



# ACTS

Of All the Apostles

## **You Will Be My Witnesses:**

**Running the Race**

## **Lesson 43**



# Conspiracy to Kill

## Acts 23:12-35

### Supplemental Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-3

**NOTE:** Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

### Memory Verse

Don't be bluffed into silence by the threats of bullies. There's nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life—body and soul—in his hands.  
Matthew 10:28 (MSG)

Have you ever had a bully threaten you? Maybe someone wanted you to throw a race or just run a little slower than normal. Were you afraid? Did you give in? Let's see what Paul does in a similar situation.

After Paul's time with the Sanhedrin, the commanding officer moved Paul back to the fort. It was there that God told Paul he would finally go to Rome and tell people about Him.

### Lesson Goals

Understand that the Jews plotted to kill Paul

Understand that Paul's nephew found out about the plan

Understand that the Roman officer made provisions for Paul's protection

Understand that we are not to fear people - our respect (fear) should be reserved for God

But, "the next morning the Jews gathered secretly to make plans against Paul. They took an oath that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed him." (Acts 23:12 NIV) There were more than 40 men who made this oath and once they made plans, they approached the religious leaders. Their plan was one of deception. They suggested that the religious leaders lie to the Roman officer, "Tell him the Sanhedrin wants to question Paul more. Ask if he can bring him to you. We will be waiting to kill him on the way."

And their plan might have worked, but Paul's nephew (his sister's son), found out about it. He went to Paul and told him what he knew. Then Paul called one of the commanders in the fort and asked him to take his nephew to the commanding officer, so he did.

"The commanding officer took the young man by the hand. He spoke to him in private. 'What do you want to tell me?' the officer asked." (Acts 23:19 NIV) Paul's nephew told the commanding officer all that he had found out. He told him that the Jews were going to pretend to want more facts about Paul, but that other men would be waiting to attack as they were on their way. "Don't give in to them," he pleaded. "They are ready now. All they need is for you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin." (Acts 23:21 NIV) And so the commanding officer sent Paul's nephew away, warning him not to tell anyone what he had just shared.

### Application

We started off thinking about a time when we were threatened by a bully or asked to throw a race or just run a little slower than normal.

What was your response? Many times our first response is fear—and fear can be debilitating.

Was Paul afraid of the plot on his life? We don't really know, but it doesn't appear to be so. He trusted God and did what he had to.

Our memory verse says, "Don't be bluffed into silence by the threats of bullies. There's nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life—body and soul—in his hands." That fear for God means reverence and respect, acknowledging that He is the One in control. Will you trust your life to Him today? And if you already have, will you run to Him first in faith and leave fear in the dust?

The commanding officer took the plot on Paul's life seriously. He "called for two commanders. He ordered them, 'Gather a company of 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 men armed with spears. Get them ready to go to Caesarea at nine o'clock tonight.'" (Acts 23:23 NlrV) Horses were to also be provided for Paul. This is the way he would be safely taken to Governor Felix.

The commanding officer also wrote a note, "I, Claudius Lysias, am writing this letter. I am sending it to His Excellency, Governor Felix. Greetings." (Acts 23:25-26 NlrV) Then the commanding officer told Governor Felix how he found Paul, about to be beaten to death by the Jews. He recounted that he had learned of Paul's Roman citizenship. In wanting to know the charges against Paul, Claudius had taken him before the Sanhedrin. What he had found out was that "the charge against him was based on questions about their [Jewish] law." (Acts 23:29 NlrV) None of this was worth the death penalty. Then Claudius told Felix about the plans to kill Paul and his own plan to move Paul to Caesarea.

"The soldiers followed their orders. During the night they took Paul with them." (Acts 23:31 NlrV) They took him as far as Antipatris. From there the soldiers turned back and headed home while Paul and the horsemen continued on to Caesarea. When they arrived, the letter was given to Governor Felix and Paul was handed over to him. Paul's case would be heard before Felix when the Jews arrived. Until then, Paul was kept under guard in Herod's palace. (Acts 23:35)

### Review

1. What was the plan for Paul? (to attack and kill him)
2. Was the plan successful? (No.)
3. Why not? (Paul's nephew found out about the plan.)
4. How was Paul saved? (He was moved to Caesarea to await trial before Governor Felix.)

Next Week  
Before Governor Felix  
Acts 24:1-27

# Preschool Lesson

After Paul's time with the Sanhedrin, the commanding officer moved Paul safely back to the fort. The next morning, though, the Jews got together in secret. They made plans to hurt Paul. They even made a pledge not eat or drink anything until they had done it. There were more than 40 men who pledged this. When their plans were set, they talked to the religious leaders. Their plan involved tricking the Roman officers in charge of Paul. They asked the religious leaders to lie to the Roman officer, "Tell him the Sanhedrin wants to question Paul more. Ask if he can bring him to you. When he does, we will be waiting to hurt him on the way."

Their plan might have worked, but Paul's nephew (his sister's son), found out about it. He went to Paul and told him what he knew. Then Paul called one of the commanders in the fort and asked him to take his nephew to the commanding officer, so he did.

