

LESSON 11

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM AND HIS IMPRISONMENT

ACTS 20:2-24:27

Introduction

After Paul's long sojourn in Ephesus, he was determined to make a trip to Jerusalem to take the collection from the Gentile churches. First, it was necessary for him to go through Macedonia and Achaia to collect the offering and to bid farewell to the churches where he had laboured for approximately seven years.

Paul's journey to Jerusalem involved several stops along the way. On occasions, his friends attempted to dissuade him from going to the city where he would surely encounter trouble. Because of Paul's deep conviction concerning God's plan and faith in God to work out His plan in spite of opposition, he would not be turned aside.

Paul followed the advice of Christian brethren in Jerusalem and participated in Jewish customs. Nevertheless, the enmity of the Jews against him was so great that they stirred up a mob which caused his arrest. The will of God cannot be defeated! God's servant as a prisoner was given opportunity to witness to political officials, and the charges against him provided the occasion for his journey to Rome.

Paul's Last Visit to Macedonia and Achaia

Acts 20:2-6

Paul's departure from Ephesus marked the beginning of his plans to depart from the Aegean area for Jerusalem. He may have desired at first to go directly to Corinth from Ephesus, but he delayed his journey in order to avoid another painful encounter with the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:23; 2:1). Titus had been sent to Corinth with a letter. Paul hoped to meet him at Troas and to hear news about the Corinthian Church (2 Cor. 2:12-13).

Paul went from Troas into Macedonia and visited the churches. He gave "much exhortation" (v. 2) to each church. Perhaps his interests were the collection for the saints at Jerusalem and the giving of final instructions to the young churches which would be assaulted by heretics after Paul's departure. He later made reference to the liberality of the poor Macedonian churches in his efforts to challenge the Church of Corinth (2 Cor. 8:1ff.).

Luke gives only one sentence to Paul's last visit to Macedonia and Achaia (vv. 2-3). He mentions that Paul spent three months during the winter in Greece. He is silent concerning the particular city and only mentions Greece by her old name "Hellas" instead of the Roman title "Achaia" (v. 2). It is likely that Paul found lodging in the house of Gaius in Corinth (cf. Rom. 16:23), and he wrote the Epistle to the Romans during the three months' stay in Greece. After years of struggling with the Judaizers who taught that Gentiles must keep the customs of Moses, Paul expressed the doctrine of righteousness by faith in his Roman letter. When he wrote, he was anticipating a trip to Jerusalem which he considered most dangerous (cf. Rom. 15:31). After he made the trip to Jerusalem, he purposed to visit Rome and Spain (cf. Rom. 15:22-32).

Paul went to Jerusalem to take an offering from the _____ churches.

(Gentile)

Paul went from Ephesus to _____ where he hoped to receive news of the _____ Church.

(Troas, Corinthian)

He went from Troas into _____

(Macedonia)

List Paul's two purposes in visiting Macedonia.

1. _____

2. _____

(to collect the offering, to give final instructions to the young churches)

Paul probably wrote his Roman Epistle during his three-month stay in _____ He lived in _____ home in _____.

(Greece, Gaius', Corinth)

In order to avoid the charges of selfish interest or dishonesty in the handling of funds, Paul requested the contributing churches to appoint delegates to join him in delivering the money to Jerusalem (v. 4; cf. 2 Cor. 9:21). Possibly he was to meet representatives from various provinces at Troas. Another plot against his life by the Jews at Corinth forced him to leave ahead of schedule (v. 3). He returned through Macedonia and may have spent some time in the province of Illyricum before the scheduled meeting in Troas (cf. Rom. 15:19). It is possible his visit to Illyricum was before the winter in Corinth. As Paul returned through Macedonia, Sopater of Beroea and Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica probably joined his group as delegates from the churches (v. 4). Gaius and Timothy of Derbe (Galatia) may have been with Paul. Tychicus and Trophimus may have arrived in Troas from Asia (Ephesus) before Paul (v. 5). A variant reading in two ancient manuscripts suggests that the church representatives were to meet Paul in Troas. It would be more natural for those from Asia and Galatia to meet him in Troas than to have been with him in Macedonia and to have been sent across to Troas ahead of him (v. 5). Perhaps Timothy was with Paul, and he was sent ahead to meet the delegates in Troas, while Paul and Luke tarried in Philippi until after Easter.

The appearance of the first person pronoun in verse 5 indicates that Luke may have joined Paul at Philippi. They remained there until after the days of unleavened bread (perhaps April of A.D. 57). Their journey to Troas required five days, and they stayed in Troas for seven days (v. 6).

A Sunday Service in Troas
Acts 20:7-12

Paul's farewell address to the Church at Troas gives insight into the life of the early Gentile churches. Paul had observed Easter before leaving Philippi. On the "first day of the week" or Sunday, the Church "came together to break bread" (v. 7). The breaking of bread may have referred to a supper meeting or love feast of the Church or to the Lord's Supper. Perhaps the reference is to both. The Church may have had a fellowship supper which was concluded with the Memorial Supper. The practice found its precedence in the last supper of Jesus with His disciples when He gave the symbols of the New Covenant at the close of the meal.

