

the remotest part of the earth

#26, good-bye Jerusalem – Acts 23:1-35

The Roman commander was honestly confused! He couldn't understand why the Jews wanted an obviously innocent man, put to death. So, in an attempt to unravel the mystery, he decided to give Paul over to be tried by the chief priests and council. These were the same chief priests who warned Peter and John not to speak in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:16—17). They also were the chief priests who had given Paul authority to bind all who called upon the name of Jesus (Acts 9:14) and bring them before the council to be tried (Acts 9:21).

1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, " Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day." 2 The high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth.

3 Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?"

4 But the bystanders said, "Do you revile God's high priest?" 5 And Paul said, "I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT SPEAK EVIL OF A RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE.' "

6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, " Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" 7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

[1.] strike him on the mouth, OK, admittedly this is not the best start but, why would Ananais want Paul to be slapped?

[2.] v:3, you whitewashed wall! Reviewing Christ's description of hypocrites (Matt 23:27-28) of what might Paul be accusing this guy?

[3.] v:4-5, God's high priest, In the old covenant who was the first high priest and of what order was he (Ex 28:1)?

[4.] question [3.] In the new covenant who is God's high priest and of what order is He (Heb 6:20)?

[5.] v:6-8, But perceiving, According to these verses, what is the difference, of belief, between the Sadducees and Pharisees?

[6.] v:6-8 again, Why did Paul initiate this dissension?

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9 And there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, " We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

10 And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks.

11 But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, " Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also."

[7.] v:9, We find nothing wrong with this man; So pretend you were the high priest. Why or why isn't this the way you wanted this little exercise to go?

[8.] v:9 again, Looking over Phil 3:4-6, write down how Paul knew about pushing a Pharisees buttons?

[9.] v:10, torn to pieces, As a born again Christian, what would you say is the greatest threat to todays' Christian?

[10.] v:11, the Lord stood at his side, From this verse how do you know that the Lord was pleased with Paul's ministry?

[11.] The Lord was pleased with Paul but, from Romans 9:1-4, how did Paul express his grief?

[12.] From Matt 23:37, how did Christ express His grief?

[13.] v:11, Where was the Lord sending Paul?

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12 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who formed this plot. 14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 "Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place."

16 But the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him."

18 So he took him and led him to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you." 19 The commander took him by the hand and stepping aside, began to inquire of him privately, "What is it that you have to report to me?"

20 And he said, " The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him. 21 "So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you." 22 So the commander let the young man go, instructing him, "Tell no one that you have notified me of these things."

[14.] v:12-15, notify the commander to bring him down to you, **The Jews wanted the chief priests and elders to conspire to aid and abet a murder. What did they want them to do?**

