



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

ACTS



Acts #35 – 21:17 - 26:32

Acts 26-27-29 ²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” ²⁹ And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **Compassion Month**
 - At EBC we are currently reminding the church of the great partnership we have with Compassion and the importance of child sponsorship
 - If you'd like to donate or sponsor a child, come talk to Matt, Mike or Joao.
- **Grow Conference – Unashamed**
 - GROW is a day conference that brings women of all ages, stages and backgrounds together to thrive on God's word.
 - Saturday August 17 – 9am to 3:30pm



#35 ACTS 21:17-26:32

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

Acts 21:1-16 Paul Goes to Jerusalem, Visits James

¹⁷ When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law,²¹ and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. ²² What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;²⁴ take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. ²⁵ But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgement that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality." ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

Paul Arrested in the Temple

²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up **the whole crowd and laid hands on him,** ²⁸ **crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."** ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. ³¹ And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. ³² He at once took



soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. **And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.** ³³ **Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains.** He enquired who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. ³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, ³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!"

Paul Speaks to the People

³⁷ As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?" ³⁹ Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people." ⁴⁰ And when he had given him permission, **Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:**

22 "Brothers and fathers, hear the defence that I now make before you."

² And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:

³ "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed towards Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶ "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. ⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁸ And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' ⁹ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' ¹¹ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

¹² "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³ came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. ¹⁴ And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; ¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'



¹⁷ “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and 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 know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ ²¹ And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

Paul and the Roman Tribune

²² Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” ²³ And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. ²⁵ But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?” ²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.” ²⁷ So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.” ²⁸ The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.” Paul said, “But I am a citizen by birth.” ²⁹ So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

Paul Before the Council

³⁰ But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

²³ And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” ² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” ⁴ Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God's high priest?” ⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹ Then a great clamour arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” ¹⁰ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.



¹¹ The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."

A Plot to Kill Paul

¹² When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. ¹³ There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. ¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

¹⁶ Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷ Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." ¹⁸ So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." ¹⁹ The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" ²⁰ And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to enquire somewhat more closely about him. ²¹ But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent." ²² So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things."

Paul Sent to Felix the Governor

²³ **Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. ²⁴ Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor."** ²⁵ And he wrote a letter to this effect:

²⁶ "Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. ²⁷ This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. ²⁹ I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. ³⁰ And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."

³¹ So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. ³² And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. ³³ When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. ³⁴ On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.



Paul Before Felix at Caesarea

24 And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. ² And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:

“Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, ³ in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. ⁴ But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. ⁵ For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. ⁸ By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”

⁹ The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

¹⁰ And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defence. ¹¹ You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, ¹² and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. ¹⁴ But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. ¹⁶ So I always take pains to have a clear conscience towards both God and man. ¹⁷ Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. ¹⁸ While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia—¹⁹ they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. ²⁰ Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, ²¹ other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”

Paul Kept in Custody

²² But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” ²³ Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

²⁴ After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgement, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.” ²⁶ At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him. ²⁷ When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favour, Felix left Paul in prison.



Paul Appeals to Caesar

25 Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. ² And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him,³ asking as a favour against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. ⁴ Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. ⁵ “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.”

⁶ After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. ⁷ **When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove.** ⁸ **Paul argued in his defence, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offence.”** ⁹ But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favour, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” ¹⁰ But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹ If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. **I appeal to Caesar.**” ¹² **Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”**

Paul Before Agrippa and Bernice

¹³ Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. ¹⁴ And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, “There is a man left prisoner by Felix,¹⁵ and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. ¹⁶ I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defence concerning the charge laid against him. ¹⁷ So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. ¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. ¹⁹ Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive.²⁰ Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. ²¹ But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.”²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow”, said he, “you will hear him.”

