

PAUL IS A PRISONER – BUT GOD’S WORD IS FREE!

Acts 21:31-33 & 22:30 & 23:23-24 & 24:1-27 & 25:2-11 & 27:1 & 28:14-30

21:31 The people were trying to kill Paul in Jerusalem. 32 So the Roman commander came running – 33 and the commander arrested Paul. 22:30 The Jews were accusing Paul. 23:23-24 So the commander sent Paul to the Roman Governor in Caesarea [a Roman city over 100 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem]. 24:1 The Jewish High Priest and a lawyer also went to Caesarea. 2 The lawyer said to the Governor, 5 “Paul makes trouble everywhere in the world.” 13 Paul answered, “That is not true. The Jews cannot prove it – I did not make trouble.”

27 But the Governor kept Paul in prison for 2 years. Then there was a new governor. 25:2 The High Priests accused Paul again. 8 Then Paul answered, “I have done nothing bad – not against the Jewish law – not against God’s temple – not against the Roman Emperor Caesar. 11 So, Governor, you cannot hand me over to the Jewish court.

Paul said, “I appeal to Emperor Caesar – I want to go to Caesar’s court in Rome.” 12 The Governor said, “To Caesar you will go.” 27:1-2 So Paul and other prisoners got on a ship. 28:14 [Finally, after a very bad storm and a shipwreck] Paul got to Rome.

28:16 In Rome, Paul could live in a [rented] house – but a soldier guarded Paul. 17 Three days later, Paul invited the Jewish leaders to his house. 23 From morning to evening Paul talked about God’s kingdom. Paul talked about Jesus. He said: The Old Testament says that Jesus is the Messiah.

24 Some Jewish leaders believed in Jesus. Some Jewish leaders did not believe in Jesus. 25 The Jewish leaders argued with each other.

Paul said to the Jewish leaders:

26 ‘You will listen and listen [to God’s Word], but you will never understand.

You will look and look [for God], but you will never see.

27 Your hearts are hard.

You hear only a little.

You have closed your eyes.

So you don’t see – you don’t hear – you don’t understand.

So you do not repent – and God does not save you.’

28 “So I want you Jewish leaders to know this: God has sent his salvation to the Gentiles – God will save Gentiles. And the Gentiles will listen!”

30 For two years Paul lived in his rented house. He welcomed everyone who came to his house. Boldly and freely he told about God’s kingdom – and he taught about Jesus.

THE END of Acts

ABOUT 3 YEARS LATER, PAUL WRITES ...

2 Timothy 4: 6-8

6 “It is time for me to die – I will leave this earth and go to heaven. 7 I fought hard for Jesus. I finished the race. I believed God’s Word – I kept my faith in Jesus.

8 So, on the Day of Judgment, God will give me the Crown of Goodness – but not only to me. The Crown of Goodness is for everyone – it is for all people who believe in Jesus – for all people who eagerly wait for Jesus to come back to earth.”

CONTENT QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who arrested Paul? (chapter 21 verse 33 – Acts 21:31)
- Where did the Roman commander send Paul? (chapter 23 verses 23-24)
- Who accused Paul? (chapter 24 verses 1-5)
- Did Paul do anything bad? (chapter 24 verse 13 & chapter 25 verse 8)
- Who did Paul appeal to? Where did Paul want to go? (verse 11)
- Where did Paul live in Rome? (chapter 28 verse 16) Was Paul free?
- What could Paul do? (verse 17) Who did Paul invite to his house?
- What did Paul talk about with the Jewish leaders? (verse 23)
- Did all the Jewish leaders believe in Jesus? (verse 24)
- What did Paul say about the Jewish leaders? (verses 26-27)

What big opportunity did the Jewish leaders lose?

Why is it important to listen carefully to God's Word?

- So what will God do? (verse 28)
- What will the Gentiles do? (verse 28)

What big opportunity do Gentiles have now?

- What did Paul do for 2 years? (verse 30)

Was Paul free? (chapter 28 verse 16)

Was the message about Jesus free? (chapter 28 verse 30)

THINK ABOUT THIS:

- The story about Paul ends here – the Bible doesn't tell us what happened to Paul.
But, what in this story is more important than Paul?
- What part of the story is not ending?
What is just beginning?
Jesus' story is beginning to spread to the whole world!
God's Word is free! God's Word can go anywhere!
- So, who is God focusing on now?
Now, God is focusing on Gentiles – God loves Gentiles too.
So now, Gentiles everywhere can become members of God's family.
God's arms are wide open to everyone!