

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 17:1-21

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Paul and Silas in Thessalonica: 17:1-9

1. **17** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.



² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” // How do these two passages relate to the contents of vv. 2-3?

- a. ^{NAS} **Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- b. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:3-6** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he

was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

2. The Spirit worked through the Word; therefore: ⁴ ...some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. // As Paul knew and shared God’s truth, *so let us know and share God’s truth; then trust the Spirit to do His work!*
3. ⁵ But the [unbelieving] Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble [thus, from the crowd], they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. // Apparently Paul and Silas were staying with Jason, while in Thessalonica.
4. ⁶ And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, ⁷ and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” // You might recall these other occasions recorded earlier in Acts when the unbelieving Jews were jealous:
 - a. At Antioch in Pisidia – 13:43-45
 - b. At Iconium – 14:1-2
5. ⁸ And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. ⁹ And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. // Jason was required to place his money and property on the line to guarantee that there would be no further disruptive events.

Paul and Silas in Berea: 17:10-15

6. ¹⁰ The brothers [believers] immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea [see the map on the other side], and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.
- a. What “word” did they eagerly receive?

- b. How did they make sure they were not being led astray? _____
7. ¹² Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. // As the gospel and those proclaiming it were oftentimes being attacked, so we shouldn't be surprised when such things happen today!
8. ¹⁴ Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. // Hostility of Thessalonian Jews must have been directed most vehemently against Paul, who is sent off, while Silas and Timothy continue the work in Berea.
9. ¹⁵ Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens [see the map on the other side], and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed. // Others go along with Paul to ensure his safety. command. Paul instructs his escort to tell Silas and Timothy to join him soon (cf 1Th 2:17–3:6).

Paul in Athens: 17:16-21

10. ¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them [Silas and Timothy] at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of

idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. // Notice that Paul went to the place where the devout ones gathered, but also to the marketplace where people of all kinds were probably present; it seems that he went to talk to whoever was willing to talk with him. *May the Lord grant us such an attitude of sharing the precious truth of God's love in Christ with all people!*

11. ¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. // The philosophical fame of Athens is evident. Epicureanism emphasized seeking a pleasurable life, though not merely in a sensual [physical] way. Stoicism stressed the rational order of nature and urged people to accept their fate within it.
12. ¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. // Areopagus. Lit, “hill of Ares.” Ares was a Greek god of war linked with Mars by the Romans; therefore, the location is also called Mars Hill. Early in the history of Athens, citizens met here to govern the city, so “Areopagus” also came to describe the city council. Paul seems to be in the place called the Areopagus, near the Acropolis, rather than at a formal meeting of citizens. He would be in view of the massive Parthenon, dedicated to Athena.... Since there was at least one synagogue in Athens (v 17), the Athenians likely knew of the OT. But the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection was new to them.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 17:22 – 18:6

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Paul Addresses the Areopagus: 17:22-34

See the “Athens Greece” PP in the “Acts” folder!

13. ²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. // Since a *negative statement* can close ears, Paul began with a *positive statement* to gain the attention of his hearers.
14. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. // Paul took something they were already worshiping – *in a sense*; then he gave them a wonderful and important explanation!
15. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. // Paul made it clear that this unknown God is the TRUE GOD – *because He created and is Lord, thus Master over all things!*
16. ²⁶ And he made from one man [Adam] every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”
 - a. God made us, loves us, and provides for us, so He wants us to seek Him where He has revealed Himself – in nature and in our conscience, *but especially in His Word!*
 - b. Because of God, we *have life, we can move, and do exist*. Whether people admit such things or not, *they are true!*
17. ²⁹ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. // Since we are not like inanimate objects, neither is God from whom we have come as His offspring.
18. ³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” Some important quotes from TLSB:
 - a. *times of ignorance God overlooked*. With the coming of Christ, God’s revealed Word is sent out into the world. Now it has come to Athens through Paul.
 - b. Chemnitz: “God by His determination has decided how long He wills to wait for repentance and where He is going to crush wickedness” (LTh 1:211). Compare Rm 2:4.
 - c. *all people*. “No one is an exception who is a human being. This repentance teaches us to discern sin: We are completely lost; there is nothing good in us from head to foot; and we must become absolutely new and different people” (SA III III 34–35).
 - d. *repent*. The proper response to God’s message is repentance (Lk 3:3; 10:13; 13:3, 5), but it must be His gift and work through His Word (compare Ac 2:38; 5:31; 10:44).
19. ³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” ³³ So Paul went out from their midst. ³⁴ But some men joined him and believed, among whom also

were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. // It's up to the work of the Holy Spirit as to who believes in Jesus, but God does want us to share His truth about sin – *which condemns*, and Jesus' work – *which saves*, whenever we have the opportunity (compare 1 Peter 3:15).

Paul in Corinth: 18:1-17



1. **18** After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth [a distance of 44 miles; both cities are in Greece]. ² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus [in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey], recently come from Italy [west of Greece] with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius [the Roman emperor, in AD 49] had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, ³ and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴ And he [Paul] reasoned [discussed] in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.
 - a. As we think about discussing eternal things with others, it's important for each of us to know some basic things, such as:
 - i. The Bible is true because...

 - ii. We have all sinned because...

- iii. Jesus is the Son of God because...

- iv. Jesus I _____, s _____, d _____, r _____, and a _____; He will come a _____!
- v. God requires all people to be r _____ in His sight.
- vi. We can be seen as righteous only through Jesus because...

- b. Memorize and understand this statement; then explain it to others:
 - i. We are saved _____
 - ii. by grace _____
 - iii. through faith _____
 - iv. in Jesus _____
 - v. for eternal life _____

2. ⁵When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia [a region in Greece where Thessalonica was located; see the map], Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. ⁶ And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."
 - a. Today: Thessaloniki Greece is the capital of the Greek Macedonia area and the second largest city in Greece, after Athens. It is an important cultural, industrial, commercial and educational center, and its port is one of the busiest in the country (www.destination360.com).
 - b. Jesus told His disciples: "...if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town" (Matt. 10:14 ESV).
 - c. Why was Paul innocent? He said these words to the Ephesian elders: "...I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27 ESV).

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 18:7-28

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3. ⁷ And he left there [*the synagogue in Corinth*] and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. // For adults, that is the order: They hear God's Word, and the Spirit works through that Word to open their eyes to the truth and give them faith in Jesus; then they are baptized! Same today for adults.
4. ⁹ And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." ¹¹ And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.
 - a. Since Paul had been attacked multiple times, he probably expected it here too, but the Lord gave him special comfort and encouragement to speak and teach without fear.
 - b. Jesus told His disciples: "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered* in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:27-28 NAS).
5. ¹² But when Gallio was proconsul [*the Roman governor of the province*] of Achaia [AD 51-52], the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal [*the official seat from which the judge made his rulings*], ¹³ saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law." ¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of

wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. ¹⁵ But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." ¹⁶ And he drove them from the tribunal. // Do you recall Pilate's words to the Jewish leaders regarding Jesus? "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law" (Jn. 18:31 ESV).

6. ¹⁷ And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this. // Earlier Crispus was the synagogue ruler (v. 8), but now, *possibly a year-and-a-half has passed*, and Sosthenes is the new synagogue ruler. Since those who opposed Paul could get no support from Gallio, they took out their frustration on Sosthenes, who was also a believer (1 Cor. 1:1).

Paul Returns to Antioch: 18:18-23

7. ¹⁸ After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae [*which is about 8 miles south east of Corinth*] he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.
 - a. *set sail for Syria. As at the end of his first journey, Paul plans to report back to the believers in Syrian Antioch who sponsored his work.*
 - b. *cut his hair ... a vow. Perhaps [Paul] had taken a temporary Nazirite vow (Nu 6:1-21) in thanksgiving.*
8. ¹⁹ And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. ²¹ But on taking leave of them he

said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus. // *Priscilla and Aquila*. Paul's co-workers travel along with him but are left to work in Ephesus.

9. ²² When he had landed at Caesarea [the place where Peter had preached to Cornelius and his household – see the map below], he went up and greeted the church [the believers], and then went down to Antioch [down in elevation, but to the north]. ²³ After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Apollos Speaks Boldly in Ephesus: 18:24-28