²³ So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. ²⁴ **And Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer.** ²⁵ **But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he**



himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”

Paul's Defence Before Agrippa

26 So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defence:

² “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defence today against all the accusations of the Jews,³ especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴ “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. ⁵ They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. ⁶ And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers,⁷ to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king!⁸ Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

⁹ “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

Paul Tells of His Conversion

¹² “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵ And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

¹⁹ “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. ²¹ For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² **To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but**



what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³ that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

²⁴ And as he was saying these things in his defence, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” ²⁵ But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.” ²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” ²⁹ And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

³⁰ Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. ³¹ And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.” ³² And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

Philippians 3:7-11

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **PAUL’S ARREST AND TRIALS:** This week’s passage is huge (five and a half chapters!), so it is best to mountain top the storyline by way of recap. Take some time to go through the story, using the headings and the bolded sections above to piece together the main narrative. Use the following as a guide if you need:
 - Paul Visits the Jerusalem Church – 21:17-26



- Paul arrested at the Temple – 21:27-22:21
- Before the tribune and the council – 22:22-23:11
- Jews Plot to kill Paul – 23:12-22
- Paul sent to Felix the Governor where he remains for at least 2 years – 23:23 – 24:27
- Paul before Festus (Felix's successor) appeals to Caesar – 25:1-12
- Paul Before Herod Agrippa II – 25:13-26:32

3. APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- a. Having considered Paul's story, it is clear that the Christian life is not about being comfortable, but living for God in all things. And yet, when we zoom out from this hard season for Paul, it is clear that God used it to bless many, by both hearing the gospel from him (like the rulers Festus, Felix and Agrippa), seeing his example in suffering, and the books he wrote in this time. *How might God be using hardship in your life to bless others?*
- b. Despite Paul's hardship (being beaten, and spending years in prison as an innocent man), he was still convinced he was in the middle of God's will for his life. *What would it take for you to believe you are in the middle of God's will when suffering or during a difficult season? How can we even know God's will for us?*
- c. When you're having "that day" – when everything seems wrong and life is hard – *what drives you to trust in God and continue on in faith?*
- d. Read Philippians 3:7-11. In this passage Paul speaks of all that he has left behind in order to be found in Christ. *What do you need to let go of so that I can follow Jesus unhindered?*
- e. *Is Jesus enough for you to continue on with the plan when things don't go how you expected?*

PRAY

Pray for one another and the roads of suffering we have each been called down. Pray for strength, that we might know his presence and his purposes for our lives.

Pray that we would be a church filled with gospel shaped people who live out our faith by grace alone! Pray that we would grow in our missional living and discipling of one another.

Pray for boldness and graciousness in our witness to the truth. Ask God to move in power in our city and bring widescale revival.

NOTES

CHAPTER 21

21:17–28:31 *Paul's Fourth Journey: Arrest and Journey to Rome.* Paul's "fourth missionary journey" in fact represents his arrest in Jerusalem, two-year imprisonment in Caesarea, appeal to Caesar, journey



in custody to Rome, and house arrest there. Although this period is not an intentional outreach planned and implemented by Paul, it is appropriately called a “missionary journey” since (1) Paul continues to take every opportunity to share the gospel, and (2) Luke uses the narrative of Paul’s arrest and journey to Rome to show that the gospel continues to advance despite opposition and apparent setbacks. According to Acts, the expansion of the church is unstoppable, since it is the work of God. See note on 28:31.

21:17–26 *Paul’s Arrival at Jerusalem.* Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem and meeting with James results in an attempt at reconciliation between Paul and some Jewish Christians who are suspicious of his message of salvation by grace apart from the works of the law (vv. 20–25). This is a good example of Paul following his policy expressed in 1 Cor 9: “To those under the law I become like one under the law” (1 Cor 9:20).

21:18 James. Not the apostle James (who was killed in 12:2), but the half brother of Jesus, a leader of the Jerusalem church, and the author of the NT letter of James. See Acts 15:13 and note on 15:13–21; Gal 1:19 and note.

21:20–21 In response to Paul’s report of success among the Gentiles (v. 19), the elders report continued success among the Jews, who remained faithful to their Jewish heritage. Yet some opponents are distorting Paul’s message of salvation by faith alone, claiming that he encourages Jews not to circumcise their children or keep Jewish customs. This accusation is not true. Paul teaches only that such works do not earn salvation, which comes only through Christ’s death on the cross.

