

# Documented Persecution

## A DEFINITIVE LOOK AT PERSECUTION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

*“If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”*  
*John 15:18(KJV)*

*“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;.”*  
*John 15:20 (KJV)*

### PREFACE

I am sure that there were times in Jesus’ ministry where he remembered back to Bethlehem, to the vivid reality of Satan’s hatred for His life. There in His birth town thousands of little boys were slaughtered at the hands of Herod’s government in hopes of destroying Him. Jesus was always aware of the hatred the world had for Him. In John 15:18, Jesus warned His disciples that it would be the same for them. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has empowered His church to trample on the works of darkness. With such authority, Jesus never gave them power to trample on man. They were commanded to love the world as He did. Persecution comes when men yield, or open doors in their thinking, to demonic powers which seek to control humanity.

In the book of Acts there are thirty-one examples of persecution. These persecutions range from religious leaders to government leaders and even persecution coming from business leaders. As you read through these accounts, stop and think about each one. In doing so, you will discover a “strength” in Christianity that is more than able to handle the hatred of the devil and wicked men. As you study these references, I pray that the Lord will impart a new fervency into your spirit to strengthen your faith in Christ in these perilous days in which we live. If Christians 2000 years ago prevailed through such turbulent times, so shall we 2000 years later.

Reference	Description of the Persecution
<b>(Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria)</b>	
1. Acts 4:3	Jewish religious leaders (JRL) laid hands on them and jailed them temporarily. (first assault, first imprisonment)
2. Acts 4:21	JRL further threaten (first threat)
3. Acts 5:18	JRL laid hands upon, then jailed
4. Acts 5:40	JRL beat the apostles and command them to not speak in Jesus name. (first physical beating)

- 5. Acts 6:9 JRL bring false accusation against Stephen. (first use of a false accusation)
- 6. Acts 7:59 Jews stone Stephen. (First Martyr)
- 7. Acts 8:1 Great persecution from the Jewish leaders
- 8. Acts 9:1 Persecution from JRL
- 9. Acts 9:23 Jews in Damascus conspire to kill Paul
- 10. Acts 9:29 Jews in Jerusalem conspire to kill Paul
- 11. Acts 12:1 Herod the King kills James (first capital punishment at the hands of human government)

**(To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth)**

- 12. Acts 13:8 Elymas seeks to turn the heart of the deputy from the faith. Under this pressure, Mark departs from the team. (First persecution by witchcraft)
- 13. Acts 13:45 Jews contend verbally, speaking against.
- 14. Acts 13:50 Jews stirred city against Apostles, expelling them from their coasts. (First city-wide persecution)
- 15. Acts 14:2 Unbelieving Jews turned the gentiles against Paul. (First account of gentiles persecuting)
- 16. Acts 14:5-6 Jews and gentiles stirred up against Paul.
- 17. Acts 14:19 Jews stone Paul
- 18. Acts 16:19 Gentiles in Philippi beat and imprison Paul and Silas.
- 19. Acts 17:5 Jews that did not believe, moved with envy, set all the city of Thessalonica in an uproar, assaulted the house of Jason, and brought Jason before the magistrate.
- 20. Acts 17:13 Jews of Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred up the Bereans against Paul.
- 21. Acts 18:6 Jews in Corinth oppose and blaspheme.
- 22. Acts 18:12 Jews created an insurrection against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat.
- 23. Acts 19:9 Ephesian Jews speak evil of the “Way”
- 24. Acts 19:23 In Ephesus, Demetrius the silversmith, stirred the whole city against Paul, dragging his companions into the theatre (First persecution from local business leaders)
- 25. Acts 20:3 While Paul stayed three months in Greece, the Jews laid in wait for him as he prepared to depart for Syria.
- 26. Acts 21:27 Jews from Asia stirred up the people against Paul while he worshiped in the temple in Jerusalem.
- 27. Acts 21:30 Jews take Paul from the temple in order murder him.

