Acts Chapter 23 Verse 15

* This still blows my mind and I cannot reconcile it that ***men of God, speaking to men of God,*** are discussing such wickedness without reservation or shame. *“Hey, how was your day, what did you do?” “Oh, you know, went to service, studied the Word of God, attended prayer service, and now I’m heading home.” “Oh nice, sounds like a blessed day.* ***So, let’s kill someone….”*** It doesn’t fit, it doesn’t compute, it doesn’t belong and really what it does is totally nullify and render useless and fake the entire day, week, life of worship and service to God!
* Ok that’s ***them.*** What about me? What about you? What about us? Can you validate your service and worship to God with the words that come out of your mouth, the intentions and ambitions of your heart, the priorities of your life and the activities of your days? That’s a major question isn’t it? Because if I can’t reconcile what they are doing and yet if I’m honest, I’m just like them, then no wonder why a spirit of *condemnation, confusion, guilt and discouragement* is always there whenever I slow down enough to feel…
* It amazes me how I watch so many get picked off and played by the flesh when they love the Lord and yet discuss *worldly and carnally* like its **common**…it’s not, or at least, it shouldn’t be. Worldly Christians are ***suffering Christians***, deteriorating…and that is precisely what the enemy wants. Christians who are consistent in worship, service and life…these are constantly turning a profit of joy and life within their heart of hearts…Hebrews 4:2 says, *“Profit comes from mixing the word with faith…”* Perhaps we need to fix out spiritual taste buds…
* And so they set themselves up to ***slay*** Paul. That is what the word in the Greek literally is…and I like this, used 24 times in 22 verses, the only time it is used after Acts is in Hebrews 10 speaking of what God did to sin so that He could **stand up righteousness** in the hearts of men. Hebrews 10:9-10, *“He takes away* (that’s the word) *the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*

Acts Chapter 23 Verses 16 – 22

* This is the only mention of a relative of Paul’s in the entirety of scripture. What I want you to see and to recall is that God **had said** to Paul that *he would make it to Rome.* Paul now has more than 40 men **plotting and pledging** to kill him. Imagine you knew nothing of Paul’s nephew for just a moment. 40 men pledged to kill him…being reasonable, doesn’t sound like he’s making it to Rome. Even if he doesn’t come in front of the council, one of them will go all ***Jason Bourne*** on him and get it done. They’ve pledged…they will not relent….
* But God uses this little boy to protect him***. God uses the natural to achieve the supernatural*** and here’s the thing, the mature Christian, the Christian that is studying the Word of God regularly and spending time in prayer, the mature Christian will experience this and witness God doing this often.

Acts Chapter 23 Verses 23 – 24

* Felix is an interesting character. *Big, very white eyes. He weighed only about 8 pounds. Black fur! Wait, that’s the wrong Felix!* This Felix really was a very interesting guy. He was formerly a slave but his brother (Pallus), who was also a slave, was a slave of Nero’s and became his friend. So Nero freed him and his brother. Felix had received his position through ***political maneuvering*** of his brother, not because of his abilities or character (that never happens today).
* But have you ever heard the saying, *“You can take the man out of the hood but you can’t take the hood out of the man?”* Or, *“You can take the girl out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the girl.”* That was Felix. Tacitus, the Roman historian, expressed his contempt for Felix and his abilities as a governor when he wrote that Felix, *“Wielded the power of a king with all the instincts of a slave.”* His corruption eventually led to his own depose. Which it always will…
* Now, consider this. The night before, amidst great discouragement and defeat, the Lord stood by Paul and said to him, “*Chin up, son. Take courage.”* And then, *“Hey uncle…more than 40 men have taken a hunger vow until your heart stops…”* (Paul’s mind – ***Hi, I’m good cheer…Probably not so much!***) But now, Paul will be **escorted by 470 trained Roman soldiers.** Set on a mount, **traveling like a king.** It was as if God wanted to ***exaggerate His faithfulness*** to Paul!
* *But we ought to remember who the Promiser is when we read the promises of God!* Imagine a friend of yours always brings you a gift but he’s poor and the gifts are always nice and heartfelt but they are always modest. And imagine that one day that same friend wins the $1.6B powerball! They call you up! Let you know! And tell you they are on their way over and they have something for you…AWWWWW yea!!
* **God has given us great and powerful promises** and we ought to remember that ***He is the God of all ages, the Creator of all things, the One who owns and sits on top of it all like a toy, man***…and when He is faithful to His Word, which He always and at all times will forever be, He delivers…well Ephesians 3:20 says, *“To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think!”* Paul needs only safe passage to Rome to fulfill God’s Word…God sends him with 470 body guards!

Acts Chapter 23 Verses 26 – 35

* At this point, Paul is awaiting trial in Caesarea. Any man or woman, any of us would be *scared, anxious and discouraged*. But check this out…I would submit to you, at this point, **not Paul.** The way he speaks in the chapters to come…read ahead…Paul is on his game. Why?
* He had received encouragement DIRECTLY from the Lord! Therefore, in the ***worst*** of outward circumstances, ***Paul’s heart beat strength!*** How about you? Have you yet received the Word of God? Do you have direct relationship with God the Father through the cross of Jesus Christ!? Your spiritual taste buds will reveal the answer to that question.
* ***Paul’s direct relationship and contact with the Lord, knowledge of God’s Word and promises and direct, first-person experience of walking in God’s promises fortified Paul’s minds, words, performances, and purpose…***
* All things promised to you and to me and to anyone who would give their trusted lives over to the One who gave you that life in the first place. If today you have not, listen…let God have your life! ***He can do more with it than you every could.*** I leave you with two awesome quotes from men like Paul…
* Andrew Murray once said, *“God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him.”* And A.W. Tozer once stated, *“The man or woman who is wholly or joyously surrendered to Christ can’t make a wrong choice – any choice will be the right one.”*