21:22–23 These men are involved in a Nazirite vow, a time of special dedication to God (see Num 6:1–21 and note). By paying for their expenses, Paul would show that he remains loyal to his Jewish heritage. Paul himself kept a Nazirite vow (18:18) and circumcised Timothy to avoid offending the Jews (16:3). Paul, as a Jew himself, is quite willing to continue to observe certain Jewish practices, but he insists that these acts do not bring salvation (Rom 3:28).

21:25 The elders cite the stipulations of the Jerusalem council (15:23–29) to show the importance of acting in a way that does not cause offense and that encourages fellowship between Jews and Gentiles.

21:27–36 *Paul Arrested.* While Paul is in the temple finishing his support for the Nazirite vow, some of his Jewish opponents from Ephesus recognize him and accuse him of (1) teaching against the Jewish people; (2) teaching against the law, (3) teaching against the temple, and (4) bringing Gentiles beyond the outer court of the Gentiles and into the inner courts. All could have been capital offenses under Jewish law. The second and third accusations likely arose from Paul’s teaching that salvation comes from faith in Christ alone, not from keeping the law or offering sacrifices in the temple. (See the similar accusations against Stephen in 6:13.) The fourth accusation is false, but it is prompted when Paul’s opponents see Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, with Paul in Jerusalem (v. 29).

21:27 seven days. The days of purification to complete the Nazirite vow (Num 6:9).



21:28 brought Greeks into the temple. Gentiles were forbidden from entering the inner courts of the temple, and signs warned of immediate execution for any who entered. Archaeologists have discovered two of these signs.

21:29 Trophimus. See 20:4.

21:30 gates. Separating the court of the Gentiles from the inner courts of the temple. The Jews shut the gates to keep the rioting crowds from defiling the inner temple courts and especially to keep out the Roman troops who would arrive shortly.

21:31 The Roman commander (Claudius Lysias, see 23:26) and his troops were garrisoned in the Fortress of Antonia, overlooking the northwest corner of the temple mount. His role was to keep the peace and quell any rebellious crowds in the volatile political and religious atmosphere surrounding the temple.

21:33 two chains. Perhaps (1) for Paul's hands and feet or (2) attached to a soldier on either side.

21:36 Get rid of him! Generally, the same thing the crowds had shouted about Jesus (Luke 23:18).

21:37–22:21 Paul Speaks to the Crowd. Paul's message is one of several defenses he gives during his arrest and incarceration, all meant to show his faithfulness to his Jewish heritage, his dramatic conversion when he met Jesus the Messiah, and his fulfillment of God's call to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Paul is not so much defending himself as taking the opportunity to proclaim the gospel. We may divide the message itself (22:3–21) into four parts: he persecuted "the Way" (vv. 3–5; cf. 9:1–2); he met the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus (vv. 6–11; cf. 9:3–8); he was healed of blindness and baptized by Ananias (vv. 12–16; cf. 9:9–18); and he had a vision in the temple at Jerusalem (vv. 17–21).

21:38 Egyptian who started a revolt. The Jewish historian Josephus refers to this Egyptian, a false prophet who gained a following of 30,000 and led them to the Mount of Olives, claiming that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down at his command. The Roman governor Felix routed them, but the Egyptian escaped. Josephus's number (30,000) may exaggerate Luke's more accurate number of 4,000. **terrorists.** Greek *sikarioi* or "dagger-men." Josephus refers to them as one of various groups opposed to the Romans. They would use hidden knives to assassinate Romans and their Jewish sympathizers.

21:39 Paul identifies himself as a respected Jew, not a terrorist (v. 38). **Tarsus ... no ordinary city.** A major commercial and educational center, it was located 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the Mediterranean on the Cydnus River.

21:40 Aramaic. The NT writers use the same Greek word to refer to the Hebrew and Aramaic languages. While the people of Israel used Hebrew in Jewish synagogues, they commonly spoke Aramaic, so this is probably intended here (see NIV text note). The crowd grows silent (22:2) when they hear Paul speaking in their mother tongue (instead of Greek, the main trade language).