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| 28. Acts 23:2  | Jewish High Priest instructs one to slap Paul.  |
| 29. Acts 23:10 | Great disagreement occurs during Paul's second defense and the Roman captain rescues Paul |
| 30. Acts 23:12 | Forty Jews bind themselves to a curse in their pursuit to kill Paul                       |
| 31. Acts 28:22 | Jewish leaders in Rome tell Paul that Christianity is spoken against everywhere           |

## PERSECUTION A CLOSER LOOK

### 1. **THE FIRST ACCOUNT OF NEW TESTAMENT PERSECUTION. IN JERUSALEM, JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS LAID HANDS UPON PETER AND JOHN AND PUT THEM IN JAIL.**

***Acts 4:3***

*“And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold(jail) unto the next day: for it was now eventide.”*

**Note:** This is the first account of persecution against the newborn church. Though Jesus had declared that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church, he never said that those gates would not try. Between Acts chapters 2-4 we see three accounts of harvest. On the day of Pentecost almost 3000 received Christ. Then the Lord added daily those who should be saved. Finally, in chapter four, 5000 more come into the kingdom of God through the apostles preaching.

This flow of harvest was truly a great threat to the kingdom of darkness, and Satan had to do something in order to stop what was happening. Jesus had conquered him soundly at the cross and now the church was sweeping up the spoils. It is interesting to note that the persecution in chapters three and four were not immediate responses to the growth of the church. Some time had transpired between Acts 2 and Acts 4. It may have been that Satan was reluctant to attack the apostles in the same way he had used the religious leaders to attack Christ. Remember, Jesus soundly crushed Satan and the devil was most likely still feeling the bruising from such a crushing defeat.

In this persecution, the apostles felt the aggression of hands grabbing them. Jesus was not with them as before. They had always been delivered by Jesus' actual presence with them, but now Jesus is at the right hand of God and they now have to learn to depend on the Holy Spirit the same way Jesus had. The words Jesus had spoken, *“I will never leave you or forsake you”* must have been rising up in their hearts as they were being thrown into a jail cell for the night. Peter and John had experienced such

an outpouring of God on the day of Pentecost with signs and wonders with thousands coming into the Kingdom of God, and now they are sobered by Jesus' words, "*they hated me and they will hate you*".

**2. JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS THREATEN PETER AND JOHN**  
***Acts 4:21***

*"So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done."*

**Note:** The miracle was so notable even the devil didn't know what to do with it. In this passage we see the church threatened for the first time. Jesus said, "I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves". I would imagine that the spirit of fear, 2 Tim. 1:7, was speaking to them constantly to back down. The newborn church now has to determine what laws they will honor

**3. JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS LAID HANDS UPON THEM**  
**AND PUT THEM IN THE COMMON PRISON**

***Acts 5:18***

*"And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."*

**Note:** Once again, hands are laid upon the apostles and they are thrown into jail. There is a clear frustration growing in the religious community in Jerusalem and until this time the leaders have only jailed and threatened the apostles. We also have only seen persecution against the apostles and not yet against the believers.

**4. JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS BEAT THE APOSTLES AND**  
**COMMAND THEM TO NOT SPEAK IN JESUS NAME**

***Acts 5:40***

*"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."*

**Note:** Here we see the first account of beatings. Up until now it was only arresting and throwing into jail with threatenings. In this passage we see the first beating. Peter and John were now growing into a deeper appreciation and love for all that Jesus had suffered in order to pay for our sins. The religious leaders also were hearing how the apostles were not obeying their commands to stop preaching the resurrection and repentance. The persistence of the apostles and the power of miracles brought greater frustration to the ranks of the religious order. Thus, in this passage the leaders turn to a new form of persecution, "physical beatings".

5. **JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARREST STEPHEN BASED ON A FALSE ACCUSATION**

**Acts 6:9-15**

*“Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they bribed men, which said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God”. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: “For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.” All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”*

**Note:** Once again, the religious leaders realize they are not stopping the message of resurrection and the manifested power of the Holy Spirit in the church. In this passage we see the first account of false witness purposely used against Stephen in order to bring a speedy judgment and conviction.

6. **JEWES STONE STEPHEN**

**Acts 7:59**

*“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”*

**Note:** Here we have another first! In this passage we see the first murder of a Christian witness. The word “martyr” in the Greek language actually means, “witness”. In modern usage we have changed the definition to mean “one who dies for his witness”. Both definitions are true. As followers of Jesus we are called to “die” to ourselves. We are admonished that our lives are not our own. We serve in the same Spirit as Jesus Christ who gave His life, not only for our sins, but the sins of the world.

7. **GREAT PERSECUTION FROM THE JEWISH LEADERS**

**Acts 8:1**

*“And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”*

**Acts 8:3**

*“As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, arresting men and women committed them to prison.”*

**Acts 26:10-11**

*“Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”*

**Note:** The key to this passage is the word “great”. With the cheap trial and conviction and ultimate death of Stephen came a new wave of aggression against the newborn church. The religious leaders had found what they thought was the model that worked and would ultimately stop the church. Saul, later known as Paul, was a key front man in this wave of unrest.

