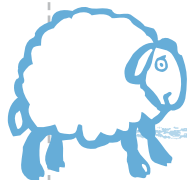




Lesson Twelve

Paul's Nephew Is Helpful



Nourishing Your Heart

Scripture

Acts 23:11–25

Bible Truth

God used Paul's nephew to help and encourage Paul.

Lesson Aim

To help and encourage God's workers.

We don't know much about him, not even his name. But we do know that he played an important, God-ordained role in protecting his uncle—the apostle Paul—from death.

To appreciate the importance of this young man's courage and helpfulness, we must see his place in the chain of events by which God fulfilled his promise that Paul would proclaim Christ to the world powers of his day (Acts 9:15).

After his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem, where many Jews had assembled to observe Pentecost, the Feast of Harvest. Some Jews from Asia spotted Paul at the temple and immediately shouted accusations against him (Acts 21:27–32). The crowd went after Paul to kill him, but the Roman soldiers intervened and calmed things down, and the commander allowed Paul to speak to the hostile group (Acts 22:1–21).

They listened to Paul's testimony until he told about his call from God to preach to the Gentiles. Incensed by these words, the crowd reacted in violence, and the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks at the northern end of the temple area (Acts 22:22–24).

The following day, the Roman commander brought Paul before the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish court, to find out exactly why they were accusing him. As Paul spoke to the Jewish leaders, the situation quickly became volatile and the commander once again feared for Paul's life, so he removed him to the safety of the barracks (Acts 23:1–10).

In the midst of this violence, confusion, and danger, God spoke to Paul, encouraging him and reminding him that as he had testified in Jerusalem, so Paul also would declare the gospel in Rome (Acts 23:11). Paul must have been greatly heartened by the words of his Lord.

Because of God's sovereign providence, Paul's enemies could not carry out their plan to kill him. Paul's nephew heard about the plot and reported it to his uncle. Paul then sent the young man to the Roman commander, who made provisions to take Paul safely to Caesarea (Acts 23:12–33). Thus, God used the power of the Roman government, Paul's rights as a Roman citizen and the helpfulness of Paul's nephew to get Paul to Rome.

Is it any wonder that Paul would write, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28)?

Memory Verse

REVIEW:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:10