



# Acts

*of the apostles*

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PART NINE

WOMEN'S *Bible* STUDY

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CALVARY CHAPEL SOUTHEAST

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# What to Expect

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## SCHEDULE

### THURSDAY MORNING 9:45AM—12:00PM

Fellowship  
Worship  
Teaching  
Small Group Discussion

### THURSDAY EVENING 6:30—8:30PM

Fellowship  
Teaching  
Small Group Discussion

February 22

February 29

March 7

March 14

March 21

March 28

**ACTS 21:1-26**

**ACTS 21:27-22:21**

**ACTS 22:22-23:11**

**ACTS 23:12-35**

**ACTS 24:1-27**

**BREAK**



# Teaching Notes | Week 1





1 When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; 2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo. 4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. 6 Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.

7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. 8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. 10 As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' " 12 When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

15 After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.

17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19 After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; 21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. 22 What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. 25 But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

# Paul's Third Missionary Journey



## Day 01

## Get to know the passage

**01** Read the passage several times.

**02** Who is in this passage and where are they?

---

**03** Look for any words in the passage that you would like to clarify or understand on a deeper level. Use a dictionary or concordance and write the words and their definitions below.

---

**04** List any repeated words and ideas.

---

**05** If you were going to give this passage a title, what would it be?



# WEEK 01 Psalm 103 Memorization

---

Each week during this year's Bible study, we want to memorize a verse from Psalm 103, adding a verse each week and culminating with the whole Psalm by the end of the year.

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Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;  
3 Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;  
4 Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
5 Who satisfies your years with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.  
6 The Lord performs righteous deeds  
And judgments for all who are oppressed.  
7 He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the sons of Israel.  
8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
9 He will not always strive with us,  
Nor will He keep His anger forever.  
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.  
12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
13 Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.

## Day 02

- 01 Where did Paul and some of the disciples traveling with him (including Luke) just depart from? What was their destination and purpose in going?
- 
- 02 How do you think Paul and the others located disciples in the community of Tyre? Do others in your community or job recognize you as a disciple of Jesus Christ? How so?
- 
- 03 During the seven-day stay in Tyre, close bonds were formed with these newfound friends in Christ. What is the evidence of their closeness? (vs 4-7) How important is close fellowship with other believers in your life? How does it show up in your life?
-

## Day 02

**04** Paul was warned about going to Jerusalem by the disciples in Tyre and a prophet named Agabus at Phillip's house. What valuable lesson did Paul convey with his answer to Agabus in verse 13?

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**05** How did his friends respond to Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem?  
How do you practice: "The will of the Lord be done" in your everyday life?



# JUDEAN TIMELINE

Our present study of Acts 21 to 24 focuses on Paul's return to Judea from his missionary travels in Asia Minor and Greece for approximately two years to bring financial aid to the struggling Jewish Christians. During his stay, he interacted with three distinct ruling bodies in Judea. First, on Paul's arrival in Judea, he reported to the Christian council of elders headed by James, the brother of Jesus in Jerusalem. From this council he received instructions about performing a vow in order to placate Jewish Christians, who thought he was teaching that Jews should abandon the Law of Moses. Secondly, after being attacked by a riotous crowd in the temple, Paul was rescued by the Romans and brought before the Jewish civil authorities in the council of the Sanhedrin to defend himself from the accusation he brought a gentile into the temple. And finally, he stood trial before the Roman court in Caesarea because he was a Roman citizen.

In order to understand each of these governing councils that Paul came before. We need to examine a brief history of Judea in the centuries leading up to the Roman conquest. Judea, after the return of the exiles from Babylon, had been ruled by a series of kingdoms from the Persians to the Greeks and finally to a series of Hellenistic kings. Just prior to a brief time of independence from 143 BC to 63 BC, Judea was ruled by the Seleucid Kings in Antioch, Syria. However, during the wicked rule of Antiochus the IV, Judea revolted at the instigation of the priest Judas Maccabaeus and his five sons. His sons and their descendants fought against the Seleucids and ultimately became the rulers of an independent Judea for the next hundred years until 63 BC when the great Roman general Pompey after conquering Asia minor moved south and annexed Judea.

However, Rome did not take direct control over Judea at this time but rather ruled through local client kings that were responsible for collecting taxes and troops for Rome. This is where the Idumean, i.e. Edomite, a convert to Judaism, Herod the Great, and his sons begin their dubious rule which led up to the advent of Jesus the Messiah, and the birth of the early Christian church.

\*Read the historical books of Maccabees I through IV for a fuller treatment.

\*Read Flavius Jospheus', The Jewish War: On the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Brandon Beaty





## Day 03

**01** In verses 19-20, Paul gives a detailed testimony of all that the Lord had done through his ministry to the Gentiles. In your opinion, what is a testimony and what makes it valid?