22:3 Tarsus. See note on 21:39. **brought up in this city.** Paul evidently studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, one of the most respected rabbis of the first century (see note on 5:34), at an early age (cf. Gal 1:14; Phil 3:4–6).

22:4 persecuted. See 8:1–3; 9:1–2; 26:9–11; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; 1 Tim 1:13. **this Way.**

22:6–21 Acts recounts Paul's conversion three times: (1) the event itself described from Luke's perspective (9:3–22); (2) described from Paul's perspective to a Jewish audience in Jerusalem (vv. 6–13); and (3) described from Paul's perspective to a Gentile audience (Festus and Herod Agrippa II, 26:12–18). The repetition shows that this event is important to Luke.

22:6 about noon. The original account of the event in ch. 9 does not mention this.

22:12–16 Paul recounts the events of 9:10–18 from his perspective.

22:12 devout observer of the law. This would have been important to Paul's Jerusalem audience.

22:14 This encounter with the resurrected Christ is fundamental to Paul's commission as an apostle (26:16; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8).

22:16 be baptized and wash your sins away. The water itself does not spiritually cleanse people of their sins; it outwardly symbolizes the Holy Spirit's inward cleansing.

22:17–21 Paul's vision takes place during his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion (9:26–28; Gal 1:17–19).

22:17 praying at the temple. Confirms for the crowd that Paul is not a renegade Jew but is faithful to his Jewish heritage.

22:21 While Paul wanted to stay in Jerusalem and testify to his dramatic conversion (vv. 19–20), God commanded him to leave, commissioning him to go "far away to the Gentiles."

22:22–29 Paul the Roman Citizen. When another riot begins to break out, the Romans seize Paul again, take him to the Fortress of Antonia, and hold him in protective custody. Paul is able to avoid a flogging by claiming his Roman citizenship (cf. 16:37).

22:22 Paul's claim that God commissioned him to go to the Gentiles (v. 21) sparks a violent response. This parallels what had happened to Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:14–30), where the people of his hometown turned on him for speaking of God's concern for the Gentiles. Though God intended Israel to be a light to the nations, they turned inward and became exclusivist, believing that God loved them and no one else.

22:23 throwing off their cloaks. Perhaps (1) equivalent to tearing their clothing as a sign of sorrow and/or rage at blasphemy (14:14; Matt 26:65; Mark 14:63) or (2) in preparation for stoning him (7:58). **flinging dust into the air.** A sign of rage and/or grief (2 Sam 16:13; Job 2:12) at hearing something offensive or blasphemous.



22:24 flogged. Flogging (Latin *flagellum*) was a cruel and gruesome method of Roman interrogation. It entailed lashing the bare back of the victim with a leather whip embedded with shards of glass or metal.

22:25–26 Roman citizens could not be flogged unless convicted. They also had the right to a final appeal before Caesar when accused of a capital offense (25:11–12, 21, 25; 26:32).

22:27–28 Roman citizenship was a high honor and not granted to everyone. People could gain it by birth, emancipation from slavery, significant service to the Roman Empire, and sometimes purchase (usually involving bribery). Citizenship by birth was viewed as the most noble.

22:28 I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship. May be sarcastic, meaning that the price of citizenship must be deflated if a lowly Jew like Paul could obtain it.

22:30–23:11 Paul Before the Sanhedrin. The commander (Lysias, see 23:26; 24:22) decides that the best way to understand the charges against Paul is to bring him before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court. This is a dangerous situation for Paul since this is the same body that condemned Jesus (Luke 22:66–71; 23:18, 23).

CHAPTER 23

23:1 I have fulfilled my duty. Translates a Greek word that comes from a root meaning “live as a citizen.” Though a Roman citizen, Paul’s true citizenship is in God’s kingdom (Phil 3:20).

23:2 high priest Ananias. Known for his cruelty, greed, and complicity with the Romans during his time in office (AD 47–59).

