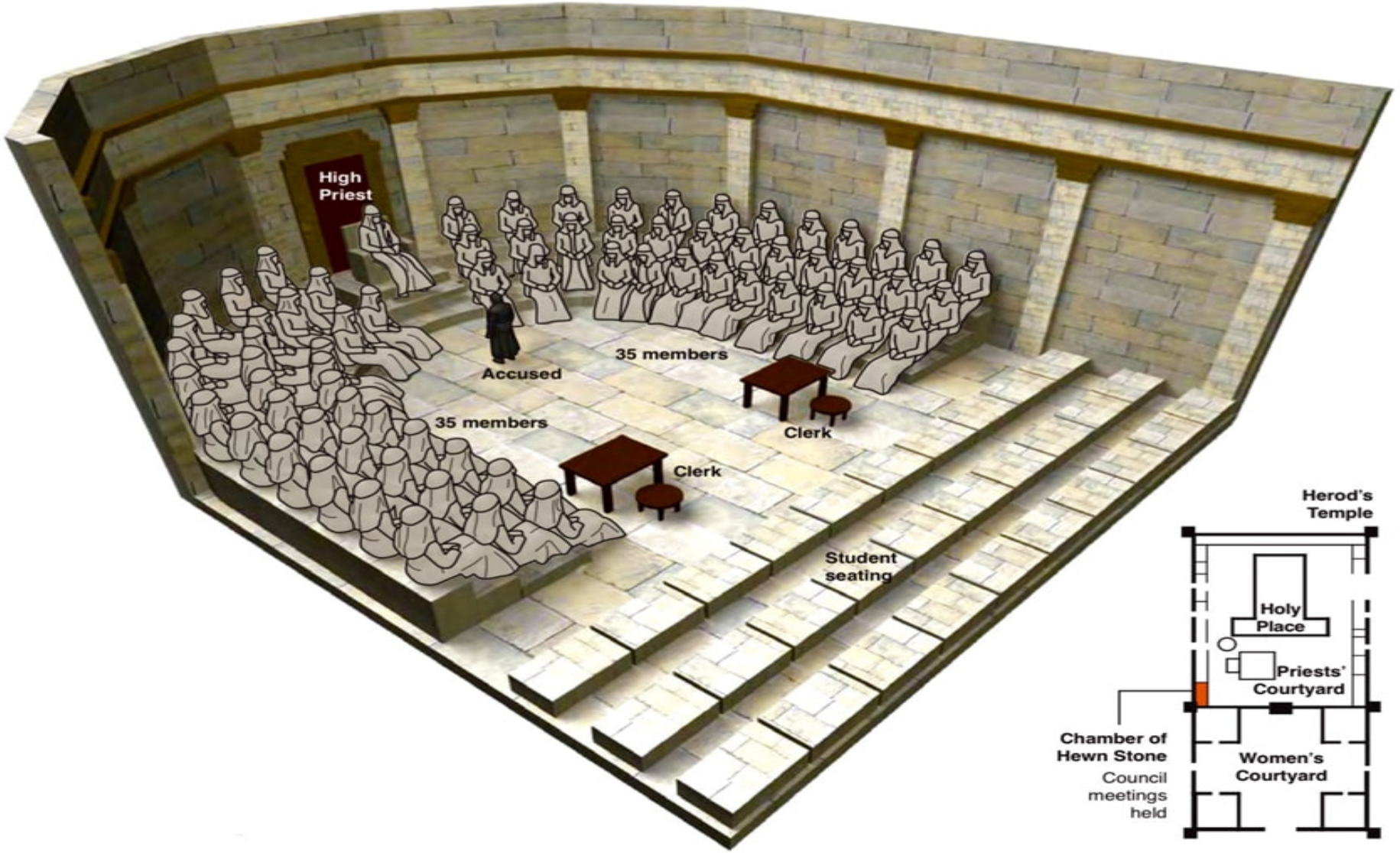
THE SANHEDRIN

The Jewish high court consisted of 71 men and was led by the high priest. The Sanhedrin council could decide almost any fate of its people—excpet the death penalty, which was decided by the Romans. The courtroom of the Sanhedrin was located within the Chamber of Hewn Stone inside the Temple.



Acts 23:1-11

Paul's Defense before the Sanhedrin

Scripture References from Legacy Standard Bible, copyright 2021, The Lockman Foundation

Acts 23:1–3

1 Now Paul, looking intently at the Sanhedrin,
said, “Brothers, I have lived my life in all good
conscience before God up to this day.”

2 And 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?”

Acts 23:4–6

4 But those standing nearby said, “Do you revile
the high priest of God?”

5 And Paul said, “I was not aware, brothers, that
he was high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall
not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

6 But knowing that one group were Sadducees
and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out
in the Sanhedrin, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a
son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and
resurrection of the dead!”

Acts 23:7–9

7 As he said this, there was 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.

9 And there occurred a great outcry; 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?”

Acts 23:10–11

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

11 But on that very night, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly borne witness to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness at Rome also.”