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**02** In vs 21, is “what others have been told” the truth? What had Paul been teaching regarding the Law? What does this teach us about making sure we report things accurately, and not spreading falsehoods or gossiping?

## Day 03

**03** James (the half-brother of Jesus) and the church leaders suggest that Paul perform a public act of Jewish piety in the temple in order to show that “you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.” (vs 24) Who were they trying to appease? Do you agree with their strategy? Why or why not?

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**04** Do you see Paul performing the rituals at the Temple as congruent with his life as a disciple of Christ? Why or why not? How do you balance legalism with the liberty that grace intends to bring?

**01** There were two mentions of women in this passage. Who were they and what did they do that was significant?

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**02** Have you ever been guided by the Spirit to do something that others tried to dissuade you from or warned you not to do? Who did you obey? What was the outcome?

**03** Go back to verse 13. Paul's declaration of faith shows his willingness to suffer and die for the name of Jesus. In what way have you suffered hardship for the cause of Jesus? Was it worth it?

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**04** What is the main lesson(s) the Spirit taught you in this passage? How are you going to apply it to your life right now?

Challenge: Read 2 Timothy 4:1-2. Spend time thinking about your testimony (everyone has one). Write it down on a separate piece of paper. You never know when you will have opportunity to share how the gospel has changed your life.



# Devotion

“And when they heard it, they began glorifying God;” (Acts 21:20a)

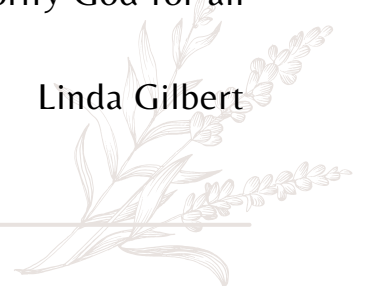
There is something exciting when we hear about what God is doing in someone, or how He is working out His plan. I always look forward to Testimony Sunday. I feel like I get to know the people who share even though I may have never met them. When our missionaries come back to town and we get the report of all that is happening, it makes me want to be there too. It is great news to hear how people have come to know Jesus and what He is doing in their lives.

After traveling more than 2500 miles by land and sea over approximately 4-5 years, Paul finally returns to Jerusalem to tell the leaders and elders what God has done. If I was telling the story of what happened, I would be tempted to lead with all the terrible things that happened. Angry mobs rioted and caused him to leave town again, evil plots caused him to change his travel plans, and a man died by falling out a window asleep while listening to him teach. He was also told he'd go to prison if he went to Jerusalem.

Paul sets a great example for us by keeping his focus on Jesus and the gospel message. He presented his message in a heavenly minded way. He told of all that God did among the Gentiles. I believe he told how the Holy spirit worked in Apollos and his students, and how the Lord performed extraordinary miracles including using his sweaty handkerchiefs! Eutychus was dead, but God through Paul raised him back to life, and Paul kept on teaching. So many came to faith and grew so that they helped to support the ministry in prayer and financially.

We can have the same mindset. We all go through some difficult situations. We can view them from our flesh and dwell on the bad things, or we can look to see how God is using those things to change us to be more like him. Our God is faithful and will see us through. Like Paul and the elders, let's glorify God for all He has done!

Linda Gilbert





# Teaching Notes | Week 2



27 When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, “Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. 30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. 31 While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 At once he took along some 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 up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he began asking who he was and what he had done. 34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing and some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. 35 When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob; 36 for the multitude of the people kept following them, shouting, “Away with him!” 37 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? 38 Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” 39 But Paul said, “I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.” 40 When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying,

Acts 22

1 “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you.”

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said, 3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, 5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

6 “But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, 7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ 8 And I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’ 9 And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, 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, ‘Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’ 11 But 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.

12 “A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. 14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 15 For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

17 “It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, 18 and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’ 19 And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You. 20 And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.’ 21 And He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

## WEEK 02

## Acts 21:27-22:21

### Day 01

### Get to know the passage

01 Read the passage several times.

02 Who is in this passage and where are they?

---

03 Look for any words in the passage that you would like to clarify or understand on a deeper level. Use a dictionary or concordance and write the words and their definitions below.

---

04 List any repeated words and ideas.

---

05 If you were going to give this passage a title, what would it be?

## WEEK 02

# Psalm 103 Memorization

---

Each week during this year's Bible study, we want to memorize a verse from Psalm 103, adding a verse each week and culminating with the whole Psalm by the end of the year.