23:3 God will strike you. Turns out to be prophetic since Jewish freedom fighters killed Ananias at the outbreak of the Jewish revolt of AD 66–73. **whitewashed wall.** A metaphor for hypocrisy: something impressive on the outside but corrupt on the inside (Matt 23:27) or a wall painted white to hide its decrepit state (Ezek 13:10–11).

23:4–5 How could Paul not recognize the high priest? Some say because of poor eyesight (see Gal 4:15; 6:11); others say Paul has been away from Jerusalem so long he does not know the high priest. More likely, the statement is sarcastic and ironic: “I didn’t recognize him because he is not acting like a high priest.” If so, Paul’s quoting from Exod 22:28 means that he respects the office but not the man.

23:6 Sadducees. Paul’s words divide the assembly since Pharisees believe in the resurrection of the dead but Sadducees do not.

23:9 Because Pharisees believe in angels and the supernatural, they are more open to the possibility that Paul has actually seen a vision from God.

23:11 For similar reassuring visions, see 18:9–10; 27:23–24. Before his arrest Paul was making plans to go to Rome (19:21; Rom 1:11–13; 15:23–24, 32), and the Lord now confirms that Paul will preach the gospel there (see 28:11–31). The Good News will reach “the ends of the earth” (1:8).



23:12–22 *The Plot to Kill Paul.* A plot to ambush and kill Paul on the way to the Sanhedrin is discovered by Paul's nephew and reported to the commander, who takes immediate action to transfer Paul to Caesarea under the cover of darkness.

23:12 bound ... with an oath. Greek *anathematizo*; it can mean to call down a curse upon themselves if they break the vow. As in the case of Judas's betrayal of Jesus, the Sanhedrin conspires with others against God's messenger.

23:16 This reference to Paul's nephew is all we learn of his relatives from either the book of Acts or Paul's letters. Though born in Tarsus, Paul was educated in Jerusalem (22:3), perhaps while living with his uncle and aunt.

23:23–35 *Paul Transferred to Caesarea.* The Romans would have likely transferred Paul to the governor's headquarters in Caesarea eventually, but the plot provokes them to transfer Paul immediately by night.

23:23–24 The large contingent of 470 soldiers, almost half the Jerusalem garrison, provides overwhelming force against any ambush and protects Paul, the Roman citizen.

23:23 spearmen. See NIV text note; it may mean additional horses rather than soldiers.

23:26–30 Claudius Lysias's letter gives a generally reliable account of Paul's arrest. Some think that Claudius Lysias twists the wording of the letter to his advantage by saying that he took Paul into protective custody because he learned about his Roman citizenship, when he actually learned about it while preparing to flog him (22:24–29). But the grammatical point is disputed, and it is possible to understand it to be saying that the commander rescued Paul and then found out he was a Roman citizen, which is in line with what happened.

23:29 no charge against him that deserved death. Paul's innocence is a major theme throughout the account of his arrest and incarceration (v. 9; 24:12–13, 20; 25:10, 25; 26:31). This parallels Jesus' innocence in both Luke's Gospel and Acts, where others repeatedly declare him to be both innocent (Luke 23:4, 14–15, 22, 41) and "righteous" (Luke 23:47; cf. "the Righteous One" in Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14).

23:31 Antipatris. A Roman military outpost 35 miles (56 kilometers) northwest of Jerusalem, about halfway to Caesarea. The foot soldiers return after getting Paul safely out of Jerusalem (v. 32), where the ambush was to take place.

23:34 governor. Marcus Antonius Felix (vv. 24, 26; see note on 24:2a). He asks about Paul's home province to determine if he has jurisdiction in this case. He does since both Judea and Cilicia were under the administrative authority of the legate of Syria, under whom Felix served.

CHAPTER 24

24:1–27 *Paul's Trial Before Felix.* At Paul's conversion God told Ananias that Paul would stand before "Gentiles and their kings" (9:15). This comes to fulfillment as Paul bears witness before two Roman



governors, Felix (vv. 1–27) and Festus (25:1–12; 25:23–26:32), and before the Jewish king Agrippa II (25:23–26:32). The first two episodes are formal trials during which Paul defends himself against his Jewish accusers. While Paul is on trial to defend himself, his “defense” (v. 10) becomes an opportunity for him to bear witness to Jesus. On the theme of Paul’s innocence throughout this section, see note on 23:29.

