

I. COUNCIL

- A. Paul Brought Before the Council the Next Day ACTS 22:30
 - 1. Remember that he had been taken in the Temple
 - a. They had accused him of bring in Gentiles
 - b. They had no cause other than their hatred for him
 - c. They had accosted him, arrested him, and were assaulting him
 - 2. The Roman Captain ran down and stopped the riot
 - a. He was mistaken about him – thought he was an outlaw Egyptian
 - b. He didn't know that Paul was a Roman citizen
 - c. He didn't know that Paul could speak Greek
 - 3. The People didn't know what Paul would say
 - a. They liked the things they agreed with and were silent
 - b. But shouted against the things they didn't want to hear
 - c. They didn't pay attention to God's Hand in Paul's testimony
 - 4. Paul's faith was questioned. Our faith will be questioned. Testify!
- B. Living before God in Good Conscience – Paul's Claim
 - 1. Few people can make such a claim, but Paul did
 - a. Even though he had been a great persecutor of Christians
 - b. Remember the testimony of God's Word toward him - ACTS 8:3
"As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."
 - c. ACTS 26:9 – "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."
 - 2. Some believe that they can follow their hearts
 - a. That is terrible advice – JER. 17:9 – "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
 - b. The CONSCIENCE must be TRAINED by TRUTH!
 - i. Pagan peoples also have engaged in human sacrifice
 - ii. People untrained in truth have been cannibals
 - iii. Societies uninformed by truth jail political adversaries
 - c. Without TRUTH, the conscience may lead to unscriptural things
 - i. It is a conscience without truth that created "penance"
 - ii. A conscience without truth that created religious self-harm
 - iii. No number of steps crawled on bare knees can save!
 - 3. People use the Ten Commandments as a measure of "goodness"
 - a. Ah, but the Bible says that "ALL have sinned and come short!"
 - b. JAMES 2:10 – "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
 - c. If ever one link in that chain breaks, the person will fall
 - d. And the links have ALREADY been broken!

- C. God does not allow us to get away with IGNORANCE
 - 1. Paul certainly didn't get away with it!
 - a. He began to be convicted by the Gospel at the death of Stephen
 - b. The hound of Heaven chased him down on the road to Damascus
 - c. Jesus Himself told him it was hard "to kick against the pricks"
 - 2. Two types of Revelation – General and Special
 - a. PSA. 19:1 – "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
 - b. JOHN 1:1 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 - c. General revelation points us to SPECIAL revelation – God's Word!
 - 3. When Paul was brought before the Council
 - a. He made a claim consistent with God's Word
 - i. But it caused a Controversy.
 - ii. It caused Confusion
 - b. But God brings a message of Comfort
 - c. And that message is Jesus Christ!

II. CONTROVERSY

- A. Two Ruling Factions – the Pharisees and the Sadducees
 - 1. Much like the Republicans and the Democrats
 - a. They would often trade control of the Sanhedrin leadership
 - b. They were the same lost religious leaders with a different creed
 - c. Be careful of creeds and confessions – written by men
 - i. People on the Internet talking about the "creeds"
 - ii. Why we can agree with others based upon a "creed"
 - iii. We should agree with the Bible!
 - iv. Then we will all NATURALLY agree!
 - 2. The Pharisees believed in the Law and all of their rules
 - a. They also believed in Resurrection (as long as it fit their paradigm)
 - b. They are the ones with the complex law
 - i. People would gain fulltime employment by studying it!
 - ii. When can I walk my donkey? The rules say.
 - iii. When should I wash my hands? The rules say.
 - c. They put their rules BEFORE the Word of God
 - d. "You can't understand God so we will tell you what it means."
 - 3. The Sadducees were more philosophical in their beliefs
 - a. They didn't believe in the STRICT sense of the Word
 - b. They thought "resurrection" was a metaphor for a good life
 - c. They're the type that think heaven and hell are "states of mind"
- B. When Paul said he lived in a good conscience, he was testifying to FORGIVENESS
 - 1. A forgiveness of sin that is ONLY found in Christ Jesus alone
 - a. Not in the rules of the Pharisees