When you read both accounts of the persecution of this time you will realize that more believers than Stephen were put to death. In fact, Paul later recounts how possessed he had been at tormenting the believers of this way. It is important to note that at this point in the book of Acts, due to the fear of God resting upon the church, people did not try to join the church without the Lord’s grace adding them. It would seem that people were not able to join the church out of their own strength. Only those who truly believed were graced to join the church and ultimately were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

In this passage we see that the persecution was so intense that no one wanted to join the church for fear of their own lives. Once again, one had to “desire” to be saved in order to join themselves to the early church. Persecution, in a sense, was very healthy for church growth, for it delivered the church from those who were obscure in heart. It is also important to examine the rage in the heart of Paul against Christianity. It is evident, looking back, that Satan saw something in this man that he feared. Paul was oppressed and obsessed with destroying the church.

Paul had grown up at the feet of learning under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was a man of great learning and respect amongst the people and he also feared God (Acts 5:34). Paul, at this point in his life, looked nothing like his treacher. Gamaliel was slow to act and showed great wisdom. Paul was “*exceeding mad*” and was hell-bent to persecute and destroy the church. It is only after Paul’s conversion that we see the training and the wisdom of Gamaliel begin to operate in Paul, who was now, “God’s man of faith and power”. It is also important to note that many religious leaders were truly lovers of God. Many converted to Christianity because of their love for God and for the holy scriptures.

Though we have no account of Gamaliel ever converting to Christ, it is very probable that he also became a believer.

8. **PERSECUTION FROM JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN DAMASCUS**

*Acts 9:1*

*“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.”*

**Note:** In this passage we have insight into the spread of Christianity. Christians were everywhere, even in foreign cities. Saul was so full of hatred for this new way that he went and requested letters of authority to arrest believers in Syria. It is also important to note that Saul’s hatred fanned the flames of revival that scattered these evangelists everywhere. In one sense Saul was responsible for bringing revival to Samaria due to his persecution, which caused Phillip to go there. Also, there is one point that the religious leaders didn’t understand about Christianity, and that is that these believers loved not their lives unto the death. Truly, the weapons of our warfare must be used in the life of one who loves not their lives unto the death. Without this, these heavenly weapons are in vain. (Rev. 12:11)

9. **JEWS IN DAMASCUS CONSPIRE TO KILL PAUL**

*Acts 9:23*

*“And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:”*

**Note:** Saul was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He had grown up at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem which gave him status and prestige amongst his peers. He had always known favor within the Jewish religious circles, probably in part because his own father had been a Pharisee. Now, for the first time in His life, as a Christian, he feels what true hatred is and the sense of fearing for his life from those who once were deemed as friends and colleagues.

10. **JEWS IN JERUSALEM CONSPIRE TO KILL PAUL**

*Acts 9:29*

*“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.”*

**Note:** Once again, Saul finds that Jerusalem is no longer a friendly place for him. We see later, in the book of Acts, his love for the temple in Jerusalem. He had grown up there. His father was a part of the religious order in Jerusalem and Saul was in training to follow in his father’s footsteps. No doubt Saul had grown up running around that great building that belonged to God. His culture was tied to a love for the temple and it

was engrained deep within him. It must have been a real awakening for him to experience the hatred of his former colleagues and bosses, who made it impossible for him to stay and worship there. We have no record of him ever returning to the temple until he is apprehended by the Jews and Romans in Acts chapter 21- from which he is never freed to see Jerusalem or the temple again.

11. **KING HEROD KILLS JAMES**

*Acts 12:1-2*

*“Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”*

**Note:** In this account we see the first persecution by government. Up until this time the aggression had only been from religious leaders, but now a new chapter opens into church history. Jesus had warned His followers to beware of the leaven of Herod and of the Pharisees. Both leavens are ultimately against the righteousness of God and in this passage we see the ultimate manifestation of these leavens is persecution against Christ and His church. (Psa. 2:1-4)

12. **ELYMAS RESISTS AND SEEKS TO TURN THE DEPUTY AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL**

*Acts 13:8*

*“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.”*

**Note:** Satan is always seeking influence and control in the realm of government. Government and its authority was God ordained in order to protect the righteous. Paul warns all men to not give a place to the devil. All this means is to not provide a place for him to usurp and to operate. In this passage, Satan, through the sorcerer, was seeking a place of influence in government. The sorcerer sought influence in the deputy’s life in order to usurp and work wickedness against the land. Paul’s arrival brought confrontation to Elymas’ wicked plan. Here we see the first opposition coming from witchcraft.