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Paul Before the Sanhedrin

30 But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to come together, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

2 Corinthians 1:12 [12]For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

Acts 24:16 [16]"In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a conscience without fault both before God and before men.

2 Timothy 1:3 [3]I am grateful to God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I unceasingly remember you in my prayers night and day,

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Acts 4:6 [6]and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.

Acts 21:32 [32]At once he took along soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Matthew 27:30 [30]And they spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head.

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Leviticus 19:15 [15]"You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you shall judge your neighbor in righteousness.

Deuteronomy 25:2 [2]then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be struck, the judge shall then make him lie down and be struck in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt.

John 7:51 [51]"Does our Law judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing?"

Ezekiel 13:10–16

10 “It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash;

11 *so* tell those who plaster *it* over with whitewash that it will fall. A flooding rain will come, and you, O hailstones, will fall; and a stormy wind will break out.

12 “Now behold, the wall will fall. Will it *then* not be said to you, ‘Where is the plaster with which you plastered *it*?’”

13 Therefore, thus says Lord Yahweh, “I will make a stormy wind break out in My wrath. There will also be in My anger a flooding rain and hailstones to consume *it* in wrath.

14 “So I will pull down the wall which you plastered over with whitewash and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation is laid bare; and it will fall, and you will be consumed in its midst. And you will know that I am Yahweh.

15 “Thus I will spend My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it over with whitewash; and I will say to you, ‘The wall is gone, and its plasterers are gone—

16 the prophets of Israel who prophesy to Jerusalem and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,’ declares Lord Yahweh.

Matthew 23:27 [27]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

John 18:23 [23]Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

Acts 23:4–6

4 But those standing nearby said, “Do you revile
the high priest of God?”

5 And Paul said, “I was not aware, brothers, that
he was high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall
not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

6 But knowing that one group were Sadducees
and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out
in the Sanhedrin, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a
son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and
resurrection of the dead!”

John 9:28 [28]And they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

1 Peter 2:23 [23]who being reviled, was not reviling in return; while suffering, He was uttering no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

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Exodus 22:28 [28]"You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

Acts 23:4–6

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Matthew 3:7 [7]But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Acts 23:7–9

7 As he said this, there was 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.

9 And there occurred a great outcry; and some of
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Matthew 22:23 [23]On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and asked Him a question,

Mark 12:18 [18]Then some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying,

Luke 20:27 [27]Now some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Him,

Acts 15:5 [5]But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.”

John 3:1 [1]Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;

Pharisees and Sadducees - MacArthur

Matt 3:7 ***Pharisees and Sadducees.*** *See note on John 3:1.* The Pharisees were a small (about 6,000), legalistic sect of the Jews who were known for their rigid adherence to the ceremonial fine points of the law. Their name means "separated ones." Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees was usually adversarial. He rebuked them for using human tradition to nullify Scripture (Matt. 15:3–9), and especially for rank hypocrisy (15:7–8; 22:18; 23:13, 23, 25, 29; Luke 12:1). The Sadducees were known for their denial of things supernatural. They denied the resurrection of the dead (Matt. 22:23) and the existence of angels (Acts 23:8). Unlike the Pharisees, they rejected human tradition and scorned legalism. They accepted only the Pentateuch as authoritative. They tended to be wealthy, aristocratic members of the priestly tribe, and in the days of Herod their sect controlled the temple (*see note on Matt. 2:4*), though they were fewer in number than the Pharisees. Pharisees and Sadducees had little in common. Pharisees were ritualists; Sadducees were rationalists. Pharisees were legalists; Sadducees were liberals. Pharisees were separatists; Sadducees were compromisers and political opportunists. Yet they united together in their opposition to Christ (22:15–16, 23, 34–35). John publicly addressed them as deadly snakes. ***the wrath to come.*** *See note on Luke 3:7.* John's preaching echoed the familiar OT theme of promised wrath in the day of the Lord (e.g., Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18; see Introduction to Joel: Historical and Theological Themes). This must have been a particularly stinging rebuke to the Jewish leaders, who imagined that divine wrath was reserved only for non-Jews.

John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible: Notes, ed. John MacArthur, Second Edition (Thomas Nelson, 2021), 1268.

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Mark 2:16 [16]And when the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they were saying to His disciples, “He is eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners!”

Luke 5:30 [30]And the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?”

Acts 24:5 [5]“For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Acts 23:10–11

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

11 But on that very night, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly borne witness to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness at Rome also.”

Luke 23:4 [4]Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.”

Luke 23:14 [14]and said to them, “You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found in this man no guilt of what you are accusing Him.

Luke 23:22 [22]And he said to them a third time, “Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt worthy of death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him.”

Acts 23:10–11

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

11 But on that very night, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly borne witness to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness at Rome also.”

Romans 1:9–11 [9]For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how without ceasing I make mention of you, [10]always in my prayers earnestly asking, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. [11]For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be strengthened;

Romans 15:23 [23]but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

Acts 28:23 23And when they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly bearing witness about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

Time line of the Apostles

John MacArthur. The MacArthur Study Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997.

