

PART FOUR

**PAUL'S
IMPRISONMENT
YEARS**

CHAPTER 11

Prisoner at Jerusalem*A. Paul Narrowly Escapes Death*
(Study Acts 21:20--22:29)

The way Luke reports v. 20 it sounds as if James and the elders do not spend a lot of time glorifying God over Paul's report on his Gentile work but quickly inform him of the strong attitude of some of the Jerusalem members against him. It is hard to understand why they are still so "zealous of the law" when its authority has ceased. Their description here resembles the Ebionite sect of church history that blended Jewish and Christian thought. If these are like the Ebionites (or are the early Ebionites) why should they be coddled instead of corrected? As to the non-efficacy of circumcision in the Christian age Paul has written that it now has no efficacy (I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; Gal.6:15). Yet as a matter of expediency while evangelizing among Jews he has had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3). Probably in the same way Paul is willing to conform to certain Jewish customs (see I Cor. 9:20) while at the same time declaring that as a system it cannot save (Acts 13:39). So in order to quiet this element against him and his ministry (v. 21) he accepts the advice of James and the Jerusalem elders to do here (v. 22-24,26) what we have seen that he has already done at Cenchrea on the Second Tour (see Acts 18:18). In so advising Paul they recognize that their decree to the Gentiles in Acts 15 dealt with Gentiles who had never been involved with circumcision and who had never been under the law of Moses (v. 25).

But even though Paul has "bent over backwards" to mellow their attitude toward him, he still ends up in

trouble. In fact the trouble grows out of what certain Jews think they see when he is in the temple purifying himself. But the trouble does not come through the Jerusalem Jews he is seeking to appease but from certain Jews of the province of Asia who are also in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. They had seen a Greek (Trophimus from Ephesus of their province) on the streets of Jerusalem with him, and when they see Paul in the temple they suppose he has brought Trophimus into the temple too, thus polluting the temple (v. 27-29). And as they cry, "Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place," it gets the results wished by their anti-Paul minds, for "all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple" (v. 30) and "went about to kill him" (v. 31), he being saved only because the Roman captain hears the uproar, sees what is happening, and goes out with "soldiers and centurions" to rescue him (v. 31,32). Their sudden and unexpected appearance puts an end to the Jews beating of Paul (v. 32). To safeguard him and yet to give his opponents an opportunity to bring their case against him before the Roman authorities, the chief captain orders Paul bound and carried into the castle (v. 33).

When this incident breaks on Paul, he is aware that this is what was divinely predicted in each place to befall him. For awhile it surely looked like it was going to be "death" for him instead of going to "prison" (see his words in v. 13). And thus for him begins a full four years of imprisonment in jails in three different cities (Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome), and it all begins with false supposition and misrepresentation. It is all related to his evangelizing the Gentiles; consequently he later wrote, "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1), and since he wrote those words to the Ephesian church

he might well have pointed out that his association with Trophimus (an Ephesian) was really what triggered the trouble in Jerusalem.

The chief captain is interested in finding out who Paul is and what he has done (33), but he can't find out from what he is hearing, for "some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude" (v. 34), so he orders him carried into the castle (v. 34), and as they do so the people follow and cry out, "Away with him" (v. 36), so bitter is their hatred toward him.

As they are carrying Paul up the stairs (v. 35), he asks the chief captain if he may speak with him (v. 37). The captain is surprised that he can speak Greek, thinking he is an Egyptian who sometime ago headed up a band of several thousand murderers (v. 38). Josephus mentions one who fits the description in several ways.

Poor Paul--charged with bringing Greeks into the temple (which he hadn't) and now supposed to be a gagg-leader (which he isn't)! He has asked to speak to the people, but first he speaks to the chief captain to tell him who he is: a "Jew" (not an Egyptian), "of Tarsus" in Cilicia, a "citizen" (not a gang-leader) of "no mean" or insignificant city (Tarsus was a prominent, honorable city of the day) (v. 39), and when he further asks permission to speak to the people (v. 39) the chief captain is agreeable (v. 40), expecting by what Paul will say to learn what the problem is between him and the people. So standing on the stairs above the mob in the court below, Paul beckons with his hand for their attention (compare Acts 13:16 and Acts 26:1), which under the conditions they give him (v. 40). Paul can not only speak Greek, but the chief captain learns he can speak Hebrew also (v. 40), confirming Paul's statement to him that he is a Jew.

Have you found any other chapter of the Bible besides this one ending with a comma?

"Hear ye my defense" (22:1) lets us know why he has asked for permission to speak to them. His wisdom

in choosing the Hebrew language in which to speak to them is seen in their being very quiet to hear what he says (v. 2).

He gives them the same background information concerning himself he has already given the chief captain but proceeds to inform them of his participation in the Jewish religion: (1) "brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel," the great Jewish teacher who himself is mentioned in Acts 5:34ff; (2) "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers;" and (3) "was zealous toward God" in persecuting Christians "as ye all are this day" (v. 3,4). The high priest and the elders can vouch for this, for they are the ones who issued him letters to the Damascus synagogue authorizing him to bring disciples of Jesus from there to Jerusalem for punishment (v. 5).

Then he begins to unfold the divine events that led to his change of mind and life. He speaks of the great light that shone around him as well as those with him and the voice of Jesus asking him why he was persecuting Him (v. 3-9). He told of being sent into Damascus for special instructions and of being led there because of being blinded by the great light (v. 10,11). And who was sent to him with those instructions? "One Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews who dwelt there" (v. 12).

The audience continues to listen as he tells them of Ananias's instructions to him ("Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord") (v. 13-16). (For a fuller treatment of his conversion see comments on Acts 9:3-18.)

He next tells them of coming back to Jerusalem some three years later (Gal. 1:18) and of his trance while praying in the temple in which Christ told him, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me" (v. 17,18). From v. 19,20 it is obvious that Paul tried to persuade the Lord to let him stay on in Jeru-

salem, being sure they would listen to him. But he was told, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (v. 21). They are patient listeners until he mentions "Gentiles" ("They gave him audience unto this word"--v. 22). But they will listen to him no longer. They tear off their clothes, throw dust into the air, and cry out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live" (v. 22,23). It is probably impossible for us to realize how anti-Gentile their Jewish-exclusiveness has made them. Immediately the chief captain has Paul brought into the castle for safe-keeping (v. 24).

