



CAPITOL COMMISSION®

Paul's Witness to His People

JUNE 16-18, 2021

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Acts 28:17-23 *And it happened that after three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he began saying to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18) And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death. 19) But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation. 20) For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel." 21) And they said to him, "We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brothers come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. 22) But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere." 23) And when they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly bearing witness about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.*

(2021 Legacy Standard Bible)

"HE [LUKE] MENTIONS NOT ONLY ONE EMPEROR, HE MENTIONS THREE OF THEM. HE EVEN ALLUDES TO A FOURTH—NERO, THE EMPEROR WHOM THE APOSTLE PAUL APPEALED TO WHEN BEING TRIED BY FESTUS ... IN ALMOST EVERY CITY PAUL VISITED, LUKE MENTIONS THE PERSON WHO WAS THE MAGISTRATE IN CHARGE. WHAT IS MORE SIGNIFICANT, NOT ONLY DOES HE ALLUDE TO THEM BY NAME ... HE EVEN GETS THEIR TITLES RIGHT IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THESE VARIED FROM PLACE TO PLACE AND CHANGED FROM TIME TO TIME."

JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

Why does Paul call for "*the leading men of the Jews*?" Does Paul consider himself a loyal Jew? How was he betrayed by his own people? What forced Paul to appeal to Nero? Is Paul pursuing a case against those who tried to kill him? What did every Jew understand as "*the hope of Israel*?" Why did these Jews want to understand Paul's thoughts? Is this the same message that Paul has presented in every capital city he has evangelized?

FOCUS ON FUTURE SATELLITE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 23-25: ACTS 28:19-32 *THE RELIGIOUS REJECT AND THE HEATHEN HEAR*
- SEPTEMBER 17: LIFT-DELTAVILLE *THE LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT*

Though beset by a host of trials, one after another, often threatening Paul's life, God continually protected His faithful servant as he was a witness in the capital of Israel and as he suffered a severe storm on his way to the capital of the world empire, Rome. Not only is there evidence of faith in Julius the centurion who was responsible to take Paul to Rome, but according to tradition Paul continued to start churches even while he was a prisoner on the way to the imperial capital—on the island of Malta, with Publius the "*leading man*" becoming their first pastor, in Syracuse the capital of Sicily while there on a three-day stop, and even in Rhegium, a

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 8:30AM – BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – 106 CARTER ST & NOON – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.

THURSDAY @ 8:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – RICHMOND – SHONEY'S, 9963 HULL STREET ROAD (LOCATED AT HULL & COURTHOUSE)

FRIDAY @ 7:30 AM – BIBLE STUDY – SUFFOLK – VILLAGE INN, 6116 COLLEGE DRIVE, NEAR HAMPTON ROADS CROSSING

Virginia

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provincial capital of the southernmost province of Italy. Paul was then refreshed by the believers in Puteoli, the grain port of Italy and the primary port of Rome, as he was able to stay with them seven days before his Triumphal Entry into the imperial capital of the world with a three stage parade hosted by the local believers.

“ROME RECEIVED HIM BOUND, COMING UP FROM THE SEA, SAVED FROM SHIPWRECK—AND WAS SAVED FROM SHIPWRECK OF ERROR. LIKE AN EMPEROR WHO HAS FOUGHT A NAVAL BATTLE AND OVERCOME, HE ENTERED INTO THAT MOST IMPERIAL CITY. HE WAS NEARER NOW TO HIS CROWN. ROME RECEIVED HIM BOUND, AND SAW HIM CROWNED AND PROCLAIMED CONQUEROR.”

CHRYSOSTOM

I. PAUL'S INNOCENCE

ACTS 28:17-18

Paul only rejoices with the believers in Rome three days before he calls together the Jewish leaders. He expects the worst—they have already received false accusations about him from the leaders in Israel who had lied against him before their own Governors Felix and Festus and done everything possible to kill him. So Paul begins by declaring his innocence. He states that he was betrayed to the Roman authorities though he “*had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers.*” Upon investigation, Paul told them, the Romans knew he should be released.

“THE JEWS HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM ROME APPROXIMATELY TEN YEARS EARLIER (A.D. 50) AND ONLY BEGAN RETURNING ABOUT A.D. 54. THEIR LACK OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE MOTHER COUNTRY AND GENERAL FUZZINESS REGARDING CHRISTIANITY CAN BE ACCOUNTED FOR, TO SOME EXTENT, BY THEIR OWN INSECURITY IN THE CITY OF ROME.” MAX ANDERS

II. PAUL'S INTEGRITY

ACTS 28:19-20

Paul had done absolutely nothing to provoke the Jews and had even brought a gift from the Gentiles to his nation. Yet the Jewish leaders with perjury had objected against his release sufficiently that Festus, in a complete denial of justice, had continually threatened a re-trial in Jerusalem knowing that Paul would likely be lynched and killed on the way there. But Paul, ignoring all these crimes against him, only mentions that he “*was forced to appeal to Caesar*” while, with forgiveness, making it clear that he was in no way pursuing a case against his own people. Then Paul reveals that it was his loyalty to God as a Jew that had ignited their objections when he said “*I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.*” This word also ignited the curiosity of these Jews in Rome.

“PAUL TOOK ALL THAT WHICH HE SPAKE OF CHRIST OUT OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. FOR TRUE RELIGION DIFFERETH FROM ALL FEIGNED RELIGIONS, BECAUSE THE WORD OF GOD ALONE IS THE RULE THEREOF.” CALVIN

III. PAUL'S ILLUMINATION

ACTS 28:21-23

The response to Paul's courageous appeal was much better than he had anticipated. They informed him that they had neither heard nor received anything from the Jews in Israel regarding Paul. But now he had made them curious to know everything. Wisely, Paul arranges a day to meet with them again. Word got out and many more Jews come to hear his explanation. Of course, he would have begun with Moses in Genesis 3:15 and shown how the prophecies proved Jesus as Messiah including Psalm 2:6 and especially Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. The exchange was so thorough that they spent the entire day learning from Paul as he carefully explained the entire Hebrew Scriptures and answered all their questions. Jesus was that perfect sacrificial lamb pictured in the Passover whose atonement for their sin provided the only means of their escape. Would they repent and receive “*the hope of Israel*”?

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you willing to be bold in your witness for Christ strategically, not only to those around you but even above you?
- 2) Do you love even your enemies as Christ commanded and with forgiveness pray for and seek their salvation?
- 3) Have you received Jesus Christ as your Passover Lamb who gave His life to pay for your sin and give you eternal life?