13. **JEWS CONTEND VERBALLY, SPEAKING AGAINST**

*Acts 13:45*

*“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.”*

**Note:** It would appear that envy is usually found at the root of most persecution.



14. **JEWISH PLOT, USING CITY LEADERS TO EXPEL THE APOSTLES**  
*Acts 13:50*  
*“But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women and the chief men of the city, and out of their coasts.”*
- Note:** Once again, envy being at the root of the persecution, the Jewish religious zealots stir up the city leaders in order to get them to persecute the apostles by physically expelling them from their coasts.
15. **UNBELIEVING JEWS STIR UP GENTILES**  
*Acts 14:2*  
*“But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.”*
- Note:** Here we see the battle for the minds. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 4: 3-4 that Satan blinds the minds of those who believe not. The minds of the Gentiles in this passage had already chosen to not believe and Satan came in and kept them blind. Spiritual blindness is best described by Pharaoh who watched the Red Sea open and the water stand up on both sides. He witnessed the sea open and Moses and the Jewish nation walk through the sea on dry ground and still he ordered his army to follow. That is the epitome of spiritual blindness. The gentiles in this example were spiritually blinded through the hardness of their own hearts.
16. **JEWS AND GENTILES STIRRED UP AGAINST PAUL**  
*Acts 14:5*  
*“And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,”*
- Note:** The persecution found in verse two moves from evil thinking to here in this verse attempted murder.
17. **JEWS STONE PAUL**  
*Acts 14:19*  
*“And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.”*
- Note:** What an emotional day Paul must have had. In fact, Lystra was probably a city he never really forgot. It was in Lystra that Paul, while preaching, discerned faith in a crippled man’s heart. The gifts of healings came into operation and the man, who had never walked, began walking. What joy it must have been to watch this miracle of healing unfold. But now, the pagan leaders in the city want to worship Paul and Barnabas. It took much convincing to prove that they were not gods. This is where the

devil got into the details. Those men never repented. Their hearts were hard and though they saw an undeniable miracle of healing, they did not desire Christ. It is in this darkness that they were convinced by zealot Jews to stone Paul. Miracles and manifestations of the Holy Spirit do not guarantee repentance. These miracles do guarantee either a hardening of the heart or a softening of the heart; there is no middle ground.

18. **GENTILES IN PHILIPPI BEAT AND IMPRISON PAUL AND SILAS**

***Acts 16:19-24***

*“And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.”*

**Note:** Here we have another first pertaining to persecution against the church. In this passage, the devil uses those in economic power tied to witchcraft to launch an assault against the church and its moral stance on human slavery. These economic leaders held influence over the city leaders, of which, according to their bidding, beat Paul and Silas and threw them into jail. Until now, we have seen persecution through religion and government, and in this passage we are introduced to the darkness of the world’s economic system and its ability to persecute. The love of money is the root of all evil. (1Tim. 6:10)

19. **NON-BELIEVING JEWS MOVED WITH ENVY**

***Acts 17:5***

*“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.”*

**Note:** Once again, envy is at the root of the persecution. It is also interesting to note that the city became involved. Satan so hated Paul and the power of God that rested upon him and his ministry to the nations. He was turning the world upside down.

20. **JEWS OF THESSALONICA CAME TO BEREIA AND STIRRED UP THE BEREANS AGAINST PAUL**

*Acts 17:13* “But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.”

**Note:** I really believe that Paul’s thorn in the flesh was this demonic spirit assigned to harass him at every turn. These Jews followed him in order to stir up the cities against him. The strength of God in him was amazing. The power of love enabled Paul to walk in miracles and establish the church while sensing continual hatred towards him. This truly is the grace that is sufficient.

21. **JEWES IN CORINTH OPPOSE AND BLASPHEME**

*Acts 18:6*

*“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, “Your blood be upon your own heads”; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”*

**Note:** Paul knows that his calling is ultimately to the Gentiles. It is here that Paul fully turns to the Gentiles. It is important to note that as you read further you will see that Paul continues to reach out to the Jews. But, in his heart, he has completely turned to the gentiles.

22. **JEWES IN CORINTH MADE INSURRECTION AGAINST PAUL**

*Acts 18:12*

*“And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,”*

**Note:** In this account, the Jews in Corinth banded together and brought Paul before the deputy. The Lord had already revealed to Paul that no harm would come to him in Corinth. As Paul began to open his mouth to speak, the deputy dismissed the crowd and rebuked the Jewish leaders for their religious strife.

