



# **The Resurrection on Trial**

**Acts 23:1-11**

*Doug Sachtleben, Lead Pastor*

*April 4, 2021*

While in the custody of Roman soldiers, Paul was given a chance to speak to the Jewish Sanhedrin. He used the opportunity to proclaim the crucial importance of the resurrection, a theme that would mark all of Paul's testimonies through the rest of Acts. Paul's proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection that awaits all who are trusting in Jesus, is an example of the hope in Christ that we have been called to proclaim.

The Jewish Sanhedrin functioned as high court for Jewish religious matters. It was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees.

Paul was charged with teaching against the Jewish law and defiling the Temple (21:28).

Paul did not bring up the resurrection as a mere legal strategy. He spoke of the resurrection of Christ and the raising of the dead often, and throughout all of his subsequent defenses (17:31; 24:14-15, 20-21, 25; 25:18-19; 26:6-8, 22-23; 28:20).

The Sanhedrin's violent response to Paul (23:9-10)

Despite Paul's bold preaching he ended up back in chains, no longer able to preach in Jerusalem and uncertain about where and when he would be able to speak of Christ. And then Jesus appeared to him with a promise (23:11)

If Jesus is not risen we don't even have nice stories about a kind man who performed miracles. Because Jesus Himself claimed to be God, the Savior sent to rescue sinners. He predicted His resurrection. If Jesus is dead and not risen, He's left us with lies and despair.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

<sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,  
<sup>27</sup> whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another... (Job 19:25-27)

### Questions to Consider

1. How have you heard unbelievers describe what they believe happens after a person dies? In 1 Peter 3:15, believers are told to always be ready to give a defense for the hope they have. What are some Bible verses you would use to explain your hope?
2. What were some of the distinctives that divided the Pharisees and Sadducees?
3. Facing the Sanhedrin, Paul may have used the resurrection of the dead as a strategic tactic to divide the group. But what evidence do we have for there being a greater reason that he brought up the resurrection?
4. How was the resurrection always central to Paul's preaching and testifying in Acts, and why? Why did he speak so often of the resurrection of Jesus? How much of a role does the resurrection have in your own efforts to tell others about Jesus?
5. How would you have felt if you were alone in chains and uncertain about the future after speaking of the resurrection? How did Christ meet Paul in that moment (Acts 23:11)? What are some verses that point to our abiding hope in Christ?
6. Read Romans 10:9-10. Use these verses to give a brief explanation of the gospel. Pray for God to give you an opportunity in the next week to talk about Jesus to an unbeliever and to speak of the hope you have in Christ.

For further reading: *Raised with Christ* (2010) by Adrian Warnock