

A Journey Through Luke and Acts

November

Each Monday read the entire chapter for that week, on consequent days break down the chapters in smaller sections of verses seeing what God might be revealing to you over the course of each day and week.

November 2- Acts 25: 1- 27

Paul appeals to Caesar

25 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. ² The chief priests and Jewish leaders presented their case against Paul. Appealing to him, ³ they asked as a favor from Festus that he summon Paul to Jerusalem. They were planning to ambush and kill him along the way. ⁴ But Festus responded by keeping Paul in Caesarea, since he was to return there very soon himself. ⁵ "Some of your leaders can come down with me," he said. "If he's done anything wrong, they can bring charges against him."

⁶ He stayed with them for no more than eight or ten days, then went down to Caesarea. The following day he took his seat in the court and ordered that Paul be brought in. ⁷ When he arrived, many Jews who had come down from Jerusalem surrounded him. They brought serious charges against him, but they couldn't prove them. ⁸ In his own defense, Paul said, "I've done nothing wrong against the Jewish Law, against the temple, or against Caesar."

⁹ Festus, wanting to put the Jews in his debt, asked Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to stand trial before me concerning these things?"

¹⁰ Paul replied, "I'm standing before Caesar's court. I ought to be tried here. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you well know. ¹¹ If I'm guilty and have done something that deserves death, then I won't try to avoid death. But if there is nothing to their accusations against me, no one has the authority to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

¹² After Festus conferred with his advisors, he responded, "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go."

King Agrippa informed about Paul

¹³ After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea to welcome Festus. ¹⁴ Since they were staying there for many days, Festus discussed the case against Paul with the king. He said, "There is a man whom Felix left in prison. ¹⁵ When I was in Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and elders brought charges against him and requested a guilty verdict in his case. ¹⁶ I told them it is contrary to Roman practice to hand someone over before they have faced their accusers and had opportunity to offer a defense against the charges. ¹⁷ When they came here, I didn't put them off. The very next day I took my seat in the court and ordered that the man be brought before me. ¹⁸ When the accusers took the floor, they didn't charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. ¹⁹ Instead, they quibbled with him about their own religion and about some dead man named Jesus, who Paul claimed was alive. ²⁰ Since I had no idea how to investigate these matters, I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem to stand trial there on these issues. ²¹ However, Paul appealed that he be held in custody pending a decision from His Majesty the emperor, so I ordered that he be held until I could send him to Caesar."

²² Agrippa said to Festus, "I want to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow," Festus replied, "you will hear him."

²³ The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great fanfare. They entered the auditorium with the military commanders and the city's most prominent men. Festus then ordered that Paul be brought in. ²⁴ Festus said, "King Agrippa and everyone present with us: You see this man! The entire Jewish community, both here and in Jerusalem, has appealed to me concerning him. They've been calling for his immediate death. ²⁵ I've found that he has done nothing deserving death. When he appealed to His Majesty, I decided to send him to Rome. ²⁶ I have nothing definite to write to our lord emperor. Therefore, I've brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this investigation, I might have something to write. ²⁷ After all, it would be foolish to send a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

November 9- Acts 26: 1- 32

Paul's defense before Agrippa

²⁶ Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak for yourself."

So Paul gestured with his hand and began his defense. ² "King Agrippa, I consider myself especially fortunate that I stand before you today as I offer my defense concerning all the accusations the Jews have brought against me. ³ This is because you understand well all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I ask you to listen to me

patiently. ⁴ Every Jew knows the way of life I have followed since my youth because, from the beginning, I was among my people and in Jerusalem. ⁵ They have known me for a long time. If they wanted to, they could testify that I followed the way of life set out by the most exacting group of our religion. I am a Pharisee. ⁶ Today I am standing trial because of the hope in the promise God gave our ancestors. ⁷ This is the promise our twelve tribes hope to receive as they earnestly worship night and day. The Jews are accusing me, King Agrippa, because of this hope! ⁸ Why is it inconceivable to you that God raises the dead?

⁹ "I really thought that I ought to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene in every way possible. ¹⁰ And that's exactly what I did in Jerusalem. I locked up many of God's holy people in prison under the authority of the chief priests. When they were condemned to death, I voted against them. ¹¹ In one synagogue after another—indeed, in all the synagogues—I would often torture them, compelling them to slander God. My rage bordered on the hysterical as I pursued them, even to foreign cities.

¹² "On one such journey, I was going to Damascus with the full authority of the chief priests. ¹³ While on the road at midday, King Agrippa, I saw a light from heaven shining around me and my traveling companions. That light was brighter than the sun. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice that said to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you harassing me? It's hard for you to kick against a spear.'^[a] ¹⁵ Then I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are harassing. ¹⁶ Get up! Stand on your feet! I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you as my servant and witness of what you have seen and what I will show you. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes. Then they can turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, and receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are made holy by faith in me.'