Failing to learn what the actual charges are against Paul, the Roman official is going to have Paul "examined by scourging" (v. 24). "It was quite a common practice among Roman provincial rulers to scourge into a confession of their crimes men whom they held as criminals and against whom suitable evidence was not at hand" (McGarvey). As they are tying him with leather thongs in preparation for scourging, Paul says something that changes the whole picture: "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" (v. 25). The "Porcian Law" forbade scourging a Roman citizen. Immediately the centurion directing the ordered-scourging conveys Paul's startling information to the chief captain (v. 26), who asks Paul directly, "Art thou a Roman?" When he affirms he is, the chief captain says he became a Roman citizen by paying a large sum of money (v. 27,28) and wonders how Paul, a poor and persecuted man, would have the means of becoming a Roman citizen (Barnes). Paul shows it was not a matter of money with him but of being born a Roman citizen (v. 28). How was he "born" a Roman citizen? Some think his being born in Tarsus made him "free born". Rome made some cities "free cities" because of some meritorious act of those cities. Julius Caesar was the first to make Tarsus a free city for its help to him in his war with Egypt. Mark Antony recognized it as a free city as did his successor August-

tus. "Free cities were permitted... to use their own laws and customs, to have their own magistrates, and they were free from being subject to Roman guards" (Barnes), but it did not make people born in them automatic Roman citizens (Robertson). People in Roman provinces were automatically Roman citizens, but people of free cities were citizens of their own city (and such is Paul by his own words--21:39). It is thought, therefore, that Paul is a descendant of some man made a Roman citizen because of some meritorious deed or by having purchased that right like the chief captain.

The reason they depart from Paul with fear, having already bound him (v. 29), is found in a statement by Cicero: "It is a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen--a crime to scourge him--almost parricide to put him to death." Paul is now completely left unmanacled (v. 30).

QUESTIONS: 1. Of what do the leaders inform Paul? 2. What advice does James give him? 3. How do you explain Paul's doing this when he knows the authority of the law has ceased? 4. Does it end the way James intended? 5. Whom do they suppose Paul has actually brought into the temple? 6. Who rescues Paul from the irate Jews? 7. This is actually the beginning of how many years of imprisonment for Paul? 8. In what 3 places? 9. What surprises the chief captain when he hears Paul speaking Hebrew? 10. What request does he make of the chief captain? 11. In what language does he speak to the people? 12. What 3 things does he tell about his life before his conversion to Christianity? 13. How does he describe the Ananias who came to him in Damascus? 14. How long was it before he returned to Jerusalem? 15. Why did he stay in Jerusalem such a short time? 16. What word that Paul says really stirs up his hearers? 17. Why did the chief captain call off scourging Paul? 18. Discuss how Paul might have been "free born".

*B. Paul and His Jewish Accusers Appear
before the Chief Captain
(Study Acts 22:30--23:11)*

The chief captain has been thwarted in every previous attempt to find out what Paul has done. He decides to call in the chief priests and Jewish council along with Paul to find out (22:30).

The first thing stated is Paul's "earnestly beholding the council" (v. 1). He is probably seeing if any of his former colleagues are still a part of the council. A few may be. If poor eyesight is the "thorn in the flesh" mentioned in II Cor. 12:7-9, his "earnestly beholding" the council members is an apt picture of his attempt to analyze the present council.

His statement to have "lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (v. 1) is not contradicted by his having persecuted Christians earlier (see Acts 26:9). To him his action had been an indication of his zeal for God (Phil. 3:6). Such a claim indicates his change from Judaism to Christianity has been sincerely and conscientiously made. It is obvious the high priest Ananias deplores such a statement coming from a man looked on as an apostate and who they consider a criminal, so he commands Paul to be smitten on the mouth for so speaking (v. 1). Robertson says that smiting the mouth or the cheek is an irritating offense and an act seen among Jews from time to time (see Luke 6:29). With personal feelings riled by this blow on the mouth Paul does not remember Jesus' instruction to turn the other cheek (apostles are human) but pronounces him a judicial hypocrite (white-washed wall) for smiting him for making a true statement (v. 3). The council members who are not accustomed to hearing their high priest so reviled reprimand Paul for his words (v. 4). Josephus's history of this Ananias lends the thought that Paul is speaking with sarcasm when he says, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest" (v. 5). He had been high

priest when Quadratus was the Roman ruler. Quadratus had sent him bound to Rome to stand trial for his behavior over certain difficulties between the Jews and Samaritans, and even though Claudius Caesar dismissed Ananias and returned him to Jerusalem he had not restored him to the office of high priest. Jonathan became the new high priest, whose recent murder had left the high priest's office vacant for a time. Barnes remarks, "It was during this interval...that the events which are here recorded take place," and he sees Ananias as merely a fill-in (functioning as high priest without actually being high priest). If he were indeed the high priest, Paul recognizes his obligation to respect the office even if he cannot respect the man occupying it ("It is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people") (v. 5).

Paul, having once been a member of the Sanhedrin, knew that part were Sadducees (who do not believe in any resurrection--v. 8) and part were Pharisees (who do believe in life after death--v. 8) and so decides to say something that will turn that body into a state of conflict within itself. Theologically he has been a Pharisee and so says, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (v. 6). This achieves Paul's purpose, for the two parties break out into theological strife once more finally resulting in this statement from the Pharisees: "We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him (the Sadducees don't believe in spirits or angels either--v. 8), let us not fight against God" (v. 9). At this point the Sadducees are so stirred up and so vindictive against Paul they are going to take matters into their own hands to inflict punishment on him which they see will not otherwise be given Paul, and in protection of Paul the Pharisees take hold of him too in order to rescue him out of their hands. At this point the chief captain (who still hasn't learned what the charge against Paul is) steps in to rescue him a-

gain and has him brought back into the castle (v. 10).

At the time of Paul's baptism Ananias of Damascus mentioned the many things Paul would have to suffer. II Cor. has already been written, so Paul's narration of numerous sufferings in II Cor. 11:23-27 shows he has already suffered much. He is again going through a suffering period, and even though he has affirmed his willingness to go to prison or to death for the Lord Jesus (Acts 21:13) God sends an angel this night to stand by him and say, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (v. 11). Paul will not forget this assurance, for he has wanted for a long time to go to Rome (Rom. 1:9-15).

QUESTIONS: 1. *Why might Paul be looking the council over so earnestly?* 2. *What does Paul say that causes him to be smitten on the mouth?* 3. *What does Paul say that really turns the Sadducees against him?* 4. *What does an angel tell Paul this night?*

C. Paul is Transferred to Caesarea
(Study Acts 23:12-35)

McGarvey is again observant when he says, "Notwithstanding the gleam of hope granted to Paul in the night, his prospects grew darker than ever the next morning." The Jews who have been defeated in their purpose to kill Paul in the courtyard (Acts 21:31,32), in their anger at his speech from the stairs (Acts 22:22-24), and in seeing the council's getting nowhere

the day before in the hearing before the chief captain (v. 10) so determine they are to end Paul's life that forty of them enter into an agreement bound by an oath that they will kill him before they eat another bite of food or drink another swallow of liquid (v. 12,13), which means they not only intend to kill him but to do it immediately. And how do they plan to do it? By having the council get the unsuspecting chief captain to bring Paul back out as if to make only a brief inquiry about a matter, and at that instant when he is brought forth they will mob him and kill him before any soldier or soldiers can be ordered to protect him (v. 15).

Probably the chief captain would have granted their request and unknowingly would have played into their hands, but God has promised Paul he will yet get to Rome. How will His providence work to carry it out?

Such a plot involving so many people is hard to keep in absolute secrecy. Somehow a young nephew of Paul overhears somebody and reports it to Paul (v. 16) who in turn requests that his nephew get to deliver a message to the chief captain (v. 17,18). As the chief captain takes him by the hand as they go to a private place to talk (v. 19), it is easy to picture the nephew as of a very young age (a lad). Here he reveals the plot (v. 20,21) and is solemnly charged by the chief captain not to tell anybody he has revealed this to him (22).

