

Acts 23:11-35
May 7, 1993
H. Van Dyke Parunak

Overview

1. *Not in sermon:*

Outline of the book thus far:

Three sections, patterned on 1:8, each beginning with organizational info about the early church

a) 1-5, Jerusalem

Organizational insight: apostles' doctrine, fellowship, bb, prayer.

Theological emphasis: immediacy of the HS's work in their lives.

1) 1, waiting for the Spirit

2) 2, Peter's sermon at Pentecost

3) 2:42 and 4:29-30 as summaries for this section

b) 6-12, Judaea and Samaria

Organizational insight: other godly leaders besides the apostles. Their focus is internal to the church, though at least one (Philip) reaches out.

Theological emphasis: rejection by Jewish orthodoxy.

1) 6-7, link back to Jerusalem

2) 11, Antioch, looks forward to 13-28 (ch.12 is external inclusio, thus footnote to finish off transition from Peter to Paul)

c) 13-28, Uttermost Parts of the Earth

Organizational insight: commendation of workers for outreach and church planting.

Theological emphasis: two Jerusalem conferences, determining the relative standing of Jews and Gentiles in the church.

1) 13-19, Asia Minor and Greece

Interrupted in ch.15 for First Jerusalem Conference

2) 19:21-ch.28, The Final Voyages (19:21 outlines itinerary)

Interrupted in ch.21 for Second Jerusalem Conference

a> 19:22-41, riot in Ephesus (foundation for trip to Rome)

b> 20:1-21:16 journey to Jerusalem

c> 21:17-23:10, events in Jerusalem

d> 23:11-26:32, events in Caesarea

1> 23:11, assurance by the Lord that he is indeed going to Rome.

2> 23:12-35, the circumstances to get him on the first stage

3> 24, hearings before Felix

Defense; gospel (righteousness, temperance, coming judgment)

4> 25:1-12, hearing before Festus

Defense; appeal to Caesar

5> 25:13-26:32, hearing before Agrippa.

Testimony of salvation

e> 27:1-28:31, in Rome

2. Following out the plan of 19:21. He has visited Macedonia and Achaia, and arrived at Jerusalem. Now the Lord moves him on to Rome.
3. Organization of this message: a case study on how God works his will for us.
 - a) His Promise. He tells us What he will do, but not always How.
 - b) His Protection. He can arrange first-class accommodations that we could never set up ourselves.
 - c) His Providence. He works circumstances in ways that we could not expect or plan. Seems like happenstance to the world around us.

A. 11, Promise

1. He must have been discouraged after the riot in the temple and the arguments in the Sanhedrin; he had hoped for a better reception by the Jews.
 - a) Paul still harbors hopes for Jewish turning as late as Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1; written in Corinth during 3 months of 20:3.
 - 1) The epistle as a whole reflects his purpose to go to Rome;
 - 2) These vv. show his hopes for the stop in Jerusalem.
 - b) Carrying offering for the saints; no doubt hoped that would commend him and the Christian faith to the Jews, who set much store by such charity.
 - 1) 11:28-30, Paul's first mission for the church at Antioch
 - 2) Gal. 2:10, during that visit, agreement with James, Peter, and John for further such ministry
 - 3) 2 Cor. 8,9, preparing this offering
 - 4) Rom. 15:25-29, bringing it home
 - 5) 24:17 reflects his purpose: "to my nation."
 - c) The agreement of the Second Conference, 21:20-25, shows that Paul still thinks of himself as a Jew, and is eager to avoid offense among the Jewish population.
2. 23:11 is the Lord's assurance that
 - a) he has borne witness in Jer; comfort over rejection by people and Sanhedrin.
 - b) he will make it to Rome. Long-range objective is here promised. Reassurance through the next several years of difficulties; a goal to let us ratchet our activities.
3. Not a rare occurrence. Compare this with previous exx. of the Lord's guidance to him:
 - a) Damascus road, sent forth to preach.
 - 1) appearance on the road
 - 2) 22:17 in temple in Jerusalem--go to the Gentiles
 - b) 16:9, vision of the man of Macedonia
 - c) 18:9, assurance in Corinth

- d) 19:21, guidance by HS to return to Jerusalem
- e) 20:23, by prophecy from other believers: coming bonds and afflictions
- f) 27:23,24 on ship to Rome
- g) Here: must go on to Rome.