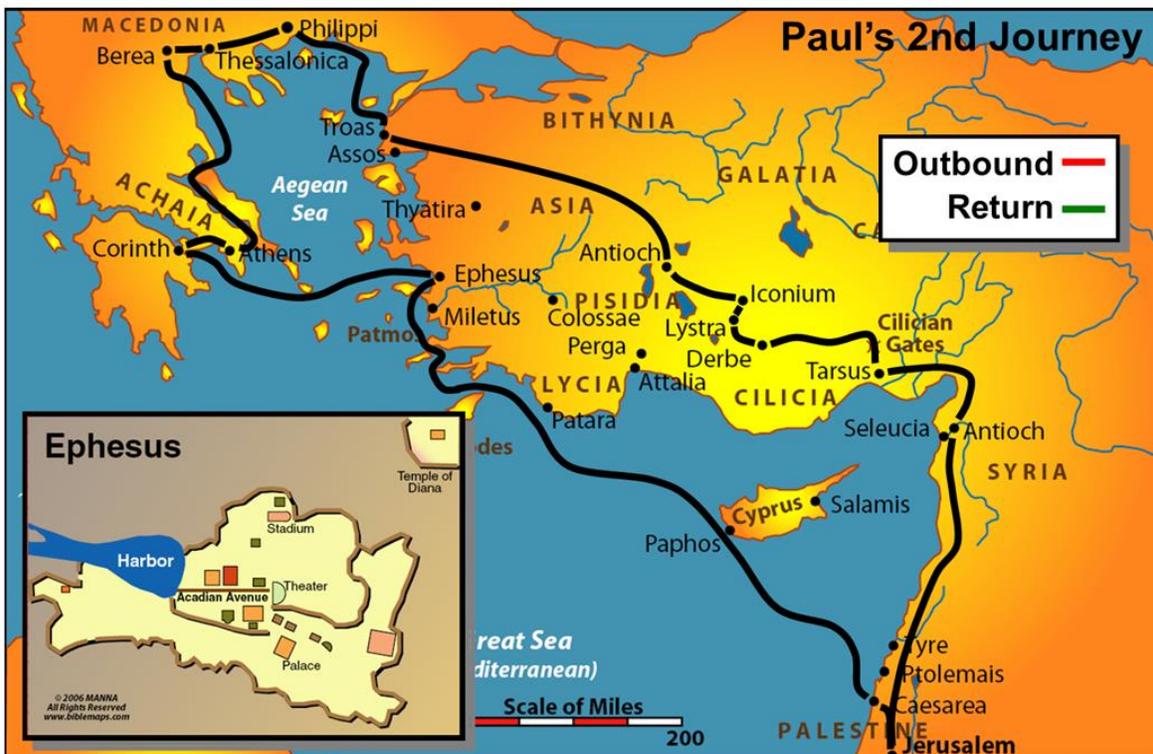
10. ²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria [on the north coast of Egypt], came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. // *John's Baptism was a temporary institution, in preparation for the coming Messiah and the*

Baptism He would institute (compare Lk 3:3; 5:33–35; 7:26–29; Mt 28:19).

11. ²⁶ He [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. // *They privately instructed the learned teacher Apollos, particularly about Christian Baptism.*
12. ²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia [see the map below], the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

- a. People "through grace had believed" – what does that mean? _____

- b. As Jesus had tried to help people see that He was the promised Christ, so His disciples had the same task.
- c. What are the pressing issues of today?



New Testament Historical Book: Acts 19:1-20

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Paul's Missionary Journeys:¹

1. **First** – Acts 13-14: Cyprus, Asia Minor, Iconium, and Lystra.
2. **Second** – Acts 15:36 to 18:22: Lystra, Phrygia and Galatia, Macedonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea.
3. **Third** – Acts 18:23 to 21:14: Ephesus, Macedonia and Greece, Troas, and Asia Minor.

Paul in Ephesus: 19:1-10

1. **19** And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland [upper] country [through the mountainous regions of Galatia and Phrygia] and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples [of Jesus]. ² And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” // Even today there is much ignorance among ♦true believers, ♦those who merely attend church, and ♦those who merely call themselves Christians. *So Bible teaching should be offered and received!*
2. ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴ And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - a. What was John’s baptism? “...a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mk. 1:4 ESV).
 - b. How many baptisms are there? “...one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5 ESV).
 - c. What about those men? Lenski wrote: “They saw from what Paul revealed to

them about John’s baptism that the baptism they had received was not John’s real baptism.... So they were now baptized” (783).

3. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.
 - a. Take note: On rare occasions in the Bible, the Spirit made His presence known as those who were baptized spoke in tongues (Acts 2:3 – The Day of Pentecost; 10:46 – Cornelius, a Gentile, having been converted; 19:6).
 - b. Lenski wrote: “The *saving* presence of the Spirit is evident in baptism; his *charismatic* presence is an entirely different thing and is bestowed as the Spirit wills for his own special purposes” (785).
4. ⁸ And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.
 - a. Paul wanted everyone to hear and benefit; however, *when some began to hinder the Word and disrupt the others*, he took the believers to another location.
 - b. Paul was in Ephesus for an extended period of time, and the Spirit used him and others to bring God’s saving truth to many!

¹ <https://www.jesustfilm.org/blog-and-stories/missionary-journeys-paul.html>

The Sons of Sceva: 19:11-20

5. ¹¹ And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. // As the Lord had worked through Peter, He now worked powerfully through Paul... The purpose of these miracles was to attest to the truth of Paul's preaching (cf Rm 15:19).
6. ¹³ Then some of the itinerant [traveling] Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits [having heard Paul do it with success, they decided to do the same], saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.
 - a. Because Jesus is God, He is known to the demons (cf Lk 4:34). Because Paul was one of Jesus' powerful workers, the evil spirits knew him also. Because the sons of Sceva did not believe in Jesus as God, they were simply using Jesus' name as part of a formula; thus they had no power over the evil spirit.
 - b. As merely SAYING we believe is much different than ACTUALLY believing in Jesus for eternal life, so it is with simply using Jesus' name versus actually knowing Jesus.
7. ¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. // Today, some may believe that Jesus is dead or was merely a man or has no power; however, when people are truly changed through Him, others notice!
8. ¹⁸ Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. ¹⁹ And a number of those who had practiced

magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

- a. *confessing and divulging their practices.* Acts of repentance. Ephesus was rife with those who practiced various forms of magic. The practices here refer to magical spells. Those who had become followers of Jesus no longer wanted to take part in a way of life they now recognized as sinful.
- b. *books ... burned.* Those who practiced magic owned small papyrus scrolls that contained magical formulas and spells. Such books were quite valuable; burning them publicly demonstrated complete rejection of such a lifestyle.
- c. *fifty thousand pieces of silver.* A piece of silver was the daily wage for a common worker.

Summary of 19:11-20:

- God continues to work through mighty miracles and His Word.
- Magic, the occult, and even using our Lord's name as an expression of good luck are all sins against the Second Commandment.
 - The Second Commandment: You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
 - *What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.
- By the power of Jesus' name, you have been forgiven of all sin (2:38) and rescued from the fiercest evil, the devil himself! Jesus gives you life in His name alone.
- "...he who believes has eternal life" (John 6:47 NAS).

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 19:21-41

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A Riot at Ephesus: 19:21-41

9. ²¹ Now after these events [with many of the new believers turning from their magic arts and burning their books] Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” ²² And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.
- “in the Spirit” – thus directed by the Holy Spirit or possibly “in the spirit” referring to Paul’s own determination to go.
 - Erastus is mentioned in Romans 16, being identified as the city treasurer of Corinth, so it’s possible that Paul recruited him when in Corinth, they went to Ephesus, and he was then sent to Macedonia.
10. ²³ About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way [the name of the movement of the followers of Jesus before they were called Christians]. ²⁴ For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. ²⁵ These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. ²⁶ And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. ²⁷ And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”
- Artemis of the Ephesians was a fertility goddess, worshiped throughout Asia.
 - silver shrines of Artemis. Probably sold to worshipers for use as votive gifts in the temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
 - Demetrius, maybe a leader among the silversmiths, was very concerned about the loss of business – in Ephesus and beyond – due to Paul and other believers, and also expressed concern about the reputation of the great goddess.
11. ²⁸ When they [the various craftsmen] heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹ So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater [a venue that could hold 25,000 people], dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel. ³⁰ But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹ And even some of the Asiarchs [men of substance and influence], who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.
12. ³² Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together [so maybe many joined in – following the rest, but didn’t even know why]. ³³ Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. ³⁴ But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” // What was going on? Lenski wrote (811-812):
- “If Alexander was also a metal image worker we can almost know what his address would have presented if he had been allowed to make it. He would have

said that he himself helped to make shrines and that thus he and the Jews were not guilty of opposing Artemis, that this was wholly the crime of renegade Jews such as ‘this fellow Paul’ who Gaius and Aristarchus [assisted].”

- b. “This Ephesian clamor seem to hold the world’s record for crowd marathon shouting.”
13. ³⁵ And when the town clerk [*the principal municipal officer of Ephesus, whom the Roman government would hold responsible for civic disorder*] had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?
- a. *temple keeper*. That designation brought great honor to the city. Ephesus was widely known as the special seat of Artemis worship.
- b. *sacred stone*. According to legend, the statue of Artemis had fallen from the sky (it may have been a meteorite) and now resided in the temple dedicated to her.
- c. A picture of the temple today: “It was completely rebuilt twice, once after a devastating flood and three hundred years later after an act of arson, and in its final form was one of the [Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](#). By 401 AD it had been ruined or destroyed. Only foundations and fragments of the last temple remain at the site” (wikipedia.org).



14. ³⁶ Seeing then that these things [about Artemis] cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷ For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.
- a. *sacrilegious*. Worshipers of false gods sometimes levied this charge against the Jews. The town clerk assures the assembly that Paul and his companions are not guilty of this serious charge.
- b. *blasphemers of our goddess*. He also makes the claim that Paul and his companions had not spoken harsh words against Artemis simply by preaching about Christ Jesus.
15. ³⁸ If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls [*supreme judges*]. Let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹ But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰ For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.” ⁴¹ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly. // Roman government took a dim view of rioting, and the town clerk warns the crowd that it is close to crossing the line from assembling into rioting.

A Summary of 19:21-41:

- Another episode shows that opponents of the Gospel cause the troubles associated with the Christian faith.
- Believers in Christ may suffer unjustly or, at times, justly because of their sins. In either case, the Lord brings us through suffering to His eternal kingdom, even while giving us opportunities to serve.
- Christ, who suffered for us, is always with us.