The commanding officer talked to Paul's nephew in private. Paul's nephew told the commanding officer all that he had found out. He told him that the Jews were going to pretend to want more facts about Paul, but that other men would be waiting to attack as they were on their way. "Don't give in to them," he begged. "They are ready now. All they need is for you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin." (Acts 23:21 NIV) And so the commanding officer sent Paul's nephew away, warning him not to tell anyone what he had just shared.

The commanding officer believed Paul's nephew. He asked a couple of his commanders to get things ready. They would need 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 men armed with spears. Paul would also need a horse. They were going to take Paul to the city of Caesarea where Governor Felix lived. They would leave at nine o'clock that night. The commanding officer wrote a letter and sent it with his soldiers to the governor. It explained everything that had happened.

The soldiers followed their orders and Paul arrived safely in Caesarea. When they arrived, the letter was given to Governor Felix and Paul was handed over to him. Paul's case would be heard before Felix when the Jews arrived. Until then, Paul was kept under guard in Herod's palace.

# Activities

**Memory Verse Activity** - Write the memory verse on long, thin, yellow strips of paper. Loop the strip into a ribbon and secure. Be sure to practice the verse, discussing its meaning with your students.

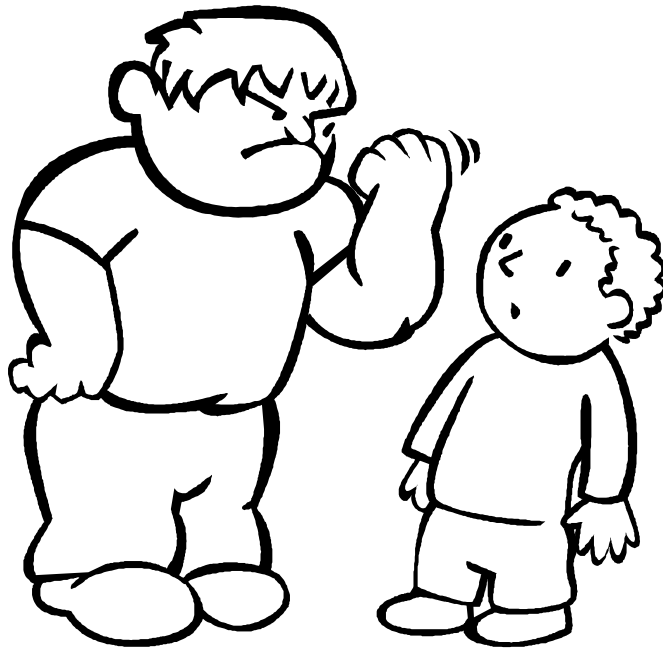
Sing “Have Faith in God,” “Faith, Faith, Faith,” “Faith is the Victory,” and “God Still Moves.”

Create a “DO NOT FEAR” acrostic.

Act out the lesson with green army men. Talk about how many men traveled with Paul as protection.

Make a booklet, illustrating the conspiracy to kill Paul and how God saved him.

As you continue memorizing Hebrews 12:1-3, read through these verses in the Amplified Bible. If you do not have access to the Amplified Bible, it can be searched on-line. Talk about the synonyms used and the new meanings understood.



Don't be bluffed into silence  
by the threats of bullies.

There's nothing they can do  
to your soul, your core being.

Save your fear for God,  
who holds your entire life—  
body and soul—in his hands.

Matthew 10:28

# Racing Riddles

When the commanding officer moved Paul to Caesarea, he sent the following to protect him.



\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ soldiers

\_\_ \_\_ horsemen, and



\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ men armed  
with spears.

# **Racing Riddles**

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When the commanding officer moved Paul to Caesarea, he sent the following to protect him.



200 soldiers

70 horsemen, and



200 men armed  
with spears.



# Word Search

o e s s r a h p r u l y n i h  
r p l a n s t o k i l l o o e  
e s e i c u d a a s e a i o r  
h o n s r a e d n e c e t p o  
s u w y o r e l n h a t c h d  
d a h l a r r s u a l i e a s  
u h i s s i n n a a a r t o e  
a p e u i h s e r r p c o r p  
l a e i a s u m e j s o r p s  
c w w d i t p y a r d p p s e  
r r a u i e c t h r o y s d r  
e i s a n h e r r i r r d o h  
t x i l e f r o n r e v o g t  
e i e c c p a f i l h s g o i  
u a p a u l s n e p h e w e f

Paul

plans to kill

forty men

Paul's nephew

God's protection

Claudius Lysias

Governor Felix

Caesarea

Herod's Palace

# Word Search

o e s s r a h p r u l y n i h  
 r p l a n s t o k i l l o o e  
 e s e i c u d a a s e a i o r  
 h o n s r a e d n e c e t p o  
 s u w y o r e l n h a t c h d  
 d a h l a r r s u a l i e a s  
 u h i s s i n n a a a r t o e  
 a p e u i h s e r r p c o r p  
 l a e i a s u m e j s o r p s  
 c w w d i t p y a r d p p s e  
 r r a u i e c t h r o y s d r  
 e i s a n h e r r i r r d o h  
 t x i l e f r o n r e v o g t  
 e i e c c p a f i l h s g o i  
 u a p a u l s n e p h e w e f

Paul

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