

A Journey Through Luke and Acts

October

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.

October 5- Acts 21: 1- 40

Paul travels to Jerusalem

21 After we tore ourselves away from them, we set sail on a straight course to Cos, reaching Rhodes the next day, and then Patara. **2** We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, boarded, and put out to sea. **3** We spotted Cyprus, but passed by it on our left. We sailed on to the province of Syria and landed in Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo. **4** We found the disciples there and stayed with them for a week. Compelled by the Spirit, they kept telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem. **5** When our time had come to an end, we departed. All of them, including women and children, accompanied us out of town where we knelt on the beach and prayed. **6** We said good-bye to each other, then we boarded the ship and they returned to their homes.

7 Continuing our voyage, we sailed from Tyre and arrived in Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers and sisters there and spent a day with them. **8** The next day we left and came to Caesarea. We went to the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and stayed with him. **9** He had four unmarried daughters who were involved in the work of prophecy. **10** After staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11** He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In Jerusalem the Jews will bind the man who owns this belt, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" **12** When we heard this, we and the local believers urged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Paul replied, "Why are you doing this? Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I'm ready not only to be arrested but even to die in Jerusalem for the sake of the name of the Lord Jesus."

14 Since we couldn't talk him out of it, the only thing we could say was, "The Lord's will be done."

15 After this, we got ready and made our way up to Jerusalem. **16** Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and led us to Mnason's home, where we were guests.

He was from Cyprus and had been a disciple a long time. ¹⁷ When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters welcomed us warmly.

Meeting the Jerusalem church leaders

¹⁸ On the next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James. All of the elders were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, he gave them a detailed report of what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ Those who heard this praised God. Then they said to him, "Brother, you see how many thousands of Jews have become believers, and all of them keep the Law passionately. ²¹ They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to reject Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to live according to our customs. ²² What about this? Without a doubt, they will hear that you have arrived. ²³ You must therefore do what we tell you. Four men among us have made a solemn promise. ²⁴ Take them with you, go through the purification ritual with them, and pay the cost of having their heads shaved. Everyone will know there is nothing to those reports about you but that you too live a life in keeping with the Law. ²⁵ As for the Gentile believers, we wrote a letter about what we decided, that they avoid food offered to idols, blood, the meat from strangled animals, and sexual immorality." ²⁶ The following day Paul took the men with him and went through the purification ritual with them. He entered the temple and publicly announced the completion of the days of purification, when the offering would be presented for each one of them.

Paul seized by the people

²⁷ When the seven days of purification were almost over, the Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the temple. Grabbing him, they threw the whole crowd into confusion by shouting, ²⁸ "Fellow Israelites! Help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, the Law, and this place. Not only that, he has even brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place." (²⁹ They said this because they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him earlier, and they assumed Paul had brought him into the temple.) ³⁰ The entire city was stirred up. The people came rushing, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple. Immediately the gates were closed. ³¹ While they were trying to kill him, a report reached the commander of a company of soldiers that all Jerusalem was in a state of confusion. ³² Without a moment's hesitation, he took some soldiers and officers and ran down to the mob. When the mob saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³ When the commander arrived, he arrested Paul and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Only then did he begin to ask who Paul was and what he had done.

³⁴ Some in the crowd shouted one thing, others shouted something else. Because of the commotion, he couldn't learn the truth, so he ordered that Paul be taken to the military headquarters. ³⁵ When Paul reached the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers in order to protect him from the violence of the crowd. ³⁶ The mob that followed kept screaming, "Away with him!"

³⁷ As Paul was about to be taken into the military headquarters, he asked the commander, "May I speak with you?"

He answered, "Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists into the desert some time ago?"

³⁹ Paul replied, "I'm a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city. Please, let me speak to the people." ⁴⁰ With the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and gestured to the people. When they were quiet, he addressed them in Aramaic.

October 12- Acts 22: 1- 30

Paul's defense before his accusers

22 "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." ² When they heard him address them in Aramaic, they became even more quiet. ³ Paul continued, "I'm a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia but raised in this city. Under Gamaliel's instruction, I was trained in the strict interpretation of our ancestral Law. I am passionately loyal to God, just like you who are gathered here today. ⁴ I harassed those who followed this Way to their death, arresting and delivering both men and women into prison. ⁵ The high priest and the whole Jerusalem Council can testify about me. I received letters from them, addressed to our associates in Damascus, then went there to bring those who were arrested to Jerusalem so they could be punished.