24:1 Ananias. See notes on 23:2, 3. That the high priest would travel all the way to Caesarea shows how important Paul’s case was to the Jewish leadership. **Tertullus.** Perhaps a Jewish lawyer familiar with Roman law or a Gentile lawyer whom the high priest hired to represent the Jewish leaders.

24:2a Felix. Marcus Antonius Felix, procurator of Judea (AD 52–59). He was a former slave who had risen through the ranks with the help of his brother Pallas, also a freed slave. Felix’s governorship over Judea was marked by corruption and growing discontent among the Jews. He treated his subjects with general disdain and responded to opposition with brutal oppression. Rome recalled him in AD 59 because of complaints from the Jews. Felix appears in Acts as Paul’s protector against Paul’s Jewish opponents, but Felix is also shown as corrupt, refusing to free Paul despite the lack of evidence against him. According to Luke, Felix does this to keep the Jewish leaders happy (v. 27) and in hopes of receiving a bribe from Paul (v. 26).

24:2b–3 It was common to offer praise to the judge at the beginning of one’s case (known as *capitatio benevolentiae*), but this is mostly false flattery. Though there was a measure of peace because of Felix’s violent suppression of dissent, there were few reforms during his governorship. Yet Felix likely welcomed the praise, since the Romans viewed themselves as establishing the great *Pax Romana* (“Roman peace”) and as great benefactors for their subject peoples.

24:5–6 Tertullus accuses Paul of three crimes: (1) “stirring up riots” throughout the empire (rebellion or sedition), (2) being a “ringleader of the Nazarene sect,” and (3) trying to “desecrate the temple.” The first crime is political, the third is religious, and the second is both since unauthorized sects were illegal under Roman law.

24:5 Nazarene sect. Christians were called Nazarenes because they followed Jesus of Nazareth. The name may have been derogatory since Nazareth was such an insignificant place (John 1:46).

24:10–21 Paul’s defense answers the three charges: (1) He refutes the charge of sedition (vv. 11–13). (2) He confirms his credentials as a Jew faithful to his God and his heritage (vv. 14–16). (3) He denies that he tried to defile the temple (vv. 17–21). He was at the temple only to offer gifts and offerings; he was ceremonially clean; and he did not start a riot.

24:10 Unlike Tertullus (vv. 2–3), Paul does not pour on the flattery. He simply acknowledges Felix’s authority and his gratitude for the opportunity to defend himself.

24:17 gifts for the poor. If these “gifts” refer to the collection Paul brought from the Gentile churches, this is the only reference in Acts to this collection (Rom 15:25–27; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9).

24:21 Paul’s defense climaxes with the most important theme of his preaching: “the resurrection of the dead.”



24:22 In his seven or so years of governing Judea, Felix is “well acquainted with the Way” (i.e., the Christian movement), so he knows that Christians are not violent insurrectionists. He claims that he delays his decision to wait for the Roman commander Lysias, but in reality he delays because keeping Paul in custody gives him a political advantage: he can both please the Jews (v. 27) and hope for a bribe from Paul (v. 26).

24:23 From the relative freedom he gives to Paul, Felix makes it clear he does not view Paul as a dangerous criminal. High-status Roman prisoners were often given such privileges (cf. 28:30–31).

24:24 Drusilla. Felix’s third wife, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I. Felix coaxed her to leave her first husband and marry him when she was 16. This morally questionable behavior may be why Paul’s talk about “righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come” disturbs Felix and causes him to dismiss Paul (v. 25).

24:26 bribe. Felix may summon Paul often both because he is fascinated with Paul’s religious convictions and because he hopes for a bribe. Though bribes were illegal in Roman law, such corruption was common.

