

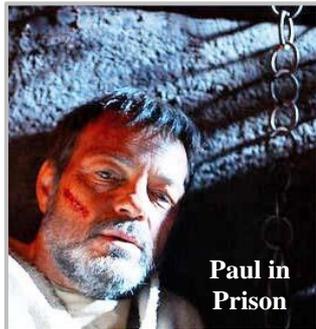
Adventure Club

A weekly lesson for children, young people, parents and grandparents, from the GCI Watford Church.
Number 49, 26th February 2021



Paul's Journey to Rome

Acts 25:11 – 28:31
Quoted from the *Easy-to-Read Version* of the Bible



Paul Appeals to Caesar

‘I want Caesar to hear my case!’ Festus talked about this with his advisors. Then he said, ‘You have asked to see Caesar, so you will go to Caesar!’

A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus. They stayed there many days, and Festus told the king about Paul’s case. Festus said, ‘There is a man that Felix left in prison. When I went to Jerusalem, the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders there made charges against him. They wanted me to order his death. But I told them, ‘When a man is accused of doing something wrong, Romans don’t hand him over for others to judge. First, he must face the people accusing him. And then he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.’

So when these Jews came here for the trial, I did not waste time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and ordered Paul to be brought in. The Jews stood up and accused him. But they did not accuse him of the kind of crimes I thought they would. Their charges were all about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died, but Paul said that he is still alive. I did not have any idea about how to judge these matters. So I asked Paul, ‘Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?’ But Paul asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the emperor. So I ordered that he be held until I could send him to Caesar in Rome.”

Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear this man too”. Festus said, “Tomorrow you can hear him”.



Festus

He succeeded Felix as the Roman Governor of Judea. Paul told Festus the resurrection is true and makes perfect sense.

The next day Agrippa and Bernice came to the meeting with great show, acting like very important people. They entered the room with military leaders and important men of the city. Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul in.

Festus said, “King Agrippa and all of you gathered here with us, you see this man. All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about him. When they complain about him, they shout that he should be killed. When I judged him, I did not find him guilty of any crime worthy of death. But he asked to be judged by Caesar, so I decided to send him to Rome. However, I don’t really know what to tell Caesar that this man has done wrong. So I have brought him before all of you – especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write to Caesar. I think it is foolish to send a prisoner to Caesar without making some charges against him.”



King Agrippa

He admitted the force of Paul’s Christian argument, but at once dismissed it. He was the great-grandson of Herod the Great.

Paul Defends Himself before Festus and Agrippa

Agrippa said to Paul, “You may now speak to defend yourself”. Paul raised his hand to get their attention and began to speak. He said, “King Agrippa, I feel fortunate that I can stand here before you today and answer all the charges these Jews have made against me. I am very happy to talk to you, because you know so much about all the Jewish customs and the things the Jews argue about. Please listen to me patiently.

All the Jews know about my whole life. They know the way I lived from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem. These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a good Pharisee. And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish religion more carefully than any other group. Now I am on trial because I hope for the promise that God made to our fathers. This is the promise that all the twelve tribes of our people hope to receive. For this hope the Jews serve God day and night. My king, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise. Why do you people think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

I used to think that I should do everything I could against Jesus from Nazareth. And that’s what I did, beginning in Jerusalem. The leading priests gave me the authority to put many of God’s people in jail. And when they were being killed, I agreed that it was a good thing. I visited all the synagogues and punished them, trying to make them curse Jesus. My anger against these people was so strong that I went to other cities to find them and punish them.

‘I said, “Who are you, Lord?”
The Lord said,
“I am Jesus.” ’
Acts 26:14-15, ERV

Paul’s Testimony

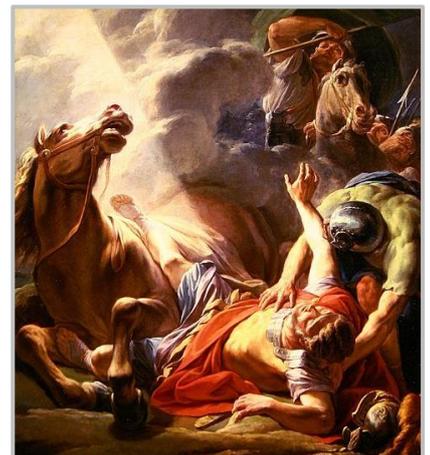
One time the leading priests gave me permission and the authority to go to the city of Damascus. On the way there, at noon, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun. It shined all around me and those travelling with me. We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me

in Aramaic. The voice said, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me.’

I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. Stand up! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will tell people about me – what you have seen today and what I will show you. This is why I have come to you. I will keep you safe from your own people and from the non-Jewish people, the ones I am sending you to. You will make them able to understand the truth. They will turn away from darkness to the light. They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven, and they can be given a place among God’s people – those who have been made holy by believing in me.’ ”

Paul continued speaking: “King Agrippa, after I had this vision from heaven, I obeyed it. I began telling people to change their hearts and lives and turn back to God. And I told them to do what would show that they had really changed. I went first to people in Damascus. Then I went to Jerusalem and to every part of Judea and told the people there. I also went to the non-Jewish people.