Now Providence must move the chief captain to quick action. He is going to transfer Paul out of Jerusalem down to Caesarea to the custody of Felix, the ruler of the land. To do this successfully we note (1) a full military escort consisting of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, is to be provided, and (2) the movement is to be made in the privacy of night (v. 23). He charges the two centurions responsible for the movement to "provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe."

unto Felix the governor" (v. 24). He then hastily writes a letter of explanation to be taken to Felix (v. 25-30). From the letter we learn the chief captain's name (Claudius Lysias) (v. 26).

The full escort goes as far as Antipatris, a city about halfway to Caesarea. The seventy horsemen will be ample escort the rest of the way, so the others return to Jerusalem (v. 31,32). The prisoner is brought to the governor as well as the letter from Lysias, and since Paul is from far-away Cilicia he will be kept at Caesarea until his accusers are summoned from Jerusalem (v. 33-35).

QUESTIONS: 1. How determined to kill Paul are 40 men? 2. Who learns of their plot? 3. To what other city will Paul be moved? 4. Tell of the number in his escort.

CHAPTER 12

Prisoner At Caesarea*A. Paul Appears before the Governor Felix*
(Study Acts 24:1-23)

It is only a few days (five) until Paul's accusers are in Caesarea to testify against him. Paul's case is more important to the Jewish leadership than we can imagine, for the trip will consume two days each way (four days traveling) plus whatever time the hearing will require. We note also that the priest Ananias and the Jerusalem elders come, and they bring a polished orator Tertullus along by whose words of accusation they hope to convince the governor against Paul.

Tertullus begins by laudatory words for the governor concerning the peace enjoyed by his reign about which McGarvey remarks, "While Felix was guilty of much corruption in his administration of affairs, the complimentary words with which Tertullus opened his speech were not undeserved, for he had restored tranquility to the country when it was disturbed first by bands of robbers, second by organized assassins, and lastly by that Egyptian for whom Lysias at first mistook Paul (21:38)."

Tertullus's four charges are either too general ("a pestilent fellow") or concern the Jews and their religion and not the Roman government ("a mover of sedition among...the Jews," "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," one who went about to profane their temple) (v. 5-8), and as to be expected "the Jews also

assented, saying that these things were so" (v. 9).

Paul is called on to speak next, and he pays Felix an honorable tribute (v. 10) but less ostentatious than that of Tertullus whose words bordered on flattery. The governor listens as Paul tells of having gone to Jerusalem but a few days ago to worship (v. 11). He says nobody found him disputing with any man or stirring up any agitation in the temple or in any of the synagogues or anywhere in the city (v. 12), flatly denying the charges Tertullus brought against him (v. 13). As to his being a ringleader of a religious sect (a charge that means little to this political leader) Paul says he worships "the God of their fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (v. 14, 15). He affirms his conscientiousness toward both God and man (v. 16) (what a tremendous verse v. 16 is!) and tells how he brought alms to his nation (v. 17), referring to the offering he raised from the Gentile churches. He tells that the Asiatic Jews who first accused him are not even present to testify against him (v. 18, 19), and that these who are present really have no accusation to bring unless it be by those who do not believe in the resurrection (v. 20, 21).

In spite of the oratory of Tertullus Felix defers any judgment until the chief captain Lysias comes from Jerusalem with whom he wishes to confer about the case (v. 22). From the freedom he enables Paul to have until Lysias comes, it is evident that Paul has "won the first round" here at Caesarea.

QUESTIONS: 1. Who is Tertullus? 2. What charges are brought against Paul before Felix? 3. Summarize Paul's reply to these charges.

*B. Felix and His Wife Drusilla Hear Paul
concerning Christ
(Study Acts 24:24,25)*

Felix is married to a Jewess Drusilla. The writings of Josephus supply us with historical information concerning her. Her father was the Herod of Acts 12 who killed the apostle James, imprisoned Peter, and delivered the speech that brought about his death (see Acts 12). Drusilla was only six years old when her father died. She was rightfully the wife of Aziz, king of Emesa, but her beauty enamored Felix who induced her to leave Aziz and go with him. She is but twenty at this time.

There is something about Paul that makes him an unusual prisoner to Felix, and he wishes Paul to inform Drusilla and him concerning the faith of Christ (v. 24). There are many aspects of the gospel that Paul can present to them, but he chooses that having to do with human behavior and coming judgment ("he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (v. 25). What a selection for this adulterous couple: "righteousness" of which they fall so far short; "temperance" or self-control by which they have not lived; "judgment to come" for which they are not ready. And the governor trembles as he considers Paul's reasoning about these matters (v. 25) and says to Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (25). We are not told what effect Paul's words have on Drusilla. It is too bad Felix sends Paul away at a time when conviction might turn him to Christ, but he can probably see the involvements of repentance that he is not ready to accept.

QUESTIONS: 1. *Who is Felix's wife?* 2. *Who was her father?* 3. *Whose wife had she once been?* 4. *Of what 3 things does Paul reason with them?* 5. *What immediate effect does it have on Felix?*

C. The Next Two Years
(Study Acts 24:26,27)

Evidently realizing it was a vast amount of money Paul gathered from the churches and took to Jerusalem, the thought comes to Felix of Paul's buying his way out of jail (v. 26)--possibly by getting this money from the churches. But Paul is not going to use the Lord's money like this, so he remains a prisoner throughout the rest of Felix's years at Caesarea (two years) (v. 27). But just as Herod Antipas had a high respect for John the Baptist (Mark 6:20), so does Felix for Paul, "wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him" (v. 26). Since Paul does not put up his release-money, he leaves Paul bound to please the Jews (v. 27). It is only two years until, according to Josephus, Felix is banished from his governorship, and he dies. He is succeeded by Festus (v. 27).

QUESTIONS: 1. On what basis will Felix immediately release Paul? 2. How long does Paul remain a prisoner here at Caesarea? 3. Does Felix ever call for Paul and talk with him?

D. Paul Appears before Festus
(Study Acts 25:1-12)

It has been two years since Paul's last recorded appearance (before Felix and Drusilla), and the only mentioned activity of Paul from then to his present appearance before the new governor at Caesarea (Fes-

tus) is that Felix communed with him from time to time. McGarvey mentions, "These two years of imprisonment in Caesarea, if we may judge from the silence of history, were the most inactive of Paul's career. There are no epistles which bear this date; and though his brethren and others had free access to him, we have no recorded effects of their interviews with him."

One of the first things Festus does upon becoming governor is to go to Jerusalem (v. 1) where Paul's enemies have not given up their fight to "get him" (v. 2). What they want is for the governor to summon him to Jerusalem, but if their request is granted Paul will never get to Jerusalem for they will have men hidden someplace between the two cities to jump out and kill him (v. 3). Festus is willing to reopen the case and hear their testimony against Paul, but he will not have him brought to Jerusalem (v. 4)--Providence again at work in Paul's behalf!

