard format was

Sender (Lysias) → Recipient (Felix) → Greeting

“Claudius”

“Lysias”

The letter Paul wrote to Felix

1. Paul was rescued from violent death.

27 “When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.

“having learned that he was a Roman” (Acts 22:25–29)

2. Paul’s case was transferred to the Jewish Council.

28 “And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; 29 and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment.

3. The discovery of a plot that forced a transfer to Caesarea.

30 “When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you.”

31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipahtris. 32 But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks.

“Antipahtris”

6. He always fulfills His _____.

33 When these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him.

“presented”

34 When he had read it, he asked from what province he was, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia,

35 he said, “I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also,” giving orders giving orders that he be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

”Herod’s Praetorium”

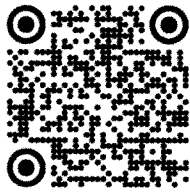
1. It was an impenetrable Roman fortress.
2. Felix had complete legal jurisdiction.
3. He was in protective custody, not a dungeon.

Implication

We can take courage knowing that God has unseen and unlimited resources to _____ us from any and all threats.

Discussion Guide

1. How does God's "must" change the way we view fear, uncertainty, and opposition in our own lives?
2. Discuss the idea of "unintentional servants." Why is it encouraging that God can use people who are completely unaware of His larger plan?
3. How does this "both / and" tension protect us from oversimplifying Scripture?
4. How does this chapter 23 strengthen your confidence in God's promises?



***Meet
the staff***



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***Weekly
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ANSWERS: unintentional, tension, preserves, Not puppets, protection, 9:00 PM, promises, protect