

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit
to empower his disciples
as they carry the good news
of his kingdom
to the nations of the world.

KEY THEME

Jesus offers salvation to everyone.

Acts

KEY VERSE

- And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.
- But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8

The book of Acts in two acts

THE MINISTRY OF PETER

(Chapters 1-12)

- Peter and the Jews, Acts 1-7
- Peter and the Samaritans, Acts 8
- The conversion of Paul, Acts 9
- Peter and the Gentiles, Acts 10-11
- Peter's arrest and deliverance, Acts 12

THE MINISTRY OF PAUL

(Chapter 13-28)

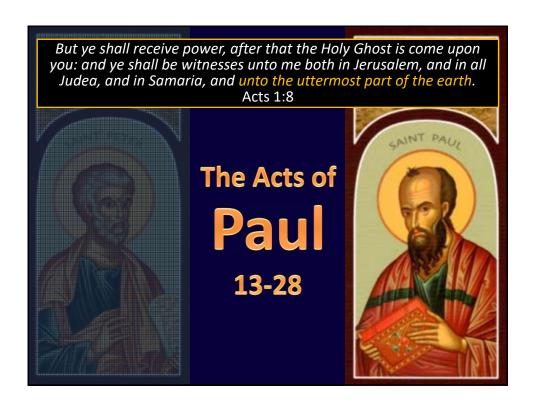
- Paul's first missionary journey, Acts 13-14
- The Council of Jerusalem, Acts 15
- Paul's second missionary journey, 16:1—18:22
- Paul's third missionary journey, 18:23-21:25
- Paul's arrest and trial in Caesarea, 21:26-26:31
- Paul's voyage to Rome, Acts 27-28

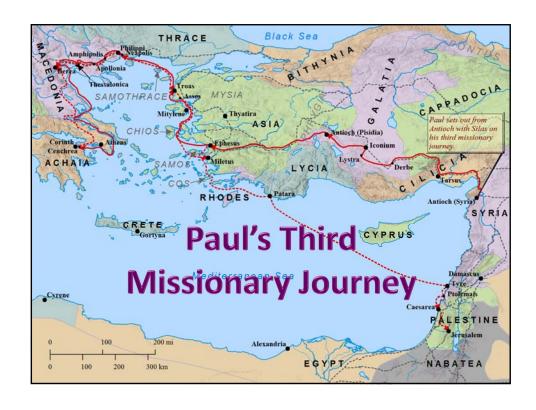
The Diligence of Luke

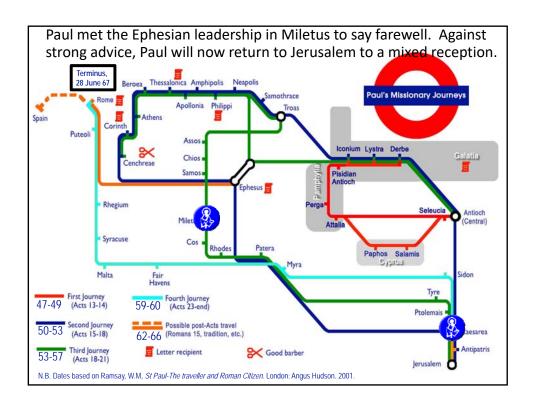
- Although not an eyewitness to the gospel events, Luke accompanied Paul during his second and third missionary journeys and was with Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea.
- Luke likely wrote the books of Luke and Acts while Paul was spending two years in prison at Caesarea Maritima, possibly as documents for Paul's legal defence.
- Luke would have been able to interview many eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, including surviving disciples and others including possibly Jesus' mother, Mary. He may also have had access to early drafts of other gospels.
- Some 60 percent of Luke's Gospel is unique. He relates at least six specific miracles not recorded by Matthew, Mark, and John. In addition to many incidents not mentioned in the other gospels, Luke the physician provides details about the physical condition of some of some witnesses. His vocabulary is larger than that of the other three Gospel writers combined, suggesting high education.

Seven Progress Reports

- 1. "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).
- 2. "So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly" (Acts 6:7).
- 3. "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria...was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31).
- 4. "But the Word of God continued to increase and spread" (Acts 12:24).
- 5. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" (Acts 16:5).
- 6. "In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (Acts 19:20).
- 7. "Paul...welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30-31).







