

Parson to Person

ACTS 23 PART 2

“So when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, ‘Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.’ So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, ‘Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.’ Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, ‘What is it that you have to tell me?’ And he said, ‘The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.’ So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, ‘Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.’”

And he called for two centurions, saying, ‘Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor.’ He wrote a letter in the following manner,

‘Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings.

This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him.

Farewell.’

Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, he said, ‘I will hear you when your accusers also have come.’ And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium” (Acts 23:12–35).

Nothing is known of Paul’s family but that which is recorded here. Many have suggested that Paul must have been married since he was a member of the Sanhedrin—as marriage was required. However, no one knows for certain what became of Paul’s wife. This leads to the question of Paul’s children—and lo, once again, we know nothing. It seems most logically to me that Paul’s wife left him when he converted to Christianity (see 1 Corinthians 7:15). If she had died, it seems more likely that he would have mentioned his loss with the list of other losses and pains he endured (see 1 Corinthians 11:23–28, Philippians 4:11–13). If he had children, they too may have left with Paul’s wife. (These are just my opinions.)

What we do know of Paul’s family is here named: he had a sister and she had a son! Of interest is the fact that they are otherwise unmentioned and that this mention is of particular interest.

When Paul was taken to the Antonio Fortress (under arrest), it seems none of his Christian brothers or sisters came to his defense or spoke on his behalf. This lone representative (likely a Jew) was the only one; and he himself may have been sent by his sister who was most likely also Jewish and one who had rejected Jesus. (Once again—this is my speculation, based upon a lack of her mentioned in Paul’s epistles.)

This young man went to Paul and was then sent to speak on Paul’s behalf to the Roman Commander. His message was one of protection. The Commander would need to know about a planned ambush and desire to end Paul’s life. The rest of the details are in the text.

Seldom will others come to the defense of those being persecuted. In fact, I have heard from believers (too many times) about how upsetting they think it is to even hear about the persecuted church.

Paul knew the pain of aloneness. He even mentioned it when he wrote, *“At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me”* (2 Timothy 4:16).

May the Lord give us grace to stand with our brothers and sisters when they are in any trouble. Let us run to the battle—rather than from it.

One might suggest that Paul’s life was prolonged because of the outworkings of one young man. May the Lord grant us the courage to be like him.

I love you all, Pastor Paul