---

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;  
3 Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;  
4 Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
5 Who satisfies your years with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.  
6 The Lord performs righteous deeds  
And judgments for all who are oppressed.  
7 He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the sons of Israel.  
8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
9 He will not always strive with us,  
Nor will He keep His anger forever.  
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.  
12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
13 Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.  
14 For He Himself knows our frame;  
He is mindful that we are but dust.

### Day 02

**01** Re-read Acts 21:20b-29. Who brought the accusations against Paul in Jerusalem? What was he accused of?

---

**02** How did the news that “all Jerusalem was in an uproar” reach the Roman commander? Why do you think he (Paul) was arrested rather than letting the crowd kill Paul?

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**03** Why was the door immediately shut after Paul was dragged out of the temple? How can we shut out chaos?  
Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-6.

### Day 02

**04** What was the reason for the confusion in vs. 31 and 24? Have you ever felt that way either inwardly or outwardly? What was the cause and how did you regain clarity?

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**05** What is the relationship between Acts 21:11 and 21:33-34?

# CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF ELDERS

When Paul returned from his third missionary journey to Judea, he went up to Jerusalem and presented himself to the Christian Council of elders. The church was birthed in Jerusalem, but because of persecution many had departed and began to proclaim the gospel everywhere they went. However, there were those who had remained in Jerusalem and had formed a council of elders of whom James, the brother of Jesus and author of the letter to James, was the leader.

This Apostolic Council played a crucial part in the development of the early church, especially for making important doctrinal decisions such as we saw in Acts 15 when they decided on whether the gentile Christians would be required to keep the law of Moses or not. However, in Acts 21 we run into the opposite thorny issue of whether the Jews, who were converting to Christ, especially the priests and Pharisees should continue to obey the Law of Moses.

Formerly, Paul has been accused by many Jews and Jewish Christians of abandoning the Law of Moses. In order to placate these Jewish converts to Christ, the council of elders advised Paul to keep a vow of purification with four other Jewish Christians and to pay the price of the sacrifice in order to show that he was not a traitor to Judaism. This entire scene seems so contradictory to what Paul had been preaching earlier about converts not needing to follow the Law in order to be saved and is highly debated by bible teachers. This problem cannot be solved here in this limited space. However, in my opinion the essence of this entire matter is summed up by Paul in First Corinthians 9 where Paul says, "I become all things to all men."

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. I Cor. 9:19-23

Brandon Beaty



### Day 03

**01** Why did the crowd of Jews “become even more quiet?” What quieted them?

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**02** In these verses Paul begins his “defense” with his credentials. Why would he begin this way?

### Day 03

**03** In vs. 22: 3, Paul says he was "zealous toward God as you all are today." Are you zealous for God today? What does that look like in your life?

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**04** Why do you think Paul chose to share his personal testimony rather than answer the accusation of bringing a Gentile into the temple?

## WEEK 02

### Day 04

## Acts 21:27-22:21

### Challenge yourself

**01** Why do you think Paul told his own story instead of preaching a sermon?

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**02** How was Jesus glorified through Paul's testimony?

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**03** Aside from this account, Paul also shares his testimony in Acts 26, Philippians 3, and 1 Timothy 1. Please read each account and tell about his audience and the purpose for his sharing.

**04** What is the main lesson(s) the Spirit taught you in this passage? How are you going to apply it to your life right now?

---

**05** We should always be ready to share how the Lord is glorified in our personal testimony. Take some time to reflect on the goodness of the Lord in your life and consider sharing it with someone this week.



# Devotion

Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.'" Acts 22:14

Although it's true we all desire to belong and probably have someone we look up to, it is with certainty that people will let us down. Only God is able to fill this deepest desire in our hearts to belong.

We only need to realize that we have been chosen to be His daughters. So in His eyes, when we came to Him through His Son Jesus Christ, we are now and forever accepted into His family. As His child, He offers us grace, mercy, compassion, and eternity with Him.

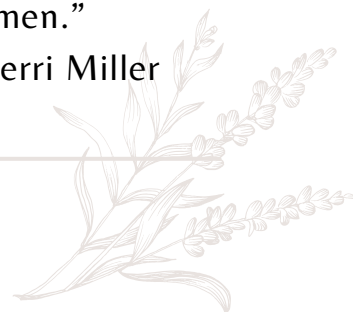
So, not only chosen, we've been appointed by God to study and learn His word, and to know His will for our lives. As chosen, we now must continue to nurture our personal relationship with Him. With our identity as His child, we can also know without a doubt that nothing can separate us from Him.

The evidence of our relationship with the Lord includes steady spiritual growth that produces good fruit and works. God did not intend for us to store up what we learn and keep it to ourselves. He wants us to share the Good News of His love and Plan of Salvation with others, and help them grow. God has had His plan since the beginning of time. One that encompasses not just our lives but all of mankind. His plan has continued to work its way through history. We can see it unfolding before us today, and we should be excited to be a part of it!