- b. Not in the philosophy of the Sadducees
 - c. Only GOD can forgive sins – ISA. 1:18 – “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”
 - 2. They REFUSED the Wonderful Grace of Jesus
 - a. Instead, they wanted to cling to their own Good Works
 - b. But what does the Bible say? ISA. 64:6 – “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”
 - c. They wanted to work their way to Heaven but that’s impossible!
 - 3. Paul was flatly denying the power of their “religion” of works
 - a. And it angered them. It will anger your family and friends too.
 - b. Better to give the truth than to perpetuation someone’s delusions
 - c. 1 JOHN 3:18 – “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
- C. The High Priest was so convicted that he ordered Paul to be smitten
 - 1. Paul was still a Roman citizen and that was ILLEGAL ACTS 22:25
 - a. The High Priest was entrusted to be just and maintain order
 - b. He lost control and Paul responded in kind to HYPOCRACY
 - c. You cannot judge me by the Law and VIOLATE it yourself!
 - i. Not just the Roman Law
 - ii. But also, GOD’S LAW – everything points to Jesus
 - iii. From Genesis to Revelation, it is one story
 - 2. Paul called him “dead inside” – Whited Wall
 - a. They would have known the words Jesus spoke against them
 - b. MATT. 23:27 – “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.”
 - c. The lost truly are “dead” inside, spiritually speaking!
 - d. That changes with Salvation – EPH. 2:1 – “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”
 - 3. So, there was Controversy. And controversy always brings CONFUSION.

III. CONFUSION

- A. Paul didn’t KNOW who was the High Priest – because it changed every year
 - 1. He had been away from the politics of the Sanhedrin doing God’s Work
 - a. Paul had more important things to think about – the MISSION
 - b. Paul wasn’t worried about the most recent election
 - c. Paul didn’t spend all day on Facebook or Twitter
 - d. Be informed but keep perspective and priorities!

2. Paul also was RIDICULING their hypocrisy!
 3. The High Priest was not supposed to change like a political office
 4. They were to serve the people not themselves
- B. The people instructed to smite him were shocked at his lack of knowledge
1. But then Paul showed his Bible knowledge off (vs. 5)
 2. He had been trained by the BEST of them and knew their ways
 3. And that took his enemies back – it was a good answer!
 4. And caused a murmuring in the council
- C. That's when Paul realized how easily the truth divided them (vs. 6-7)
1. And also, how rudderless the religious lost really are (vs. 8-9)
 2. They jumped on his side without any qualms or true convictions
 3. Be CAREFUL when the world agrees with you – they don't understand
 4. And they almost pulled Paul into pieces (vs. 10)

IV. COMFORT

- A. God sent Paul Comfort (vs. 11)
1. You know, even in the worst situations we can still trust our God
 2. HEB. 13:5 – “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”
 3. We must live our LIVES (our conversation) knowing His FAITHFULNESS
- B. You can run out of His mercy!
1. LAM. 3:21-23 – “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. (22) It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (23) They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”
 2. His mercies are always new! Trust Him!
 3. And look for His hand in your life. Look for His hand in your DAY!
- C. And God knows when His children are suffering and discouraged
1. Open your eyes to see Him working in your life – LOOK to HIM
 2. The author and FINISHER of our Faith – He will FINISH it!
 3. PHIL. 1:6 – “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”

V. CHRIST

- A. This comfort only comes from a REAL relationship with Jesus Christ
- B. Paul had thought himself righteous, but he learned the truth from God's Word
1. You have heard today how our heart lies to us, the truth about sin
 2. You have heard today how only Jesus can save, never “good works”
 3. Paul realized it on the road to Damascus and called Jesus LORD.
 4. Will you?
- C. Be Saved Today!