

“A Connection That Brings Protection”

Acts 23:12-24

November 2, 2010

Introduction: As soon as we elect a new president, he or she is provided special protection by the Secret Service agents. Every move made by the President is under the protective eye of these agents. In fact, the entire presidential household is given the same privilege because of their connection to the President. This is not only true in the physical realm, but also in the spiritual realm for a child of God (**Psalm 91:3-7**). The Bible teaches us in **Isaiah 54:17** that there is no weapon formed against God’s people shall prosper. However, it is nothing we have done so great to receive this protection. It is only because we are connected to the One who is in charge of everything (**Psalm 24:1**). In today’s lesson, we will see how the Apostle Paul’s connection brought him protection. This should solidify our faith by making us realize that because of our divine connection we have the same protection available to us.

Verses 12-15

The Plot

In these verses, we see the plot to kill Paul. Paul was a man of God, **proclaiming** the message of salvation. However, some men (certain of the Jews) did not like the message and did not want to hear it. We all know that the enemy may kill the man, if God allows it, but no one can do away with the Word of God (**Mark 13:31**). The Apostle Paul was God’s chosen vessel, yet these men were so **deceived** they thought he was evil (**Acts 9:15**). The text said the men bound themselves under a curse before God. They made a vow to God that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. Even though the law they were following said, “thou shalt not kill”, they really thought they were pleasing God by getting rid of Paul. This shows us how deceived the human **mind** can be at times (**Romans 1:28**). When people act out of anger, they sometimes perform an action that is not pleasing to God (**Titus 1:16**). When we try to take matters into our own hands, we are **failing** to trust the Lord. The Lord wants the believer to be led by love (**Romans 13:10**) (**Matthew 22:36-39**).

Verses 16-22

The Premonition

In these verses, we see Paul receiving a warning that evil was coming his way. God used a young man to expose the works of darkness. Paul's nephew overheard the men plotting and entered into the castle to warn Paul. Notice Paul tells one of the guards to take the young man to the chief captain. This is very unusual for a captain to be talking to a prisoner. It is even more unusual for the chief captain to receive this young man sent by a prisoner. This young man was really operating in the will of God. When we walk or operate in the will of God, He will give us courage to face anything that comes our way (**1 Samuel 17:33-37**). We can see that even though these forty evil men had made an oath to God (oath of death), they were wrong. God intervened and caused this young man to be in the right place at the right time to help save Paul. The Lord has placed every believer in someone's life to warn them of the danger they will face without Jesus (**Romans 6:23**). Like this young man, have we made ourselves available to be used by God? This young man did not let anything stop him from being a part of God's plan (**1 Timothy 4:12**). The chief captain instructed the young man to not tell anyone about the plot. The captain trusted the young man. He could have easily retained him for a day or two until the plot was completed, but there was something about the young man that indicated trustworthiness.

Verses 23-24

The Provision

We see that the captain provided protection for Paul. The captain called for two of his officers to gather two hundred soldiers (200), threescore and ten horsemen (70) and two hundred spearmen (200). All together, Paul had 470 men escorting him to safety. The captain was going to make sure that no one killed Paul along the way (**Romans 8:31**). Remember, there were 40 men waiting to kill Paul. However, when God is on our side, we will always outnumber the enemy. God plus no one else is *the majority* and He is all that we need. We have to learn how to move forward in faith (**Hebrews 11:6**). The Bible teaches us to humble ourselves and He will raise us up. First, Paul was bound like a beast in prison, but then, in verse 24, we see him riding on a beast like a king. Only a Holy and gracious God can provide that kind of transportation (**Philippians 4:19**). This should be a lesson to all of us that we should stay connected to the one who can provide divine protection.