¹⁹ "So, King Agrippa, I wasn't disobedient to that heavenly vision. ²⁰ Instead, I proclaimed first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, then to the whole region of Judea and to the Gentiles. My message was that they should change their hearts and lives and turn to God, and that they should demonstrate this change in their behavior. ²¹ Because of this, some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to murder me. ²² God has helped me up to this very day. Therefore, I stand here and bear witness to the lowly and the great. I'm saying nothing more than what the Prophets and Moses declared would happen: ²³ that the Christ would suffer and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to my people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴ At this point in Paul's defense, Festus declared with a loud voice, "You've lost your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you mad!"

²⁵ But Paul replied, "I'm not mad, most honorable Festus! I'm speaking what is sound and true. ²⁶ King Agrippa knows about these things, and I have been speaking openly to him. I'm certain that none of these things have escaped his attention. This didn't happen secretly or in some out-of-the-way place. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

²⁸ Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you trying to convince me that, in such a short time, you've made me a Christian?"

²⁹ Paul responded, "Whether it is a short or a long time, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today will become like me, except for these chains."

³⁰ The king stood up, as did the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them. ³¹ As they left, they were saying to each other, "This man is doing nothing that deserves death or imprisonment."

³² Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he hadn't appealed to Caesar."

November 16- Acts 27: 1- 44

Paul's voyage to Rome

27 When it was determined that we were to sail to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were placed in the custody of a centurion named Julius of the Imperial Company.^[a] ² We boarded a ship from Adramyttium that was about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia. So we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, came with us. ³ The next day we landed in Sidon. Julius treated Paul kindly and permitted him to go to some friends so they could take care of him. ⁴ From there we sailed off. We passed Cyprus, using the island to shelter us from the headwinds. ⁵ We sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and landed in Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship headed for Italy and put us on board. ⁷ After many days of slow and difficult sailing, we arrived off the coast of Cnidus. The wind wouldn't allow us to go farther, so we sailed under the shelter of Crete off Salmone. ⁸ We sailed along the coast only with difficulty until we came to a place called Good Harbors,^[b] near the city of Lasea.

⁹ Much time had been lost, and the voyage was now dangerous since the Day of Reconciliation had already passed. Paul warned them, ¹⁰ "Men, I see that our voyage will suffer damage and great loss, not only for the cargo and ship but also for our lives." ¹¹ But the centurion was persuaded more by the ship's pilot and captain than by

Paul's advice. ¹² Since the harbor was unsuitable for spending the winter, the majority supported a plan to put out to sea from there. They thought they might reach Phoenix in Crete and spend the winter in its harbor, which faced southwest and northwest.

¹³ When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they could carry out their plan. They pulled up anchor and sailed closely along the coast of Crete. ¹⁴ Before long, a hurricane-strength wind known as a northeaster swept down from Crete. ¹⁵ The ship was caught in the storm and couldn't be turned into the wind. So we gave in to it, and it carried us along. ¹⁶ After sailing under the shelter of an island called Cauda, we were able to control the lifeboat only with difficulty. ¹⁷ They brought the lifeboat aboard, then began to wrap the ship with cables to hold it together. Fearing they might run aground on the sandbars of the Gulf of Syrtis, they lowered the anchor and let the ship be carried along. ¹⁸ We were so battered by the violent storm that the next day the men began throwing cargo overboard. ¹⁹ On the third day, they picked up the ship's gear and hurled it into the sea. ²⁰ When neither the sun nor the moon appeared for many days and the raging storm continued to pound us, all hope of our being saved from this peril faded.

²¹ For a long time no one had eaten. Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have complied with my instructions not to sail from Crete. Then we would have avoided this damage and loss. ²² Now I urge you to be encouraged. Not one of your lives will be lost, though we will lose the ship. ²³ Last night an angel from the God to whom I belong and whom I worship stood beside me. ²⁴ The angel said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar! Indeed, God has also graciously given you everyone sailing with you.' ²⁵ Be encouraged, men! I have faith in God that it will be exactly as he told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on some island."