23. **EPHESIAN JEWS SPEAK EVIL OF THE “WAY”**

*Acts 19:9*

*“But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.”*

**Note:** Here we see the effects of the Gospel upon the human heart. These Jews heard the Gospel and then choose not to believe. Their hearts were hardened by an act of their will. Jesus declared that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. In this example of persecution, the unbelieving Jews spoke against the Gospel that Paul was preaching. The wording of this verse would lend one to believe that these Jews not only could not disprove Paul’s preaching but rather chose to respond by

hardening their hearts. Only people who are convinced of truth have the ability to harden their hearts against the truth.

24. **IN EPHESUS, PAUL'S COMPANIONS ARE DRAGGED INTO THE THEATER**

*Acts 19:23*

*"And the same time there arose no small stir about that way."*

**Note:** In this account of persecution we see an attack come from the economic princes of the city. The craftsmen of Ephesus were rich and making idols was big business. Paul's gospel was interfering with the idol business and this infuriated the devil and Demetrius. In 1 Samuel 5 we have the account where the Philistines had captured the ark of the Lord and had placed it into the house of their idol Dagon. In the morning when they opened the door, they found Dagon on the floor with his head and his hands cut off. So it was in Ephesus. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and Paul's preaching was destroying the idol business in the region.

25. **JEWS IN GREECE LAY IN WAIT FOR PAUL**

*Acts 20:3*

*"And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia."*

**Note:** As stated earlier, Paul's thorn must have been the continual sense of hatred and murder against him. In the midst of such persecution, the Lord continually delivered him.

26. **IN JERUSALEM, JEWS FROM ASIA STIR UP THE PEOPLE AND TAKE PAUL**

*Acts 21:27*

*"And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,"*

**Note:** Paul knew that persecution awaited him in every city where he went. He also knew, through the word of wisdom given by Agabus the prophet, that he would be taken by the Jews and then by the Romans during his stay in Jerusalem.

On the seventh day of prayer in the temple, Paul's prophetic destiny to Rome began. From the temple of God in Jerusalem to Caesar in Rome, God was taking Paul out of the temple at Jerusalem, which would be completely destroyed in AD 70, and planting a "seed" for church expansion into Europe and from there to all nations.

27. **JEWES TAKE PAUL FROM THE TEMPLE IN ORDER TO MURDER HIM**

**Acts 21:31**

*“And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.”*

**Note:** This persecution turns from physical aggression to attempted murder.

28. **JEWISH HIGH PRIEST INSTRUCTS ONE TO SLAP PAUL**

**Acts 23:2**

*“And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.”*

**Note:** Jesus had stood before the Jewish high priest and they smote him in the face. Now Paul, on route to Rome, must endure one more physical bruise at their wicked hands. In A.D. 70, Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed and these religious leaders found themselves out of a job. They had missed their day of visitation.

29. **ROMAN CAPTAIN RESCUES PAUL**

**Acts 23:10**

*“And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.”*

**Note:** As the tempers began to flare, the devil knowing that Rome was now in control and that he could not use the same tactics on Paul that he had used on Stephen, was filled with rage. I believe that the devil did not know what to do. He was bound by the authority of Rome, Roman law, and the angel of the Lord that stood by Paul. Paul, yet again, is rescued from death.

30. **FORTY JEWS BIND THEMSELVES TO A CURSE IN THEIR PURSUIT TO KILL PAUL**

**Acts 23:12-13**

*“And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.”*

**Note:** Paul, now firmly in the grip of Rome, was still considered a threat to Jewish religion and ultimately the devil. Jesus said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and Paul really stirred up that side of Satan.

31. **IN ROME, JEWISH LEADERS TELL PAUL THAT  
CHRISTIANITY IS SPOKEN AGAINST EVERYWHERE.**

*Acts 28:22*

*“But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”*

**Note:** Though the book of Acts deals primarily with the life of Peter and Paul, the fact is that all the apostles functioned in the power of God and had gone different directions with the gospel. People all over the world knew about the message of Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection. In this passage, we see that Christianity was spoken against everywhere, and yet it did not stop it! Though the dog barks, the train keeps moving, and this is true with Christ and His church.

**“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock  
(giant stone-the revelation of Jesus Christ the son of God) I will build  
my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**

**Matthew 16:18**