After eight or ten days of seeing about matters in Jerusalem Festus returns to his capital (v. 6), accompanied by those being sent to make the accusations against Paul. The next day Paul is brought from the prison to be tried before the new governor (v. 6).

Though there are several accusers and "many and grievous charges" brought by them, Luke says of those charges, "They could not prove" them (v. 7). And Paul himself denies their charges when he says, "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended any thing at all" (v. 8).

Festus can see that Paul should be set free, yet like Felix before him he is wanting to please the Jews, and knowing they want him to go to Jerusalem, he says to Paul, "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of those things before me?" (v. 9). Paul having escaped from there through the help of a great escort is not wishing to go back and so decides to call upon his Roman citizenship again by saying, "I

stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged" (v. 10). (Every Roman Citizen had the right to appeal his case to Caesar's court in Rome.)

We cannot help but appreciate Paul's honesty and commitment to the law of the land when he says, "If I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar" (v. 11). Festus and the council both see that Paul has rightly spoken, for after their conferring with each other Festus says to Paul, "Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go" (v. 12).

QUESTIONS: 1. *Who is governor after Felix?*
2. *What do Paul's enemies at Jerusalem want the new governor to do?* 3. *What is their intention?* 4. *What does Paul say when the governor asks him if he will go to Jerusalem and there be tried?*

E. Paul Appears before the Visiting King Agrippa
(Study Acts 25:13--26:32)

There are no vessels plying the Mediterranean on a regular schedule between Caesarea and Rome, so it is another time of waiting for Paul until a ship comes to Caesarea that will be heading toward Rome. During this waiting-period the brother and sister (Agrippa and Bernice) of Drusilla (Festus's wife) come to Caesarea to congratulate Festus on his appointment as governor (v. 13). This Agrippa is actually Herod Agrippa II, and he along with Bernice and Drusilla are all child-

ren of Herod Agrippa I, the Herod of Acts 12 who was smitten of God. This Agrippa II is ruling east of the Jordan with his residence at Caesarea Philippi. Bernice's history shows that she got around romantically. She was married to Marcus, and after his death married her uncle (king of Chalcis). Since his death she has been living incestuously with her brother Agrippa II. Later she will have a short marriage to the king of Sicily after which she will return and live again with Agrippa II. Her final involvements will be to be mistress to both Vespasian and Titus of Rome. There seems to be very little virtuous blood in the Herod family--all descendants of Herod the Great or Herod I who was ruling when Jesus was born.

During this visit Festus tells Agrippa II about Paul's case (v. 14-21). V. 9 tells us practically nothing of Festus's own thoughts about the Paul-case after Paul's defense before him. Now in the verses being presently considered we can see what he is thinking. Note first that Paul's accusers brought no pertinent charges against him (v. 18). Note also his statement in v. 19 reflecting no personal knowledge about Jesus.

Agrippa II says he would like to hear Paul personally (v. 22). He is more informed about Jesus than Festus. Consider McGarvey's thought: "Being the son of Herod who tried to suppress the Christian faith by killing the apostle James, and imprisoning Peter with the purpose of killing him; a nephew of the Herod who had killed John the Baptist, and mocked Jesus on the day of His crucifixion; and a great grandson of the one who attempted to kill Jesus in His cradle at Bethlehem, the names of Jesus and His apostles had been household words in his family for generations back. The name of Paul was doubtless less familiar than those of the original apostles, but of him he could not have been ignorant. He would not have deigned, as would none of his ancestors, to visit a congregation for the purpose of hearing an apostle, but in the pri-

vacy of the praetorium in which Paul was a prisoner he could gratify his curiosity by hearing him and at the same time render some assistance to Festus." Festus promises him that opportunity on the morrow (v. 22).

You suppose Paul's case will be heard privately by Agrippa II accompanied by Festus. Instead Festus has turned the hearing into a great occasion attended not only by Agrippa II and Bernice, who come in with their royal best ("great pomp"), and Festus but by the "chief captains" (Greek: "chiliarchs"--leader of one thousand soldiers) and the "principal men" of Caesarea (y. 23). Paul, who has already made his appeal to Caesar's court, is brought in before this august group not for a legal hearing but for King Agrippa to hear his story and be able to advise Festus as to what the real accusations are against Paul for Festus's formal report to Caesar when he sends Paul to him (v. 24-27). It is interesting to note that with no Jewish accusers present, it is easy for Festus to say, "I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death" (v. 25) even though his accusers had said, "He ought not to live any longer" (v. 24).

From this point forth it is Agrippa who gives Paul permission to speak (26:1). As Paul prepares to speak to all these of the ruling class (v. 1), we are reminded of what Jesus said earlier about the preaching career of Paul: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before...kings" (Acts 9:15).

It is a relief to Paul to get to be heard by one who is so knowledgeable on questions concerning the Jews and their religion, for Agrippa himself professes the Jewish religion and is Rome's representative with reference to the Jewish temple and priesthood. No wonder Paul speaks as he does in v. 2,3.

After telling the king that his early life was well known by the Jerusalem Jews (referring to when he was a student under Gamaliel in Jerusalem) and a strict Pharisee (v. 4,5), he shows that all that has befallen him grows out of his belief in a resurrec-

tion, for since Acts 23:6-9 the Pharisees of the Jewish council have been willing to release him, and only the Sadducees and their fellow-member (the priest Ananias) have persisted in their attempt to destroy him. In what Paul says in v. 6,7 it is evident he sees Jesus as the obvious fulfillment of the divine promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning proof of His deity, which Paul has been proclaiming. He now asks those assembled (the "you" in v. 8 is plural in Greek), "Why should it be thought a thing incredible" (unbelievable) "with you that God should raise the dead?" After all, if God could create the heavens and the earth and everything in them, a belief held by the Jews, why couldn't He raise somebody from the dead? Obviously He could.

Paul shows he has not always believed in Jesus--far from it (consider his words in v. 9-12). And then he tells again the story of his experience near Damascus (v. 13-15). He relates how at this appearance of Jesus he was commissioned by Jesus to go forth with a message that would (1) open people's eyes, (2) turn them from darkness to light, (3) and turn them from the power of Satan unto God so that they might receive (4) forgiveness of sins and (5) inheritance among those who are sanctified through faith in Jesus (v. 16-18). How earnest he is as he tells the king, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (v. 19,20), and he adds, "For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me" (v. 21).

He says it is by the help of God he has been allowed to continue living and witnessing to both small and great in which he states only those things Moses and the other prophets said were to come (v. 22); namely, that the Messiah should suffer and arise from the dead and then show light to the Jews and to the

Gentiles (v. 23).

Paul is waxing too eloquent for the governor Festus, and he interrupts Paul with this loud comment: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (v. 24). In other words Paul has become so obsessed with this Jesus-matter he has "gone off his rocker". It is interesting that the words, "Thou art beside thyself," are all translated from only one word in the Greek, a word from which we get "maniac". And when he says, "Much learning doth make thee mad," the Greek word for "mad" is the same word again. Paul refuses to accept such a conclusion but solemnly states he is speaking forth "the words of truth and soberness" (v. 25). The word "soberness" in Greek denotes a sound mind (Vine), just the opposite of Festus's representation.