Since we are proceeding chronologically, we will go on to 1 and 2 Corinthians, then Romans.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts – A Recap and Going Forward

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RECAP: We are currently in the process of studying through the NT in chronological order. Chronologically (when their contents took place), the gospel accounts are first while Revelation is last; the other books/letters were written in between. Some fit into the 30 years of history as recorded in the book of Acts, while the others were written after the time covered in Acts. We began our study of Acts in 2018 and basically followed this order – going through Acts and pausing along the way to study the letters around the times they were written.

The following dates are approximate and a work in progress but are intended to help us understand the order of some NT events, as well as when and where various letters were written.

✚ Acts 1 – 14

- About 18 years: 30-48
- Including Paul's **first** missionary journey (recorded in chapters 13-14), which departed from Antioch, and went through Cyprus and Asia Minor, before returning to Antioch: **see PP map 1**
- James (written by James, the half-brother of Jesus, in 50 or earlier, probably written from Jerusalem)

✚ Acts 15 – 16

- About 3 years: 49-51
- Including the Jerusalem council (chapter 15) and the *first part* of Paul's **second** missionary journey (chapters 15-16), from Antioch to Philippi: **see PP map 2**

✚ Acts 17:1 – 18:22

- About 2 years: 51-53
- Including the *final part* of Paul's **second** missionary journey, from Philippi – through Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea – to Antioch: **see PP map 2**

- 1 and 2 Thessalonians (written by Paul in 51 and 52, while in Corinth)
- Galatians (written by Paul in 53, while in Ephesus)

✚ Acts 18:23 – 19:41

- About 2 years: 54-55
- Including the *first part* of Paul's **third** missionary journey, from Antioch to Ephesus: **see PP map 3**
- 1 Corinthians (written by Paul in 55, while in Ephesus)

✚ Acts 20:1-3

- About 1 year: 56
- Including the *next part* of Paul's **third** missionary journey, from Ephesus to Corinth: **see PP map 3**
- 2 Corinthians (written by Paul in 55, while in Macedonia)
- Romans (written by Paul in 55, while in Corinth)

GOING FORWARD: Today and beyond:

✚ Acts 20:4 – 21:16

- About 1 year: 57
- Including the *final part* of Paul's **third** missionary journey, from Corinth to Jerusalem: **see PP map 3**

✚ 21:17 – 28:31

- About 3 years: 58-61
- Including Paul being arrested in Jerusalem, being imprisoned for two years, and making a perilous journey to Rome.
- Paul's other letters were written during his two-year imprisonment noted above **or** during his imprisonment in Rome **or** after his release from prison in Rome.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 20:1-32

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Paul in Macedonia and Greece: 20:1-6

1. **20** After the uproar ceased [A Riot at Ephesus: 19:21-41], Paul sent for the disciples [living in Ephesus], and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia [going north to the region of Macedonia where he wrote 2 Corinthians, then south to Corinth].
2. ² When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece [more specifically, Corinth].
³ There he spent three months [and wrote the letter to the Romans], and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia [going north, then eventually heading south, map 3]. ⁴ So-pa-ter the Berean, son of Pyr-rhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Ar-is-tar-chus and Se-cun-dus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Ty-chi-cus and Tro-phi-mus.
⁵ These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, ⁶ but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

Eutychus Raised from the Dead: 20:7-16

3. ⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. // It was Sunday; those who belonged to Judaism worshiped on Saturdays, but Christians worshiped on Sundays because of _____.
4. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. ⁹ And a young man named Eutychus [whose name means fortunate], sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the

third story and was taken up [lifted up] **dead**.

- ¹⁰ But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." ¹¹ And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. ¹² And they took [literally, led] the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted. // What happened with Eutychus? He was dead. When Paul said "his life is in him," God had worked a miracle through Paul to raise him from the dead.
5. **See PP map 3:** ¹³ But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. ¹⁴ And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mi-ty-le-ne. ¹⁵ And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. ¹⁶ For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Paul Speaks to the Ephesian Elders: 20:17-38

6. ¹⁷ Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders [pastors] of the church to come to him. ¹⁸ And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable [useful, advantageous], and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. // Paul

did not stop in Ephesus, but asked the Ephesian pastors to come to him in Miletus; then he spoke about what he did as an example for them:

- a. Serving with all humility (not arrogance).
 - b. Saying whatever was useful (even though it may have been difficult to hear).
 - c. Teaching in public and in homes.
 - d. Calling both Jews and Greeks to repent and trust in Jesus as Savior.
7. ²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained [literally, having been bound; also, controlled] by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. // As Jesus knew of His cross yet still went to Jerusalem, so Paul, aware of imprisonments and afflictions, was still willing to go.
- a. Are you listening to the Holy Spirit? Y N
If yes, how? _____
 - b. Do you desire to follow God's will for your life, even though it could be difficult? Y N
8. ²⁵ And now, behold, I know [somehow by the HS] that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.
- a. What made Paul innocent of the blood of the Ephesian pastors? _____

 - b. What is important for us regarding others?

9. ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹ I

know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

- a. How might we pay careful attention to ourselves? _____
 - b. What is being done today to try to pull us and others out of God's kingdom? _____

 - c. What can we do to "be alert"? _____

10. Since Paul would no longer be able to help or instruct the pastors in Ephesus, he said to them: ³² And now I commend [entrust] you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- a. Note what God and His word can do:
b _____ you up and g _____ you the inheritance – *not something that is earned, but freely received because of a relationship*. So, it is vital to get people into the word – *because the HS will work through the word, and the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword*. Sure, we want others to worship with us, but they can have many excuses – tired, working, etc., *so focus first on getting them into the word*.
 - b. Discipleship: It's good for each of us, one-on-one, to take what we know about the Bible and keep passing it on to someone else. When we do, *both of us will benefit*.
 - c. For us today, through the many potential ways of communication, we can disciple anyone, anywhere until we die. So, pick one person, begin small, share God's word, and try to establish a dialogue. Older people email, younger people text.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 20:33 – 21:16

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Paul Speaks to the Ephesian Elders: 20:17-38 – C

11. ³³ I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me [*by making tents; 18:3*]. ³⁵ In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
- a. Since Paul was given tent-making ability, *he made tents to provide his needs*. He was also given the gospel, the good news about forgiveness through Jesus, *so he freely offered that good news to everyone*.
- b. What about us, what abilities do we have? The Bible says: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another" (1 Peter 4:10 ESV). At Bethlehem, *and in most churches*, a small percentage of people do the majority of what needs to be done. That is typical, *but not healthy*. **So, please identify your gift and use it!**
12. ³⁶ And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, ³⁸ being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship. // In 20:22, Paul said he was "*constrained by the Spirit*," so, he ♣gave into the will of the HS, ♣entrusted his life to God, and ♣departed Miletus for Jerusalem. It is also BEST when we seek and follow God's will (Eph. 2:10).

Paul Goes to Jerusalem: 21:1-16

1. **21** And when we had parted from them and set sail [*see PP map 3*], we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ² And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia [*the region where*

Tyre is located], we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴ And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. // Note how Paul and other followers of Jesus were in tune with the Spirit and with each other.

The Holy Spirit

Wants to teach us: ^{NAU} **John 14:26** "...the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things..."

Wants to guide us:

- ^{NAU} **Acts 8:29** "Then the **Spirit** said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.'" // An unusual request, *but Philip obeyed!*
- ^{NAU} **Acts 13:1-2** "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers... While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the **Holy Spirit** said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" // The call to Paul's first missionary journey.
- ^{NAU} **Galatians 5:16-17** "...walk by the **Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the **Spirit**, and the **Spirit** against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you [*your old nature*] may not do the things that you please [*it desires*]." // Believers still have the old nature—*that wants to sin*, and the new nature—*that wants to please the Lord*. Though the old nature is relentless, *it is important to walk by the Spirit!*
- ^{NAU} **Romans 8:14** "...all who are being led by the **Spirit of God**, these are sons of God." // Who is YOUR leader? _____

Wants to power us: ^{NAU} **Acts 1:8** "...you will receive power when the **Holy Spirit** has come

upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..." // What is an example of the Spirit's power at work in your life? _____

Wants to speak through us: ^{NAU} **Matthew 10:19-20** "...when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." // That should give us peace, but it should also encourage us to constantly be *in tune* with the Spirit!

Wants to fill us and use us: ^{NAU} **Acts 4:31** "...when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness." // Note the connection: They were filled on the inside, which then manifested itself on the outside in their speaking of God's word! What can be said about the filling of the Spirit? Let's compare it to filling the gas tank on our car:

- Car—gas:
 - We desire to fill the tank.
 - We are willing to pay the price.
 - We plan to use the gas to get where we need to go.
- Us—HS:
 - We desire to be filled.
 - We are serious about turning from all sin.
 - We plan to live by the Spirit by following His will for our lives.

Can be resisted: ^{NAU} **Acts 7:51** "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit..." // The HS is now working through the means of grace (word and sacrament), so *He can be resisted*, in comparison to Jesus' return when "every knee shall bow" (Phil. 2:9-11). Unfortunately, long ago and today, many are resisting the HS – which is NEVER good. *So let us be open and obedient!*

2. ⁵When our days there were ended, we departed [from Tyre, see map 3] and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed ⁶and said farewell to one

another. Then we went on board the ship [heading for Jerusalem], and they returned home [to Tyre].

3. ⁷When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. ⁸On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea [see PP map 3], and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven [Acts 6:1-7], and stayed with him. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. // ^{NAU} **Joel 2:28** "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions."
4. ¹⁰While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" ¹²When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." [Paul was completely in tune with the HS and God's will for his life!] ¹⁴And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."
5. ¹⁵After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge. // From Caesarea to Jerusalem is about 75 miles, yet they made the difficult journey to help Paul and those with him as much as possible.
- a. How is the HS calling you to help others?