Although the Jewish Christians met on the Sabbath (our Saturday), that day had no special meaning to Gentiles who did not have a background in Jewish customs. The Christian converts outside of Judaism spontaneously turned to the first day of the week because of the resurrection of Jesus on that day. The early Jewish Christians continued worshipping in the synagogue; therefore, they continued to observe the Sabbath. After Judaism and Christianity separated, the Christians chose the first day of the week for worship.

John 20:1 and 26 record that the disciples assembled on the "first day of the week," and they were again assembled on the next Sunday. 1 Corinthians 16:1 indicates that the custom in Corinth was to assemble on the first day of the week.

Paul gave an extended address to the gathered disciples. Luke was probably following the Roman method of reckoning the beginning of day at dawn; therefore, the meeting probably took place on Sunday night. The Church at Troas, as in other places, met in a private home. The largest room was the upper room.

Paul had much to say in his last message to the Church; therefore, he continued until midnight. In order to have sufficient light in the room, there were many lamps (v. 8). Perhaps the heat from the lamps and the extended discourse contributed to the sound sleep of Eutychus, a young man sitting in the window. The

List those who apparently accompanied Paul or met him along the way.

(Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, Trophimus, Luke)

Give three possible interpretations of "breaking of bread."

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(supper meeting or love feast, Lord's Supper, both)

The New Testament Christians worshipped on Sunday because Jesus' _____ was on that day.

(resurrection)

Give three Scriptures which indicate the Christians worshipped on Sunday. _____, _____, _____

(John 20:1, John 20:26, 1 Corinthians 16:1)

young man fell from the third floor. Verse 9 seems to say that Eutychus was dead, but verse 10 implies that Paul discovered that he was not dead: "But Paul went down and fell upon him and after embracing him, he said, 'Do not be troubled, for his life is in him'" (v. 10—NASB). It is uncertain whether his life was miraculously restored to him or whether Paul discovered that those who first examined him were mistaken about his being dead.

The address of Paul was interrupted only for a brief period of time. After the disciples reassembled, Paul broke the bread and ate (v. 11). He continued his instructions until dawn.

The Trip from Assos to Miletus

Acts 20:13-16

Apparently Paul and his companions had chartered a vessel at Troas to take them as far as Lycia. Paul chose not to board the small ship at Troas, perhaps because of rough sailing. The ship sailed around the promontory (projection of land) and Paul boarded at Assos. The use of the first person plural indicates that the author was part of the company on board the ship. After Paul boarded the ship at Assos, they sailed for Mitylene. On the following day they sailed to Chios, then to Samos, and finally to Miletus. Paul deliberately passed Ephesus in order to avoid spending time in Asia. He desired to arrive in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost, which was only thirty days away.

Final Instructions to the Ephesian Elders

Acts 20:17-38

Because of his concern for the Asian Christians, Paul sent word for the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus. When they arrived, he shared a message which was a combination of a warning, a charge, and a farewell. Rackham divides the message into three points, and each point has three subdivisions which address the world, the Church, and the individual believer.¹ He sees in verses 18-27 Paul's vindication of himself. Paul first defended himself to the world, next to the Church, and in respect to his personal sincerity. Verses 28-31 charge all Christians in the world to repent and believe, the presbyters to be faithful in their ministry, and the individual Christians to live lives of self-denial and self-devotion. Verses 32-35 express his farewell to the Church and commend the believers to the grace of the Lord.

Paul defended his character and conduct before them because he knew that after his departure the Judaizers would attack his character in order to turn his disciples away from his teachings. His Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians imply that he had been accused of preaching for money, prestige, and personal power. He assured the elders that he served the Lord in humility and out of concern for the people. Any earthly rewards he received did not compensate for the trouble he experienced from the Jews who plotted against him (v. 19). Even though Paul's stand for salvation by faith apart from keeping the customs of Moses brought him persecution, he did not shrink from openly proclaiming that which was of the Lord. He did not avoid telling his message to the Jews even though he was aware they might

Paul did not go to Ephesus apparently because he wanted to arrive in Jerusalem for the _____ of _____.

(Day, Pentecost)

Paul met the Ephesian elders in _____.

(Miletus)

Paul defended his character and conduct because he knew the _____ would attack his character and try to turn his disciples away from his _____.

(Judaizers, teachings)

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 385.

react with hostility. He informed both Jews and Greeks that a right relationship with God was established through faith in Jesus Christ and not by keeping the customs of Moses (v. 21).

Paul had been warned already that when he arrived in Jerusalem he would face bonds and afflictions (v. 23). He felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem; therefore, he would not turn aside from God's will in order to avoid the hardships. Most of his ministry had been among the Gentiles. From his Roman letter, we know that he carried a great burden for his own people. He wanted them to experience the love and power of God which comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Verse 24 implies that Paul felt that he was obligated to share the Gospel of grace with the Jews in Jerusalem before he had completed the task to which God had called him.

The Apostle was aware that he would not be making another journey into Asia (v. 25). The statement does not imply that Paul expected death in Jerusalem but that he expected to go to another province after he had been to Jerusalem. Paul felt that his work in Asia and surrounding provinces was completed: "I am pure from the blood of all men" (v. 26). Paul had used his time efficiently in explaining the plan of God wherever he went (v. 27). He declared God's plan to include the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God even though this proclamation brought rejection from his own kinsmen. The full purpose of God included the unity of both Greeks and Jews in the Church.