Paul ‘Saw a Light from Heaven’

‘We all fell to the ground.’
Painted in 1767 by the French artist,
Michael Nicolas-Bernard Lepicie.

This is why the Jews grabbed me and were trying to kill me at the Temple. But God helped me, and he is still helping me today. With God's help I am standing here today and telling all people what I have seen. But I am saying nothing new. I am saying only what Moses and the prophets said would happen. They said that the Messiah would die and be the first to rise from death. They said that he would bring the light of God's saving truth to the Jewish people and to the non-Jewish people."



'I Am Not Crazy'

During his defence speech, Paul ceases to be an advocate for himself as a prisoner, but becomes an advocate for God.

While Paul was still defending himself, Festus shouted, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Too much study has made you crazy".

Paul said, "Most Honourable Festus, I am not crazy. What I am saying is true. It all makes perfect sense. King Agrippa knows about all this, and I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about these things, because they happened where everyone could see them. King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know you believe!"

King Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think you can persuade me to become a 'Christ-follower' so easily?"

Paul said, "It is not important if it is easy or if it is hard. I pray to God that not only you but that everyone listening to me today could be saved and be just like me – except for these chains I have!"

King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all the people sitting with them stood up and left the room. They were talking to each other. They said, "This man has done nothing worthy of being put to death or even put in jail". And Agrippa said to Festus, "We could let him go free, but he has asked to see Caesar".



Aristarchus

He was seized during the Ephesus riot, Acts 19:29. He was aboard the ship with Luke and Paul.

Paul Sails for Rome

It was decided that we would sail for Italy. An army officer named Julius, who served in the emperor's special army, was put in charge of guarding Paul and some other prisoners on the trip.

We got on a ship from the city of Adramyttium that was ready to sail to different places in Asia. Aristarchus, a man from Thessalonica in Macedonia, went with us.

The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very good to Paul and gave him freedom to go visit his friends there, who gave him whatever he needed. We left that city and sailed close to the island of Cyprus because the wind was blowing against us. We went across the sea by Cilicia and

Pamphylia. Then we came to the city of Myra in Lycia. There the army officer found a ship from the city of Alexandria that was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the city of Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any farther that way, so we sailed by the south side of the island of Crete near Salmone. We sailed along the coast, but the sailing was hard. Then

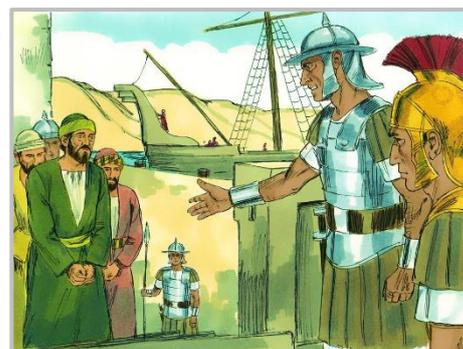
we came to a place called Safe Harbours [Fair Havens], near the city of Lasea.

We had lost much time, and it was now dangerous to sail, because it was already after the Jewish day of fasting. So Paul warned them, "Men, I can see that there will be a lot of trouble on this trip. The ship, everything in it, and even our lives may be lost!" But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. So the army officer accepted what they said instead of believing Paul. Also, that harbour was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter, so most of the men decided that we should leave there. They hoped we could reach Phoenix, where the ship could stay for the winter. Phoenix was a



Roman Cargo Ship

In Acts chapter 27 there are over 50 words, mostly nautical, found nowhere else in the New Testament. All 276 people on board survived the shipwreck.



Julius

was the Centurion who was responsible for taking Paul to Rome. He was kind and very respectful towards Paul.

city on the island of Crete. It had a harbour that faced southwest and northwest.

The Storm



Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, “This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!” So they pulled up the anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete **1**. But then a very strong wind called the “Northeaster” came from across the island. This wind took the ship and carried



it away. The ship could not sail against the wind, so we stopped trying and let the wind blow us. We went below a small island named Cauda. With the island protecting us from the wind, we were able to bring in the lifeboat, but it was very hard to do. After the men brought the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold it together **2**. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis. So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship.

The next day the storm was blowing against us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship **3**. A day later they threw out the ship’s equipment **4**. For many days we could not see the sun or the stars. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive – we thought we would die.

‘We thought we would die.’
The ‘we’ means Luke was aboard.

Acts 27:1, ERV’

The men did not eat for a long time. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, “Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have all this trouble and loss. But now I tell you to be happy. None of you will die, but the ship will be lost. Last night an angel came to me from God – the God I worship and belong to. The angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar. And God has given you this promise: He will save the lives of all those sailing with you.’ So men, there is nothing to worry about. I trust

God, and I am sure everything will happen just as his angel told me. But we will crash on an island.”

On the fourteenth night we were still being blown around in the Adriatic Sea. The sailors thought we were close to land. They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was 120 feet deep. They went a little farther and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks, so they threw four anchors into the water **5**. Then they prayed for daylight to come. Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship, and they lowered the lifeboat to the water. They wanted the other men to think that they were throwing more anchors from the front of the ship. But Paul told the army officer and the other soldiers, “If these men do not stay in the ship, you will lose all hope of survival.” So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water **6**.