 - b. Are you doing all you can to be obedient?
Y N If no, what else should you begin doing?

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 21:17-26

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Paul Visits James: 21:17-26

6. ¹⁷ When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. ¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James [the half-brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem Church], and all the elders [pastors / church leaders] were present.
7. ¹⁹ After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry [probably regarding his most recent missionary trip]. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.
 - a. ^{ESV} **Acts 2:41** ...there were added that day about three thousand souls.
 - b. ^{ESV} **Acts 4:4** But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.
 - c. ^{ESV} **Acts 6:7** ...the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.
8. [The Jews] are all zealous for the law, ²¹ and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to **forsake Moses**, telling them **not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.**”
9. **Redefining Laws and Customs (TLSB, 1671):** Jesus often clashed with the Pharisees while teaching His disciples that God wanted to include the Gentiles in His kingdom. The following [are] examples from the Gospels where Jesus interpreted and applied Old Testament laws and Jewish traditions. It will help you understand how Jesus fulfilled the Law of God, yet overturned man-made ideas

of holiness and righteousness. He did this to prepare the way for people of all nations to enter God’s kingdom.

Attendance at Passover (Lk 2:41-50):

- ❖ **Example:** Jesus faithfully attended the feasts instituted by the heavenly Father in the OT [see Leviticus 23].
- ❖ **Meaning:** Jesus kept the Jewish feasts, not only for personal devotion, but more important to fulfill the Law of the old covenant. ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Jews and Samaritans (Jn 4:7-9):

- ❖ **Example:** John points out for his Gentile readers that Jews and Samaritans did not associate with one another. This was because the Samaritans had intermarried with the Gentiles [Deut. 7:1-4] and taken up pagan practices; therefore, the Jews considered them unclean.
- ❖ **Meaning:** Jesus freely associated with the Samaritan woman, breaking Jewish custom. He did this out of loving concern for her, calling her to repentance and to faith in Him as the Messiah.

Fasting (Mk 2:18-22; Lk 5:33-39):

- ❖ **Example:** Fasting was an important part of Pharisaic devotion. They usually fasted twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays (Lk 18:12). John the Baptist encouraged similar devotion among his disciples.
- ❖ **Meaning:** The Pharisees questioned the devotion of Jesus’ disciples because they did not fast like other devout Jews. Jesus’ reply to them shows that He expected fasting to be a part of later Christian devotion (Mt 6:16 “When...”; Mt 17:21

“prayer and fasting”). However, He used the example of His feasting to show that He was God’s special Servant who brought the joy and comfort of God’s kingdom.

Picking Grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1–8; Mk 2:23–28; Lk 6:1–5):

- ❖ **Example:** In contrast to the Pharisees, Jesus applies Dt 23:25 to the Sabbath. The disciples were permitted to satisfy their hunger on the Sabbath by picking a little grain.
- ❖ **Meaning:** Jesus’ interpretation of the OT and the story about King David reveal that the Sabbath was intended as a blessing and relief, not a painful rigor.

Clean Hands (Mt 15:1-20; Mk 7:1-23):

- ❖ **Example:** Jesus broke with the tradition of the Jewish elders because He did not require the disciples to wash their hands before they ate.
- ❖ **Meaning:** Jesus uses these incidents to point out the importance of keeping God’s Law over keeping traditions. Notice that Jesus does not tell the Pharisees and teachers of the law that they have to break tradition.

Washing Cups (Mt 23:25-26; Lk 11:39):

Another tradition of the Jewish elders. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their zeal for traditions rather than for mercy and repentance.

Seating at a Wedding (Mk 12:38-39; Lk 14:7-11):

- ❖ **Example:** The seating at feasts illustrated people’s social ranking. People competed for the “spotlight,” as they do today.
- ❖ **Meaning:** Jesus’ illustration and parable reveal the upside-down character of God’s kingdom. For God’s people, the honor is in humility, not social rank. Jesus’ parable undermined the socially acceptable rules about feasting. He emphasized that one should use a feast as an opportunity to show mercy.

Invitations to a Feast (Lk 14:12-14): Feasting and gift giving in most cultures are dominated by “reciprocal giving.” I.e., if you give a gift to someone, you can anticipate a gift in return. Such giving solidifies social relationships among people of rank but isolates the poor.

Throughout Jesus’ teaching on feasts, He emphasizes two key points: God’s Word—correctly applied—must have precedence over traditions, and mercy is the essence of devotion [*love*]. These key points still apply to us today.

10. ²² “What then is to be done? [The Jews] will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow [*something done periodically by Jews (Num. 6:1-21)*]; ²⁴ take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus, all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. // Paul is to purge himself of the suspicion that he has become a traitor to the Jewish people and their customs by publicly associating himself with these men and paying the considerable expenses involved in the sacrificial ceremony of purification. *shave their heads*. Done at the fulfillment of a vow.
11. ²⁵ But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols [*polluted by them*], and from blood [*eating it violated Jewish custom, Gen. 9:4*], and from what has been strangled [*so the blood remained in the meat*], and from sexual immorality.” [*Decisions made at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:29).*] ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them. // Apparently Paul was required to inform the appropriate priests when these offerings would be presented.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 21:27 – 22:5

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Paul Arrested in the Temple: 21:27-36

12. ²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed [*“the customary seven days that were needed for terminating a vow of the type that had been made”* (Lenski, 887)], the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

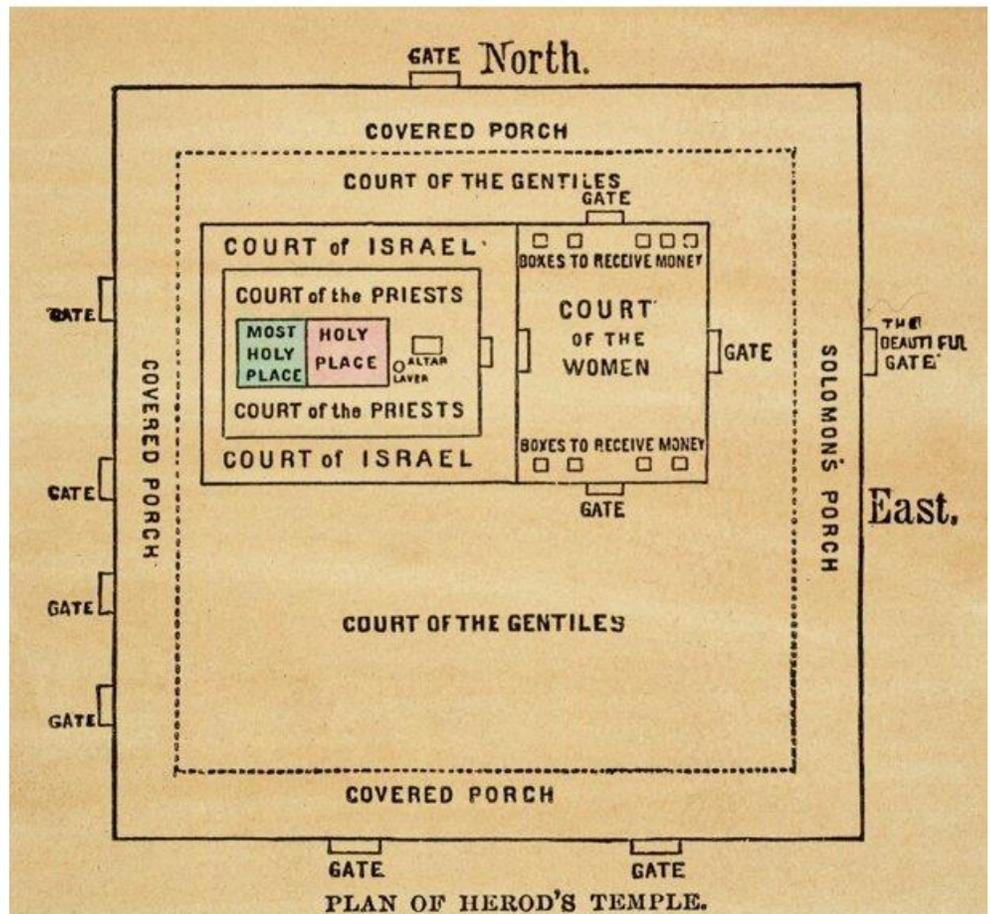
a. Jews from Asia: Paul, on his third missionary journey, had encountered trouble in Ephesus: Acts 19:9 “...when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way [*trusting in Jesus as the Messiah*] before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus” (NAU).

b. Trophimus: One of Paul’s companions on this journey to Jerusalem; he would have been known to the Jews from Ephesus.

c. Negative and false ideas about Christians and churches today: People may say:

- i. They think they are better than others!
- ii. They only want your money!
- iii. They only care about themselves!
- iv. _____
- v. _____

13. ³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. // “...the doors that opened into the courts of the men and of the women.... We take it that this Levite police force... helped to get the crowds out of these most sacred precincts” (Lenski, 890).



14. ³¹ And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. ³² He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when [the crowd] saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.
- tribune*. Claudius Lysias, the Roman officer in charge of 760 infantrymen and 240 cavalrymen.
 - cohort*. Stationed at the Roman fortress Antonia, outside the northwest wall of the temple.
15. ³³ Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. ³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, ³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!” // The tribune believed Paul to be the wrongdoer because he was the one being attacked.