Now lest this interruption should derail Paul's hope of reaching King Agrippa, he says, "The king knoweth of these things...None of these things are hidden from him," for the career of Jesus was well known among the Jews (v. 26). And turning to the king himself Paul speaks to him personally for the fifth time in this appearance ("King Agrippa," v. 2; "King Agrippa," v. 7; "O king," v. 13; "O king Agrippa," v. 19; and "King Agrippa," v. 27). He says, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" As a Jew he does, and Paul doesn't want to give him an opportunity to be timid about his faith in the presence of the objecting-Festus, so Paul immediately adds, "I know that thou believest" (v. 27). At the same time Paul wishes, like a successful salesman, to elicit an agreement from him with what he is saying, hoping for a favorable decision on the king's part of lining up with the Christians. Agrippa can see the bent of Paul's intentions, and not wishing to go the way Paul is hoping says something that begins to draw the hearing to a quick close: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (v. 28). The American Standard reads, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Chris-

tian." Even though all the words in the Greek sentence are simple, it is still not easy to be dogmatically sure about how the king's statement is to be taken. If we could actually hear him say it, his tone of voice (which we do not have) would be most helpful in the matter. The fact that the king himself stops the hearing after Paul makes but one more utterance (and that utterance being another attempt on Paul's part to convert the king to his cause), along with the fact that Acts does not say Agrippa communed again with Paul like Felix did (24:26), causes this writer to conclude Agrippa's statement is not to be taken that he is about to become a Christian.

Before giving you our personal studied conclusion here is the Greek sentence itself to aid you in studying the matter out for yourself: *En oligo* ("in a little" or "with a little") *me* ("me") *peitheis* ("thou persuadest" or "persuadest thou?") *Christianon* ("Christian" or "a Christian") *genesthai* ("to become"). In view of the several possibilities and when taking many things into account, we see it as a question designed to slow Paul's thought of getting a decision from him ("In so little or with so little, persuadest thou me to become a Christian?").

Agrippa's use of the name "Christian" shows that the followers of Christ are known even to outsiders by that divine name that was first given at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

Paul's desire for everyone to be a Christian reflects itself in his remark to the king: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" ("I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds"--ASV) (v. 29). What a change would be brought over the land if Agrippa, Festus, Bernice, the chief captains, and the principal men of Caesarea all become Christians! His "bonds", of course, he is

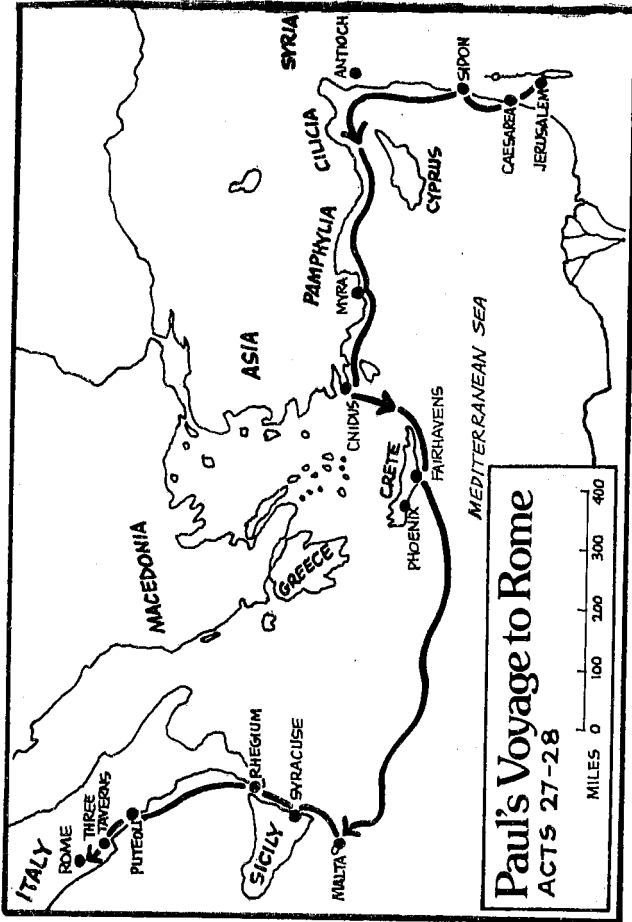
not wishing off on any person.

The king wishes to pursue the matter no further. He rises to signify the hearing is over, and the room is soon empty of its prominent people (v. 30), and Paul is returned to the prison. As the notables confer among themselves in Paul's absence, they say, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds" (v. 31), and Agrippa agrees, for he says to Festus, "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar" (v. 32). The legal process having been set in motion when Paul, the Roman citizen, said, "I appeal unto Caesar" (Acts 25:11), it appears he cannot even be set free now without appearing before Caesar.

QUESTIONS: 1. What is the relationship of Drusilla, Bernice, and this Agrippa? 2. Where is this Agrippa ruling? 3. What is the purpose of Paul's case being heard by Agrippa? 4. Who all are present at the hearing? 5. Summarize the material that Paul presents on this occasion? 6. When commissioning Paul what 5 things did Jesus say his preaching would accomplish? 7. What does Festus interrupt Paul to say? 8. What does Paul say in reply? 9. Does Agrippa believe the Old Testament prophets? 10. Give your understanding of the King James's statement, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

CHAPTER 13

Transferred To Rome



A. *The Safe Part of the Trip*
(Study Acts 27:1-12)

Festus not only has Paul to move to Rome but also a whole group of other prisoners. V. 37 places the number of people on board at 276, probably mostly these prisoners (some would be the crew and the guards). They are being transferred under the watchful eye of the centurion Julius and his soldiers (later mentioned in v. 42). When he finds a ship going in the direction of Rome, he puts Paul and the other prisoners aboard. Paul anticipates the trip as he has every reason to be confident of his release at Rome where he has long wanted to go anyway. But the other prisoners probably have a different outlook about the trip. Lardner says it was common to send prisoners from the various Roman provinces to Rome either for punishment or for fighting in the arena.

Notice the "we" and "us" in v. 2--indicating Luke, the author of Acts, is with him as is Aristarchus of Thessalonica. You will remember from Acts 20 that both of these men accompanied Paul and the Gentile offering to Jerusalem. It is likely they have remained with him through the trials of his imprisonment. It is commonly conjectured that it is while Luke was with Paul during his two years at Caesarea that he wrote the Gospel of Luke. This is a plausible conjecture, for from the prison at Rome two years later he will write Acts (Acts 28:30,31), and his Gospel account was written prior to his Acts history (see Acts 1:1). In his Gospel account Luke mentions personal contact with eye-witnesses to the life of Jesus (Luke 1:1-3). This he surely would have had in Palestine better than in Troas where he originally joined Paul's party or in Philippi where he rejoined it. Had he been a Jew he would of course have been in Jerusalem numerous times, but since he is a Greek this may have been his first time in Jerusalem. Aristarchus is still with Paul when he writes Colossians from his Roman prison

(Col. 4:10).