24:27 Felix was succeeded. Felix was summoned to Rome in AD 59 when the Jewish leaders made a case against him for mismanagement, especially his poor handling of a conflict between Jews and Syrians in Caesarea. Felix keeps Paul in prison “to grant a favor to the Jews,” which might help Felix’s chances as he faces their accusations in Rome. **Porcius Festus.** Succeeded Felix and was governor for only about two years (AD 59–62) before dying in office. Little is known about him apart from the Acts account, but he appears to have been a generally competent ruler, maintaining order and ridding the countryside of bandits.

CHAPTER 25

25:1–12 Paul’s Trial Before Festus. A new and dangerous stage of Paul’s imprisonment occurs with his appearance before Festus, the recently appointed governor of Judea. When Paul’s Jewish opponents appeal to Festus to return him to Jerusalem for trial, Festus asks if Paul is willing to be tried there. Knowing that such a transfer would likely result in his assassination, Paul exercises his right as a Roman citizen and appeals to Caesar. Festus agrees and events are set in motion that will take Paul to Rome and bring about the climax of Luke’s narrative in Acts.

25:1–3 Among Festus’s first tasks is introducing himself to the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. Paul is clearly on their minds, and they immediately request that Festus transfer Paul to Jerusalem for trial. The Jewish leaders hatch a plot against Paul similar to that recounted in 23:12.

25:4–5 Festus wisely chooses to have Paul’s trial again in Caesarea, where he has much greater control of the situation than he would have in the volatile atmosphere of Jerusalem.

25:7–8 Paul’s response indicates that their “many serious charges” (v. 7) are the same as the earlier ones: breaking the Jewish law, defiling the temple, and provoking revolution against Caesar and Rome



(v. 8; see 21:27–36; 24:5–6 and notes). None are true, as Paul stated at his earlier trial (see 24:10–21 and note; cf. 22:3; 23:6).

25:9 Festus proposes a compromise solution: Paul’s trial would occur in Jerusalem (to satisfy the Jews), but he would stand trial before Festus (the Roman court would protect Paul’s rights as a citizen).

25:11 I appeal to Caesar! The right of every Roman citizen. Paul knows that he would have little chance for a fair trial in Jerusalem and that his life would be in constant danger (23:12; 25:3). **Caesar.** Originally a family name of Julius Caesar, but became a title for the emperor. The Caesar at this time was Nero, who would later persecute the Christians.

25:12 Festus confers with his “council” (advisers and legal experts) to determine the validity of Paul’s appeal to Caesar, and he then grants it. This solves Festus’s dilemma to provide justice for Paul or please the Jewish leaders. Festus can say that his hands are tied and that he must send Paul to Rome.

25:13–22 Festus Consults King Agrippa. By visiting Caesarea, the Jewish king Agrippa II provides Festus an opportunity to clarify the charges against Paul and so prepare a brief to send with Paul to Rome.

25:13 King Agrippa. Agrippa II, the son of Agrippa I (see note on 12:1) and great-grandson of Herod the Great (see Luke 1:5 and note). Agrippa II was only 17 when his father died, so the Romans placed his father’s kingdom under the authority of Roman governors. In the years that followed, Rome gradually gave him authority over a number of (mostly Gentile) cities north and east of Galilee. While the Roman governor ruled Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, Rome gave Agrippa—the Jewish king—authority to appoint the Jerusalem high priest. **Bernice.** Agrippa’s sister, with whom he was widely rumored to be having an incestuous affair. Agrippa and Bernice are in Caesarea to “pay their respects” to the new governor.

25:16 Festus presents himself as the defender of Roman justice.

25:21 Emperor. Greek *sebastos* (also v. 25), which means “revered,” “sovereign,” or “august one” (i.e., “his majesty”). The title was first given to Caesar “Augustus” but came to be used of other emperors (see note on v. 11). Here it refers to Nero.