Verse 28 gives much insight concerning the leadership of the early Church. It should be remembered that Paul was addressing the elders of the Church of Ephesus (v. 17). The term elder was adopted from the Jewish concept of leadership in the synagogues and the Sanhedrin. The leaders of Jewish social institutions were the heads of families or elders. Their patriarchal society favoured an aristocratic form of governing institutions. The elders were mature men who had authority over the smaller social entity of the home. A president of the elders or ruler of the synagogue was responsible for synagogue services.

Since the Church of Ephesus met in houses, she was divided into small units or groups which were determined by geographical location and available facilities. Probably the Church of Ephesus referred also to the congregations in surrounding cities. A number of elders came from that Church to hear Paul. Whether each group had more than one elder or not is uncertain.

Verse 28 describes the elders as guardians, shepherds, and overseers (bishops). The Church is called "the flock" which must be guarded from false teachers. The elders themselves were to guard against the doctrines of Judaizers and Gnostics and were made the overseers of the Church by the Holy Spirit. An overseer (bishop) was responsible to care for and protect the congregation, not to rule over it. The elders-bishops were also instructed "to shepherd the church of God" (NASB). Shepherd and pastor are synonymous terms. Shepherds guide, guard, and feed the flock. An elder-bishop should be a mature and respected leader who guards the flock from false teachings, feeds the flock by teaching the Word of God, leads the flock in doing the will of God, and ministers to the flock when there are needs. He is assigned the responsibilities by the Holy Spirit. No man should choose the position because of ambition or pride.

The Church belongs to God. It is identified as "the church of God," meaning the people of God. The Christians replaced the Israelites as the people of God. Christians have been acquired (purchased) with God's own blood. Paul did not distinguish between the shedding of the blood of Christ and the blood of God in verse 28. Blood represents life. God has given the life of his Son in order that His Church will have life.

Paul was warned he would face _____
and _____ in _____
_____.

However, he felt compelled to share the Gospel
of _____ with the _____ in Jerusalem.

(bonds, afflictions, Jerusalem, grace, Jews)

The full purpose of God included the unity
of _____ and _____ in the
Church.

(Jews, Greeks)

List three terms for leadership of the early Church
which are implied in Acts 20:28.

A bishop was responsible to care for and
_____ the _____.

(elder, bishop, pastor, protect, congregation)

Paul was aware that after his departure "savage wolves" would attempt to destroy the flock. Judaizers had already attempted to destroy the churches in Galatia and Macedonia. Other self-appointed leaders with perverse teachings would draw away the disciples after them (v. 30). Paul reminded the elders that he had given three years to constant and diligent teaching of them (v. 31). After his departure, they would be responsible for continuing that proclamation of the Word from God. He recognized that they would be tried and tempted, but God's grace would build them up and give them victory (v. 32).

Paul refuted the accusation made by some that he proclaimed Christ in order to gain offerings of silver, gold, or clothes (v. 33). He reminded them that while in Ephesus he had supported himself by manual labour. Instead of preaching to avoid manual labour, he engaged in both in order to be able to help the weak in their hour of need (v. 35). Paul's message contained a saying of Jesus which is not found in the Gospels: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (v. 35).

Paul closed the session with the Ephesian elders with prayer. Since Paul had informed them that they would see him no more, they wept and embraced him repeatedly before he departed. Verse 38 depicts the deep love and respect the elders had for the Apostle.

Continuing the Trip to Jerusalem
Acts 21:1-16

After the sad parting at Miletus, Paul and his associates had a favourable trip to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara which was on the coast of Lycia. Patara and Myra were the usual starting places for the voyage across the open sea, either to Egypt or past Cyprus to Syria. Paul, his associates, and the delegates of the churches found a ship at Patara bound for Phoenicia. The distance was about 400 miles which could be covered in four days if the winds were favourable. The open sea between Patara and Tyre required a larger vessel than the chartered coastal vessel on which they had been travelling. While the ship was unloading cargo at Tyre, Paul sought out the disciples. The churches in Phoenicia had been planted by Hellenists; therefore, the disciples would not be hostile to Paul's Gospel. On a previous occasion, they rejoiced to hear the news of the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 15:3).

Luke's purpose for recording this section is to set forth the trying of Paul's faith by the reports that he should not go up to Jerusalem. The hostility of the Jews towards the Gentiles had increased, and Paul's position had caused his life to be endangered by the Jewish Zealots. They had become more numerous and bolder.

The changing of cargo at Tyre permitted Paul's group to remain seven days with the disciples. When the appointed time for departing arrived, the disciples and their families escorted Paul and his company to the ship. After praying together on the beach, another farewell took place on the morning of the fifth Sunday after Easter (v. 5).

Paul's voyage continued from Tyre to Ptolemais before departing for Caesarea. There they found hospitality in the house of Philip who was one of the Seven. Twenty-four years earlier he had begun the work of evangelizing Caesarea. Apparently he had settled there and had a family of four daughters who were prophetesses (v. 9). Luke fails to elaborate on the nature of their prophetic activity. The fact that the author mentions that they were virgins does not imply that virginity was exalted by the early Church. The daughters may have warned Paul about the dangers in Jerusalem.

Agabus, who had previously uttered a prediction at Antioch,

Some accused Paul of preaching for offerings

of _____, _____, or _____.

(silver, gold, clothing)

Write the saying of Jesus which Paul quoted and is not found in the Gospels.