So now, the question is: how can you embrace the truth that you have been called and chosen by God to know Him personally and share Him with those around you?

Prayer: Lord, thank You so much for choosing me and appointing me to be Your child. Thank You that You loved me before I ever loved You and that You have good plans for my life to grow me and bring me closer to You. Help me to keep trusting in Your sovereignty, and to share Your goodness with those around me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Jerri Miller





# Teaching Notes | Week 3



22 They listened to him up to this statement, and 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 crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way. 25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?” 26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.” 27 The commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, “Yes.” 28 The commander answered, “I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.” And Paul said, “But I was actually born a citizen.”

29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

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

### Acts 23

1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”

The high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?” 4 But the bystanders said, “Do you revile God’s high priest?” 5 And Paul said, “I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’ ”

6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!” 7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. 9 And there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, “We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” 10 And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks. 11 But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”

01 Read the passage several times.

02 Who is in this passage and where are they?

03 Look for any words in the passage that you would like to clarify or understand on a deeper level. Use a dictionary or concordance and write the words and their definitions below.

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6 The Lord performs righteous deeds  
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7 He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the sons of Israel.  
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Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
9 He will not always strive with us,  
Nor will He keep His anger forever.  
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.  
12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
13 Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.  
14 For He Himself knows our frame;  
He is mindful that we are but dust.  
15 As for man, his days are like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.



### Day 02

**01** What was the statement that set off the crowd in Verse 22:21? Why did it cause them to tear their clothes and throw dust in the air and call for violence against Paul? What is it about Paul's belief that caused chaos everywhere he went?

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**02** List some ways our culture shows disdain or hatred for believers that testify for Jesus. How can you combat those who mistreat you due to your faith?

### Day 02

**03** Are you willing to make people angry or uncomfortable for the cause of spreading the Gospel? Explain.

---

**04** Many around the world are still being persecuted for testifying for Jesus. Who is the true enemy of the people of God? How do we battle the true enemy?



# THE JEWISH COUNCIL: THE SANHEDRIN

In Acts 23, the Roman commander brought Paul before the Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin, in order to discover why the people wanted to put him to death. This ruling Jewish council of 70 religious leaders was made up of the high priests, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The word Sanhedrin is Greek, and means sitting together or assembly. The Romans allowed it to exist and make decisions concerning religious laws for Judea with the exception of cases of capital punishment as was seen in the trial of Jesus.

The Sadducees were associated with the priests and the temple and the high priest was chosen from their families. They trace their lineage back to Zadok who was the high priest under King Solomon. They were rich aristocrats, and were highly Hellenized. Formerly, they owed their status and power to those Hellenistic rulers such as the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. Theologically, they held to the five books of the Torah and didn't believe in bodily resurrection, angels and spirits Acts 23:8. In 70 AD, when the temple was destroyed, the Sadducees ceased to exist because their entire lives were connected with the temple and now it was gone

On the other hand, the Pharisees were non-aristocratic and were opposed to the Sadducees. They believed in bodily resurrection, angels and spirits. They also held to what is known as the oral law which were traditions that they believed were given by God to Moses orally at Mt. Sinai and then passed down to proceeding generations. However, as we see in the life of Jesus, they esteemed these oral laws and traditions higher than the written law of Moses. Jesus rebuked them in the gospels when he said, "your traditions have made the word of God of none effect." Mk 7:13 Because the Pharisees were not associated with the temple, they endured as religious leaders after its destruction and then, finally, in the 2nd century AD, they committed these oral laws to writing in the book known as the Mishna, which forms the chief text of modern Orthodox Judaism.

Paul, himself a former high-ranking Pharisee, when he is before the Sanhedrin in Acts 23, appeals to those who are Pharisees and instantly creates a great stir and has to be rescued again by the Romans. The Roman commander then decides to send him to Felix, the governor in Caesarea. Even though Paul is a Jew and a Christian, he is more importantly to them a Roman citizen, which gives him substantial legal rights and status as we will see in the remaining chapters of the book of Acts.

Brandon Beaty

### Day 03

**01** What is the reason the commander brought Paul before the Jewish council? Why do you think he was confused by the Jews outrage? (See Acts 21:40.)

---

**02** How does Paul address the chief priests and council in verses 1, 5 and 6? How is Paul's demeanor the same or different from when he speaks to the people?

### Day 03

**03** How does Paul refer to himself in verse 6? What was his purpose for that? How does that affect his audience?

---

**04** Read Matt 23:1-36. What do you do when the Spirit shows you that hypocrisy is springing up in your life? You can keep your answer confidential if you choose.