Just before dawn Paul began persuading all the people to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. Now I beg you to eat something. You need it to stay alive. None of you will lose even one hair off your heads.” After he said this, Paul took some bread and thanked God for it before all of them. He broke off a piece and began eating. All the men felt better and started eating too. (There were 276 people on the ship.) We ate all we wanted. Then we began making the ship lighter by throwing the grain into the sea.



The Ship Begins to Break Up

When daylight came, the sailors saw land, but they did not know what land it was. They saw a bay with a beach and wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could. So they cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that were holding the rudders. Then they



raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there and could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces **7**.

The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape. But Julius the army officer wanted to let Paul live. So he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. He told the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim to land **8**. The others used wooden boards or pieces of the ship. And this is how all the people went safely to land **9**.



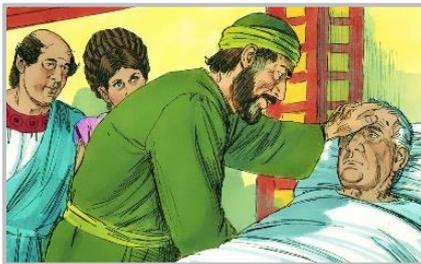
St Paul's Bay
is the traditional place of
Paul's shipwreck,
but nobody knows for sure.

Paul on the Island of Malta

When we were safe on land, we learned that the island was called Malta. The people who lived there were very good to us. It was raining and very cold, so they built a fire and welcomed all of us. Paul gathered a pile of sticks for the fire. He was putting the sticks on the fire, and a poisonous snake came out because of the heat and bit him on the hand. When the people living on the island saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said, "This man must be a murderer! He did not die in the sea, but Justice does not want him to live".



But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and was not hurt. The people thought he would swell up or fall down dead. They waited and watched him for a long time, but nothing bad happened to him. So they changed their opinion. They said, "He is a god!"



There were some fields around that same area. They were owned by a man named Publius, the most important Roman official on the island. He welcomed us into his home and was very good to us. We stayed in his house for three days. Publius' father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery, but Paul went to him and prayed for him. He laid his hands on the man and healed him. After this happened, all the other sick people



Publius
Maltese Roman
Official and
Landowner.

on the island came to Paul, and he healed them too. The people on the island gave us many honours. And after we had been there three months and were ready to leave, they provided us everything we needed for our trip.

Italy

We got on a ship from Alexandria that had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods. We stopped at the city of Syracuse. We stayed there three days and then left. We came to the city of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the city of Puteoli. We found some believers there, who asked us to stay with them a week. Finally, we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters in Rome heard about us and came out to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three Inns. When Paul saw these believers, he thanked God and felt encouraged.



The 'Market of Appius'

was a small town 43 miles from Rome. It was built next to the Appian Way which connected Rome with south-east Italy. The construction of the road started in the 4th century BC. As can be seen above, parts of the road are still being used.

Rome

When we came to Rome, Paul was allowed to live alone. But a soldier stayed with him to guard him.

Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jews. When they came together, he said, "My brothers, I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our fathers. But I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They asked me many questions, but they could not find any reason why I should be put to death. So they wanted to let me go free. But the Jews there did not want that. So I had to ask to come to Rome to have my trial before Caesar. That doesn't mean I am accusing my people of doing anything wrong. That is why I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel."

The Jews answered Paul, "We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have travelled from there brought news about you or told us anything bad about you. We want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this new group".

Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. He spoke to them all day long, explaining God's kingdom to them. He used the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to persuade them to believe in Jesus. Some of the Jews believed what he said, but others did not believe. They had an argument among themselves and were ready to leave. But Paul said one more thing to them:

"The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet. He said,

'Go to this people and tell them: You will listen and you will hear, but you will not understand. You will look and you will see, but you will not understand what you see. Yes, the minds of these people are now closed. They have ears, but they don't listen. They have eyes, but they refuse to see. If their minds were not closed, they might see with their eyes; they might hear with their ears; they might understand with their minds. Then they might turn back to me and be healed.' [Isaiah 6:9-10]

I want you Jews to know that God has sent his salvation to the non-Jewish people. They will listen!" Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed all the people who came and visited him. He told them about God's kingdom and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold, and no one tried to stop him from speaking.'

'He told them about God's kingdom and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Acts 28:31, ERV

See if you can memorise the following:
'He told them about God's kingdom and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Acts 28:31, ERV

Word Search

PAUL JOURNEY
ROME CAESAREA
SIDON PHOENIX
FAIR HAVENS
CRETE SYRACUSE
MALTA RHEGIUM
APPIAN CNIDUS
WAY PUTEOLI
LUKE PUBLIUS
SHIP FESTUS
THREE TAVERNS
SNAKE BERNICE
MYRA ARISTARCHUS
STORM JULIUS
FELIX AGRIPPA

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S	T	O	O	R	M	W	N	L	O	K	E	O	D	I	S

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Bible abbreviations: ERV: Easy-to-Read Version.

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