("It is more blessed to give than to receive")

Luke's purpose in writing Acts 21 was to set forth the trying of Paul's _____ by the reports he should not go to _____.

(faith, Jerusalem)

Paul stayed in _____ home on his way to _____, twenty-four years after Philip had begun evangelizing Caesarea.

(Philip's, Jerusalem)

acted out the prophetic message by binding Paul's hands and feet with his own belt to symbolize what would happen to him in Jerusalem. Agabus predicted that the one who owned the belt would be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem and would be delivered to the Gentiles (v. 11). The ancient prophets declared their messages to be "the word of the Lord." Agabus declared what "the Holy Spirit says." Paul believed that the Holy Spirit was leading him to Jerusalem. His friends attempted to dissuade him from the journey, implying that they understood the Spirit to be guiding him in a different direction (vv. 12, 13).

Paul was convinced that his trip to Jerusalem was the will of the Lord to the extent that he was willing not only to be imprisoned but to die in Jerusalem for Him (v. 15). In a similar manner, Jesus had set his face toward Jerusalem even though he knew that to go to Jerusalem meant death. Paul's determination did not reveal obstinacy but strength of character. He was convinced that the doctrine of salvation by faith alone and the unity of Gentiles and Jews within the Church were vital principles revealed by God through the Old Testament and Christ.

The last stage of the journey is noted in verse 15: "And after those days . . ." Many Jews would be going to Jerusalem for Pentecost which came approximately fifty days after the Passover (Easter). Paul and his associates were joined by disciples from Caesarea. Since the journey was between sixty and seventy miles, more than one day's journey, probably the group spent a night in a certain village where Mnason lived. Mnason was one of the original disciples, probably one of the 120, who had first received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Since he was of Cyprus, he may have taken the Gospel to that island where Paul and Barnabas began their first missionary journey.

Events Leading to Paul's Arrest Acts 21:17-36

The apprehensions of Paul were partly relieved when he arrived in Jerusalem, and he was welcomed gladly by the Jerusalem Christians who behaved like Christian brothers (v. 17). The next day Paul had a conference with James and the elders who glorified God when they heard Paul's report concerning what God had done among the Gentiles. They informed Paul that many thousands among the Jewish believers continued, however, to be zealous for the Law. The practice of Jewish Christians' continuing to keep the Mosaic Law but not forcing the Gentiles to keep the Law had been agreed upon in the Jerusalem Conference. A key point concerned circumcision of children. The Jerusalem Christians had been informed that Paul was teaching Jews who lived among Gentiles not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. Since one custom required Jews not to associate with uncircumcised Gentiles, it would have been impossible to have Jews and Gentiles in the same church if the Jews held to their customs and if the Gentiles were not circumcised. In attempting to bring about fellowship in mixed churches, Paul may have encouraged Jews not to keep the custom of no association with uncircumcised Gentiles.

The Christians in the segregated Jewish Church of Jerusalem would not have confronted the problems. They could rejoice with Paul concerning God's blessings upon his Gentile ministry, but they were also concerned about the problem created by their association with Paul. They suggested that Paul openly demonstrate his adherence to Jewish customs by purifying himself along with four men who were under a vow. They further recommended that he pay all expenses involved in keeping the ritual in order that the Jews would see that Paul did not oppose the keeping of Jewish Law and customs.

What did Agabus predict would happen to Paul in Jerusalem? _____

(He would be bound by the Jews and delivered to the Gentiles.)

Paul, like _____, set his face towards _____ even though it meant death.

(Jesus, Jerusalem)

The Jerusalem Christians had heard Paul was teaching Jews who lived among _____ not to _____ their children.

(Gentiles, circumcise)

List two actions which the Jerusalem Christians suggested Paul should do to prove he did not oppose Jewish laws and customs.

1. _____
2. _____

(purify himself, pay the expenses of four men under a vow)

Paul's purpose in going to Jerusalem was not to widen further the breach between Jewish and Gentile Christians but to bring about a reconciliation. The suggestion of the Jerusalem leaders conformed with the decision of the Council and did not infringe on the liberty of the Gentiles who were not required to keep the Mosaic Law. Since Paul was a Jew, there was no problem to him in following Jewish customs; therefore, he engaged in the ritual of purification and agreed to pay the expenses of the four men who were fulfilling their vows. When the Nazarite vow was fulfilled by shaving the head and burning the hair at the altar, two lambs, a ram, and a loaf and cake with meal and drink offerings were sacrificed. It was a work of piety for wealthy Jews to pay the expenses of the poor brethren who could not afford the cost of the sacrifices. The act would publicly reveal that Paul supported Jewish customs.

Fulfilling the purification vow involved the public notification to the Jews that Paul and his four associates had been under a Nazarite vow, but the days of the vow were then completed. Apparently Paul went through the Temple with each of the four, giving notice that the sacrifice had been offered for each of them (v. 26).

Paul was on the last day of fulfilling the vow when non-Christian Jews from Asia discovered him in the Temple. They laid hands on him and stirred up the multitude by accusing him of four actions against the Jews:

1. Paul was not loyal to his own people.
2. Paul proclaimed that the Law of Moses did not have to be kept.
3. Paul preached that Christians did not have to keep the festivals in Jerusalem and the ceremonies of the Temple.
4. Paul had brought Greeks into the Temple and had defiled the holy place.