The ship they are on is going to Adramyttium, a city on the west coast of Mysia. Mysia is a province in northwestern Asia Minor. Since it is getting late to sail on the open sea, the ship will parallel the coast as much as possible (v. 2). The first stop is at Sidon, ancient Phoenician city on the Mediterranean. There is enough stop-over here that Paul can visit with friends here. This fact indicates there is a congregation here (v. 3). Luke's mentioning that Julius courteously allows Paul liberty to leave the ship to visit his friends shows he is fully trusted by the centurion and is looked on as an innocent prisoner. As we shall see, Julius will respect Paul even more as the trip progresses.

Because of the high and contrary winds at sea as the ship leaves Sidon, it sails "under Cyrus" (between the island of Cyprus and the mainland) over the "sea of Cilicia" (Paul's native province where Tarsus is) "and Pamphylia" until coming to the city of Myra in extreme southwest Asia Minor (v. 5). Here they leave the ship since it will continue its journey northward to Adramyttium, and the centurion puts the prisoners aboard a ship hauling wheat (v. 38) out of Egypt (Alexandria) to Italy (v. 6).

It is slow sailing between Myra and Cnidus ("many days" for the 130-mile trip) (v. 7). At Cnidus the ship turns south and sails between the east end of Crete and the island of Salmone (v. 7). The ship docks at Fair Havens near the city of Lasea midway east-west on Crete's south shore (v. 8).

It is obvious that they cannot make it to Rome before winter hits. Calendar-wise they really should not leave Fair Havens, but it is not as commodious to winter in as Phenice (Phoenix) to the west (v. 12). The "much time" at Fair Havens (v. 9) is likely spent waiting for the proper wind-condition to prevail that will enable them to go on to Phenice. Luke tells us how late in the year it is getting to be ("the fast

was now already past"--v. 9). This is a Jewish expression for the Day of Atonement (October). This makes it late for sailing. The more part advised to depart thence...if by any means they might attain to Phenice (Phoenix)" (v. 12). The owner of the ship is willing to risk the voyage (v. 11) in order to have the safer port for his vessel during the winter storms. But Paul admonishes them, "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives" (v. 9,10). This is no doubt an inspired utterance that will prove to be true. The centurion favors taking the ship-owner's advice (v. 11), and so when a gentle breeze comes up they head for the desired port (v. 13). But trouble is ahead!

QUESTIONS: 1. *How many are on board the ship?*
2. *Why are they going to Rome?* 3. *What is the centurion's name?* 4. *What 2 Christian men are on the ship as well as Paul?* 5. *Why does the ship sail close to the coast line?* 6. *Why do they not want to winter at Fair Havens?* 7. *Where do they want to winter?* 8. *What advice does Paul give the centurion?*

B. The Dangerous Part of the Trip
(Study Acts 27:13-44)

From Fair Havens it is only five miles to Cape Matala and then thirty-five more on to Phenice. This movement to the better harbor should be accomplished in about four hours. But soon the soft south wind is

replaced by a violent wind from the northeast (v. 14). This is not good news. These mariners know of this wind and have a name for it ("Euroclydon," meaning "northeast wind"). They are trying to sail to the northwest since they have passed the cape, and this northeasterly wind is striking them broadside (v. 15). The ship gets blown off-course, and instead of keeping close to the shore of Crete as they started out to do (v. 13) they go south of the island Clauda instead of between it and Crete (v. 16). Now look at your map--they will never see Phenice, for they are blown out into the open sea and will ultimately be wrecked on the island Melita many miles west several weeks later.

Necessity forces them to work hard to do what they can do. "We had much work to come by the boat" in v. 16 is translated, "We were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat," in the American Standard. This is a boat normally towed by a ship during good weather but hoisted onto deck in bad weather. Their difficulty in raising it is probably due to its being considerably filled with water from the storm. Next "they used helps, undergirding the ship" (v. 17). McGarvey's comment many years ago, "The undergirding consisted in passing cables around the hull of the vessel and drawing them tight by the capstan so as to prevent her timbers from parting," is borne out by the New American Standard's rendering that they employed supporting cables to undergird the ship.

The "quicksands" of v. 17 are called "Syrtis" in the American Standard and were well known to those shipping on the Mediterranean. They were to the southwest of Crete, the very direction Euroclydon is blowing them. Their situation, already desperate, is growing worse. To do something against being blown further southwest they "strake sail" ("lowered the gear"--ASV) (v. 17) or lowered part of the sails. This does keep them from being driven into the feared Syrtis (see map). However, the storm continues to beat on them, and they are "exceedingly tossed with the tempest" (v.

18). What next can they do? They throw some of the cargo overboard (v. 18), maybe some of the wheat mentioned in v. 38 or maybe other cargo being hauled to Italy. The ship is riding too deep in being pitched up and down. Luke and others ("we") get involved in throwing the "tackling" out next (v. 19). Scholars have not agreed on what is meant by this word, but it has to do with those items of the ship that can be dispensed with under these conditions.

All we can say for the situation of the crew and passengers is that they are still alive, but they have given up all expectation of ever setting foot on land again (v. 20). Their incapacitated vessel is now at the mercy of the sea and the elements. The storm has allowed neither sun to shine on them by day nor stars by night for "many days" (v. 20). They are out on the open sea, and they don't know where they are: "As the mariners of the age were dependent on the sun and the stars exclusively for a knowledge of the direction in which they were sailing, when they had seen neither for many days and the storm was unabated, they had no definite idea as to where they were and hence their despair of being saved" (McGarvey).

Many days have gone by, and nobody has had any appetite to eat (v. 21). God has revealed a heartening message to Paul which he shares with those on board. In order to get them to believe what he is about to say, he reminds them they would be in a different situation now if they had believed him before (v. 21). His statement that they will lose the ship but that none of them will perish seems impossible to be true (v. 22). On what is his statement based? "An angel of God" stood by Paul in the night and said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar; and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with me" (v. 23). Since Paul belongs to God and serves Him (v. 23), he says to his comrades, "Sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me" (v. 25). This is the confidence of all

who implicitly believe on God's Word: "God said it...I believe it...That settles it." As Jesus said to God, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Mystery is added to their imaginations as Paul next says, "Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island" (v. 26), and they will be.

It has been two weeks since leaving the peaceful Fair Havens on Crete (v. 27). During this time they have been "driven to and fro in the sea of Adria" (v. 27). "Adria" is short for "Adriatic", and its use here shows that name to be used for more sea then than now.

About midnight the crew members are of the opinion they are nearing some land (v. 27). They sound for depth and find it is twenty fathoms (one hundred twenty feet deep) (v. 28). A little later they find the depth to be ninety feet. They are losing depth fast enough that they decide to anchor the ship with four anchors from the stern (back part of the ship) until daylight (v. 29). At this point the crew decides to trust their fate to the emergency boat aboard. They begin letting it down as if they are going to use it for putting anchors out the front part of the ship (v. 30) while their real intention is to get in it, escape to land, and leave the battered ship to whatever fate awaits it. But Paul sees what is happening and says to the centurion and to his soldiers to stop the crew from abandoning the ship, saying, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (v. 31). The soldiers cut the ropes, causing the boat to fall to the water below before the crew can get into it (v. 32).

