

The Acts of the Apostles, part 2

Paul's Missionary Journeys

Session 5 – Acts 21:37 – 26:32

Acts 21:37 – 22:21

1. Remember from last session that Paul had just been arrested in Jerusalem but saved from the converted Jews who thought he was perverting God's Word while reaching out to Gentiles. As the tribune was taking Paul away, he asked to speak to the crowd. What confusion was there about his identity?
2. As Paul began speaking, the Jews got very quiet. Why?
3. In Paul's remarks, he recounted his conversion experience, reported by Luke in Acts 9. First, he emphasized that he was brought up as a Jew. Look at Philippians 3:5-6. How does Paul describe that part of his background?
4. He was educated at the feet of Gamaliel. Why drop this name (see Acts 5:34)?
5. What about his conversion experience might he have thought would work in his favor with them?
6. The accounts here and in chapter 9 give different details in particular about Ananias' call and his words to Saul. What differences do you note (compare 9:10-19 with 22:12-16)?
7. With the words of Ananias to Saul in mind, look up 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8. How could Paul call himself an apostle, which is generally reserved for those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' earthly ministry (see Acts 1:21-22)?
8. Finally, Paul mentioned the vision that happened about 3 years after his conversion. How does this fit in with his activity and journeys leading up to this speech?

Acts 22:22 – 23:11

9. Paul's speech did not seem to change the minds of those in the crowd. So the tribune sought to torture the truth out of Paul. What stood in the way of Paul's torture? Why might Paul have waited to mention this fact?

10. The next day, the tribune brought Paul before the Jewish Council. Notice how Paul responded when Ananias had him struck. Why did Paul say that God would strike him?

16. What happened to prevent the Jews from completing their plan? How did Claudius Lysias thwart them?

11. Look up Luke 6:27-31. Did Paul demonstrate Jesus' instruction here?

17. Was all of this by chance or by design (look at 23:11 again!)?

12. What caused Paul's change in attitude in verse 5? Should a person's role determine how they are treated?

Acts 24:1 – 21

18. When Paul stood before Felix, Tertullus spoke the charges of the Jewish Council against him. What were those charges? Do they seem to be deserving of death? (And were they true?)

13. How did Paul turn attention away from himself? Was that wise or devious (see Matthew 10:16)?

19. What was Paul's response to each of their charges?

14. Even as Paul's life was spared (for the moment, at least), the Lord had a message for him. How might this message have given him hope? Fear?

20. Look up 1 Peter 3:13-17. How did Paul's appearance and behavior before Felix (as well as before the other rulers) demonstrate what Peter would later write about persecution?

Acts 23:12 – 35

15. "The Jews" (perhaps those mentioned in 21:27) made an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Why is this not a good idea (look at James 4:15-16; Numbers 22:29-31)?

21. Once again, Paul made reference to the resurrection (in which the Sadducees did not believe). Look at the following passages and sum up the support among Jews for the resurrection of the dead: Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; John 11:24.

Acts 24:22 – 25:12

22. Felix simply ended the trial without a verdict. Instead, he kept Paul in prison for two years. What were two reasons Luke hints at that he might have done this?

23. Who else had been imprisoned unjustly for 2 years (Genesis 41:1)? What similarities can you see between the two men/situations?

24. Finally, Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus. How long did it take for the Chief Priests to try again? If they were so intent, why might they have been quiet those two intervening years?

25. What did Paul and/or the Jews gain from the hearing before Festus?

Acts 25:13 – 27

26. Now Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice arrived and Festus wanted to bring Paul before them and other nobles. Since the governor's tribunal had the same authority as the emperor himself, what purpose would such a meeting have? What reasons does Festus give?

27. Bear in mind that Agrippa, before whom Paul defended himself, was a part of a dynasty of rulers in the region. What significant role did each of the following relations of Agrippa and Bernice play?

a. Herod the Great, their great grandfather (Matthew 2:13-16).

b. Herod Antipas, their great uncle (Matthew 14:3-12).

c. Herod Agrippa, their father (Acts 12:1-3 and 12:20-23).

d. How might their family history have prepared them to listen to Paul?

Acts 26:1-23

28. As Paul began his defense, he indicated that his history was well known to the Jews. Why would that have been the case (look again at questions 3&4 from this session)?

29. For the first time, Paul indicated one of his tactics against followers of "The Way" prior to his own conversion. What was it (see verse 11)? What commandment does this seem to ignore/break?

30. What other times have Jews showed the same level of regard for the commandments (see Acts 23:12-15; Acts 6:11; Matthew 23:59-60)?

Acts 26:24 – 32

31. What was Festus' response to Paul's defense?

32. Does it seem that Paul expected more of Agrippa than of Festus or Felix? Why might this have been?

33. What was Agrippa's personal verdict in response to Paul's defense?

34. Paul had been imprisoned now for more than 2 years. He could no longer move freely about and visit the believers and churches he had met on his journeys. Does that mean that his work for God was halted (see 2 Timothy 2:9)?