Prejudice distorts objectivity. This last accusation against Paul was based on premature conclusions. They had seen Paul associating with the Greek Trophimus in the city, but they had not actually seen Trophimus in the Temple (v. 29). The Jews had concluded that since they saw Paul with a Greek he had brought him into the Temple.

Prejudice also twists and perverts truth. Perhaps the Asian Jews had heard Paul teaching Gentiles that they were saved and accepted into the Christian Church apart from the rules of proselytism.

Prejudice blinds men to reality. The Jews claimed divine sanction of their customs and concluded that the keeping of their customs made them right with God. They had made their customs the requirements for salvation. Their attitudes had reduced religion to a legalistic set of rules. Jesus faced the same circumstances. He was rejected and killed by the religious leaders who judged Him to be a blasphemer of God because He did not condone the substitution of legalism for spiritual relationships.

Paul was accused of profaning the inner court, the Court of Israel, by having brought Trophimus into the sacred area. Those who seized Paul dragged him from the inner to the outer court, the court of the Gentiles where strangers were permitted to enter. Between the two courts were walls and pillars which contained the inscription in Greek and Latin forbidding any stranger to pass within, "on pain of death." After Paul was taken from the inner court, the door was shut (v. 30).

The outer court was surrounded by colonnades which formed great cloisters with spacious roofs. At the northwest corner of the court was the stairway which led to the fortress of Antonia. The fortress which was first built by the Hasmonaeans was used as the headquarters of the Roman garrison or cohort. A

List four accusations brought against Paul.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

TRUE OR FALSE?

The Jews had seen Trophimus with Paul in the city, but they had not actually send him in the Temple. _____

(true)

cohort was composed of one thousand men, and it was commanded by a tribune or "chief captain." Each cohort was composed of ten centuries, each under a centurion. The commander or tribune of the cohort was Claudius Lysias. His Greek name indicates that he was not a Roman by birth. He was possibly born in the region of Lycia and had gained his Roman citizenship under Claudius.

Since disturbances were common among the Jews, the Roman soldiers kept watch over the Temple area. They spotted the tumult involving Paul in time to rescue him before he was killed. Luke depicts the magnitude of the tumult by stating that "all Jerusalem was in an uproar" (v. 31).

Stoning was the usual penalty for an act of blasphemy; however, the mob sought to kill Paul by blows and beatings. Centurions were dispatched with their companies of one hundred men each. At least two hundred soldiers were sent to quell the mob, which stopped beating Paul when they saw the captain, the centurions, and the soldiers (v. 32).

The Old Testament records two tragedies enacted in the Temple. The blood of Zachariah was shed in the court of the Lord's house (2 Chron. 24:21). Athaliah was led out of the court and slain in the entry (2 Kings 11:4-16).

Paul was arrested and chained to two soldiers. The soldiers were ordered to take him up the steps into the barracks. The mob desired to kill him rather than have him escape into the hands of the Gentiles (v. 36). When Paul reached the second flight of stairs, which led from the cloister up to Antonia, he requested permission to speak. Since he spoke in Greek, the disappointed captain realized that Paul was not "the Egyptian" (v. 38).

Lysias apparently had concluded that he had captured the Egyptian impostor who had recently stirred up a revolt and led 4,000 men of the Sicarii (dagger men) into the desert (v. 38). Josephus (*Antiq.* XX. 8.6) describes the revolt led by the Egyptian who assured his followers that the walls of Jerusalem would fall before them as the walls of Jericho had fallen before Joshua. When he and his followers reached Jerusalem, the Roman soldiers, under Felix, fell upon them instead. Some were killed, others captured, but the Egyptian escaped.

Paul identified himself as a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia (v. 39). He was granted permission to speak to the people, and he addressed them in the Hebrew dialect, probably Aramaic (v. 40).

Paul's Defence before the Jews

Acts 22:1-22

Since Paul's background and history were unknown by most of the Jews, he gave an account of his past (vv. 3ff.). Four charges had been made against him; however, they could be summed up into one: he taught equality of the Gentile with the Jew in the Kingdom of God. He was considered to be a traitor to his people and to the religion of his ancestors. In defending himself against the charges, Paul pointed out that he had always been a loyal Jew and his ministry to the Gentiles was in obedience to God's command.

Paul identified his home as Tarsus of Cilicia. Although he had been born outside the Holy Land, he did his advanced studies of the Old Testament Law under Gamaliel who was an eminent Pharisee. His training included the principles of the most scrupulous observance of the Law and the traditions of the Fathers. The Pharisees were known for their zeal in keeping the Law. Paul understood the emotion of the Jewish mob because there was a day when he too "persecuted this way unto the death" (v. 4). He recognized the mob action of the Jews had been an expression of zeal towards God (v. 3). He had experienced that

Claudius Lysias was commander or _____ of the _____, and he was stationed in the fortress of _____.

(tribune, cohort, Antonia)

Lysias had thought Paul was an Egyptian _____ who had stirred up a revolt and had led 4,000 men of the Sicarii into the _____.

(impostor, desert)

Paul's defence was two-fold:

1. He had always been a loyal _____.
2. His ministry to the Gentiles was in obedience to _____.

(Jew, God)

same zeal at the time Stephen was stoned. Like his opponents, he too had persecuted men and women who appeared to depreciate the Law. Some of the Jewish leaders would remember Paul who had persecuted the Christians twenty-three years earlier (v. 5).