## WEEK 03

### Day 04

## Acts 22:22-23:11

### Challenge Yourself

- 01 Look up Acts 9:15-16. Was Paul's suffering a punishment for persecuting Christians? What is God's purpose for allowing such chaos to follow Paul wherever he goes?
- 02 What happens when Paul confesses the hope and resurrection of the dead in verse 23:6? How did Paul use this to his advantage? Was his strategy successful?
- 03 Paul was once again rescued to safety by the commander. What did the Lord impart to him the next night? How is the Lord pictured in verse 11? Look up vs. 11 in different versions, ie., New International Version, New Living Translation, New King James, etc. How does the command that Jesus gave expand in meaning? What would Jesus tell you to be courageous about?

## WEEK 03

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### Day 04

## Acts 22:22-23:11

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### Challenge Yourself

**04** What does it mean to you when the Lord says to “be of good courage” or to “take courage?” (Read Psalm 27:14 and Deuteronomy 31:6). Would you consider yourself a woman of courage?

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**05** Write out Deuteronomy 31:6 as a prayer. How many more verses can you find that tells us to be courageous or to not be afraid? Write some here. In what way do these verses encourage or discourage you?



# Devotion

## COURAGE

Can you even imagine being Paul? I try to think about it at times and can't even imagine. His courageous obedience is so inspiring to me. When he was a Pharisee he was devout and carrying out what he thought was noble and right, and after his conversion on the Damascus Road he had the same fervor, but now placed correctly on Christ.

Here he is taken by the Roman consul and wrongly flogged. Again, can you even imagine being flogged? The very word is so heavy. He spoke up for himself and informed the centurion that he was a Roman citizen.

At the very end of this week's passage, the Lord stood by him and said to Paul, "take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also."

Take courage... the means to me that it is something that Paul didn't innately have. Me neither. Jesus is speaking ... Take courage. To take something means it is offered. Jesus is offering Paul courage to take into the next conversation.

I grew up a cowgirl. I pretty much thought John Wayne was my Grandpa. My dad sure loved him and his movies. One of John Wayne's quotes is, "Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway." That is what I picture of Paul. It says earlier he was being stretched out for the whips. We know he had many travails in spreading the Gospel. YET ... he was courageously obedient. He stepped forward when others were timid. He was led by God. He was in tune with the Holy Spirit. He was courageously obedient. He took courage.

How often are we offered something and we say, "no thank you." or we say "I'm ok." Jesus is a giver of good gifts, when he offers me something I don't want to decline it. I want to take it.

Sherilyn Sander





# Teaching Notes | Week 4



12 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who formed this plot. 14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place."

16 But the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him." 18 So he took him and led him to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you." 19 The commander took him by the hand and stepping aside, began to inquire of him privately, "What is it that you have to report to me?" 20 And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him. 21 So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you." 22 So the commander let the young man go, instructing him, "Tell no one that you have notified me of these things."

23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen." 24 They were also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter having this form: 26 “Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings. 27 When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; 29 and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you.”

31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks. 33 When these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 When he had read it, he asked from what province he was, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, “I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also,” giving orders for him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

01 Read the passage several times.

02 Who is in this passage and where are they?

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03 Look for any words in the passage that you would like to clarify or understand on a deeper level. Use a dictionary or concordance and write the words and their definitions below.

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04 List any repeated words and ideas.

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05 If you were going to give this passage a title, what would it be?

Each week during this year's Bible study, we want to memorize a verse from Psalm 103, adding a verse each week and culminating with the whole Psalm by the end of the year.

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Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;  
3 Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;  
4 Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
5 Who satisfies your years with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.  
6 The Lord performs righteous deeds  
And judgments for all who are oppressed.  
7 He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the sons of Israel.  
8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
9 He will not always strive with us,  
Nor will He keep His anger forever.  
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.  
12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
13 Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.  
14 For He Himself knows our frame;  
He is mindful that we are but dust.  
15 As for man, his days are like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.  
16 When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,  
And its place acknowledges it no longer.

### Day 02

**01** Why did the Jews form a conspiracy? What was their oath?

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**02** Do you think they kept their oath? Have you ever promised to do something in the midst of overwhelming certainty because you were seeking justice?

### Day 02

**03** How were the chief priests and elders' accomplices in the plot against Paul?

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**04** Why was it important for the commander to tell Paul's nephew, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me?"

