

LESSON TWELVE

(26:1-27:44)

The Voyage To Rome In Caesara 26:1-32

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

2 “I think myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 because you are especially familiar with all 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 at 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 for 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 the 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 shut up many of the saints in prison, by 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.

12 “Thus 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, shining round 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 do you persecute me? It hurts 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 to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles - to whom I send you 18 to open their eyes, 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 “Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of 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 the people and to the Gentiles.”

24 And he thus made his defense. Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are mad; your great learning is turning you mad.” 25 But Paul said, “I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. 26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not 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 you think to make me 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.”

26:1 - Since Festus has no case, he may consider that Paul’s defense before Agrippa may reveal something he doesn’t know. As it turns out, Festus evidently thinks (v. 24) that the Romans and the Jews are dealing with a man who is out of his mind. We should be aware that this is not so much a trial as a hearing.

Though the lesson begins here in ch. 26, we suggest that some consideration be given to a light once-over of this chapter, since you have already studied ch. 9 and ch. 22, and more extensive attention given to ch. 27.

V. 2 - **fortunate** - The Greek term is normally translated blessed/happy, as in Matthew 5. It is evident that Paul does not unduly flatter his chief auditor, or other listeners.

V. 3 - Agrippa was knowledgeable in Jewish affairs, and had control of the temple, high-priest appointment, etc. He would know, perhaps better than most, what the situation was.

patiently - as in Rom. 2:4; II Cor. 6:6; Gal. 5:22; II Peter 3:15.

V. 4 - Though some of the Jews in general knew about Paul, some might not of those present, so Paul recited basically what has been recorded by Luke prior to this event.

manner of life - how one lives, life-style.

strictest party - As we noted on 24:5, the Greek term is transliterated “heresy” and translated often as “sect”. **strictest** - same as in 22:3.

V. 6 - The very end of our hope as a Jew is what is found in Christ, Paul asserts.

V. 7 - An interesting point is Paul's expression "twelve tribes", even though ten tribes had disappeared from the scene seven centuries earlier, for all practical purposes.

earnestly - The Israelites "stretched themselves" to do God's will, Paul's word indicated.

worship - From the Greek term as in Matt. 4:10; Luke 1:74; Acts 7:7; Rom. 12:2; Hebrews 9:9, 14, meaning service to a deity.

V. 8 - This expression is addressed to all of his auditors, and is intended to illuminate the essence of the hope he had just mentioned, as well as to challenge their own preconceptions. (Recall the scene in Acts 17.) The incongruity is, Paul says, that he is being accused for the Jewish hope. He points out, in v. 9, that he had once thought God did not raise Jesus from the dead, though such a position was not correct (which is why he changed).

V. 9 - His religious position as a Jew caused him to oppose the Christian heresy, specifically identified with one Jesus from Nazareth.

V. 10 - Some have argued pro and con from this verse about Paul's position on the Sanhedrin. We can not show, from this verse, or any other verse, that he was a member thereof. He may only have meant that he was for such acts as he detailed and willfully participated in them. It seems more natural taking the verse as meaning that Paul was a member of the council, however.

V. 11 - His efforts were zealous, and continued over a period of time and various places. He made (or tried to make) Christians blaspheme (that is, reverse their stand and speak against faith in Jesus as the hope of the twelve tribes, etc.).

Notice Paul's efforts: he pursued Christians everywhere, continually working at making them reverse their position about Jesus when he caught them, and even killed some of them.

V. 14 - Some see in the common Greek proverb about the goad that he mentioned an attempt to speak to the culture of this audience. The Greek text indicates he had often kicked against a goad, figuratively speaking. He may have reference to his conscience (24:16) or his inability to believe in God though rejecting the resurrection, etc.

Hebrew - Paul is probably speaking in Greek.

persecute - Note that though Paul was persecuting Christians, and not Jesus per se, yet Jesus identified with the Christians, since they were members which made up Jesus' body.

V. 16 - **appoint** - Select, choose, as in 3:30; 22:14.

V. 17 - God's agency is herein expressed. We know he did many times deliver for Paul (v. 22).

Gentiles - This word was a real stumbling block to Jews, who could not accept the fact that their hope was extended to Gentiles.

V. 18 - This verse has the essence of the Gospel message and that which it does for those who accept it. As elsewhere in the N.T., only two state in life are possible. In consideration of this fact, Paul preached (v. 20) repentance, the change of mind that brings one to turn to God and away from idols (cf. Acts 14:15), and practice a life in keeping with such a decision (see Luke 3:8ff). For the "power/authority" of Satan, see II Cor. 4:4; II Tim. 2:26; I John 5:19.