Although Paul's address served as a defence of his actions, he used it also to share his experience in Christ (vv. 6-16). He had not planned the experience, but it was divinely given. The great light which shone from heaven came at noon. There was no question that it was a God-given miracle. With the light came the voice of the Lord who identified Himself as Jesus of Nazareth whom Paul was persecuting when he laid hands on the Christians (v. 8). Paul said that his companions saw the light, but "they heard not the voice of him that spake to me" (v. 9). Luke indicates in Chapter 9 that those accompanying Paul heard the voice. An examination of the grammar in 22:9 reveals that the disciples did not hear with understanding; however, they may have heard a noise.

Paul continued to share the series of divine events which left him with no choice but to do what God willed. He was informed that Ananias of Damascus would give him further instruction.

Ananias could not be accused of having perverted Paul's Jewish theology for he was a devout Jew who kept the Law himself. The blindness which had incurred from the bright light on the road was removed by the laying on of hands by Ananias. Such a miracle proved that what Paul had experienced was from God. The miracle of the restored sight could not have taken place apart from the power of God. Ananias interpreted the event as an indication that God had chosen him to salvation through faith in the "Just One" (v. 14). Paul's election was not only to salvation, but also to service. He was to become a witness "unto all men" of what he had seen and heard (v. 15).

Verse 16 has been used by some to argue for baptismal regeneration. The verse does not teach that sins are washed away by being baptized. The emphasis is on the end of the sentence: "calling on the name of the Lord." He was cleansed of his sins by calling upon the name of the Lord, and the spiritual experience was to be symbolized by baptism.

Paul referred to a journey to Jerusalem and an experience in the Temple in which the Lord revealed to him that he should depart from Jerusalem (vv. 17ff.). Paul was more tactful than Peter in alluding to the Jewish rejection of Jesus (v. 18). He was reluctant, like Jonah, to leave his own people in obedience to the command of the Lord (v. 19).

It is uncertain what the conclusion of Paul's address would have been had the people continued to listen to him. It appears they were attentive to his words until he shared the command of his Lord to him: "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (v. 21). As soon as he mentioned the word "Gentiles", the mob reacted violently and shouted for his death (v. 22).

Paul's Appeal to his Citizenship

Acts 22:23-30

The mob had listened quietly until Paul mentioned the Gentiles. The one word confirmed their suspicions of him and resulted in the judgement that he was a traitor who did not deserve to live. The Jews expressed the oriental custom of shaking their clothes and throwing dust into the air.

The Roman tribune did not understand the reason for the response of the Jews. He determined to get the truth from Paul by scourging him until he confessed why the Jews shouted against him. Paul was stretched out by the Roman soldiers for the brutal scourging which sometimes resulted in death. Paul waited until the last moment to use the privileges of his Roman citizenship to

Paul's defence was also a sharing of his experience in-

(Christ)

The mob stopped listening to Paul when he mentioned the_____

(Gentiles)

escape the punishment. Subjects and slaves of Rome were often maltreated by the soldiers, but it was unlawful for a citizen to be shamefully beaten in public or to be punished before he had had a fair trial and was condemned. For Paul to turn to his Roman citizenship added further to the breach between him and the Jews.

Luke points out that the centurions and chief captain recognized the seriousness of their action in mistreating a Roman citizen. Upon further questioning, Paul revealed to the chief captain that he had been free-born (v. 28). The chief captain became fearful because he knew that he was at fault for having bound Paul (v. 29). He prepared for a proper trial in which Paul's accusers would appear and state their case against him. Paul's Jewish identity was no longer a benefit, he was forced to identify with his Roman heritage.

Paul before the Sanhedrin Acts 23:1-10

Since the accusations against Paul apparently involved questions of the Jewish Law, Lysias decided to place Paul before the Sanhedrin for trial. Paul did not stand before the Sanhedrin as a criminal but as an equal. He looked intently at the Council and addressed them as "brethren" (v. 1). Paul had at one time occupied a seat among them, either on the bench or among the disciples. He had associated with proconsuls, Asiarchs, and other Jewish and Gentile leaders.

Paul informed the Council that he was convinced he was doing the will of God (v. 1). The High Priest Ananias acted arrogantly towards his statement and commanded him to be struck on the mouth. The action was typical of Ananias who is described by Josephus as avaricious (greedy) and cruel. He had acquired enormous wealth by violent means. Paul reacted spontaneously with the words, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall" (v. 3). He was being tried for breaking the Law, but Ananias had just broken the Law by ordering action contrary to it. Paul was reminded that he was speaking to "God's high priest" (v. 4). Since the Scripture stated, "Thou shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" (v. 5), he acknowledged that he was in error. He stated he did not know that he was speaking to the High Priest. He probably meant that he failed to consider the office of the person who had given the commandment. Paul respected the office but not the person who occupied it.

Paul saw one last opportunity to share his hope in Christ with his brethren. His accusers had been unwilling to admit the real cause of their accusations. They stated religious reasons for opposing him. Paul had made little headway in convincing them that he was acting in obedience to God's will. He turned the discussion to controversial doctrines after he detected that part of those before whom he appeared were Sadducees and the others were Pharisees. His hope in Christ was based on the resurrection of the dead. He differed with the Pharisees at the point of recognizing that Christian hope included Gentiles as well as Jews. He did not mention this difference because the Jews had refused to recognize that their real problems were hatred of Gentiles and national pride.