Paul Speaks to the People: 21:37 – 22:21

16. ³⁷ As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And [the tribune] said, “Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins [*aka sicarii, who carried sicas, which were curved daggers*] out into the wilderness?” // The tribune mistook Paul for the man who had convinced a number of people he was a prophet a few years earlier. He led 4,000 troops against the Romans at Jerusalem, promising that the walls of the city would fall simply because of his presence. The Romans crushed the revolt, but the Egyptian escaped.
17. ³⁹ Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you,

permit me to speak to the people.” ⁴⁰ And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language [*that is, speaking Aramaic, the common language of Judea at that time*], saying:

- 22** “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.” // Paul expresses his kinship with the angry Jews while giving deference to the Jewish leaders. Stephen’s address began the same way (7:2).
- ² And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: ³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. // “Paul’s having Gamaliel as a teacher already explains the kind of an education he received... [which was] limited to the things handed down from the Jewish fathers, and he received it in a form that was most exact and accurate... No devout Jew in all Israel could have provided a more satisfactory Jewish upbringing and education for his son than that which Paul’s father provided for him” (Lenski, 902).
- [Let me tell you about my zeal:] ⁴ I persecuted this Way [*those who followed Jesus*] to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. //
 - I persecuted this Way to the death*. Paul later relates his approval of Stephen’s death (v 20) and speaks of his approval of the execution of Christians (26:10).
 - “These letters made Paul the agent of the entire Sanhedrin.... We do not know how the Sanhedrin managed to have its death verdicts carried out” (Lenski, 904).

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 22:6-29

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Paul Speaks to the People: 21:37 – 22:21 – Cont.

In our current study of Acts, Paul has recently:

- Completed his third missionary journey.
- Arrived in Jerusalem.
- Greeted James – *the half-brother of Jesus*.
- Been arrested – *In the process of helping four Jewish men complete a vow – for the purpose of gaining favor with the Jews in Jerusalem.*

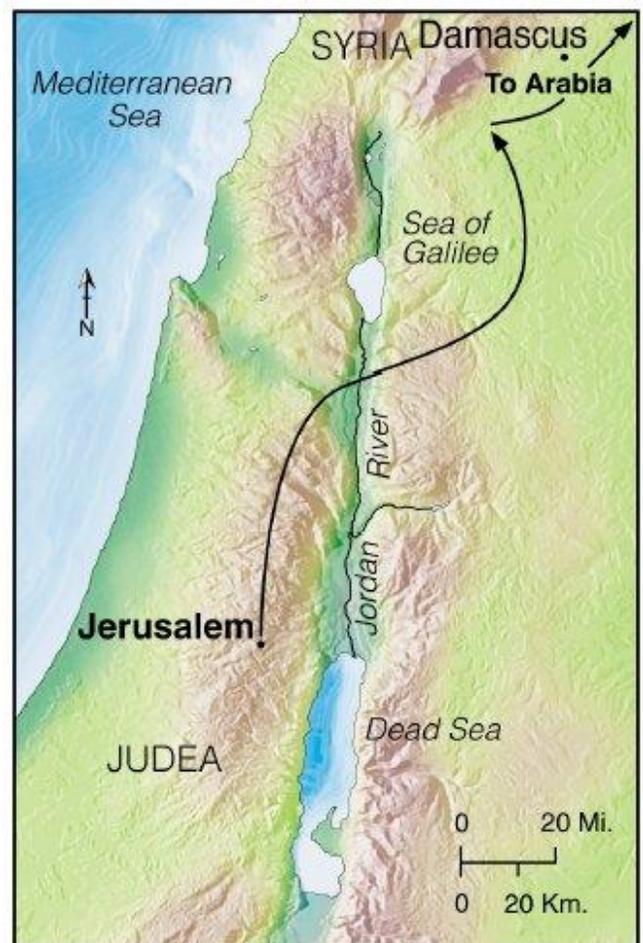
In the process of being taken into custody, Paul was granted permission to address the hostile crowd. So far Paul has explained that:

- He is a Jew.
- He was born in a significant city – *Tarsus*.
- He studied under Gamaliel – *a famous Jewish teacher*.
- He was very zealous for the law because he had persecuted followers of Jesus – *delivering them to prison to be put to death*.
- He had official authorization from the Sanhedrin to travel to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem.

Paul now continues addressing the crowd (for more details about Paul's conversion, [see our study of Acts 9:1-19a](#)):

4. ⁶“As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me [*the noonday sun is bright, but this light was much brighter*]. ⁷And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ⁸And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ // When you think of the great efforts Paul had taken and was taking to have followers of Jesus put to death, Paul must have been quite shocked when the voice said, “I am Jesus...”

5. ⁹ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed [*assigned*] for you to do.’ ¹¹ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus [*by the way, from Jerusalem to Damascus is about 135 miles*].



6. ¹² “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there [*and having been sent to Paul by Jesus*], ¹³ came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw

him. ¹⁴ And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; ¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him [Jesus] to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

- a. Think about the sins of Paul, nevertheless, *he was appointed by God the Father to:*
 - i. Know the will of the Father.
 - ii. See and hear Jesus.
 - iii. Testify to others about Jesus.
 - b. Ananias said to Paul, "be baptized and wash away your sins" – those words agree with the Greek text of the Bible, yet many proceed as if baptism was merely *a picture of forgiveness*. According to the Bible, Baptism is *real washing*, as Peter said: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38 NAU).
7. ¹⁷ "When I had returned to Jerusalem [three years later] and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw him [Jesus] saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' [After hearing those words, Paul tried to reason with Jesus:] ¹⁹ And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' ²¹ And he [Jesus] said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" // Remember, Paul is addressing the hostile crowd in Jerusalem. "The point that Paul's hearers are to note in this statement is his desire by all means to remain and to work among the Jews in Jerusalem, in the very place where everybody knew about his fearful persecution of the Christians; he thought that he was best fitted for that. It was the Lord

who insisted on his going to the Gentiles." (Lanski, 912)

Paul and the Roman Tribune: 22:22-29

8. ²² Up to this word they [the crowd] listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live." ²³ And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ the tribune [the Roman officer in charge of 1,000 men] ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging [thus the truth was to be whipped out of Paul], to find out why they were shouting against him like this. ²⁵ But when they had stretched him out for the whips [stripped to the waist and forced to bend over a low pillar with his feet and hands secured to the floor], Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" // Non-citizens of Rome could legally be treated that way, but not Roman citizens.
9. ²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." ²⁷ So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." ²⁸ The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth." ²⁹ So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.
 - a. The tribune evidently doubted that a man such as he saw before him had the means to purchase a Roman citizenship, as he himself had done.
 - b. **Summary:** Paul's address does not avert the crowd's hatred. However, as a Roman citizen, he receives help from a Roman tribune. God established the governing authorities to bring a degree of peace and civil righteousness to our troubled world.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 22:30 – 23:22

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On the previous study sheets:

- Paul completed his third missionary journey and arrived in Jerusalem.
- Jews in the temple, *mistaken about Paul's situation*, were attempting to kill him – which led to Paul being arrested.
- Paul spoke to the angry crowd; then he was taken into custody and was about to be flogged – until it was discovered that he was a Roman citizen.

Paul Before the Council: 22:30 – 23:11

10. ³⁰ But on the next day [after Paul was arrested and almost flogged], desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he [the tribune] unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them. // Those who met were significant Jews; the Roman leadership worked through them to control the regular Jewish people.

1. **23** And looking intently at the [Jewish council], Paul said, “Brothers [since he and they were Jews], I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” ² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! [Compare Mt. 23:27.] Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” ⁴ Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?” ⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”
 - a. *in all good conscience up to this day* – Even though Paul did terrible things by arresting and imprisoning followers of Jesus, *he thought he was serving God*.

- b. *whitewashed wall* – Paul paints the high priest as one whose fair exterior conceals from human eyes the corruptness of one doomed to God’s judgment.
 - c. *contrary to the law* – Luther: “...it is permissible to [condemn] on account of the Word of God; but it is wrong to [condemn] on your own account for personal vengeance...” (AE 14:258).
2. ⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees [rejecting the resurrection from the dead] and the other Pharisees [accepting the resurrection from the dead], he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope [the certainty] and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.
 - a. Paul’s strategy was to divide and conquer!
 - b. *resurrection ... angel ... spirit* – The Sadducees did not believe in these things, though they could find them in the Books of Moses. *Let us always believe the Bible!*
 3. ⁹ Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the **Pharisees’ party** stood up and contended sharply, “**We find nothing wrong** in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” ¹⁰ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks. // Paul’s strategy was successful.
 4. ¹¹ The following night the Lord stood by him [Paul] and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me [Jesus] in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”

// Not – *might testify* but *MUST testify*. As Paul made his difficult journey to Rome, *even though death seemed certain on various occasions*, Paul knew he would make it to Rome because of what Jesus had told him.

A Plot to Kill Paul: 23:12-22

5. ¹² When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. ¹³ There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. ¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near.”
- a. *bound themselves by an oath* – **The conspirators vowed they would be cursed by God if they did not fulfill their sinister mission.** Since we naturally crave food and drink every day, *they planned to bring Paul’s life to an end very quickly.*
- b. *the chief priests and elders* – Years earlier they had authorized Paul to arrest and imprison followers of Jesus. Now, *since Paul was serving Jesus*, they were asked to help bring Paul’s life to an end. When we are connected to Jesus, *we have eternal life but should also expect persecution!*
6. ¹⁶ Now the son of Paul’s sister [Paul’s nephew] heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷ Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him.” [Amazingly, the centurion listed to Paul!] ¹⁸ So he took [Paul’s nephew] and brought him to the tribune and said, “Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you.” ¹⁹ The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”

- a. Keep in mind what happened earlier: the tribune – *before he knew Paul was a Roman citizen* – had him bound and was about to have him flogged; however, when he discovered Paul’s citizenship, the tribune was afraid (see 22:29).
- b. Possibly because Paul was nearly and unjustly flogged, the tribune was willing to give special attention to what the young man had to say.
7. ²⁰ And he said, “The Jews [the Jewish leaders] have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. ²¹ But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent.” ²² So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of these things.”