⁶ "During that journey, about noon, as I approached Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven encircled me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice asking me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you harassing me?' ⁸ I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are harassing,' he replied. ⁹ My traveling companions saw the light, but they didn't hear the voice of the one who spoke to me. ¹⁰ I asked, 'What should I do, Lord?' 'Get up,' the Lord replied, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told everything you have been appointed to do.' ¹¹ I couldn't see because of the brightness of that light, so my companions led me by the hand into Damascus.

¹² "There was a certain man named Ananias. According to the standards of the Law, he was a pious man who enjoyed the respect of all the Jews living there. ¹³ He came and stood beside me. 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' he said. Instantly, I regained my sight and I could see him. ¹⁴ He said, 'The God of our ancestors has selected you to know his will, to see the righteous one, and to hear his voice. ¹⁵ You will be his witness to everyone concerning what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ What are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins as you call on his name.'

¹⁷ "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I had a visionary experience. ¹⁸ I saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Hurry!' he said. 'Leave Jerusalem at once because they won't accept your testimony about me.' ¹⁹ I responded, 'Lord, these people know I used to go from one synagogue to the next, beating those who believe in you and throwing them into prison. ²⁰ When Stephen your witness was being killed, I stood there giving my approval, even watching the clothes that belonged to those who were killing him.' ²¹ Then the Lord said to me, 'Go! I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

²² The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they shouted, "Away with this man! He's not fit to live!" ²³ As they were screaming, throwing off their garments, and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ the commander directed that Paul be taken into the military headquarters. He ordered that Paul be questioned under the whip so that he could find out why they were shouting at him like this.

²⁵ As they were stretching him out and tying him down with straps, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Can you legally whip a Roman citizen who hasn't been found guilty in court?"

²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. He asked, "What are you about to do? This man is a Roman citizen!"

²⁷ The commander went to Paul and demanded, "Tell me! Are you a Roman citizen?"

He said, "Yes."

²⁸ The commander replied, "It cost me a lot of money to buy my citizenship."

Paul said, "I'm a citizen by birth." ²⁹ At once those who were about to examine him stepped away. The commander was alarmed when he realized he had bound a Roman citizen.

Paul appears before the Jewish council

³⁰ The commander still wanted to know the truth about why Paul was being accused by the Jews. Therefore, the next day he ordered the chief priests and the entire Jerusalem Council to assemble. Then he took Paul out of prison and had him stand before them.

October 19- Acts 23: 1- 35

23 Paul stared at the council and said, "Brothers, I have lived my life with an altogether clear conscience right up to this very day." ² The high priest Ananias ordered those standing beside Paul to strike him in the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, "God is about to strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit and judge me according to the Law, yet disobey the Law by ordering that I be struck."

⁴ Those standing near him asked, "You dare to insult God's high priest?"

⁵ Paul replied, "Brothers, I wasn't aware that he was the high priest. It is written, *You will not speak evil about a ruler of your people.*"^[a]

⁶ Knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, Paul exclaimed in the council, "Brothers, I'm a Pharisee and a descendant of Pharisees. I am on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead!"

⁷ These words aroused a dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ This is because Sadducees say that there's no resurrection, angel, or spirit, but Pharisees affirm them all. ⁹ Council members were shouting loudly. Some Pharisees who were legal experts stood up and insisted forcefully, "We find nothing wrong with this man! What if a spirit or angel has spoken to him?" ¹⁰ The dispute became so heated that the commander feared they might tear Paul to pieces. He ordered soldiers to go down and remove him by force from their midst. Then they took him back to the military headquarters.

¹¹ The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Be encouraged! Just as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so too you must testify in Rome."

A murder plot discovered

¹² The next morning some Jewish leaders formulated a plot and solemnly promised that they wouldn't eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³ More than forty people were involved in the conspiracy. ¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have solemnly promised to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ You and the council

must explain to the commander that you need Paul brought down to you. Pretend that you want to examine his case more closely. We're prepared to kill him before he arrives."

¹⁶ Paul's sister had a son who heard about the ambush and he came to the military headquarters and reported it to Paul. ¹⁷ Paul called for one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander because he has something to report to him."