Paul stated that he was being judged because he preached the resurrection of the dead. He had been in the Sanhedrin and knew of the debates between the two groups concerning the resurrection and angels or spirits. His statement fanned the fire of conflict between the two groups, and the Pharisees came to his support. They declared that they found no evil in him (v. 9). The aristocratic, priestly group, the Sadducees, continued to oppose Paul. The Pharisees argued that if God had spoken to him the

Paul used the privileges of his _____
citizenship to escape _____

(Roman, punishment)

When the captain found Paul was a Roman citizen, he prepared for a proper _____

(trial)

Paul stood before the Sanhedrin as an _____,
and not as a _____.

(equal, criminal)

Paul said the real reason he was on trial was because he preached the _____
of the _____.

(resurrection, dead)

Sanhedrin should not hinder or condemn his work. The debate between the two sides became so emotional that the captain had Paul removed before he was torn apart by members of the Sanhedrin.

Divine Support and Deliverance

Acts 23:11-35

Paul was given a vision of the Lord through which he was comforted and guided. He had gone to Jerusalem with the conviction that he must witness for Christ to the Jews. Both he and the Gospel were rejected completely by the Jews. Paul had desired to go to Rome, and he was given assurance that he would witness there also (v. 11).

Paul's reliance on Roman citizenship had secured him a fair trial but not protection against the plotting of the Jews. Forty fanatical Jews, perhaps Zealots, formed a conspiracy against him and took an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed him (v. 12). The forty were probably Sicarii who carried concealed daggers under their cloaks and assassinated their enemies while mingling among the people. They plotted with the Sanhedrin to have Paul brought again before the Council for a more thorough investigation. The Zealots planned to slay him before he arrived in the chamber (vv. 14-15). Their plot might have succeeded if Paul's nephew had not warned him (v. 16). The warning was shared with Lysias who heeded it and made plans to send Paul to Caesarea during the night (vv. 17-23). Two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen from the irregular forces were dispatched to give maximum security to the important prisoner. Lysias knew that the situation was explosive, and he was determined to avoid the slaying of his prisoner.

The captain instructed Paul's nephew to tell no one of their conference. Luke does not explain how Paul's nephew came to know about the plot. Neither does he explain what happened to the forty men when they failed. Since more than one horse was provided for Paul, Luke implies there were companions with him (v. 24). No other prisoner is mentioned, but it is possible that an associate of Paul had been arrested also (cf. 27:2). His trial would not have been important since he was not the threat to the Jews that Paul was.

Claudius Lysias wrote a letter to Felix, the governor of the province (vv. 25-30). He explained the conditions under which he took Paul into custody and conveyed the information that Paul was a Roman citizen. He mentioned the plot which caused him to send Paul to Caesarea immediately, and he declared Paul's innocence of any crime worthy of death or imprisonment (v. 29). The soldiers departed with the letter and their prisoner and travelled the distance of thirty miles to Antipatris during the night. Since the distance was sufficient to put Paul beyond the danger of the Zealots, the foot soldiers returned to Jerusalem the next day (v. 32). The demands of the journey would have been impossible for men who were not conditioned as soldiers. The horsemen continued with Paul and delivered him and the letter to the governor. Paul was kept in custody in Herod's praetorium (palace) which served as the residence of the Roman governor or procurator.

Paul's Trial before Felix

Acts 24:1-27

The case against Paul (vv. 1-9)

The governor scheduled Paul's trial when his accusers arrived. Paul did not have to wait long until the High Priest Ananias

Paul's Roman citizenship had secured him a fair_____ but not protection from the_____.

(trial, Jews)

Who told Paul of the Zealots' plot to kill him?

(his nephew)

Because of the plot, Lysias sent Paul to_____ in Caesarea immediately.

(Felix)

came with elders and an orator or attorney, Tertullus, who placed the case against Paul before the procurator.

Tertullus opened the speech with personal compliment or flattery, a characteristic of Roman oratory. He commented on his achievement of peace, the correction of evils, and the gratitude of the Jews for the rule of Felix. Actually, Felix was a despicable character, but there may have been some basis for the praise of Tertullus. He had suppressed the brigands on his entry into office. The historian Tacitus (*Hist. V. 9*) said that Felix "revelled in cruelty and lust, and wielded the power of a king with the mind of a slave." His third wife was Drusilla, a Jewess.

Tertullus accused Paul of being a pestilent fellow, an agitator among the Jews, and the ringleader of the Nazarene sect. The accusations that he created dissension among the Jews and was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes were political charges. Apparently the "sect of the Nazarenes" referred to the Christians whose leader was from Nazareth. Paul was charged with the religious violation of profaning the Temple (v. 6). Verse 7 is omitted in the earlier manuscripts. Tertullus urged Felix to examine Paul personally to establish the truth of his accusations (v. 8). The Jews who accompanied Tertullus affirmed his statements.