Summary of 23:12-22: ...Paul’s nephew... is an example to us of how family members may support one another in trying times and call upon legitimate authority in support of God’s people.

A Heroic Act in the OT: ^{NAU} **1 Samuel 31:8-12**
“...the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul [the first king of Israel] and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head and stripped off his weapons, and sent *them* throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people [that Saul, their enemy, was dead]. They put his weapons in the temple of Ashtaroth [a false goddess], and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan [a place in Manasseh, west of the Jordan]. Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead [an ancient Israelite town in Gilead] heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men rose and walked all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned [or buried (1 Chr. 10:12)] them there.” // How is God calling us to live for Him with courage, strength, and honor?

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 23:23 – 24:21

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Paul Sent to Felix the Governor: 23:23-35

Note: This action was taken in response to the plot to ambush Paul on the road and put him to death.

8. ²³ Then [the tribune] called two of the centurions and said, “Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night [that is, 9 pm].
²⁴ Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.” // The tribune wanted to diffuse a volatile situation, so he provided a heavy military escort to take Paul by night to Caesarea, 55 miles away. This city was the administrative center for the governor of the province of Judea.
9. ²⁵ And [the tribune] wrote a letter to this effect: ²⁶ “Claudius Lysias [the name of the tribune], to his Excellency the governor Felix [he served as governor of Judea from AD 52 to 60], greetings. ²⁷ This man [Paul] was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. // Notice how the tribune skipped the part about nearly flogging Paul, which was illegal.
10. ²⁹ I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. ³⁰ And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man [to kill him (without disclosing how he found out about the plot)], I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.” // The tribune – to avoid any further trouble in Jerusalem – passed the situation with Paul unto Felix, the governor of Judea.

11. ³¹ So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris [that is, about halfway to Caesarea]. ³² And on the next day they returned to the barracks [the two hundred soldiers and the two hundred spearmen], letting the horsemen go on with him. ³³ When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. ³⁴ On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod’s praetorium.
 - a. accusers – Not those who initially seized Paul in the temple and tried to kill him, but the high priest and some elders.
 - b. Herod’s praetorium – Herod the Great [who, over 50 years earlier, had sent his soldiers into Bethlehem to murder the Newborn King] had built for himself a palace at Caesarea. It became the home of the governor of the province.

Paul Before Felix at Caesarea: 24-1-21

1. ²⁴ And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus [apparently the attorney for the high priest and elders]. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. ² And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse [Paul], saying: “Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, ³ in **every way** and **everywhere** we accept this with **all** gratitude. ⁴ But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. ⁵ For we have found this man a plague [that is, dangerous to the public], one who stirs up riots among all

the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the [sect of the Nazarenes](#). ⁶ [He \[Paul\]](#) even tried to [profane the temple](#), but we seized him. ⁸ By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.” ⁹ The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

- a. [sect](#) – A group holding to beliefs that are contrary to established doctrine.
 - b. [sect of the Nazarenes](#) – A named used only here in the NT to describe the followers of Jesus – *since Jesus grew up in Nazareth and was a.k.a. Jesus of Nazareth*.
 - c. Note: From the perspective of the Jewish leaders, Paul was holding to contrary beliefs when, in fact, it was the Jewish leaders who were holding to false teachings.
 - d. Keep in mind: Salvation has always been through faith in the Coming Messiah; for example: ^{NAU} **Genesis 15:6** “Then [Abram] believed in the LORD; and [the LORD] reckoned it to [Abram] as righteousness.” However, over a long period of time, people began to trust in their own obedience to the law for their salvation. So, first with John the Baptizer, then Jesus, then Jesus’ disciples, and then Paul, they proclaimed the saving truth, which was contrary to the false teachings of the Jewish leaders.
 - e. [profane the temple](#) – That refers to Paul dishonoring the temple by bringing a Gentile into the temple; however, Paul did not really do that; Paul associated with a Gentile but was in the temple with Jews.
2. ¹⁰ And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: “Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. ¹¹ You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, ¹² and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in

the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. ¹⁴ But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. ¹⁶ So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

3. ¹⁷ Now after several years [*that is, after my first three missionary journeys*] I came to bring [alms to my nation and to present offerings](#). // **Donations Paul had been collecting from churches he had started; these were intended to help fellow Christians in and around Jerusalem. Bringing money into the area while it was experiencing economic troubles would likely endear Paul to the hearers.** But it was also true; Paul heard of the great needs in Jerusalem and did what he could to help.
4. ¹⁸ While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia [*that is, Ephesus, who mistakenly identified me*]— ¹⁹ they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me [*Roman law required that one’s accusers be present to make their case*]. ²⁰ Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, ²¹ other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”

Summary of 24:1–21 Paul defends himself before the Roman governor, Felix. He claims to follow what is written in the Scriptures, focusing especially on the resurrection of the dead. Paul uses the opportunity to bear witness concerning Jesus, who has given him new life. Through Jesus’ sacrificial death and His resurrection from the dead, God forgives us and builds us up. He empowers us to proclaim His mercy.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 24:22 – 25:12

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On the Previous Study Sheet:

- Paul was sent to Felix, the governor, who lived in Caesarea, about 55 miles away from Jerusalem (see the red line):



- Once Paul's accusers arrived, he was put on trial before Felix.

Paul Kept in Custody: 24:22-27

- 22** But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way [the beliefs of the followers of Jesus], put them off [thus, Paul's accusers], saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case." **23** Then he gave orders to the centurion that he [Paul] should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs. // The custody into which Felix placed Paul was akin to house arrest. Paul was allowed to have visitors who could provide for his basic needs, such as clothing and food. He was held in Caesarea for two years (v 27).
- 24** After some days [that is, shortly after the recess in Paul's trial] Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. // Drusilla, who was Jewish. Daughter of Herod Agrippa I, who was ruthless in his

treatment of Christians [^{NAU} Acts 12:1-3 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword. When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.]. **Drusilla was only 19 but had already left her first husband (King Azizus of Syria) to marry Felix.**

- 25** And as he [Paul] reasoned about **righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment**, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you." **26** At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him.

a. Paul's key topics:

i. Righteousness:

- What level of rightness does God require? ^{NAU} **Matthew 5:48** "...you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- What has God done to make us righteous in His sight? ^{NAU} **2 Cor. 5:21** "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

ii. Self-Control:

- It is a _____ of the Spirit (Gal. 5).
- Who enables us to live lives of self-control? ^{NAU} **Galatians 5:16** "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
- How was Paul possibly using the topic with Felix and Drusilla? ^{NAU} **1 Peter 2:11** "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul."

iii. **The Coming Judgment:**

1. Who will be okay and who will be condemned? ^{NAU} **Matthew 25:46**
“These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
 2. Why was Felix alarmed?
^{NAU} **Revelation 20:12** “...I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”
- b. Money: **Though illegal, Felix was hoping for a bribe, knowing Paul had come to Judea with considerable money (v 17). While Paul undoubtedly kept preaching God’s Word to Felix, Felix continued to be interested in obtaining a bribe from Paul.**
8. ²⁷ When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus [*in AD 59 or 60*]. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison. // Thinking about Paul’s preaching / teaching to Felix over a two-year period, what does that verse tell you about the spiritual condition of Felix when he ceased being the governor?

Paul Appeals to Caesar: 25:1-12

1. **Chapter 25** Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province [of Judea], he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. ² And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him [Festus], ³ asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way [*like the plot two years earlier*]. ⁴ Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. ⁵ “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me [to Caesarea], and if there is anything wrong about the man [Paul], let them bring charges against him.” // God protected Paul by not

allowing Festus to give in to the request to bring Paul to Jerusalem.

2. ⁶ After he [Festus] stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal [*Official seat from which a judge made rulings*] and ordered Paul to be brought. ⁷ When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him [Paul], bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. ⁸ Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” // **Once again, Luke shows that troubles surrounding the preaching of the Gospel are due to groundless provocation by its enemies.**
3. ⁹ But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” ¹⁰ But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried [*In a trial, the Roman governor carried the same authority as the emperor himself*]. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹ If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” // **Since it appeared that Festus might concede to the Jews and have Paul’s trial moved to Jerusalem, Paul requests a change of venue. Every Roman citizen had the right to have his case heard in the emperor’s court in Rome. The current emperor, Nero, had not yet become a terrible persecutor of the Church, as he had by AD 68, when Paul and Peter were martyred.**
4. ¹² Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.” // **council. Group of men who gave advice to the governor, especially regarding legal matters. However, the final decision concerning what to do with Paul rested solely on the governor.**

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 25:13 – 26:11

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On the Previous Study Sheet:

- Paul, after being on trial in Caesarea – *with no resolution to his case*, remained under house arrest for two years.
- At the end of the two years, Felix the governor was succeeded by Festus.
- The Jewish leaders asked Festus to complete Paul’s trial in Jerusalem, but, instead, he invited them to return to Caesarea.
- When Paul’s trial resumed and no progress was being made, Paul appealed to Caesar and Festus agreed.