Acts 21

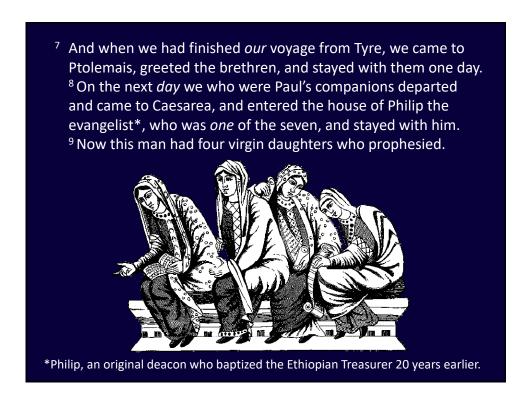
Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem

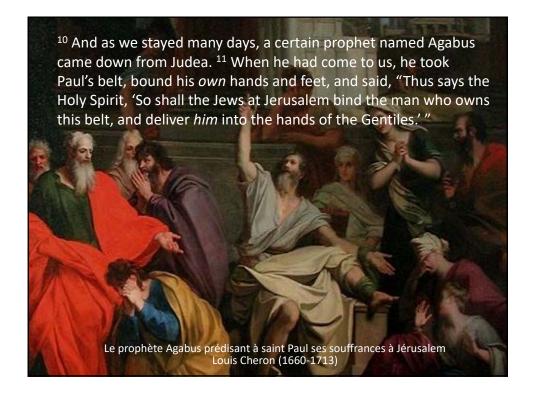
- ¹ Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.
- ² And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo.

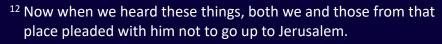


- ⁴ And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told* Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.
 - * Literally (in Greek) "kept on saying to him."
- ⁵ When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. ⁶ When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.









¹³ Then Paul answered,



"What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."



¹⁴ So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying,



"The will of the Lord be done."



* Agabus had predicted the Judean famine 15 years earlier and worked with Paul on famine relief. (Acts 11:27-30)

Did Paul disobey the Holy Spirit?

- 1. Paul said he was bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem. (Acts 20:22)
- 2. Disciples in Tyre said through the Spirit, "Don't go." (21:4)
- 3. Philip's daughters prophesied, "Don't go." (implied in Acts 21:9)
- 4. Agabus prophesied, "Don't go." (21:10-11)
- 5. Disciples in Caesarean Maritima pleaded, "Don't go." (21:12)
- 6. Luke and disciples with Paul pleaded, "Don't go." (21:12)
- The prophecies (including #2, 4 and possibly 3 directly from the Holy Spirit) sound like admonitions not to go.
- Paul went anyway (21:17), despite knowing the danger (Acts 15:30-31; 20:22-23).
- The prophecies can be seen as warnings ("Get ready") rather than prohibitions ("You must not go.")
- Paul obeyed the revealed will of God (23:1) and the LORD stands by him (23:11).

Paul Urged to Make Peace

¹⁵ And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem.

The 65 mi/104 km journey took 3 days on foot, 2 with animals.

¹⁶ Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason* of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.

Mnason was possibly converted at Pentecost 25 years earlier.

- ¹⁷ And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. [And gave them money collected]
 - * Μνάσων ("remembering"), a Christian of Cyprus known for hospitality.

- ²⁰ And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs.
- Legalists had busily spread lies and false rumours about Paul.
 - The leaders were not concerned what Paul taught Gentiles; that was settled at the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15).
 - But they were concerned that Paul's presence in the city not cause division or disruption among the "thousands of Jews ... zealous of the law." (Acts 21:20).
- Paul did warn Gentiles not to get involved in Judaism (Gal 4:1-11) but he did not tell Jews not to practice, so long as they didn't make the practices a test of fellowship (Rom 14:1-15:7).
- Traditional worship would continue until destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, when sacrifices could no longer occur.

The Letter to the Hebrews

- This incident took place in 57 AD. The book of Hebrews was yet to be written.
- It was penned around 64 AD between Paul's two Roman imprisonments, before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD and traditional Jewish worship ceased.
- Written to believing Jews in Jerusalem around 64 AD, the letter concisely shows the relationship of the New Testament Revelation by the Son over Old Testament Revelation by the prophets. It proves from the Tanakh the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old.

"The book of Hebrews was written to the Hebrews to tell them to stop being Hebrews!"

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse

Papyrus 114
Hebrews 1:7-12

Hebrews 1:7-12 ca. AD 250

Earliest fragment is Chester Beatty P46 c. 175-225

- What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.
 - The earlier Council of Jerusalem dealt with gentile believers, not Messianic Jews. Although Jewish Christians are free from the obligation of following the Mosaic Law, that doesn't mean that they can't observe it voluntarily.
 - The same grace that gave the Gentiles freedom to abstain also gave the Jews freedom to observe.
 - All God asked was that they receive one another and not create problems or divisions.