4. *Application*: We should expect the Lord to give us the assurances we need in serving him:
- a) through his Word;
 - b) by his Spirit.
- If he can lead us personally and subjectively as well as publicly through the Scriptures, he can assure us in the same way.

B. 16-35, Protection

The Lord gives Paul first-class safe conduct. Four details presented to us.

1. 16-21, the story makes it up to the level where action can be taken. Nephew -> Paul -> Centurion -> Chiliarch. Doesn't get lost in paperwork; everyone gives it the attention it merits.
2. 22-30, the Chiliarch takes precautions.
 - a) 22, urges the nephew to silence.
 - b) 23-24, prepares a massive force: 470 soldiers to guard a single prisoner! Beasts--probably for Luke, who would have been with him (note visual touches like v.19).
 - c) 25-30, letter to Felix. Places his own conduct in the best light; also predisposes Felix to doubt the Jews' sincerity.
3. 31-33, the forced march.
 - a) Full force through the mountains, where travel would have been necessarily slow at night; even horses couldn't move faster than infantry here, and the risk of ambush was greatest.
 - b) Out of the mountains and in daylight, the footmen would retard the march, which now faced much less chance of ambush.
4. Felix: kept in the very palace, where assassins would have a difficult time getting to him.
5. *Application*: God has no difficulty in providing the very best of care for his people, when that is what's needed.

C. Throughout, Providence

Over and over in this history, Luke faithfully records seemingly trivial and sometimes apparently adverse circumstances that move events along to God's great purpose.

1. Previous examples:
 - a) 1:8 -> ch. 6-7, persecution of Stephen: leads to scattering, 8:1-4 and 11:19, preparing the next wave of expansion.
 - b) 19:21 is launched by riot in the stadium in Ephesus, which in 21:27-29 launches Paul out of Jerusalem and on to Rome.

2. 12, the plot. Had the Jews not been so murderous, he would not have gotten on his way to Rome so soon. Misfortune as the Lord's way of producing his desired outcome, 1 Cor. 10:13.
3. 16, His nephew: that he has someone faithful to him, yet not known to the Jews as sympathetic; and that this one could learn the plot.
4. 27, his citizenship: otherwise Lysias would have left him to the mercy of the Jews.
5. 34, his place of birth; otherwise he might have been transferred, with further opportunity for the Jews to ambush him (cf. 25:2,3).
6. *Application*: Though we cannot see the end from the beginning, yet we can be sure that God does, and if we trust in him, he will perfect that which concerns us.

Summary:

1. God has a plan.
2. He desires to assure us of his control--WHAT, not necessarily HOW.
3. He can provide the very best mechanisms the world has available--if that suits his purpose. If he does not so provide, it's because in his wisdom he has something better.
4. He works his plans mysteriously, exhibiting his sovereign power.

Hymn: God Works in a Mysterious Way

Analysis

A. Vision of the Lord

quote p

1. quote f: 11 Th^| de\ e)piou/sh| nukti\ e)pista\s au)tw^| o(ku/rios ei)^pen,
2. quote: reason p
 - a) text: Qa/rsei,
 - b) reason: comparison
 - 1) w(s ga\r diemartu/rw ta\ peri\ e)mou^ ei)s)Ierousalh\m
 - 2) ou(/tw se dei^ kai\ ei)s (Rw/mhn marturh^sai.