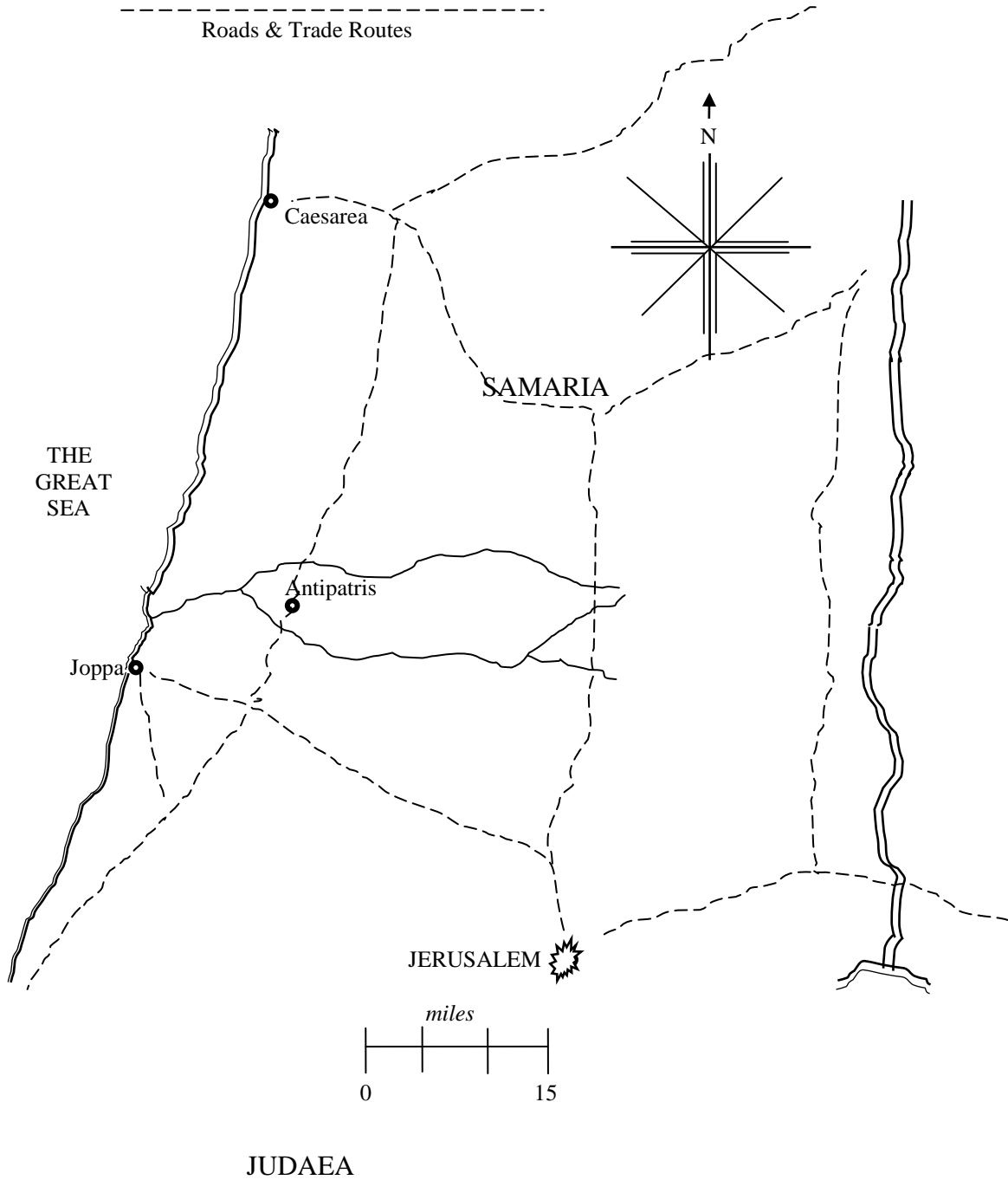
[15.] v:16-17, Paul called one of the centurions, **OK, what has happened so far that would encourage the centurion to even listen to Paul?**

[18.] v:18-19, What is it that you have to report, **And by the same token, what's happened, so far, that would encourage the commander to even listen to the young man?**

[19.] v:20-22, Tell no one that you have notified me, **Considering where the Lord is sending Paul (v:11), what power would cause the commander believe the boy?**

