

ACTS: To the Ends of the Earth

Study 54: The Invisible Hand of God

READ Acts 23:11-35 and **LISTEN** to the [sermon](#) by Pastor Craig.

The Bible teaches us that everything that occurs in this universe does so according to the will and purposes of God. The theological term for this is providence, and it is a doctrine that should bring us much comfort and reassurance when faced with difficult situations. Our passage provides no statement of doctrine, no exhortations to follow, and no commands to obey. Rather, it illustrates for us how the invisible hand of God's providence works to achieve His purposes. The Lord Jesus had promised the Apostle Paul that he would preach in Rome. Therefore, no scheme of the devil or plot of man to assassinate him would render the promise inoperative.

Big idea: We trust in and give thanks to God for His invisible hand of providence that rules over all His creation to protect His people and fulfill His purposes.

Questions:

1. What promise did Jesus give Paul in v. 11? How might that have given him courage despite his immediate circumstances not changing ie. imprisonment and plots?
2. What did Jesus not tell Paul about the things he might face between receiving the promise and the promise being fulfilled? What does this teach you?
3. A. What should be our confidence (Is 41:10; Heb 13:6) and greatest joy (Luke 10:20) despite our situation?

B. How might knowing these things give you courage in difficult circumstances?

4. What plan do some of the Jews plot to deal with Paul (vv. 12-15)?
5. A. What was the driving force behind the Jews' hatred and fanaticism? See 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19. How does this help you better understand the source and nature of Christian persecution and opposition?

B. Why do you think Satan is so opposed to Christianity?
6. What does Acts 23:12-30 teach about the way God sovereignly works to accomplish His purposes, despite evil intentions?
7. A. Read 2 Kings 6:8-17. How did God relieve the fear in Elisha's servant and give him a different perspective of the situation (v. 17)?

B. How might this account be helpful to understand and accept God's providential, sovereign rule over evil today? See Ps 37:12-13; Heb 11:1, 13.
8. What has been the main takeaway from this lesson and what will you do in response?

STOP AND PRAY:

Adore: God who sovereignly rules His creation and will bring His purposes to pass
Thank: Jesus for His care, protection, and comfort in the midst of difficult providences
Pray: that you will have the eyes of faith to trust in God's invisible hand over your life