B. Move from Jerusalem

1. 12-14, The Jewish plot

- a) time: 12 Genome/nhs de\ h(me/ras
- b) quote p
 - 1) quote f: poihsantes sustrofh\n oi()Ioudai^oi a)negema/tisan e(autou\s le/gontes
 - 2) quote: mh/te fagei^n mh/te pi/ein e(/ws ou(^ a)poktei/nwsin to\n Pau^lon.
- c) 13 h)^san de\ plei/ous tessera/konta oi(tau/thn th\n sunwmosi/an poihsa/menoi:
- d) quote p
 - 1) quote f: 14 oi(/tines proselqo/ntes toi^s a)rxiereu^sin

kai\ toi^s presbute/rois ei)^pan,
 2) quote:
 a> quote p
 1> quote f:)Anage/mati a)neqemati/samen e(autou\s
 2> quote: time p
 a: text: mhdeno\s geu/sasqai
 b: time: e(/ws ou(^ a)poktei/nwmen to\n Pau^lon.
 b> quote p
 1> quote f: 15 nu^n ou)^n u(meis e)mfani/sate tw^|
 xilia/rxw| su\n tw^| sunedri/w| o(/pws
 2> quote: kataga/gh| au)to\n ei)s u(ma^s
 3> manner: w(s me/llontas diaginw/skein a)kribe/steron
 ta\ peri\ au)tou^:
 c> h(meis de\ pro\ tou^ e)ggi/sai au)to\n e(/toimoi/
 e)smen tou^ a)nelei^n au)to/n.

2. 16-17, The plot uncovered

a) Paul's nephew
 1) AQ p
 a> AQ f: 16)Akou/sas de\ o(ui(o\s th^s a)delfh^s Pau/lou
 b> AQ: th\n e)ne/dran
 2) parageno/menos kai\ ei)selqw\n ei)s th\n parembolh\n
 3) a)ph/ggeilen tw^| Pau/lw|.
 b) quote p
 1) quote f: 17 proskalesa/menos de\ o(Pau^los e(/na tw^
 e(katontarxw^n e)/fh,
 2) quote:
 a> To\n neani/an tou^ton a)pa/gage pro\s to\n xili/arxon,
 b> e)/xei ga\r a)paggei^lai/ ti au)tw^|.

3. 18-35, The plot foiled

a) 18-21, *men-de* contrast: The centurion report to the Chiliarch.
 Point: the plot becomes known at the highest level.
 1) 18, the centurion
 o(me\n ou)^n paralabw\n au)to\n
 a> h)/gagen pro\s to\n xili/arxon
 b> quote p
 1> quote f: kai\ fhsi/n,
 2> quote: (O de/smios Pau^los proskalesa/meno/s me
 h)rw/thsen tou^ton to\n neani/skon a)paggei^n pro\s
 se/, e)/xonta/ ti lalh^sai/ soi.
 2) the chiliarch: interchange p
 a> IU: quote p
 1> quote f: 19 e)pilabo/menos de\ th^s xeiro\s au)to^
 o(xili/arxos kai\ a)naxwrh/sas kat' i)di/an
 e)punqa/neto,
 2> quote: Ti/ e)stin o(\ e)/xeis a)paggei^lai/ moi;
 b> RU: quote p
 1> quote f: 20 ei)^pen de\ o(/ti

2> quote:
 a: Oi()Ioudai^oi sune/qento tou^ e)rwth^sai/ se
 o(/pws au)/rion to\n Pau^lon kataga/gh|s ei)s to\
 sune/drion w(s me/llon ti a)kribe/steron
 punqa/nesqai peri\ au)tou^.
 b: 21 su\ ou)^n mh\ peisqh^|s au)toi^s:
 c: e)nedreu/ousin ga\r au)to\n e)c au)tw^a)/ndres
 plei/ous tessera/konta,
 d: oi(/tines a)negema/tisan e(autou\s mh/te fagei^
 mh/te piei^
 e: e(/ws ou(^ a)ne/lwsin au)to/n,
 f: kai\ nu^n ei)sin e(/toimoi prosdexo/menoi th\n
 a)po\ sou^ e)paggeli/an.

b) 22-30, *men-de* contrast: The Chief Captain takes precautions.
 Point: his thoroughness; several levels of preparation.