Paul Before Agrippa and Bernice: 25:13-27

5. ¹³ Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus.
 - a. Agrippa the king. Herod Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I (cf. 12:1), ruled a territory that expanded over the years. He had authority over the temple in Jerusalem.
 - b. Bernice. Agrippa’s sister; they were involved in an incestuous relationship.
 - c. Drusilla (AD 38 – AD 79) was... the sister of Berenice, Mariamne (MA-AM-NE) and Herod Agrippa II.
6. ¹⁴ And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying, “There is a man left prisoner by Felix, ¹⁵ and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. ¹⁶ I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. ¹⁷ So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my

seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. ¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. ¹⁹ Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. // Festus understood the charges against Paul were of a religious nature, nothing that would condemn him before the Roman government. Festus also understood that the controversy revolved around Jesus, specifically whether or not He was alive.

7. ²⁰ Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I [*Festus*] asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. ²¹ But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.” ²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” said he, “you will hear him.” // Apparently the situation with Paul was rare, *which may be the reason why Agrippa was interested in meeting Paul and hearing what he had to say*. We can only imagine how many stories had circulated around that area and even the known world about Jesus – *His teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection*.
8. ²³ So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. // Try to imagine the golden opportunity that Paul was being given to bear witness about who Jesus is and what He had done.
 - a. *great pomp*. Probably Agrippa and Bernice, as well as all the other officials present, were dressed in their finest.

- b. *audience hall*. Probably in the palace of Herod, where trials were heard.
 - c. *military tribunes*. There were five cohorts in Caesarea. Each cohort consisted of 600 soldiers.
 - d. *prominent men*. Most likely Gentiles who were well respected and viewed as leaders.
9. ²⁴ And Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵ But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite to write to my lord [the emperor] about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.” // *write to my lord*. Whoever presented a case to the emperor had to do so in writing. Festus wanted to appear competent to the emperor, not simply to repeat the religious charges of the Jewish leaders.

Paul’s Defense Before Agrippa: 26:1-11

1. ²⁶ So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: ² “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. // Whether on trial, witnessing our faith, or in general conversation with others, it’s wise to kindly gain the attention of others – respecting them, calling them by name, etc.
2. ⁴ “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and

in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. ⁵ They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. // Paul was well known – *as a Pharisee and then as a follower of Jesus*. It seems that his accusers wanted to forget his Pharisee connection and only focus on his Jesus connection, which they saw as destructive.

3. ⁶ And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, ⁷ to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! ⁸ Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? //
 - a. In a roundabout way, Paul was indicating that his accusers and all Jews should know and believe what he knows and believes – that ✦Jesus is the Promised Messiah, ✦He is risen, and ✦God is calling everyone to trust in Him for eternal life.
 - b. *As a whole, the Jews believed in the resurrection of the dead. Hence, it does not follow that Paul should be (unjustly) accused simply for proclaiming that Jesus’ resurrection is the basis for the believer’s resurrection.*
4. ⁹ “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. // Those are some of the most ruthless things recorded in the Bible that were done by Paul against Christians. Note the underlined words above... Paul was so zealous against Jesus; then, *when converted*, became so zealous for Jesus! Let us also live with ✦faith, ✦courage, and ✦zeal for our Savior!

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 26:12-32

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From the Previous Study Sheet:

- Festus has now replaced Felix as the governor and King Agrippa has now arrived in Caesarea – possibly to see how things are going for Festus, the new governor.
- While in the city, Festus told the king about Paul’s case to gain some advice on how to explain Paul’s case to the emperor.
- When Paul was brought before the king, he explained his upbringing and strong opposition to the followers of Jesus.
- References to Paul’s conversion:
 - His actual conversion: Acts 9:1-22
 - Paul retelling his conversion to the riotous crowd in Jerusalem: Acts 22:6-16
 - Paul retelling his conversion to King Agrippa in Caesarea: Acts 26:12-18

Paul Tells of His Conversion: 26:12-32

5. ¹²“In this connection [to arrest followers of Jesus, for the purpose of putting them to death] I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, **brighter than the sun**, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴And when we had **all** fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ // A goad was a pointed stick used to guide or drive certain livestock. Jesus may have meant that Paul’s opposition was futile, or that Paul needed to repent of his sin of opposing Jesus and believe in Him instead.
6. ¹⁵And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’
- a. Persecution is hostility and ill treatment.
 - b. Why persecute Christians?

- i. To cause them to stop speaking about and living for Jesus.
 - ii. To make their lives so miserable that they reject Jesus.
 - iii. When the reasons above have failed, they are persecuted for the purpose of separating them from others through imprisonment or death.
7. ¹⁶But [Jesus said to Paul] rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you **have seen** me and to those in which I **will appear** to you, ¹⁷delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’
- a. Servant (ὕπηρέτην): Meaning helper or assistant, referring to Paul helping / assisting Jesus to make Himself and His saving work known to the world.
 - b. Witness (μάρτυρα): It can mean to communicate what we see and/or hear; it is also the word for martyr – when a person’s witness leads to his death.
 - c. **Have seen... will appear**: Paul’s conversion experience equipped him with an amazing story to tell about Jesus. Jesus also indicated that He would be appearing to Paul in the future to give Paul even more things to tell others about Jesus.
 - d. ¹⁷delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you; comments by Lenski: “The thought is that Jesus promises ‘to take out’ Paul, out of the dangers that threaten him in his witness-bearing.... Agrippa and all those present are to know that Paul went out to

bear his testimony under a specific order from no less a master than the risen Christ himself, and that [His] protection accompanied... his work" (1040-1041).

- e. ¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' Those words are a beautiful picture of conversion:
- i. Before conversion: People are ♦in spiritual darkness, ♦unable to see God's saving truth, and ♦under the power of Satan. *Let us keep those things in mind as we pray for and speak to people who are not in Christ.*
 - ii. During conversion: The Holy Spirit is working through God's word to open their eyes to ♦the condemning power of their sin, ♦their helplessness to save themselves, and ♦Jesus and His saving work for their salvation.
 - iii. Conversion itself: By the Spirit working through the word, God gives the gift of faith to trust in Jesus for eternal life.
 - iv. Some gifts given in conversion: Forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, membership in God's kingdom, and holiness / sanctification (ἁγιάζω) in God's sight.
8. ¹⁹"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but declared first to those in Damascus [*the place I was originally going to arrest followers of Jesus*], then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. // Three Important steps (20):
- a. Repent: Recognize their sins, understand they are against God, recognize their helplessness to save themselves, and be sorry for their sins.
 - b. Turn to God: Be open to and receive God's gift of faith by which they trust in Jesus for their entrance into heaven.

- c. Perform deeds in keeping with their repentance: Now in Christ, and indwelt, guided, and powered by the Spirit, they are to stop their sinning and do things that show their sorrow and trust in Jesus.
9. ²¹For this reason [*because I went about calling people to repent*] the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles." // Paul made it clear that he was not teaching anything new, but the same things written by the prophets about the coming Messiah.
10. ²⁴And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind." ²⁵But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." ²⁸And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" ²⁹And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains."
11. ³⁰Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. ³¹And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." ³²And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." // **Agrippa's comment implies that Festus should have declared Paul innocent before his appeal to Caesar.**

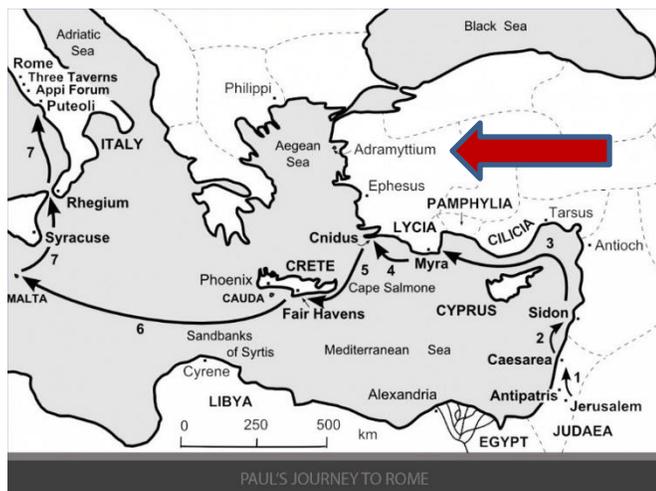
New Testament Historical Book: Acts 27:1-17

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Paul Sails for Rome: 27:1-12

1. **27** And when it was decided that we [Paul, Luke – the writer of Acts, and maybe others] should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. // A cohort contained 600 soldiers, six 100-men centuries, each led by a centurion. When in battle, a cohort was led by the most experienced centurion.
2. **2** And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. // See the maps.



3. **3** The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius [the centurion] treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for.



// The Gospel had been preached in this area earlier (Phoenicia; 11:19).

4. **4** And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. // lee of Cyprus. The ship sailed on the east and north sides of the island so that it was shielded from strong westerly winds. // See the map.
5. **5** And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. // See the map.
6. **6** There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. **7** We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone.
 - a. Salmone – at the east end of Crete.
 - b. Cape Salmone – A **cape** is a high point of land that extends into a river, lake, or ocean.
 - c. lee of Crete. The ship sailed to the east and south of the island to avoid strong northwest winds.

⁸ Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. // See the map.