# PAUL THE SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL JEW, ROMAN, CHRISTIAN

Throughout this portion of Acts we see Paul identified as a Jew, Roman and Christian. He came to Jerusalem as an apostle knowing that chains and prison awaited him. He is commissioned by James and the elders to fulfill a vow in the temple to prove to Jewish converts that he is not a traitor to Judaism. He courageously gave his testimony on the stairs of the Antonia fortress to a Jewish crowd who wanted to kill him. He revealed to the Roman commander that he was born a Roman citizen from an important city and province in the empire. When the Roman commander, Claudius Lysias, brought him before the Sanhedrin, he once again gives his personal testimony and reveals that he was a former Pharisee who had put Christians in prison. He declared to the Sanhedrin, listen, I was a very good Pharisee, zealous for the law, but I met Jesus and now everything has changed. In every situation he is placed, he preaches the gospel to whomsoever will listen.

And finally, he is brought to the Roman governor Felix in Caesarea to defend himself before his accusers from Jerusalem as a citizen of the empire. In Caesarea, the Roman capital of Judea, he is kept under house arrest for two years. During this entire time, he preaches the gospel to whoever would listen. He preached to the Roman governor Felix, the High Priest, to Festus the new procurator, who replaced Felix, to King Agrippa II, Herod the Great's great grandson, and then finally he will be taken to Rome and preach to the court of Emperor Nero.

From this point on in the rest of Acts, he will be in the hands of the Romans. Whether he is in chains, on the steps of the temple, before the Sanhedrin, the Roman court in Caesarea or before the emperor, Paul always preached the gospel. His life in these chapters in Acts serves as admonition to us that is found in 2 Timothy 4: 2, "... preach the word, be ready in season and out of season..." always be ready in every situation to give witness to the great salvation we have in Jesus Christ.

Brandon Beaty



### Day 03

**01** Where was Paul being sent? Who or what was Paul's escort?

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**02** Why did they travel by night, and why such a large contingent of soldiers?

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**03** What does the letter to Claudius Lysias outline, and what is its significance? Did you notice anything purposefully left out?

### Day 03

04 What can we assume about the character of Claudius Lysias by his actions?

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05 Why did the governor ask Paul what province he was from?

**01** What promise did Paul receive from Jesus? Does Paul have to hold onto and encourage him in his imprisonment? (Acts 22:11) What actions do we see this week that shows God is at work?

---

**02** The Jews themselves were sinning against God in their lying and plotting to kill Paul. Have you ever been willing to go against God's word thinking the "ends justifies the means?"

**03** What was Paul's mindset regarding the ministry God had called him to (Acts 20:24 and Philippians 3:13-14)? What is your mindset to the things God has called you to?

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**04** In what way would the presence of Jesus in vs. 11 have encouraged Paul in the next few days as the plot of the Jews was revealed? How has the presence of the Holy Spirit encouraged you in times of trouble?



# Devotion

God's protection over Paul is so evident in this passage. While plans were being made to kill Paul, by no coincidence, Paul's nephew was hearing everything. After Paul and the commander heard of the plans, Paul was escorted out of the city by 470 soldiers under the cover of night.

This shows the presence of God and the keeping of His promise to Paul that he will bear witness in Rome. Fortunately, Paul serves a powerful God who appoints governments and leaders to execute His will (Romans 13). Nothing is outside of God and the fact they were sending that many soldiers for one man proves that.

Have you ever found yourself doubting the Lord's promises and protection for your life? When my flesh is doubtful, I read the scriptures and I'm reminded of God's promises. God has a plan and will protect me to do His work. Remember to read God's promises when you're doubting the direction for your life.

Verse 25 on includes a letter to the governor, Felix, and a cliff hanger for Paul being held captive awaiting his trial. This was the start of a 2 year stretch where Paul was kept in Caesarea. This was a change for Paul since he had been traveling and sharing the Gospel. But captivity didn't stop him from sharing the gospel. He would share Jesus with the guards and the governor which fulfilled a promise that Paul would bear the name of Jesus to kings (Acts 9:15).

This thread of trusting the Lord and remembering His promises has been so encouraging to me. In the day-to-day challenges I should keep His words close to my heart. I have been promised protection, guidance, and that my needs will be taken care of.

We are daughters of the King and as Jesus says in Matthew Chapter 6, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" Stay sensitive to His spirit and close to Him.

Lauren Chaffee





# Teaching Notes | Week 5



1 After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with an attorney named Tertullus, and they brought charges to the governor against Paul. 2 After Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying to the governor, “Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation, 3 we acknowledge this in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. 4 But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing. 5 For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. [We wanted to judge him according to our own Law. 7 But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands, 8 ordering his accusers to come before you.] By examining him yourself concerning all these matters you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him.” 9 The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.