²⁷ On the fourteenth night, we were being carried across the Adriatic Sea. Around midnight the sailors began to suspect that land was near. ²⁸ They dropped a weighted line to take soundings and found the water to be about one hundred twenty feet deep. After proceeding a little farther, we took soundings again and found the water to be about ninety feet deep. ²⁹ Afraid that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they hurled out four anchors from the stern and began to pray for daylight. ³⁰ The sailors tried to abandon the ship by lowering the lifeboat into the sea, pretending they were going to lower anchors from the bow. ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and his soldiers, "Unless they stay in the ship, you can't be saved from peril." ³² The soldiers then cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

³³ Just before daybreak, Paul urged everyone to eat. He said, "This is the fourteenth day you've lived in suspense, and you've not had even a bite to eat. ³⁴ I urge you to take some food. Your health depends on it. None of you will lose a single hair from his head." ³⁵ After he said these things, he took bread, gave thanks to God in front of them

all, then broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ Everyone was encouraged and took some food. (³⁷ In all, there were two hundred seventy-six of us on the ship.) ³⁸ When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

³⁹ In the morning light they saw a bay with a sandy beach. They didn't know what land it was, but they thought they might possibly be able to run the ship aground. ⁴⁰ They cut the anchors loose and left them in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that ran back to the rudders. They raised the foresail to catch the wind and made for the beach. ⁴¹ But they struck a sandbar and the ship ran aground. The bow was stuck and wouldn't move, and the stern was broken into pieces by the force of the waves. ⁴² The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners to keep them from swimming to shore and escaping. ⁴³ However, the centurion wanted to save Paul, so he stopped them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and head for land. ⁴⁴ He ordered the rest to grab hold of planks or debris from the ship. In this way, everyone reached land safely.

November 23- Acts 28:1- 31

On the Island of Malta

28 After reaching land safely, we learned that the island was called Malta. ² The islanders showed us extraordinary kindness. Because it was rainy and cold, they built a fire and welcomed all of us. ³ Paul gathered a bunch of dry sticks and put them on the fire. As he did, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, latched on to his hand. ⁴ When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer! He was rescued from the sea, but the goddess Justice hasn't let him live!" ⁵ Paul shook the snake into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ They expected him to swell up with fever or suddenly drop dead. After waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to claim that he was a god.

⁷ Publius, the island's most prominent person, owned a large estate in that area. He welcomed us warmly into his home as his guests for three days. ⁸ Publius' father was bedridden, sick with a fever and dysentery. Paul went to see him and prayed. He placed his hand on him and healed him. ⁹ Once this happened, the rest of the sick on the island came to him and were healed. ¹⁰ They honored us in many ways. When we were getting ready to sail again, they supplied us with what we needed.

Paul makes it to Rome

¹¹ After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had spent the winter at the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with carvings of the twin gods Castor and Pollux as its figurehead. ¹² We landed in Syracuse where we stayed three days. ¹³ From there we sailed to Rhegium. After one day a south wind came up, and we arrived on the second day in Puteoli. ¹⁴ There we found brothers and sisters who urged us to stay with them for a week. In this way we came to Rome. ¹⁵ When the brothers and sisters there heard about us, they came as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he gave thanks to God and was encouraged. ¹⁶ When we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to live by himself, with a soldier guarding him.

Paul meets Jewish leaders in Rome

¹⁷ Three days later, Paul called the Jewish leaders together. When they gathered, he said, "Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I'm a prisoner from Jerusalem. They handed me over to the Romans, ¹⁸ who intended to release me after they examined me, because they couldn't find any reason for putting me to death. ¹⁹ When the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar. Don't think I appealed to Caesar because I had any reason to bring charges against my nation. ²⁰ This is why I asked to see you and speak with you: it's because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

²¹ They responded, "We haven't received any letters about you from Judea, nor have any of our brothers come and reported or said anything bad about you. ²² But we think it's important to hear what you think, for we know that people everywhere are speaking against this faction."

²³ On the day scheduled for this purpose, many people came to the place where he was staying. From morning until evening, he explained and testified concerning God's kingdom and tried to convince them about Jesus through appealing to the Law from Moses and the Prophets. ²⁴ Some were persuaded by what he said, but others refused to believe. ²⁵ They disagreed with each other and were starting to leave when Paul made one more statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke correctly when he said to your ancestors through Isaiah the prophet,

²⁶ *Go to this people and say:*

You will hear, to be sure, but never understand;

and you will certainly see but never recognize what you are seeing.

²⁷ *This people's senses have become calloused,*

and they've become hard of hearing,

and they've shut their eyes

so that they won't see with their eyes

*or hear with their ears
or understand with their minds,
and change their hearts and lives that I may heal them.*^[a]

²⁸ "Therefore, be certain of this: God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen!"^[b]

Paul's ministry in Rome

³⁰ Paul lived in his own rented quarters for two full years and welcomed everyone who came to see him. ³¹ Unhindered and with complete confidence, he continued to preach God's kingdom and to teach about the Lord Jesus Christ.