Paul's defence (vv. 10-21)

Paul denied two of the three charges made by Tertullus. He denied that he was an agitator who stirred up trouble in Jerusalem (v. 12), for he had come to Jerusalem to worship only twelve days before (v. 11). He partially acknowledged the second charge that he was a ringleader of a sect "after the way which they call heresy" (v. 14), but he denied that those who followed "after the way" had rejected the worship of God according to the Law and the Prophets (v. 14). As a follower of "the way" Paul claimed to be a more loyal Jew than his accusers. "The sect" emphasized the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, a doctrine taught by the Pharisees (v. 15). The Pharisees also stressed that a person should be blameless before God by keeping the Law. Paul not only maintained a blameless conscience before God and before men, but he had gone beyond the requirements of the Law by bringing an offering to his own people (vv. 16-17).

Paul refuted the third charge that he attempted to profane the Temple by pointing out that "certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult" (v. 18). The Jews from Asia were responsible for the tumult. Paul reminded his accusers that he had already been tried before the Sanhedrin which had been unable to establish the fact that he was guilty of any wrong (cf. 23:1-10). The Pharisees on the Council had defended Paul's proclamation of the resurrection.

Felix's decision (vv. 22-27)

Paul's emphasis on the central Christian doctrine of the resurrection made it impossible for the Pharisees to support the Sadducees in condemning Paul as a heretic. Since Paul's accusers could not agree and his testimony contradicted their accusations, Felix required further investigation before making a decision. Paul was kept in custody, but he was given some freedom; therefore, Luke implies that Felix did not consider Paul guilty of any crime with which his court was concerned.

Felix was married to the Jewess Drusilla, the daughter of Agrippa I who slew James. She was a sister of Agrippa II and Bernice (cf. 25:23). Drusilla was born in A. D. 38 and had married Azizus, king of Emesa, at the age of fifteen. She and Bernice were jealous of each other's beauty, and each took advantage of oppor-

Who was the prosecutor for the Jews?

(Tertullus)

Paul was accused of being an _____ among the _____ and profaning the _____.

(agitator, Jews, Temple)

He denied being an agitator because he had come to Jerusalem only _____ days before to _____.

(12, worship)

He denied profaning the Temple because the Jews had found him " _____ in the Temple."

(purified)

The Pharisees supported Paul's teaching of the _____.

The _____ could not.

(resurrection, Sadducees)

tunities to climb the social ladder. Drusilla left Azizus to become the third wife of Felix.

Felix had some knowledge of Christianity and desired a fuller understanding of it. He and Drusilla invited Paul to speak to them "concerning the faith in Christ" (v. 24). Paul did not use his opportunities before Roman officials to defend himself but to share Christ. Paul's words concerning justice, self-control, and future judgement applied to Felix's ambition for money (his desire for a bribe—v. 26), social and political power, and self-gratification. The message was likewise applicable to Drusilla who was controlled by vanity, jealousy, and social ambition. Although Felix recognized that Paul was innocent, he left him in prison, hoping to receive a bribe and to appease the Jews (v. 27). Instead of repenting when he became aware of his guilt, Felix dismissed Paul with the weak excuse that he did not have time to hear him at the present (v. 25). Paul continued in prison in Caesarea until Festus became procurator.

Why did Felix keep Paul in prison?

1. _____
2. _____

(hoping to receive a bribe, to appease the Jews)

Home Study Assignment

Basic study (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. What was the main purpose of Paul's planned trip to Jerusalem? _____

2. Name two purposes for Paul's last visit to Macedonia.
 1. _____
 2. _____
3. Who was Aristarchus? _____

4. To what does the "breaking of bread" refer? _____

5. Why did New Testament Christians choose to worship on Sunday? _____

6. List three Scripture references which reveal that Christians worshipped on Sunday.

7. Why did Paul defend his character and conduct before the Ephesian elders? _____

8. What three titles for the leadership of the early Church are implied in Acts 20:28?

9. What is the primary responsibility of bishops? _____

10. What did Agabus predict concerning Paul? _____

11. What disturbed the Jerusalem Christians about Paul's teachings? _____

12. What did the Jerusalem Christian leaders suggest Paul do? _____

13. What four accusations did the Jews bring against Paul? _____

14. Who was Claudius Lysias? _____

15. For whom did Lysias mistake Paul? _____

16. Name two points Paul stressed in defending himself against the charges. _____

17. What caused the people to cease listening to Paul's defence given from the steps of Antonia? _____
18. What did Paul state was the reason he was on trial before the Sanhedrin? _____

19. What word did Paul's nephew bring to him? _____

20. Name two charges by Tertullus which Paul denied. 1. _____
_____ 2. _____
21. Give two reasons Felix kept Paul in prison. 1. _____
_____ 2. _____

Supplementary activities (Levels 2 and 3):

1. Explain the responsibilities of the pastor which are set forth in Acts 20:17-31.
2. How was Paul's testimony in 22:3-21 related to the defence of himself?

Advanced activities (Level 3):

1. Read pages 207 to 243 in *The Book of Acts* by Frank Stagg.
2. Does Stagg think Eutychus was dead when Paul embraced him?
3. How did Paul's appeal to his Roman citizenship in Acts 22:25 affect his future relation to the Jews?

Seminar Discussion

1. What is the relationship and responsibility of bishop, pastor, and elder (presbyter or priest)?
2. Was Paul's address in Acts 22:3-21 primarily a defence of himself or a witness for Christ?
3. Was Paul honest in stating to the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1-10) that he was on trial because he preached the hope of resurrection of the dead?
4. Did Paul compromise his doctrinal position concerning salvation by faith alone when he agreed to undergo purification in response to the request of Jerusalem Christian leaders?