10 When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, 11 since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 Neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot. 13 Nor can they prove to you the charges of which they now accuse me. 14 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; 15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16 In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

17 Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings; 18 in which they found me occupied in the temple, having been purified, without any crowd or uproar. But there were some Jews from Asia— 19 who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me. 20 Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, 21 other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.’ ”

22 But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.” 23 Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him.

24 But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you.” 26 At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him. 27 But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.

### Day 01

### Get to know the passage

01 Read the passage several times.

02 Who is in this passage and where are they?

03 Look for any words in the passage that you would like to clarify or understand on a deeper level. Use a dictionary or concordance and write the words and their definitions below.

04 List any repeated words and ideas.

05 If you were going to give this passage a title, what would it be?

Each week during this year's Bible study, we want to memorize a verse from Psalm 103, adding a verse each week and culminating with the whole Psalm by the end of the year.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;  
3 Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;  
4 Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
5 Who satisfies your years with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.  
6 The Lord performs righteous deeds  
And judgments for all who are oppressed.  
7 He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the sons of Israel.  
8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
9 He will not always strive with us,  
Nor will He keep His anger forever.  
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.  
12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
13 Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.  
14 For He Himself knows our frame;  
He is mindful that we are but dust.  
15 As for man, his days are like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.  
16 When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,  
And its place acknowledges it no longer.  
17 But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on  
those who fear Him,  
And His righteousness to children's children,

## Day 02

**01** Why does Tertullus address Felix the governor with such flowery language in vs 2-9? Was he reporting the truth of the events in Acts 21:26-36? Look up Jude 1:16 and Proverbs 20:19. What does God say about those who use flattery to gain an advantage?

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**02** What evidence did Tertullus bring to Felix? Would you want him as your lawyer, why or why not?

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**03** Compare the difference in Paul's speech to Tertullus. Why is Paul cheerful to answer for himself?

### Day 02

**04** In verses 14-15 Paul confesses to being part of “the Way”. How does Paul describe “the Way?” Is this a good name for the Christians at this time? Why or why not?

---

**05** What does Paul confess to strive for in verse 16? In what ways do you endeavor to have a clear conscience without offense toward God and man?

# THE ANTONIA FORTRESS

One of the most dramatic scenes in Acts 23 is Paul being pulled apart by the Jews in the temple and then being rescued by the Romans soldiers. But where did these soldiers come from and why were they there?

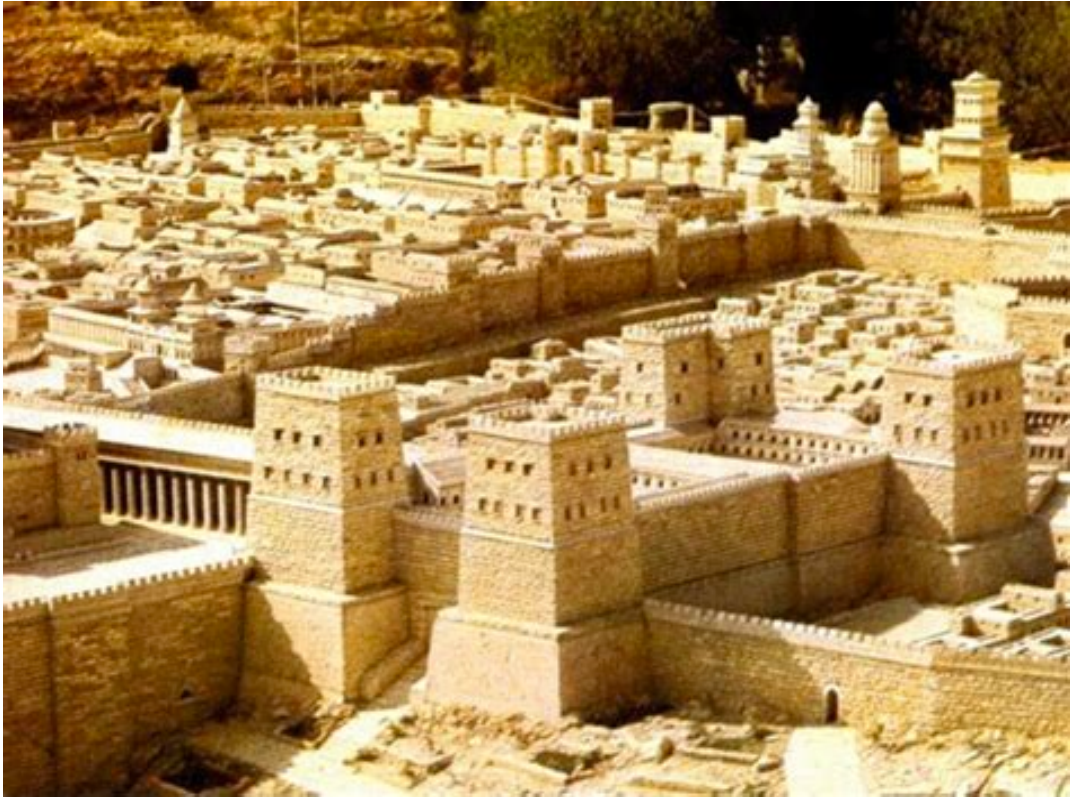
After Herod the Great died in 4 BC, Emperor Augustus portioned his kingdom between his three sons, Archelaus to Judea, Antipas to Galilee, and Philip to Trachonitis. However, in six AD, Archelaus was removed and exiled to the province of Gaul, present day France, for his nefarious activities. Then Judea proper was annexed and became a Roman province. Since Judea was considered a small province not worthy of a higher official such as a proconsul, a prefect or procurator from the lower Equestrian class was appointed to govern. There were approximately 15 procurators up until the time of the destruction of Judea in 70 AD. The most famous of these of course was Pontius Pilate, but in this section of Acts two more are mentioned: Antonius Felix and Porcius Festus.