It is obvious that Paul is more and more taking a leading role in the prevailing situation. As daytime nears, he urges them all to take some food since it has been so long since they have eaten (v. 33) and especially since "there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you" (v. 34). This man of God is in no way ashamed but in the presence of them all "he took bread, and gave thanks to God" and began to eat (v. 35), and they did likewise (v. 36). Other examples of

returning thanks before eating: Luke 24:30; Matt. 14:19; I Tim. 4:3-5. We who have prayed for our "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11) should not forget to thank the Father when He sends it. Food and something social like a meal are cheering (v. 36). It is in conjunction with this meal that Luke tells us how many are on the ship (two hundred seventy-six) (v.37), mentioned here because this is possibly the first time they have all gathered together in a common meeting.

Since they are anchored and awaiting the day when they hope to proceed to whatever land they are near they "lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea" (v. 38). This will allow them to proceed into shallower waters as the ship will ride higher.

As daylight comes, they can see they are in reality near some land, but nobody recognizes the place (v. 39). However, they are glad to see land once more regardless of what land it is! Noticing a creek running into the sea, their plan is to let the nose of the ship enter the creek (v. 39). A slightly different setting is portrayed by the American Standard: "They perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it." No mention is made of the storm continuing. Since no mention is made of the storm, evidently they are through with it. Being ready to try for shore, they take up the anchors ("casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea"--ASV), lower the rudders that had been raised out of the water while the anchors were out, and raised up a sail (v. 40). To one who knows the general geography of where they are, a very clear picture comes to mind by the expression, "Where two seas meet" (v. 41). What "two seas"? Barnes: "Greek: Into a place of a double sea (*dithakassa*). That is, a place which is washed on both sides by the sea. It refers properly to an isthmus, tongue of land, and which was washed on both sides by the waves. It is evident that this was not properly an isthmus that was above the waves, but was probably a long sand-bar that stretched

far out into the sea, and which they did not perceive. In endeavoring to make the harbor they ran on this bar or sand-bank." McGarvey says in speaking of the two currents striking the free end of the stuck-boat that they are in sailor's phraseology "two seas". He goes on to say that they strike the stern so that the timbers, already under great strain, immediately give way so that the ship is actually breaking up, and that if those on board are going to escape they must do something immediately. Sensing what is about to happen, "the soldiers' counsel wasto kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape" (v. 42). The lone stated reason for the centurion's not accepting the soldier's counsel (he wants to spare Paul) (v. 43) shows the high regard this Roman official Julius has developed for his unusual prisoner. He tells those who can swim to jump off the wreckage and get to land and the rest to jump into the water, hold onto broken boards from the wrecked ship, and be washed ashore by the waves (43,44). And they all make it safe to land (v. 44) just as Paul earlier predicted: "Be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship" (v. 22).

QUESTIONS: 1. What does "Euroclydon" mean? 2. What does it mean when it says "they used helps, undergirding the ship"? 3. What do they do to keep from being blown southwest on to the quicksands? 4. In the midst of their despair what heartening message does Paul bring to them? 5. How do the crew members try to make their escape from the ship? 6. What does Paul do before they eat? 7. How does their ship become wrecked? 8. In what 2 ways do the members of the group get to shore safely?

C. Wintering on Melita
(Study Acts 28:1-10)

The prisoners make no attempt to escape, for where will they go (they are on an island)? And how can they get anywhere else?

"Luke calls the islanders barbarians" (v. 2) "because thus the Greeks and Romans styled all people except themselves. The term bore less of reproach than it does with us. These barbarians were very far from being savages" (McGarvey). A ship aground just off their shore in the early morning is excitement to the island-people who gather near the shore to watch the happenings. It is from them that the stranded travelers learn they are on the island of "Melita" (Malta today south of Italy) (v. 1). The men can hardly believe they are actually on land again for at one time this seemed absolutely impossible (27:20). We have not yet mentioned the fact that this is not the first time Paul has been involved in a shipwreck. When he earlier wrote II Corinthians he then had already been shipwrecked three times (II Cor. 11:25) and according to that verse on one of them had spent "a night and a day...in the deep".

Providence has brought them to an island-people of a compassionate nature, for Luke says they "shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold" (v. 2). The early winter rains of this coastal area make it a most disagreeable time to be washed ashore water-soaked. It has to be a large bonfire to enable nearly three hundred men to crowd around it.

It is while putting wood on the fire that God uses miracle-power to gain further hospitality for the abandoned men and also to enable Paul to be an influential man during their winter here. And more and more Julius realizes how valuable Paul is to the group. What a sight when the hard-working Paul has a

viper come out of the fire's smoke and fasten itself on his hand (v. 3)! The islanders have no doubt picked up by this time the fact that their "guests" are actually prisoners bound for Rome. When they see the viper hanging on Paul's hand, they say among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live" (v. 4). Thus the stage is set for the great miracle. When Paul shakes off the venomous beast into the fire and still hours later has suffered no harm from it, the curious onlookers are so changed in their conclusion concerning Paul that they now think he is a god (v. 5,6).

Until other arrangements can be made Publius, a Roman ruler ("chief man of the island"), hospitably cares for the group for three days (v. 7). His goodness to so large a group is more than repaid when Paul miraculously heals his very sick father (v. 8). Word spreads, and others locally and throughout the island do not miss the opportunity to bring their sick to Paul to heal (v. 9). Paul's kindness to them will also be well repaid when the island-people graciously outfit them with many things for their departure for Rome later.

McGarvey wisely observes, "We cannot suppose that Paul healed diseases among the islanders so generally without mentioning the name of Jesus. On the contrary, though Luke makes no mention of it, we must think that from the palace of the governor to the remotest hamlet of the island the name and power of Jesus were fully made known during the three months of his stay."

QUESTIONS: 1. *In what sense are the islanders "Barbarians"?* 2. *On what island are they?* 3. *Tell about the weather.* 4. *What happens as Paul is putting wood on the fire?* 5. *What do the islanders think when they*

see this? 6. *When no harm follows, what do they think now?* 7. *What miracles does Paul perform?*

D. On to Rome
(Study Acts 28:11-16a)

Shipping resumes on the Mediterranean as the worst of winter ends. A ship of Alexandria, Egypt that has also wintered at Melita is ready to sail northward (v. 11). "Castor and Pollux" (v. 11) were twin sons of Jupiter in mythology and were held to be the special guardians of sailors. Authorities tell us their images often graced such vessels.

There are varying attitudes about their departure from Melita. The island-people are no doubt reluctant to see them go. Paul is eager to get on his way to Rome, the brethren there, and freedom. The centurion will be glad to see his mission of transporting so many prisoners under such adverse conditions completed. Those prisoners who will not be acquitted at Rome and those who will be made to fight wild animals in the arena would much prefer remaining on the island. Farewells are bidden as the ship sails out of port on its way north. We wonder if their shipwreck experience has made them skeptical of boarding another ship?

