

Time Audit Chronicles: Paul's Defense Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:1–23:11)

Prologue: Bold Testimony Amid Opposition

The Presswood family sat together, reading **Acts 22:1–23:11**, where **Paul** boldly defended himself before the Sanhedrin, recounting his testimony and proclaiming the truth of Jesus' resurrection. Ariel was fascinated by Paul's courage, standing in the face of angry leaders to speak about Jesus. Alice, holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was imagining herself sitting in the Sanhedrin, watching Paul's intense interaction with the religious leaders.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, "Why did Paul go back to Jerusalem if he knew the people there were against him? Wasn't he afraid?"

Ryan smiled at Ariel's insight. "That's a great question, Ariel. Paul knew that his mission was to share the gospel, no matter the cost. He felt called by God to testify about Jesus in **Jerusalem**, even though he knew it would be dangerous. Paul's obedience shows us what it means to trust God completely, even when the path is difficult."

Ariel nodded. "So, he wasn't focused on his safety—he was focused on obeying God and sharing the truth."

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Let's use the **Time Audit Machine** to step back into that moment and see how Paul shared his testimony and stood firm in the truth about **Jesus' resurrection**."

The Journey Begins: Paul Addresses the Crowd (Acts 22:1–21)

The **Time Audit Machine** powered up, and the family found themselves outside the **Antonia Fortress** in **Jerusalem**. Paul was standing on the steps, addressing a large crowd of angry Jews who had just tried to kill him. The Roman soldiers had intervened and allowed Paul to speak, and he raised his hand to quiet the mob.

Ryan pointed to the scene. "Paul began by sharing his **testimony**—how he had been a zealous Pharisee, trained under **Gamaliel**, and how he had persecuted Christians. He was building common ground with the crowd, showing them that he understood their perspective because he had once shared it."

Ariel watched as Paul spoke passionately in **Aramaic**, the language of the people. "He's telling them about how he used to persecute Christians—he's showing them that he's not some outsider but someone who was once like them."

"That's right," Ryan said. "Paul wanted the crowd to see that his encounter with Jesus wasn't something he had imagined—it was a real, life-changing experience. He told them how Jesus had appeared to him on the road to **Damascus**, calling him to be a messenger of the gospel."

As Paul described his encounter with Jesus, the crowd listened intently. But when he mentioned that Jesus had sent him to preach to the **Gentiles**, the crowd erupted in anger.

“They’re mad because Paul is saying that the gospel is for the **Gentiles** too,” Ariel observed. “The people thought the Messiah was just for Israel, but Paul is saying it’s for everyone.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “This was a radical idea to them, and it challenged their deeply held beliefs about who could be part of God’s kingdom.”

Paul Brought Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30–23:6)

The Roman commander, unsure of what to do with Paul, ordered him to appear before the **Sanhedrin**, the Jewish ruling council. The scene shifted, and the family found themselves in the chamber where the **high priest** and other religious leaders sat in judgment over Paul.

Ryan pointed to the room. “The Sanhedrin was made up of two groups: the **Pharisees**, who believed in the resurrection of the dead, and the **Sadducees**, who did not. Paul used this division to his advantage.”

Ariel watched as Paul stood before the council and boldly declared, “**Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.**” (Acts 23:6).

Ariel’s eyes lit up. “Paul knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees would argue about the resurrection! He used that to shift the focus away from himself.”

“Yes,” Ryan said, smiling. “Paul was incredibly wise. By emphasizing the resurrection, he pointed to the core of the gospel message—**Jesus’ resurrection**—while also creating a division among his accusers. The Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection, began to defend Paul, while the Sadducees wanted to condemn him.”

The Council Descends Into Chaos (Acts 23:7–10)

As Paul’s words sparked a fierce debate between the Pharisees and Sadducees, the chamber erupted into chaos. The Pharisees argued that Paul might have received a revelation from God, while the Sadducees vehemently rejected this idea. The Roman commander, fearing for Paul’s safety, ordered him to be removed from the council.

Ariel watched the scene, amazed. “Paul’s wisdom not only helped him survive—it also shifted the focus to the **resurrection**, which is the heart of the gospel.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Paul wasn’t just defending himself—he was using the moment to proclaim the truth about Jesus and to show how His resurrection fulfills God’s promises.”

God's Encouragement to Paul (Acts 23:11)

That night, as Paul was held in the Roman barracks, Jesus appeared to him in a vision and said, “**Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**”

Ariel's face softened. “Jesus appeared to Paul to encourage him! Even though things were hard, Jesus was telling Paul to keep going.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Paul's mission wasn't over. Jesus reassured him that his testimony in **Jerusalem** was just the beginning—he would go on to testify in **Rome**, spreading the gospel even further.”

Key Teaching: Proclaiming the Resurrection

As the family returned from the **Time Audit Machine**, they reflected on Paul's courage and wisdom in proclaiming the gospel before the Sanhedrin. Ryan turned to Ariel and Alice, summarizing the lessons from this powerful moment in **Acts**.

“Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin teaches us a few important things,” Ryan began. “First, it shows us the importance of sharing our **testimony**. Paul shared his story to show how Jesus had transformed his life, and we can do the same to point others to Christ.”

Ariel nodded. “Paul wasn't afraid to share his story, even when it made people angry. He stayed focused on the **truth**.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Second, it shows us the centrality of the **resurrection** in the gospel. Paul knew that the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our faith, and he boldly proclaimed it, even in the face of opposition. And finally, it reminds us that **God is with us**, just as Jesus encouraged Paul in the barracks. When we face challenges, we can trust that God will guide and strengthen us.”

Takeaway: Boldness in Sharing the Gospel

In **Acts 22:1–23:11**, Paul demonstrates boldness and wisdom as he defends himself before the Sanhedrin. By sharing his **testimony**, he points to the transformative power of Jesus, and by emphasizing the **resurrection**, he proclaims the heart of the gospel. Even in the midst of opposition, Paul's faith remains unshaken, and Jesus reassures him that his mission is far from over. This passage challenges us to be **bold witnesses** for Christ, trusting in God's presence and guidance as we share the good news of His resurrection and the hope of salvation.