

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Paul Imprisoned and Appeal to Rome

### Acts 21-26

## Opening

Gathering: What percent of Christians today would stand up for their faith in a radically Muslim country?

Today's Focus: Paul continued to witness of the gospel even as he stood trial for his faith in Jesus.

Key Verses: *You will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.* Acts 22:15

*Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul replied, "Short time or long – I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."* Acts 26:28-29

Opening Prayer

## Lesson

Travel Plans (Acts 19:21-22)

What plans did Paul make after spending a couple of years in Ephesus during his third journey?  
Acts 19:21-22

Besides checking up on things, what did Paul intend to do by passing through Greece?  
1 Corinthians 16:1-4

What were Paul's plans after taking the offerings to Jerusalem church?  
Romans 15:23-28

Did Paul sense any danger in his plans to go to Jerusalem?  
Romans 15:31-32

How were Paul's plans to go to Jerusalem in time for the Passover changed?  
Acts 20:3b

What target date did Paul set for arriving in Jerusalem after he missed Passover?  
Acts 20:16

Did Paul believe the dangers in Jerusalem were gone since he missed Passover?  
Acts 20:22-23

Why would Paul go to Jerusalem if prison and hardship was facing him?  
Acts 20:24

Sad Farewells (Acts 20:36-21:16)

How did the Ephesians respond to Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem despite the danger?  
Acts 20:36-38

Was the concern for Paul's safety because of their friendship?  
Acts 21:3b-4

How did God test Paul's obedience to His call to go to Jerusalem even further in Caesarea?  
Acts 21:10-11

Had Paul heard of the accuracy of Agabus' prophecies?  
Acts 11:27-30

How did the Christians in Caesarea respond to this vivid prophesy?  
Acts 21:12

Did all of this change Paul's mind?  
Acts 21:13-16

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### I Became Like a Jew to Win the Jews (Acts 21:17-26)

- Besides giving contributions from the churches, what did Paul do in Jerusalem?  
Acts 21:17-19
- How did the Jerusalem Christians, who focused on Jews, respond to this report?  
Acts 21:20-22
- How did they feel they could disprove these rumors that Paul turned Jews from their traditions?  
Acts 21:23-24
- How did Paul go further than just paying for their purification expenses?  
Acts 21:26
- Why did Paul do this when he knew the rumors were false?  
1 Corinthians 9:19-23

### Away With Him! (Acts 21:27-30)

- Did Paul's efforts accomplish their desired goal?  
Acts 21:27-29
- Temple had 13 stone signs with: *Let no Gentile enter within the balustrade and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will be personally responsible for his consequent death.*
- What did other Jews think about a Jew bringing a forbidden Gentile into the temple?  
Acts 21:30

### Romans to the Rescue (Acts 21:31-40)

- What happened when the mob noise was heard in the Tower Antonia (at NW corner of temple)?  
Acts 21:31-36
- Was the commander able to understand anything about the situation through the commotion?  
Acts 21:37-38
- Besides speaking fluent Greek, how did Paul inform the commander who he was?  
Acts 21:39-40

### Here Is My Defense (Acts 22:1-21)

- Was Paul able to quiet the frenzied mob enough to talk to them?  
Acts 22:1-2
- Besides speaking their language, how did Paul try to *become like a Jew to win the Jews*?  
Acts 22:3-4, 12-15
- How did he transition further into his Christian faith?  
Acts 22:17-18, 21

### The Verdict (Acts 22:22-30)

- Was the crowd satisfied with Paul's explanation of why he spent time with Gentiles?  
Acts 22:22
- Did this help the commander understand why the mob was so upset?  
Acts 22:23-24
- How did Paul keep himself from being flogged?  
Acts 22:25, 29
- What did the commander decide to do to get to the bottom of this near-riot?  
Acts 22:30

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### Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1-11)

How did Paul's stand before the Sanhedrin take an immediate bad turn?

Acts 23:1-5

Knowing that the Jews *would not accept his testimony* (22:18), what defense did Paul take?

Acts 23:6

Did this statement have any effect?

Acts 23:7-10

With things getting hotter and hotter, how was Paul assured he was doing the right thing?

Acts 23:11

### Paul's Nephew Saves the Day (Acts 23:12-24)

Having blown their chance to nail Paul before the commander, what did the Jews decide to do?

Acts 23:12-15

How did this plan fall apart?

Acts 23:16-18a, 22

What did the commander decide to do?

Acts 23:23-24

### Moving the Prisoner (Acts 23:25-35)

How would Governor Felix know what to do with Paul?

Acts 23:25-30

Did the army have any trouble taking Paul?

Acts 23:31-32

Did Felix have Paul held in the federal prison?

Acts 23:35

*Felix* - Raised as a slave; Got position since brother Pallas was close to Nero; cruel and oppressive  
*Tacitus* (Roman historian): *Felix exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave*

### Trial Before Felix (Acts 24)

How were the Jewish leaders more prepared this time?

Acts 24:1

What three charges did the Jews bring against Paul?

Acts 24:5-9

How did Paul address the charge of being a *troublemaker and stirring up riots*?

Acts 24:11-13

How did Paul address the charge of being a *ringleader of the Nazarene sect*?

Acts 24:14-16

How did Paul address the charge of *trying to desecrate the temple*?

Acts 24:17-21

With no basis to punish Paul, but in trouble with the Jews for other reasons, what did Felix do?

Acts 24:22-23, 27

Did Felix forget entirely about Paul during this time?

Acts 24:24-26

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### Trial Before Festus (*Acts 25:1-8*)

How long did it take the new governor to learn about Paul's case?

*Acts 25:1-2*

What did the Jewish leaders ask Festus to do?

*Acts 25:3-5*

How did the prosecution and defense arguments go during this trial?

*Acts 25:7-8*

### Result of the Trial (*Acts 25:9-12*)

Faced with upsetting his new constituency with an inevitable acquittal, what did Festus do?

*Acts 25:9*

What did Paul think of this idea?

*Acts 25:10-12*

Note: Emperor Nero was too young to rule, so his tutor, Seneca, led in his place

Seneca was a positive and just leader, Paul would have stood trial before Seneca

Seneca's brother was Gallio, Achaia proconsul who sided with Paul (*Acts 18:12-17*)

Besides acquitting Paul, winning the appeal would recognize Christianity distinct from Judaism

### Festus Consults King Agrippa (*Acts 25:13-26:32*)

Who came to visit the new governor just a few weeks after Festus took office?

*Acts 25:13*

Why was Paul brought to trial before King Agrippa?

*Acts 25:24-27*

How did King Agrippa reply after Paul told his story?

*Acts 26:28-29*

What did King Agrippa think about everything he had heard?

*Acts 26:30-32*

### Closing Prayer

### Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I jumped to a conclusion and later found it was wrong?  
(*Acts 21:27-29; Joshua 9 [Deuteronomy 7:1-2]; Matthew 16:21-23; John 7:52*)
2. When have I been caught up in something mainly because of others or public opinion?  
(*Acts 21:30-36; 22:22-24; 1 Kings 12:1-20; Matthew 27:15-26; Galatians 1:6-9; 5:7-12*)
3. When have I taken a stand based on my opinion without trying to seek the truth?  
(*Acts 23:6-10; 1 Kings 12:26-30; John 11:45-53; 12:37-41*)
4. When have I over-zealously pursued a goal that hurt others in the process?  
(*Acts 23:12-15; 25:1-3; Daniel 6; Galatians 4:17-18; 2 Peter 2*)
5. How have I uniquely used situations in my life to share the gospel?  
(*Acts 21:35-22:21; 24:10-16, 24-25; 26:1-29; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:15*)