¹⁸ He took him to the commander and said, "The prisoner Paul asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you."

¹⁹ The commander took him by the hand and withdrew to a place where they could speak privately. He asked, "What do you have to report to me?"

²⁰ He replied, "The Jewish leaders have conspired to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow. They will pretend that they want to investigate his case more closely. ²¹ Don't fall for it! More than forty of them are waiting to ambush him. They have solemnly promised not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, awaiting your consent."

²² The commander dismissed the young man, ordering him, "Don't tell anyone that you brought this to my attention."

²³ The commander called two centurions and said, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to leave for Caesarea at nine o'clock tonight. ²⁴ Have horses ready for Paul to ride, so they may take him safely to Governor Felix." ²⁵ He wrote the following letter:

²⁶ Claudius Lysias, to the most honorable Governor Felix: Greetings. ²⁷ This man was seized by the Jews and was almost killed by them. I was nearby with a unit of soldiers, and I rescued him when I discovered that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ I wanted to find out why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their council. ²⁹ I discovered that they were accusing him about questions related to their Law. I found no charge deserving of death or imprisonment. ³⁰ When I was informed of a conspiracy against his life, I sent him to you at once and ordered his accusers to bring their case against him before you.

³¹ Following their orders, the soldiers took Paul during the night and brought him to Antipatris. ³² The following day they let the horsemen continue on with Paul while they returned to the military headquarters in Jerusalem. ³³ The horsemen entered Caesarea, delivered the letter to the governor, and brought Paul before him. ³⁴ After he read the letter, he asked Paul about his home province. When he learned that he was from

Cilicia,³⁵ the governor said, "I will hear your case when your accusers arrive." Then he ordered that Paul be kept in custody in Herod's palace.

October 26- Acts 24: 1- 27

Paul's trial before Felix

24 Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They pressed charges against Paul before the governor.² After the governor summoned Paul, Tertullus began to make his case against him. He declared, "Under your leadership, we have experienced substantial peace, and your administration has brought reforms to our nation."³ Always and everywhere, most honorable Felix, we acknowledge this with deep gratitude.⁴ I don't want to take too much of your time, so I ask that you listen with your usual courtesy to our brief statement of the facts.⁵ We have found this man to be a troublemaker who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the empire. He's a ringleader of the Nazarene faction⁶ and even tried to defile the temple. That's when we arrested him.^{7a} ⁸ By examining him yourself, you will be able to verify the allegations we are bringing against him."⁹ The Jews reinforced the action against Paul, affirming the truth of these accusations.

¹⁰ The governor nodded at Paul, giving him permission to speak.

He responded, "I know that you have been judge over this nation for many years, so I gladly offer my own defense."¹¹ You can verify that I went up to worship in Jerusalem no more than twelve days ago.¹² They didn't find me arguing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd, whether in the synagogue or anywhere else in the city.¹³ Nor can they prove to you the allegations they are now bringing against me.¹⁴ I do admit this to you, that I am a follower of the Way, which they call a faction. Accordingly, I worship the God of our ancestors and believe everything set out in the Law and written in the Prophets.¹⁵ The hope I have in God I also share with my accusers, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.¹⁶ On account of this, I have committed myself to maintaining a clear conscience before God and with all people.¹⁷ After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring gifts for the poor of my nation and to offer sacrifices.¹⁸ When they found me in the temple, I was ritually pure. There was no crowd and no disturbance.¹⁹ But there were some Jews from the province of Asia. They should be here making their accusations, if indeed they have something against me.²⁰ In their absence, have these people who are here declare what crime they found when I stood before the Jerusalem Council.²¹ Perhaps it concerns this one statement that I blurted out when I was with them: 'I am on trial before you today because of the resurrection of the dead.'"

²² Felix, who had an accurate understanding of the Way, adjourned the meeting. He said, "When Lysias the commander arrives from Jerusalem, I will decide this case." ²³ He arranged for a centurion to guard Paul. He was to give Paul some freedom, and his friends were not to be hindered in their efforts to provide for him.

Paul in custody

²⁴ After several days, Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and summoned Paul. He listened to him talk about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ When he spoke about upright behavior, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became fearful and said, "Go away for now! When I have time, I'll send for you." ²⁶ At the same time, he was hoping that Paul would offer him some money, so he often sent for him and talked with him.

²⁷ When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. Since Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.