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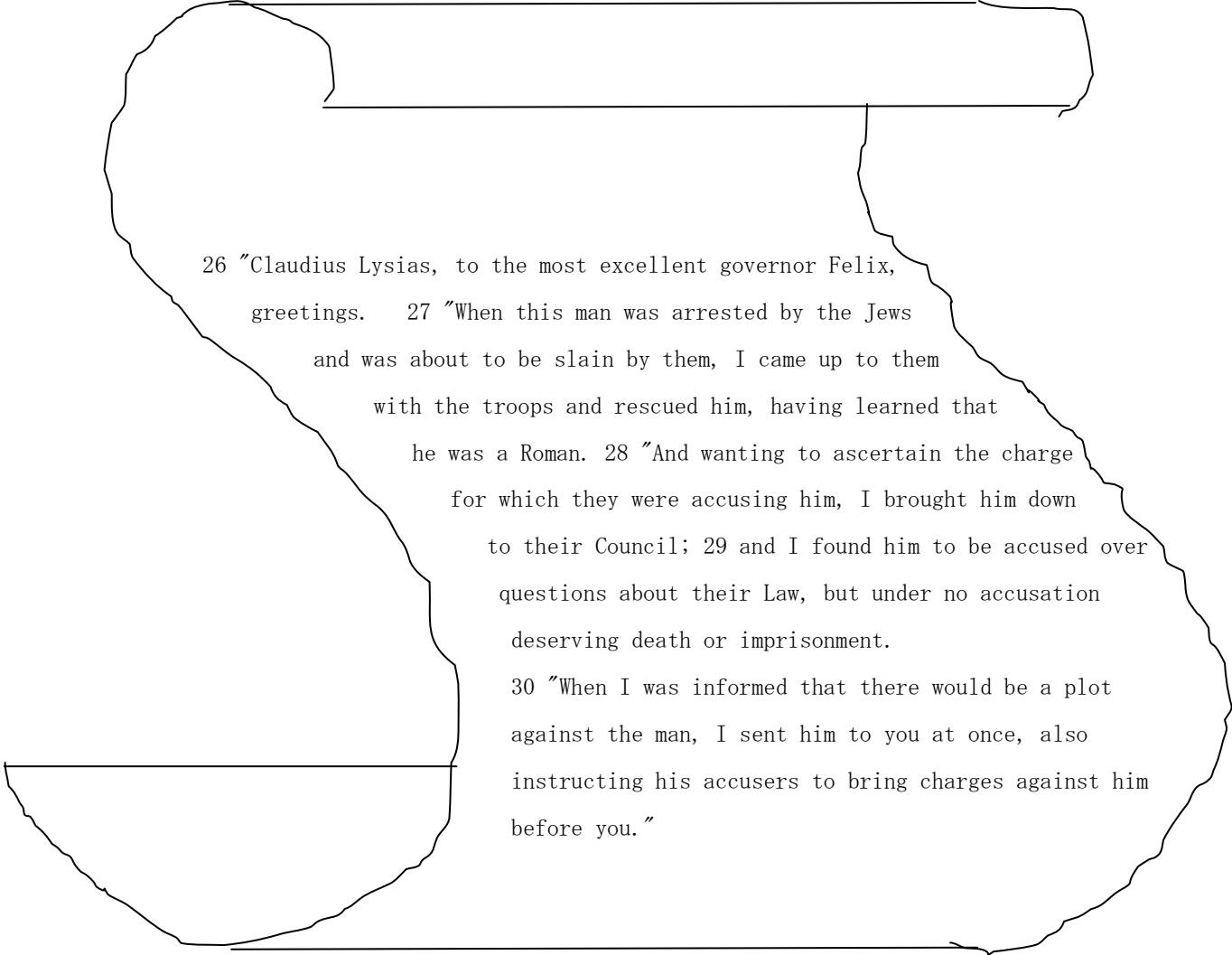
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23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen." 24 They were also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor.

[20.] v:23-24, proceed to Caesarea, OK, before we go on, estimate how many miles this horseback ride will be (map pg 4 and v:31).

[21.] v:23-24 again, Thinking about these two verses along with this chapter, just how threatening does the commander think the Jews are?

25 And he wrote a letter having this form:



26 "Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings. 27 "When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 "And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; 29 and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment. 30 "When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you."

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31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks.

33 When these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 When he had read it, he asked from what province he was, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also," giving orders for him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium (Herod's judgment hall).

[22.] v:25-30, bring charges against him before you. From the list below, choose the best statements that gives the flavor of Claudius Lysias' letter to Felix.

- a) I'm here for you, let's work together!
- b) I want no part of this mess.
- c) I'm just a simple soldier, you can handle this.

[23.] v:31-32, they returned to the barracks. For some reason it was felt that the 200 soldiers and 200 spearmen were no longer needed. Why do you suppose that was?

[24.] v:33-35, I will give you a hearing after, What reason did Felix give for postponing Paul's hearing?

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NOTES