Their first stop is at Syracuse on the famous island of Sicily (just off the toe of Italy's boot-shaped peninsula) where the ship stops for three days (v. 12). Instead of "from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium" (v. 13), the American Standard reads, "From thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Regium," suggesting that the winds blew them off the straight course between the two cities. At Rhegium

they are actually in Italy (on the toe of the boot). After one day at Rhegium the wind is very desirable for continuing the journey (v. 13) enabling them to make the one hundred eighty mile trip to Puteoli in only a day (v. 13). "Puteoli" means "the wells". Barnes says, "It was celebrated for its warm baths, and from these and its springs it is supposed to have derived its name." The gospel has been preached here by somebody, for they find "brethren" here (v. 14). Seven days are spent here (v. 14) during which time word about Paul gets to the church at Rome. When the tipp toward Rome is resumed certain brethren from Rome meet Paul at Appii Forum, and still others meet him ten miles north at Three Taverns (v. 15). Barnes says of Appii Forum, "This was a city 56 miles from Rome... The city was built on the celebrated Appian way, or road from Rome to Capua. The road was made by Appius Claudius and probably the city also. It was called the 'forum' or 'market-place' of Appius because it was a convenient place for travelers on the Appian way to trip for purposes of refreshment. It was also a famous resort for pedlars and merchants." Three Taverns was another such rest-and-refreshment place on the road to Rome.

These brethren coming to meet him means much to Paul: "He thanked God, and took courage" (v. 15). After being denied the fellowship of Christians (except for Luke and Aristarchus) for several months, his joy over their coming to meet him is quite understandable.

- QUESTIONS: 1. Comment on "Castor and Pollus".
2. Who come to Appii Forum and Three Taverns? 3. How does their coming affect Paul?

CHAPTER 14

Prisoner At Rome*A. Acts' Account*
(Study Acts 28:16-31)

The centurion Julius bids an adieu to Paul as he delivers him to the captain of the guard who permits him to dwell by himself with a soldier responsible for him (v. 16). Paul's privileged condition as a prisoner is further indicated by the fact that after he has been in Rome only three days he can call the chief of the Jews together to talk to them (v. 17). He rehearses his case with them (v. 17-20). The Jerusalem Jews evidently dropped any hope in his case when at Caesarea he made his appeal to Caesar, for these Jews here at Rome say to him, "We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee" (v. 21).

These Jews welcome the opportunity to talk with somebody of the Christian faith like Paul, for they say, "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against" (v. 22), so they set a day when they and others can come to his lodging to hear him about the matter (v. 23). We catch from their comment what we would expect--that among the Jews Christianity is universally spoken against.

The appointed day arrives, and Paul welcomes the opportunity to speak to his own Jewish brethren "from morning till evening" (v. 23). Earlier when writing to his Christian brethren in Rome concerning the Jews, he said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

Notice also what he wrote in Rom. 9:1-4. What Paul presents on this occasion is material in the law of Moses and the prophets that has to do with the kingdom of God and with the career of Jesus (v. 23). How much those of us who teach courses in Old Testament Prophets would be treated by being present to hear what Paul expounds and testifies (v. 23)!

The day has been profitable, for some are made believers by the things Paul has spoken, but not all (v. 24). From "they agreed not among themselves" (v. 25), you can see that serious discussion has broken out among those Jews who believe and those who don't. Before they depart at the end of day, Paul quotes from their venerated prophet Isaiah concerning their willful disregard of the convincing evidence presented to them (v. 25-27 refers to Isa. 6:9,10). Paul also tells them what he has told stubborn Jews elsewhere: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it" (v. 28). As the Jews leave Paul's place, they are still carrying on their heated discussion over what Paul has taught (v. 28).

As we come to the last two verses of Acts, there is something we are still waiting for--his hearing before Caesar! Why is he held a prisoner at Rome "two whole years" when he should be set free? In his Introduction Reece ably shows that if a person's accusers do not show up within two years to testify against him, he is automatically released. So Paul is detained until that time expires. During this time Paul is given every liberty of "preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 31) to "all that came in unto him" (v. 30). It is at the end of these two years that Luke writes this great book to his fellow-Greek Theophilus.

QUESTIONS: 1. *How is Paul's imprisonment in Rome different from most prisoners' imprisonment?* 2. *What have the Jews in Rome heard about Paul's case?*

3. Why are they interested in hearing what Paul has to say about Christianity? 4. Tell what happens when they hear him. 5. How long is Paul a prisoner in Rome?

B. Gleanings from His "Prison Epistles"

As we have noted, these two years have been busy years for Paul. Besides teaching many people in Rome, he has written four epistles now a part of our New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These are commonly referred to as Paul's "prison epistles". From them we can glean bits of information concerning these two years.

The church at Philippi sends Epaphroditus to Paul with a generous gift (Phil. 4:10,18). While he is staying on to minister to Paul, Epaphroditus becomes deathly ill and almost dies (Phil. 2:27,30). After he recovers, he returns to Philippi carrying Paul's Philippians epistle with him. Other gleanings from Philippians: (1) Some of "Caesar's household" (probably servants) have been converted (Phil. 4:22); (2) Paul's bonds in Christ being manifest in the palace have emboldened many brethren of Rome to be bolder in their evangelizing for Christ (Phil. 1:13,14), causing Paul to say, "The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 1:12); (3) Sometime during these two years Timothy has come to be with Paul at Rome (Phil. 2:19).

Also during these years Paul is able to convert a slave Onesimus, who had run away from his master Philemon, a member of the Colossian church (Phm. 10, 11). Paul now sends him back to his master (Phm. 12, 15-19). Accompanying Onesimus to Colosse is Tychicus of Asia bearing both the Colossian and the Philemon epistles (Col. 4:7-9). They will go by ship to Ephesus and by land from Ephesus to Colosse. Paul also sends the Ephesian epistle by Tychicus to drop off as they

go through Ephesus (Eph. 6:21,22). From Col. 4:12 we learn that Epaphras of Colosse is also with Paul when he writes Colossians while from Phm. 23 we see that Mark and Demas are also with Paul at the time of writing.

From Paul's later and final epistles (I and II Timothy and Titus) we conclude that he gets released from the Jewish charge against him to accomplish some of the aspirations he has had while being detained at Rome.

We cannot conclude our study of Acts without remarking that we are so indebted to this inspired account for our knowledge of what happened during the first third of a century of the church. May we say that we selfishly lament that we do not have a similar book of history covering the happenings from the end of Acts to the death of the last apostle (John)? Being denied such a chronological coverage, we are forced to piece together fragments of information from several epistles to know what little we do about the last portion of the apostolic age.

As a parting tribute to the great apostle Paul, let us say that from the time he is introduced to us at the stoning of Stephen (chapter 7), there is very little recorded in the rest of the book of Acts that is not related to him in some way either directly or indirectly. His conversion and fruitful labors thereafter forever stand as a testimony to the truth of the gospel, to the power of it, and to the victory of it!

QUESTIONS: 1. What epistles does Paul write during his Roman imprisonment? 2. What man from Philippi becomes deathly ill while ministering to Paul? 3. Who is Onesimus? 4. Who is his master at Colosse? 5. What epistles tell us bits and pieces of Paul's life after he is released from this imprisonment?