The procurator's primary headquarters was on the Judean coast in the port city of Caesarea built by Herod the Great. However, since Jews were seen as rebellious, over a thousand troops were garrisoned in Jerusalem to keep order, especially during the great Jewish festivals when a multitude of pilgrims would flock to the temple.

The Roman troops were stationed in a fortress called the Antonia, which was on the northside of the temple complex and overlooked the great court. It was built by Herod the Great and named in honor of the Roman Consul Mark Anthony, of Cleopatra fame, who had previously ruled the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. The Antonia had four high towers that overlooked the temple mount and was a barracks for the troops.

It is from the Antonia fortress that the Roman soldiers came and rescued Paul from being killed in the riot in the temple court and allowed him to give his great testimony before the multitude of Jews. Paul was then spared from the customary scourging due to his Roman citizenship, then finally brought before the ruling religious council of the Jews the Sanhedrin.

Brandon Beaty



# THE ANTONIA FORTRESS

### Day 03

01 How does Paul describe his actions in the Jerusalem temple and what was his purpose for being there?

---

02 How does Paul find common ground with his accusers (vs 15) and challenge them in verse 20-21?

---

03 Why does Felix decide to procrastinate in Paul's case? (Vs 22)

### Day 03

04 What happened when Felix and his Jewish wife Drusilla heard more of the teachings of Jesus by Paul? What three specific things made Felix afraid?

---

05 What, if any teaching causes you fear, anxiety or you just avoid thinking about? Are you willing to submit it to the Lord?

**01** How could righteousness, self-control, or judgment become stumbling blocks to unbelievers? How would you answer someone who might be fearful about coming to faith because of these?

---

**02** Define righteousness, self-control and judgment. Which of these do you struggle with the most? Are you comfortable in the struggle or are you willing for the Holy Spirit to work in that area of your life? Explain.

**03** Go back and reread Acts 24:15. What does Paul say about hope in Romans 5:1-5?

---

**04** Do you remember a time when you were called names and/or falsely accused of something? Do you find hope in a future reward for wrongs suffered here?



# Devotion

A few days later Felix came back with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix became frightened. “Go away for now”, he replied. “When it is more convenient, I will call for you again.”

This passage reminds me that we are all called to be a reflection of Jesus to the world, the Salt and light. We need to be bold like Paul talking to Felix and Drusilla.

Not long ago, I was sitting in the lab waiting for my turn to be called back. A lady came and checked in. I had overheard that she had been sent by oncology. She sat down and looked across the room at me and began to tell me about her new diagnosis of Breast Cancer and how scared she was. Then she said, “I am sorry I don’t know why I am telling you all this. You are a complete stranger.” I felt God say, “You are up. Help her.” I set my nerves aside, moved to sit next to her, and let her know how sorry I am that she is going through this. I asked if I could pray for her. She seemed surprised, but said yes. Above our doors here at CCSE we have the words ... “You are now entering the mission field.” We don’t have to travel outside the country, we don’t need to be a Bible Scholar. We just need to be willing to be used by God. I would like to say I always heed that nudge, but I have missed plenty of opportunities to be used by him.

Dear Lord, Your gift of Salvation through your Son Jesus is something we don’t deserve, but you have graciously given it to us. Please give us the boldness to share your gift with the lost. Give us a passion to love the unlovely, and to be the Salt and Light you have called us to be. In Jesus name, AMEN.

Kimberly Hutchinson





# Helpful Resources

Just point your smart phone camera at the QR code to link to the websites