Prior to the Council meeting, we have a cunning plan to enable you to publicly demonstrate your reverence for Jewish Law and custom.

- ²³ Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow.
- ²⁴ Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

The Nazirite (Nazarite) Vow Numbers 6

An oath to separate oneself from the world and to serve only Yahweh, abstaining from the vine, hair cuts, or touching dead. Could be permanent (e.g., Sampson, Samuel) or temporary (e.g. Paul in Corinth) for a minimum of 30 days. Strict purity.

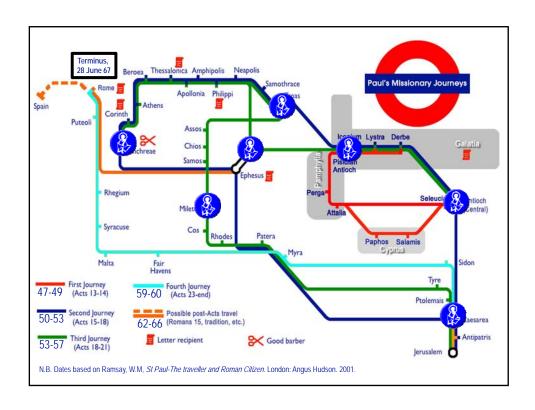
The oath allowed service to God without a Levite bloodline. This was very expensive. The last seven days was to be in the Temple courts, when hair would be cut off and burned on the Altar with prescribed sacrificial peace and sin offerings of 4 he-lamb yearlings and grain offerings per Numbers 6:13-21. Wealthy patrons would often sponsor Nazirites.

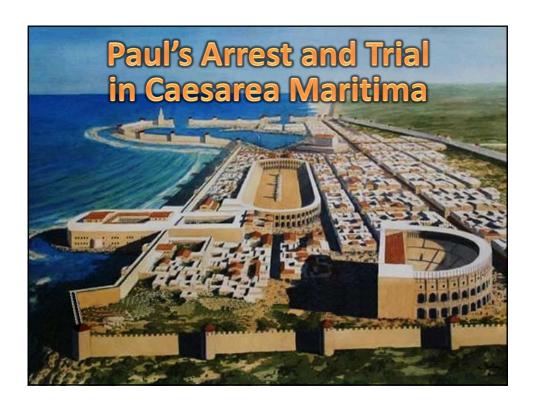
²⁵ But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

Confirmation of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)

²⁶Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.







שבועות Shavuot (Greek: Pentecost)

- Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) is a Jewish harvest festival celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover.
 - Barley and wheat were planted in fall for April-May harvest.
 - Barley ripened faster and its harvest was celebrated at the feast of firstfruits during Passover week.
 - Wheat matured later and its feast of harvest (Shavuot), was celebrated seven full weeks plus one day following the feast of firstfruits. Seven weeks plus 1 day = 50 days (hence the Greek term "Pentecost").
 - Shavuot was also a day of renewing God's Noahic covenant with "all life on the earth" (Gen. 9:8-17), commemorated the day when God gave the Torah to Israel on Mt Sinai, and marked observance of the mourning of King David.
- Shavuot is one of three Biblical pilgrimage festivals.

THE ACTION THUS FAR

- The book of Acts begins with the birth of Jesus' Church during the feast of Shavuot fifty days after Christ's resurrection. (1-6:7)
- The gospel takes root in Jerusalem and spreads throughout Judea and Samaria (then considered half-Jews). (6:8-9:31)
- Peter begins evangelism among the gentiles. (9:32-12:24)
- The gospel spreads geographically through persecution. Chief persecutor Saul becomes evangelist Paul; two missionary journeys spread the gospel to Cyprus, Lycia and Galatia. (12:25-16:5)
- On his second journey, the Holy Spirit guides Paul to cross the Aegean Sea and spread the gospel to Europe. (16:6-19:20)
- Paul's third missionary journey revisits earlier ekklesia and plants the gospel in Asia. Against strong advice, Paul feels compelled to attend Shavuot in Jerusalem. His reception is mixed, and he is swayed to sponsor a 7 day Jewish (Nizi)rite for PR. (19:21-21:26)

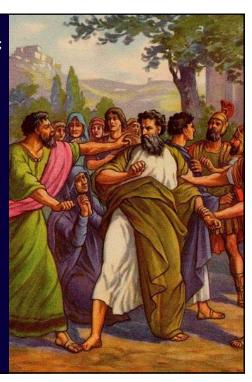
²⁷ Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