V. 19 - This verse indicates that God had plans for Paul, but Paul had to be willing.

V. 21 - The truth is stated, as seen by Paul!

V. 22 - **The prophets and Moses** - Note here Jesus' comments in Luke 24:25-27; Acts 3:18-25. The expression "Moses and the prophets" generally included the Old Testament, especially as it related to what God previously promised and was in the process of fulfilling at the time of speaking. Fulfilled prophecy was and is a great apologetic to lead people to a position of faith. Paul certainly used this very point in his sermon, and appealed to Agrippa on this basis, v. 27.

V. 23 - Note II Tim. 1:10, and the contrast of "darkness" in v. 18 to light through Christ. Of course, John's gospel and first epistle are full of light/darkness.

first to rise - The first can either mean first to rise by virtue of who he was, or first in point of importance. See I Cor. 15:20, 23.

V. 24 - The Greek term translated "mad" has a general idea of frenzy/mania/disturbed mind, or even irrationality. In view of Festus and his background, the last meaning is likely, since Festus evidently thought that Paul had overdrawn his conclusions, and was thus attempting to do what was not justified. The Greek word occurs in John 10:20; Acts 12:15 and I Cor. 14:23.

V. 25 - Some have pointed out that much of this discourse, not only in the arrangement of words (syntax) but the very words chosen, is in the classical Greek of the day rather than the more common Greek of the street. If so, then Paul's educational training is used before this cultured audience. He certainly was courteous in the response to Festus.

V. 26 - **sober truth** - The Greek text has "true and sound words" (i.e., not mad or deceitful).

V. 27 - Agrippa could hardly deny believing the prophets, though maybe he did not believe them as Paul had presented them, which, of course, was the point at issue.

V. 28 - The answer of Agrippa is most difficult to decipher, since the various phrases and words can mean different things. Paul had argued that the O.T. had pointed to Christ and Christianity. He then appealed to Agrippa on this basis. What Agrippa meant could be: “With so little effort as this, do you think you can make me become a Christian?” or “With such little effort do you think I would reject possibilities”, though the King James translation is not a very good possibility.

V. 29 - Again, Paul’s consummate skill came to light, as he took Agrippa’s reply, whatever it might have meant, and turned it into something in his favor. One can easily believe that the promised help of the Holy Spirit for the apostles was his on this occasion.

chains - The status of Paul was hard to appreciate, if one considered his position that Christianity was the consummation of Judaism. If so, then of all people, Jews should not be persecuting him (cf. v. 7). He would yet have been a Jew except for the divine intervention in his life that brought about the change. If all Jews would accept the truth, Paul asserted, then every difficulty would vanish.

V. 31 - The unanimous conclusion was: innocent. The problem is yet with Festus: what to do with Paul. He still could have freed him in spite of the appeal, had his desire for justice matched his desire for Jewish favor.

QUESTIONS

175. Was Paul on trial before Agrippa?

176. Was Paul’s former life as a Jew an important part of his defense?

177. Why did Paul think it somewhat absurd to be persecuted by the Jews?

178. What do you think was so convincing to Paul to make him oppose Jesus?

179. Do you think v. 14 indicates that Paul had some inner turmoil about his avid persecution of Christians?

180. Why did Jesus say he appeared to Paul?

181. Did Jesus promise to help Paul in times of trouble?
182. Describe the effects of conversion as stated in v. 18.
183. When Paul remarked that he was not disobedient, v. 19, did that indicate that he believed he had a choice in serving as God wanted?
184. Why did Paul talk about repentance in v. 20 rather than faith or immersion?
185. In what way did Paul mean that Jesus was “first to rise from the dead” in v. 23?
186. What did Jesus bring to light among “the people and the Gentiles?” (Cf. II Tim. 1:10)
187. What caused Festus to speak so in v. 24?
188. What was not done in a corner?
189. Did Agrippa consider Paul innocent?
190. What do you think makes ch. 26 such a great chapter to study?

Leaving for Rome, 27:1,2

27 *And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort, named Julius. 2 And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.*

27:1 - It will be good to review the four centurions (Matt. 8; Luke 23; Acts 10; here) that are prominent in the New Testament, all of whom were noteworthy for some reason. Though the lesson is inclusive of Ch. 26, further study of this chapter will surely be profitable. The character of Julius and that of Paul as revealed on this voyage are worth much reflection.

V. 2 - Evidently Paul and two companions Luke and Aristarcus, sailed to Italy. **Adramyttium**- a city of Mysia in Asia.

At Sidon, 27:3

3 The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for.

V. 3 - **kindly** - Translates a Greek term with the Greek word for love as a prefix.

friends - The above Greek word is the root of this term also. These people may have been Christians, or otherwise.

