

Acts 24 Paul's Third Defense (27 verses)

1) Paul's third defense takes place 5 Days after his arrest in Jerusalem.

v. 1 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. 2 When Paul was called in, **Tertullus presented his case** before Felix:

2) Charge of "Temple Desecration" was a capital offense.

v. 5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, **stirring up riots among the Jews** all over the world. **He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect** 6 and even **tried to desecrate the temple**; so we seized him. (*"and would have judged him according to our law.* 7 *But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands."* Appears in some manuscripts.) 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

3) Paul responds graciously before his accusers and his judge.

v. 10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "**I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense.** 11 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. 13 And **they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.**

4) Paul was still an observant Jew, but the issue is the Resurrection of Jesus.

v. 14 However, I admit that **I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect.** I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, 16 and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that **there will be a resurrection** of both the righteous and the wicked. 17 "After an absence of several years, **I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings.** 18 **I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts** doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. 19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. 20 Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— 21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: **'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'**" 22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."

5) Paul shares on "the Way" with Felix and Drusilla.

v. 24 Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid

and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."

Note: Drusilla was a daughter of Herod Agrippa and the sister of Agrippa II and Bernice.

6) Paul was kept in custody in Caesarea for 2 full years.

v. 26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him. 27 When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

Acts 25 Paul's forth defense and his appeal to Caesar (27 verses)

1) Another plot to kill Paul.

v. 1 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, 2 where the chief priests and the Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. 3 They requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. 4 Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. 5 Let some of your leaders come with me, and if the man has done anything wrong, they can press charges against him there."

2) Paul's fourth defense was before Festus.

v. 6 After spending eight or ten days with them, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. 7 When Paul came in, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They brought many serious charges against him, but they could not prove them. 8 Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar."

3) Paul's appeal to Caesar in Acts 25:11 guaranteed his trip to Rome.

v. 9 Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?" 10 Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. 11 If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!" 12 After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

4) King Agrippa II and his sister Bernice arrived.

v. 13 A few days later **King Agrippa and Bernice** arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.

Note: They were brother and sister. She was the mistress of two Roman emperors, Vespasian and Titus, and she almost became Empress.

5) Festus discussed Paul's case with King Agrippa.

v. 14. Since they were spending many days there, **Festus discussed Paul's case with the king.** 15 When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned. 16 "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over anyone before they have faced their accusers and have had an opportunity to defend themselves against the charges. 17 When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. 18 When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. 19 Instead, **they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive.** 20 I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. 21 But when **Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision**, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar."

6) Agrippa took an interest in the case and wished to hear from Paul.

v. 22 **Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."** He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him." 23 The next day **Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high-ranking military officers and the prominent men of the city.** At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. 24 Festus said: **"King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man!** The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 **I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome.** 26 But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write.

Acts 26 Paul makes his 5th defense before King Agrippa II. (32 verses)

1) The King invited Paul to speak for himself.

v. 1 Then **Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."** So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: 2 "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 and especially so because **you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies.** Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

2) The Resurrection of Jesus should not be controversial to the Jews.

v. 4 "The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. 5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that **I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee.** 6 And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. 7 This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. 8 **Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?**

3) He then explained his previous opposition to the followers of Jesus.

v. 9 **"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.** 10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 **Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished,** and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

4) Paul recounts his Damascus Road experience with Jesus.

v. 12 "On one of these journeys **I was going to Damascus** with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 **About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road,** I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. 14 We all fell to the ground, and **I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'** 15 **"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,'** the Lord replied. 16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. 17 **I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them** 18 **to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'**

5) Paul explained that the present issue involved preaching to the Gentiles.

v. 19 "So then, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.** 20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and **then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God** and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. 21 **That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.**

6) Festus was so stirred up that he thought Paul was insane.

v. 22 But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — 23 **that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would**

bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles." 24 At this point **Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."** 25 "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. **"What I am saying is true and reasonable."**

7) King Agrippa II was moved by Paul's testimony, but not enough to get saved.

v. 26 The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. 27 **King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."** 28 **Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"** 29 Paul replied, **"Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."**

8) Agrippa was convinced of Paul's innocence.

v. 30 The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. 31 After they left the room, **they began saying to one another, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."** 32 **Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."**

Acts 27 Luke carefully recorded an ancient shipwreck. (44 verses)

1) Luke is with Paul for this eye witness account.

v. 1 When it was decided that **we would sail for Italy**, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.

2 **We boarded a ship** from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. (Note: v. 3 - 8 list other ports they passed)

2) Paul prophetically warns about the pending calamity.

v. 9 Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. So **Paul warned them**, 10 **"Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also."** 11 But the centurion, **instead of listening to what Paul said**, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, **the majority decided that we should sail on**, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest. 13 When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and **sailed along the shore of Crete.**

3) Some travel details concerning the storm and pending shipwreck.

v. 14 Before very long, **a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island.** 15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along...18 We took such a violent battering from

the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, **we finally gave up all hope of being saved.**

4) God sent an angel to Paul with a message of hope.

v. 21 After they had gone a long time without food, **Paul stood up before them** and said: "**Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete;** then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because **not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.** 23 **Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me** 24 **and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'** 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

5) Initially, they seemed to ignore Paul once again.

v. 26 **Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."** 27 On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28 They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. 29 Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. 30 **In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow.**

6) Paul qualified his prophecy, then instructed the Centurion and he listened.

v. 31 Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "**Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."** 32 **So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.** 33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. 34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. **Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head."** 35 After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36 They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 Altogether there were **276 of us** on board.

7) They finally decided to run the ship aground.

v. 38 When they had eaten as much as they wanted, **they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.** 39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where **they decided to run the ship aground if they could.** 40 Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.

8) The actual cause of the ship's destruction is explained.

v. 41 But **the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground**. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and **the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf**. 42 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. 43 But **the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life** and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44 The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. **In this way everyone reached land safely.**

Acts 28 The conclusion to Acts (31 verses)

1) They landed on Malta with Luke still along to record the details.

v. 1 Once safely on shore, **we** found out that the island was called **Malta**. 2 **The islanders showed us unusual kindness**. They built a fire and welcomed **us** all because it was raining and cold.

2) There was a miraculous deliverance from a poisonous snake.

v. 3 **Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand**. 4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." 5 But **Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects**. 6 **The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.**

Mark 16:15 He (*Jesus*) said to them,...17 **And these signs will accompany those who believe**: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will **pick up snakes with their hands**; and when they drink **deadly poison**, it will not hurt them at all; they will **place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.**"

3) A notable healing took place when Paul prayed.

v. 7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. 8 **His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him**. 9 When this had happened, **the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured**. 10 They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

4) After three months the continued on to Rome in another ship.

v. 11 **After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island**—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12

We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13 From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14 There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. **And so we came to Rome.** 15 The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. 16 **When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.**

5) Paul sent for the local Jewish leaders to make his 6th defense.

v. 17 **Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders.** When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 **They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death.** 19 The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. 20 For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." 21 They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect." 23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. **He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.**

6) As usual, some were convinced and some rejected the truth about Jesus.

v. 24 **Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.** 25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: **"The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: 26 "'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." 27 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'** 28 "Therefore I want you to know that **God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"** (Note: v. 29 *"And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves."* Appears in some manuscripts.)

7) Unhindered and in chains for 5 years, Paul wrote the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

v. 30 **For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house** and welcomed all who came to see him. 31 **He proclaimed the kingdom of God** and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and **without hindrance!**