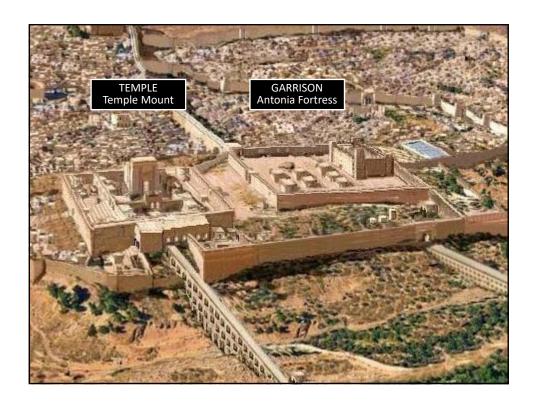
MHOENA ANNOTEMEIZITO
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ΦΟΗΕΑΥΤΛΙ ΑΙΤΙΟΣΕ Σ
ΤΑΙΔΙ Α.ΤΟ ΕΧΑΚΟΛΟΥ
OEINOANATON

NO FOREIGNER IS TO ENTER THE BARRIERS SURROUNDING THE SANCTUARY. HE WHO IS CAUGHT WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO BLAME FOR HIS DEATH WHICH WILL FOLLOW

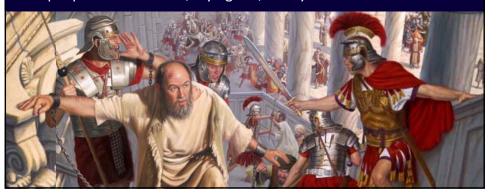
²⁹ (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

- ³⁰ And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.
- 31 Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.





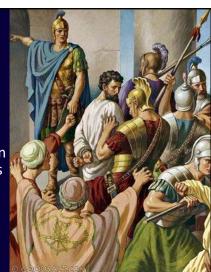
- ³³ Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks.
- When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. ³⁶ For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!"



Addressing the Jerusalem Mob

Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?"
 He replied, "Can you speak Greek?
 Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

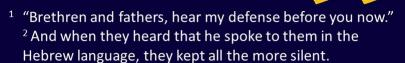
³⁹ But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people."



⁴⁰ So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew language, saying,

Acts 22

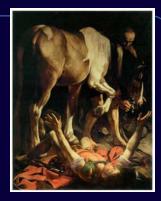
Paul's Defense at Jerusalem



Then he said: ³ "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, ⁵ as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

"Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. ⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' ⁸ So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'



"And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. ¹⁰ So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' ¹¹ And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

"Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, ¹³ came to me; and he stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that same hour I looked up at him. ¹⁴ Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. ¹⁵ For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

¹⁶ And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

AND NOW WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? 22:16

GET UP, AND BE BAPTIZED AND WASH AWAY YOUR SINS, CALLING ON HIS NAME.

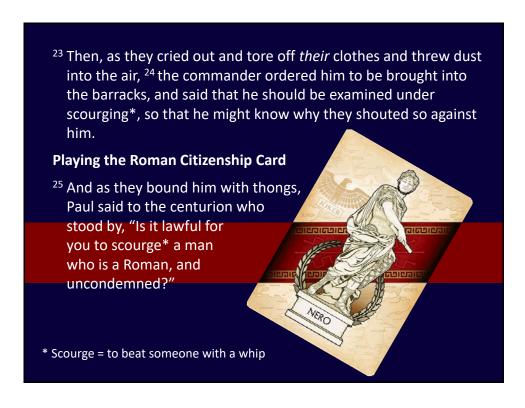
¹⁷ "Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance ¹⁸ and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.'

¹⁹ So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. ²⁰ And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' ²¹ Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.' "

²² And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said,



"Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!"





CAESAR (r. 27 BC to AD 14)

Painted marble bust found in 1863 at Prima Porta outside of Rome where Augustus's wife Livia lived after he died. EMPEROR CAESAR AUGUSTUS:
PONTIFEX MAXIMUS: HOLDING
THE TRIBUNICIAN POWER FOR THE
SEVENTEENTH TIME: SALUTED
I MPERATOR FOR THE FOURTEENTH
TIME: PROCLAIMS

that all Roman citizens shall be exempt from scourging without *provocatio* (appeal to a trial), and that, prior to any trial before a magistrate, a formal charge had to be made against them. Any magistrate or official who refused to grant *provocatio* was subject to a very severe sanction (possibly death*).

²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep...." (2 Cor 11:24-25)

- ²⁶ When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."
- ²⁷ Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

- ²⁸ The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." [He was a Freedman (ex-slave), or *libertinus*.]
 - And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." [Freeborn, ingenuus.]
- ²⁹ Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Roman civil and criminal procedures in Acts accord with what is known of Roman trial procedure and custom. Paul is tried five times in Acts by Roman Governors: Sergius Paulus (Cyprus), Annius Gallio (Corinth), and Antonius Felix x2 and Porcius Festus (Judea).