Under the Lee of Cyprus, 27:4

4 And putting to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us.

V. 4 - It was late Fall, and the wrong time to be sailing on the sea (see v. 9). The sea became treacherous with storms and wind, with which the vessels of that time were not capable to cope.

At Myra, 27:5-6

5 And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy, and put us on board.

V. 6 - Much sea traffic moved to and from Alexandria, mostly because of the commodities involved.

At Cnidus, 27:7a

Under the Lee of Crete, 27:7b

7 We sailed slowly for a number of days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go on, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone.

V. 8 - The voyage so far: Caesarea to Sidon, about 70 miles. Sidon to Myra, about 450 miles. Myra to Fair Havens, about 350 miles (Fair Havens to Malta, some 500 miles).

At Fair Havens, 27:8-15

8 Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

9 As much time had been lost, and the voyage was already dangerous because the Fast had already gone by, Paul advised them, 10 saying, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." 11 But the centurion paid more attention to the captain and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. 12 And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to put to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, looking northeast and southeast, and winter there.

13 And when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close inshore. 14 But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land; 15 and when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven.

V 9 - **The fast** - The Jewish day of Atonement, occurring on the 10th day of the seventh month (of the religious calendar) and on the 10th day of the first month of the civil calendar. It came in late September or early October. Today it is called Yom Kippur. It was the only day that the Old Testament somewhat officially designated as a fast day, although many Jews fasted otherwise. Paul may or may not have observed the day - Luke may simply have recorded it as a point in time.

V. 10 - Perhaps Paul is speaking from experience, since he had been shipwrecked before. As it turned out, God's intervention saved the people, though the ship was lost.

V. 11 - **paid more attention** - The centurion was actually in charge of the ship. The captain and the owner did a better job of persuading (which is the Greek word used) than did Paul. The fact that a prisoner should have even been considered speaks volumes both about Paul and Julius.

V. 13 - The northeast wind had been giving them problems. It had died out, and the south wind seemed to be what they needed to get from Fair Havens to Phoenix, about 40 miles distance.

V. 14 - Our word typhoon transliterates the Greek term. It was a violent storm, and "caught" (to take violently, as in Luke 8:29; Acts 6:12; 19:29) the ship, and drove

(carried) it out from shore to the open sea. The Greek verb for “were driven” is seen in Matthew 14:11; Luke 24:1; John 21:18; Acts 12:10; Hebrews 1:3; II Peter 1:21, with the idea of something being carried or driven, not of its own accord.

Cauda, 27: 16-17

16 And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the boat; 17 after hoisting it up, they took measures to undergird the ship; then, fearing that they should run on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven.

V.17 - Because of the possibility of being driven south onto a dangerous area, they attempted to use the wind and keep a course at right angles to it, thus being blown westward. undergird - Evidently they tried to tie the ship together in some way to keep it from breaking into pieces.

Driven for 14 Days by the Wind, 27:18-27

18 As we were violently storm-tossed, they began next day to throw the cargo overboard; 19 and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackle of the ship. 20 And when neither sun nor stars appeared for many a day, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

21 As they had been long without food, Paul then came forward among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me, and should not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. 22 I now bid you take heart; for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

23 For this very night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and to whom I worship, 24 and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and lo, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ 25 So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. 26 But we shall have to run on some island.”

27 When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adrea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land.

V. 18 - **storm tossed** - the reason for the action in v. 17.

V. 19 - **tackle of ship** - The vessels and whatever of the ropes, etc., that could be spared to lighten the ship and help prevent it from being filled with water from the boisterous seas. Note that not everything was thrown overboard, but what was thought could be spared.

V. 20 - Their condition was bad enough, but they could not chart any course without the sun and stars to guide them. Thus they won't know where they are until they get on the island, 28:1. Luke says that their hope of being saved (in a physical sense, though the Greek term is the same for salvation, etc.) was gradually “taken from around them” as one takes off a layer of something) at a time.

V. 21- Lack of hope causes many other things to happen. For the ship's passengers, loss of appetite was a result. Some think that the ship may have been a government ship, carrying wheat from Egypt's granaries to Rome. If so, then the ship's captain would have been in the employ of Rome, and with the centurion in charge, they thought they knew more than the "landlubber" Paul. He, however, still stood by them, and with God's encouragement, helped them in a tight spot.

V. 22- **no loss of life** - He believed God's word, and it proved true.

V. 24- Paul evidently was being affected by the others. God, knowing this, used the occasions to encourage Paul and to create faith in the others through Paul.