25:23–26:32 Paul Before Agrippa. Paul’s final defense before heading to Rome is the longest and most comprehensive of all his speeches after his arrest. It closely parallels his defense before the temple mob (22:1–21): (1) He is faithful to his Jewish heritage (26:4–8). (2) He persecuted the church (26:9–11). (3) On the Damascus road, he encountered Jesus, who commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles (26:12–18). (4) He preached everywhere to Jews and Gentiles alike (26:19–20). (5) Jews arrested him in Jerusalem (26:21). In this speech he highlights the resurrection (26:6–8, 23), which is central to his gospel message (1 Cor 15). As elsewhere in his trial, Paul’s actions parallel those of Jesus, who appeared before both a Roman governor (Pilate) and a Jewish king (Herod Antipas), and both Pilate and Herod acknowledged that Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:6–15).

25:23 high-ranking military officers. Probably the tribunes over the five Roman cohorts (1,000 men each) stationed at Caesarea. **prominent men of the city.** Wealthy citizens and civic leaders. Paul gains the opportunity to preach the gospel before a prestigious audience.



25:25 See note on 23:29.

25:27 Ironically, Festus is seeking charges against Paul to put in his report to Caesar while at the same time acknowledging that Paul is innocent.

CHAPTER 26

26:2 As in his defense before Felix (see notes on 24:2b–3, 10), Paul does not pour on the flattery but simply states his gratitude for the opportunity to defend himself before the Jewish king Agrippa.

26:3 well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Agrippa II (see note on 25:13), as one who is Jewish but also part of the ruling Roman elite, understands both the theological (Jewish) and legal (Roman) aspects of Paul's case.

26:4–5 As elsewhere in his defenses, Paul begins by affirming that he is faithful to his Jewish heritage (cf. 22:3–5; 24:14–16). For Paul's education in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, see 22:3 and note.

26:5 Pharisee. See 23:6; Phil 3:5 and notes.

26:6–7 Israel's hope was that God would save his people and raise the dead. Paul points to the irony that he is on trial for proclaiming that Jesus has fulfilled that hope.

26:8 Paul defends the resurrection, preparing for the climax of his message in v. 23. Some groups within Judaism, like the Sadducees, denied the resurrection (23:8), and Greeks in general rejected a bodily resurrection. Whether or not Agrippa believed in the resurrection, he was closely associated with the Sadducees since he appointed the high priest (see note on 25:13).

26:10 cast my vote against them. Some claim this means Paul must have been a member of the Sanhedrin. But the phrase could simply mean that he supported and approved the decision.

26:12–18 Luke recounts Paul's conversion for a third time (9:1–30; 22:5–21; see note on 9:1–19a). In Paul's retelling, he focuses on the commission Jesus gave him (vv. 16–18).

26:14 Aramaic. See note on 21:40. **It is hard for you to kick against the goads.** A proverb, here meaning "It is hard for you [Paul] to resist God's purpose for your life." A goad is a stick used to prod an animal.

26:20 repent and turn to God. Either (1) "repent" and "turn to God" are synonymous or (2) it means a change of mind ("repent") followed by a change of life direction ("turn to God"). In either case, the change in his converts would be evident in their "deeds" (see Eph 2:8–10; Phil 2:12 and notes).

26:22–23 Two important themes throughout Luke-Acts: (1) The OT Scriptures ("the prophets and Moses") predicted that "the Messiah would suffer" (see note on 3:18). (2) The message of salvation is for all people, regardless of social status ("small and great") or ethnicity ("to his own people ... and to the Gentiles").



26:23 first to rise from the dead. Jesus' resurrection begins the end-time resurrection and guarantees that all believers will rise as he did (see 1 Cor 15:20–23 and notes on 15:20–22; see also Col 1:18; 1 John 3:2 and notes).

26:24 You are out of your mind, Paul! Paul's preaching about the resurrection seems insane to the Gentile Festus (1 Cor 1:23).

26:27 do you believe the prophets? A dilemma for Agrippa: answering "yes" would impress his Jewish subjects but open him up to Paul's further preaching. Instead of answering, Agrippa chides Paul for trying to convert him (v. 28).

26:28 Christian. The second time this title appears in Acts (see 11:26 and note; cf. 1 Pet 4:16).

26:30–32 For Paul's innocence, see note on 23:29.¹

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