The Sanhedrin Divided

³⁰ The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Acts 23

The Jerusalem Jews Plot to Kill Paul

¹ Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said,



"Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until 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 will strike you, you whitewashed wall [hypocrite*]! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

- ⁴ And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"
- ⁵ Then Paul said,

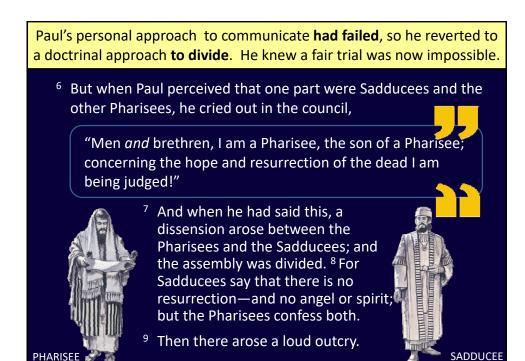
"I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.' "

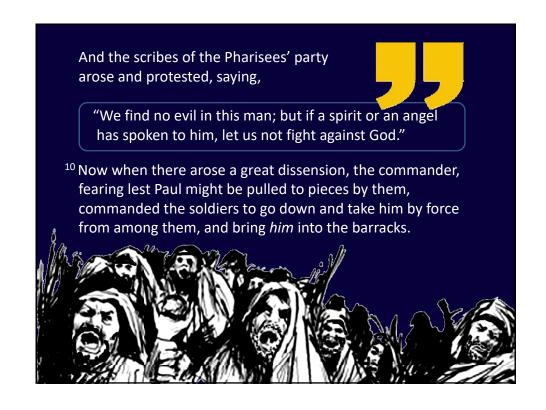
Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.

EXODUS 22:28



*In the Jewish revolt of 66 AD, Ananias hid in an aqueduct in Herod's palace. Jews killed him.





The Plot Against Paul

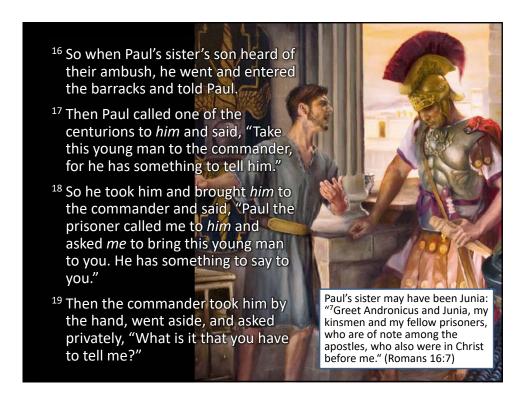
¹¹ But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

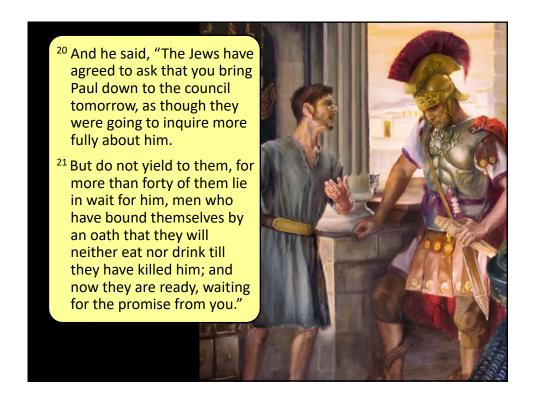
Courage. Take heart!
Commendation. Well done!
Confidence. Next up, Rome!
"Lo, I Am With You Always" (маккнем 18:20).

- ¹² And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. ¹³ Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.
- 14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said,

"We have bound ourselves under a great oath* that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

*King Saul's Rash Oath before the Battle of Michmash in 1035_{BC} ²⁴ And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. (1 Samuel 14:24)





²² So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him,* "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me." ²³ And he called for two centurions, saying,



QUOTE

"Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour [9 pm] of the night; ²⁴ and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor."

Claudius Lysias assigned nearly half the Jerusalem garrison of 1,000 men to accompany Paul to Caesarea Maritima.

 \rightarrow ²⁵ He wrote a letter in the following manner:

- Claudius Lysias,To the most excellent governor Felix:Greetings.
- This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. ²⁸ And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. ²⁹ I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. ³⁰ And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him.

Farewell.

- ³¹Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.
- ³² The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks.
- ³³ When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him.
- And when the governor had read *it,* he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that *he was* from Cilicia,

 35 he said,

QUOTE

"I will hear you when your accusers also have come."