7. ⁹ Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast [The Day of Atonement] was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” ¹¹ But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said.

a. The Day of Atonement was the sixth of seven required festivals. Leviticus 23 has this summary: ²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month [*Tishri*] is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves [by not eating] and present a food offering to the LORD. ²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.

i. The Day of Atonement, a.k.a. Yom Kippur, is a fall festival; in 2022, it begins in the evening on October 4 and ends on the evening of October 5.

ii. The day pointed ahead to **Jesus’** ultimate once-for-all sacrifice on Good Friday and **the** fullness of eternal life for all who receive the benefits of Jesus’ saving work: By grace, through faith in Jesus, for eternal life!

iii. More: Go to: www.BLC7500.com; then Sermons; then search for “atonement” or [click here](#).

b. **Most likely Paul is offering advice based on his experience as a seasoned traveler; he had already endured three shipwrecks (2Co 11:25).** Note that on this occasion Paul’s advice was not taken, but it was taken later – as noted in this chapter.

8. ¹² And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that

somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. // When making a decision, it is good to first gather all of the pertinent information and to *weigh the ideas from those with experience* more than the advice of others. See the map.

The Storm at Sea: 27:13-38

9. ¹³ Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor [took it up] and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. ¹⁴ But soon a tempestuous wind [*sea – LSB 715, Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me*], called the northeaster, struck down from the land [probably blew down from Mount Ida on Crete]. ¹⁵ And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. // **The sailors were unable to bring the bow of the ship into the wind.** // See the map.



10. ¹⁶ Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship’s boat. ¹⁷ After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along.

a. **Cauda. Small island 22 mi S of Crete.** // See the map.

b. **secure the ship’s boat. A small boat, used for transporting passengers and as a lifeboat, was usually pulled behind the larger ship. Here the small boat was probably brought aboard.**

c. **supports to undergird. Large cables or ropes were secured around the hull of the ship to help it weather fierce storms.**

d. **Syrtis. One of two treacherous sandbars (here the larger one is meant) off the coast of Libya. They were much feared by ancient sailors.**

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 27:18-44

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From the Previous Study Sheet:

- Paul, a prisoner, and others in his missionary team, boarded a ship in Sidon of Phoenicia, on their way to Rome, so that Paul's case could be brought before Nero.
- They changed ships in Myra in Lycia. Then they continued with increasing difficulty along the southern edge of Asia, then south to the southern edge of Crete.
- When they arrived in Fair Havens, on the southern side of Crete, Paul suggested they winter there, but the majority decided to continue to the harbor of Phoenix on the east end of Crete. *See the map.*
- Now, as we continue *the storm at sea*, read [vv. 13-17](#); then continue below.

The Storm at Sea: 27:13-38 – Continued

11. ¹⁸ Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo [a nautical technical term for throwing overboard of a ship's cargo because of a stormy sea (Friberg, BW)]. ¹⁹ And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. // The *ship's tackle* included all that is used on a ship to load or unload cargo.
12. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. // ...the storm prevented them from navigating by the sun or the stars.
13. ²¹ Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. // Paul wanted them to know he was right before – when they did not listen; maybe that would encourage them to listen to him now.
14. ²² Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of

the ship. ²³ For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, ²⁴ and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵ So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. ²⁶ But we must run aground on some island." // Paul made these things clear:

- a. The ship will be lost.
- b. God will spare every one of your lives.

15. BTW: How many were on the ship?

17 47 103 187 276 411 597

16. ²⁷ When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea [from Cauda to Malta – during those 14 days, 550 miles], about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. // *See the map.*
17. ²⁸ So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms [*sounding – the action or process of measuring the depth of the sea; 1 fathom = 6 feet; 20 fathoms = 120 feet*]. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.
18. ³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. // The sailors tried to make it appear that they were attempting to secure the ship's position, but they were actually seeking to escape under the cover of darkness.

19. ³³ As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” ³⁵ And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. // Paul gave thanks to God for the food; he did not celebrate the Lord’s Supper.
20. ³⁶ Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. ³⁷ (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) ³⁸ And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.
- 276 persons.* Other ancient accounts of travel by ship show that such a large number of passengers on a grain ship was entirely possible.
 - throwing out the wheat.* Some of the cargo had already been thrown off. As a last resort, the remainder of the wheat was thrown overboard.

Summary of 27:1–38 Grave difficulties beset Paul’s journey to Rome, yet the Lord assures Paul that he will reach his journey’s goal. When the trials of life weigh us down, it is easy for us to lose hope and stop trusting God. Yet God promises He will never leave us nor forsake us (Dt 31:6, 8; Heb 13:5). Through Jesus’ saving work, the Father keeps us with Him forever.

Let us pray: Father, be with us always in this world, especially when we are tossed about by the everyday storms of life. Grant us safe passage until we reach our final destination of heaven. Amen.

The Shipwreck: 27:39-44

21. ³⁹ Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. ⁴⁰ So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at

the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. ⁴¹ But striking a reef [a place where two seas meet], they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf.

22. ⁴² The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, ⁴⁴ and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.
- kill the prisoners.* The guards were subject to punishment if their prisoners escaped.
 - all were brought safely to land.* Paul’s promise from God is fulfilled. Divine intervention causes everyone to be rescued.



THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND PAUL’S JOURNEY TO ROME: The Roman Empire formed the backdrop for the ministries of Jesus and the apostles. Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus (27 BC–AD 14; Lk 2:1). He carried out His earthly ministry, was crucified, and rose from the dead during the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37; Lk 3:1). Claudius (AD 41–54) expelled Jews (and Jewish Christians) from Rome (Ac 18:2). Under Nero (AD 54–68), Paul journeyed to Rome to make his appeal to Caesar and bear witness to Christ there (AD 57–58; Acts 27–28). Later, Nero persecuted Christians, and in AD 68, Paul and Peter were martyred in Rome.

New Testament Historical Book: Acts 28:1-31

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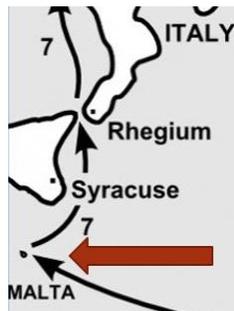
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From the Previous Study Sheet:

- Paul, a prisoner, and others on his missionary team were on a ship with a total of 276.
- They tried to make it to the port of Phoenix on the island of Crete, but, due to a strong wind and storm, the sailors lost control and the ship was pushed westward for 14 days.
- Finally, after being pushed for about 550 miles, they ran aground near the island of Malta and, *by the grace of God*, everyone on the ship made it safely to the shore.

Paul on Malta: 28:1-10

1. **28** After we were brought safely through [we were brought, **thus**, after God brought us], we then learned that the island was called Malta [117 miles south of the island of Sicily]. **2** The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.
2. **3** When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper [a venomous snake] came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. **4** When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." // **murderer**. **The natives concluded that Paul must have been guilty of a serious crime, and that he was now being punished with certain death. Justice. Among the Greek gods and goddesses, Justice was the daughter of Zeus who exacted revenge on humans.**
3. **5** He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. **6** They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down

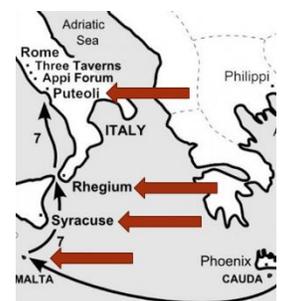


dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. // Quite a reversal – *from a murderer to a god!* Paul certainly told them otherwise.

4. **7** Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. **8** It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. // It was never Paul himself, **but God working through Paul to do the miracles.**
5. **9** And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. **10** They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed. // We can certainly presume that Paul, *as he healed*, told the people about:
 - a. Their sin, the hell they had earned, and their helplessness to save themselves.
 - b. Then, *being sorry for their sins*, he called them to trust in Jesus for eternal life.

Paul Arrives at Rome: 28:11-16

6. **11** After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. **12** Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. **13** And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium [re-ge-um]. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli [pu-te-oli].
 - a. **twin gods**. **Castor and Pollux, sons of the Greek god Zeus, were believed to be the**



patrons of sailors. The constellation Gemini was associated with them.

- b. *made a circuit*. In sailing, this is known as tacking, the changing of direction by bringing the bow into the wind.
7. ¹⁴ There we found brothers [in Christ] and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵ And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. ¹⁶ And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.
- a. *the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns*. 33 and 43 miles from Rome, respectively. Both were located on the Appian Way [one of the earliest and strategically most important Roman roads].
 - b. Paul received a nice welcome from various believers, *which gave him confidence*.
 - c. Paul was placed under house arrest with a guard chained to him.

Paul in Rome: 28:17-31

8. ¹⁷ After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.
9. ¹⁸ When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. ¹⁹ But because the [leaders of the] Jews [in Jerusalem] objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. ²⁰ For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel [the coming of the Messiah, His work, and His resurrection] that I am wearing this chain.”
10. ²¹ And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken

any evil about you. ²² But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.” // The leading Jews in Rome had heard bad things about Christians, *but they were willing to hear Paul on the topic*.

11. ²³ When [the leading Jews] had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. ²⁴ And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. // The greatest mystery: *Why some are saved but not others!*
12. ²⁵ And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶ “Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” ²⁷ For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ ²⁸ Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” // Think about Romans 1:16, *to the Jew first*. Paul taught them and, *by the Spirit*, some believed but others disbelieved. Why? Regarding God’s truth about sin and salvation, they had ♦dull hearts, ♦nearly deaf ears, and ♦closed eyes, *thus, sadly, they refused to repent*.
13. ³⁰ He lived there two whole years [60-62] at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. // The Holy Spirit used Paul to carry God’s truth to many important parts of the known world – *between his three missionary journeys, his time in Rome, and after he left Rome*.

This ends our study of Acts!