- 1) 22, to Paul's nephew:
 o(me\n ou)^n xili/arxos a)pe/luse to\n neani/skon
 a> quote p
 1> quote f: paraggei/las
 2> quote: mhdeni\ e)klalh^sai o(/ti tau^ta e)nefa/nisas
 pro/s me.
- 2) 23-30, to his men: (*de* not expressed)
 quote p:
 a> quote f: 23 Kai\ proskalesa/menos du/o [tina\s] tw^
 e(katontarxw^n ei)^pen,
 b> quote:
 1> (Etoima/sate stratiw/tas diakosi/ous o(/pws
 poreuqw^sin e(/ws Kaisarei/as, kai\ i(ppei^s
 e(bdomh/konta kai\ deciola/bous diakosi/ous, a)po\
 tri/thw w(/ras th^s nukto/s,
 2> 24 kth/nh te parasth^sai
 3> i(/na e)pibiba/santes to\n Pau^lon diasw/swsi pro\s
 Fh/lika to\n h(gemo/na,
- 3) manner: quote p (Semantically, the third precaution, but
 syntactically a ptc of manner): to Felix
 a> quote f: 25 gra/yas e)pistolh\n e)/xousan to\n tu/pon
 tou^ton:
 b> quote:
 1> 26 Klau/dios Lusi/as tw^| krati/stw| h(gemo/ni
 Fh/liki xai/rein.
 2> 27 To\n a)/ndra tou^ton sullhmfqe/nta u(po\ tw^
)Ioudai/wn
 3> kai\ me/llonta a)nairei^sqai u(p' au)tw^
 4> e)pista\s su\n tw^| strateu/mati e)ceila/mhn,
 5> maqw\n o(/ti (Rwmai^o/s e)stin:
 6> 28 boulo/meno/s te e)pignw^nai th\n ai)ti/an di'
 h(\n e)neka/loun au)tw^| kath/gagon ei)s to\
 sune/drion au)tw^:
 7> 29 o(\n eu(^ron e)gkalou/menon peri\ zhthma/twn tou^
 no/mou au)tw^,

```

8> mhde\n de\ a)/cion gana/tou h)\ desmw^n e)/xonta
e)/gklhma.
9> 30 mhnugei/shs de/ moi e)piboulh^s ei)s to\n a)/ndra
e)/sesqai,
10> e)cauth^s e)/pemya pro\s se/,
11> paraggei/las kai\ toi^s kathgo/rois le/gein [ta\]
pro\s au)to\n e)pi\ sou^.
```

c) 31-33, *men-de* contrast: the trip to Caesarea

Point: straight-through march. Take no chances.

- 1) 31 Oi(me\n ou)^n stratiw^tai kata\ to\ diatetagme/non
au)toi^s a)nalabo/ntes to\n Pau^lon h)/gagon dia\ nukto\s
ei)s th\n)Antipatri/da:
- 2) comment p
 - a> text: 32 th^| de\ e)pau/rion e)a/santes tou\s i(ppei^s
a)pe/rxesqai su\n au)tw^| u(pe/streyan ei)s th\n
parembolh/n:
 - b> comment <ippeis>:
33 oi(/tines ei)selqo/ntes ei)s th\n Kaisa/reian kai\
a)nado/ntes th\n e)pistolh\n tw^| h(gemo/ni pare/sthsan
kai\ to\n Pau^lon au)tw^|.

d) 34-35, Safe harbor with Felix

- 1) 34 a)nagnou\s de\
- 2) kai\ e)perwth/sas e)k poi/as e)parxei/as e)sti\n
*"what sort of province"; because imperial, Felix would hear
it. Otherwise, like Pilate in Luke 23:6,7, he would have
tried to pass the case off to someone else.*
- 3) kai\ puqo/menos o(/ti a)po\ Kiliki/as,
- 4) quote p
 - a> quote f: ... e)/fh ...
 - b> quote:
 - 1> 35 Diakou/somai/ sou ...
 - 2> o(/tan kai\ oi(kath/goroi/ sou parage/nwntai:
- 5) keleu/sas e)n tw^| praitwri/w| tou^ (Hrw/|dou fula/ssesqai
au)to/n.