V. 25 - **Take heart** - Surely needed, since all hope was gone. The word is used again in v. 36, also in James 5:13. Paul's stand on God's expressed word was made on the basis of his past experiences with God, who had always proved faithful. Christians often are called upon to do much the same thing; we can't prove to anyone, even ourselves, that God's promises, yet unfulfilled, will be honored. However, consideration of what God has done in the past, especially as relevant as the Bible, gives us a foundation upon which to build our faith and hope. (Some evidently didn't believe too much in Paul, as v. 30-42 shows.)

V. 26 - The manner of the salvation of the people was not specifically spelled out.

V. 27 - The ship was still on a storm-tossed sea, and driven to and fro.

Coming to Land, 27:28-44

28 So they sounded and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they sounded again and found fifteen fathoms. 29 And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let our four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the boat into sea, under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let it go.

33 As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some food; it will give you strength, since not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." 35 And when he had said this, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. 36 Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 (We were in all two hundred and seventy-six persons in the ship.) 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. 39 Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to bring the ship ashore. 40 So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders; then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. 41 But striking a

shoal they ran the vessel aground; the bow struck and remained immovable, and the stern was broken up by the surf. 42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape; 43 but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their purpose. He ordered those who could swim to throw themselves overboard first and make for the land, 44 and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all escaped to land.

V. 28 - **fathoms** - Originally, the distance of the outstretched arms, about 6 feet.

V. 29 - The usual practice was to anchor from the bow rather than the stern/rear (see v. 30).

V. 30 - The sailors evidently did not trust Paul, or anyone but themselves.

V. 31 - Even if God had spoken about the salvation of all being assured, the sailors, Paul figured, would be needed to help with the ship. As it turned out, they were not needed, but Paul understood God's promise to preclude such action as the sailors were taking. (The soldiers finally believed Paul, and cut loose the little boat.) This is a good example of how human reasoning enters in the understanding of God's revelation. As nearly as we know the sailors were not said to be a part of the salvation process.

V. 34 - Again Paul is emphatic about God's promise and ability to save them all - even to the hair of their heads! As previously noted, not all was thrown overboard, but only what was considered expendable.

V. 35 - Thanksgiving to God for food was both a Christian thing to do (Matt. 15:36; I Tim. 4:3-5) and a good witness to all 276 aboard. A good example was set before them all by Paul, who then put his trust and advice into action.

V. 38 - The last of the ship's cargo was cast overboard. They considered themselves ready to do the best possible, whatever that would be.

V. 39 - Because of the stormy conditions, they had lost track of their position (v. 20).

V. 41 - The sea was still big enough to destroy the ship - so danger was yet present. The sailors evidently attempted to go between two obstacles or through a channel which was not deep enough to permit passage. The ship was apparently "chancy" since efforts had been made earlier (v. 17) to keep it from falling apart. The currents were from two directions at that point, and the buffeting of the ship from one side and then the other was too severe for the ship to stand it. It began breaking up, and something had to be done immediately in order for the people to be saved.

V. 42 - The soldiers were responsible for the prisoners, and perhaps thought that their escape would cost them their lives, as in Acts 12.

V. 43 - The centurion realized the debt all owed to Paul, and determined to save him. The salvation of all was a great example of God's ability and their trust in him.

QUESTIONS

191. Describe Julius, as chapters 27 and 28 present him.

192. Name people in "Paul's party"

193. Have you ever used a map to trace the sea adventure?

194. Was Paul's expression (v. 10) about the voyage true?

195. What provisions were made to help save the ship (prior to arriving at Malta)?

196. How do you reconcile Paul's statement in v. 10 and v. 24?

197. Does one's trust (faith) in God sometimes mean that God's Word will have to be trusted, even if it can't be proved?

198. How do you see Paul's statement in v. 31 with God's revelation in v. 24?

199. What conditions of mind would describe the people on the ship?

200. Did God's promise to Paul come true?

201. Isn't this chapter a great chapter on the subject of God's ability and God's faithfulness?

ABA REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 12

1. Identify Agrippa.
2. What is interesting about Paul's use of the expression "twelve tribes" in 26:7?
3. Was Paul a former member of the Sanhedrin? Explain.
4. What is meant by "kicking against the goads"?
5. Discuss two ways to interpret the term "first to rise".
6. What is the meaning of the Greek term "mad"?
7. What is the best way to translate Agrippa's words in 26:28?
8. Summarize Paul's appearance before Agrippa.
9. Compare (and be prepared to discuss) Paul's testimony of his conversion in Acts Chapters 9, 22, and 26.
10. Discuss the four prominent centurions in the New Testament.

11. Discuss the places Paul visited/passed on his trip to Rome.

12. When did the Jewish “Day of Atonement” occur?

13. Describe the great storm and the events that transpired.

14. What is the distance of a “fathom”?