



PAUL'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

Date: 09.07.25 | Paul Defends the Gospel in Caesarea Part 2 - Governor Felix
Scripture: Acts 24

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- God values all people and calls Christians to live on mission for the sake of reaching the lost with the gospel.
- God continues to work in the world, and people are invited to join Him in His work.
- We are to be involved in reaching the nations through prayer, giving resources, acting with love, and sharing the gospel.
- The church is a fellowship of believers, and we are called to meet together regularly.
- The church is not a place or a building, but rather a community of people who belong to the family of God.

HIGH SCHOOL:

- God values all people---born and unborn, young and old, male and female, all ethnicities, those of opposing faiths---and calls Christians to live on mission for the sake of reaching the lost through prayer, giving resources, acting with love, and sharing the gospel.
- God continues to work in the world, and as we join Him in His work, He uses people to accomplish His eternal purposes.
- We demonstrate honor for God when we respect the earthly authorities God has placed in our lives.
- The church is a community of believers called to gather regularly to study Scripture, pray, worship, serve, encourage one another, and proclaim the gospel to the world.
- The church is called to train and equip its members for works of ministry.



MEMORY VERSE

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. - Romans 1:16a

16 F l a n a o t g, f i i t p o G f s t e w b, - use this first letter memorization tool that aids in remembering text by using the first letter of each word as a cue.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

“Two Truths and a Lie: Trial Edition”

- How to Play: Each student shares 2 true things about themselves and 1 false thing. Others “put them on trial” and must decide which is the lie.
- Debrief: Say, “In Acts 24, Paul had to defend the truth about himself and the gospel. Others were trying to twist the truth. Let’s see how he responded.”

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Important Terms to Know for This Lesson:

Pharisee – The Pharisees were a group of Jewish religious leaders who believed in obeying God’s law very carefully. They also believed in angels, spirits, and that one day God would raise the dead to life again. Paul had been a Pharisee before he followed Jesus ([Acts 23:6-8](#)).

Sadducee – The Sadducees were another group of Jewish leaders. They were powerful and often worked closely with the priests and the temple. Unlike the Pharisees, they did not believe in angels, spirits, or the resurrection of the dead. This made them strongly opposed to Paul’s message about Jesus rising from the dead ([Acts 23:8](#)).

Sanhedrin (or council) – The Sanhedrin was the Jewish ruling council in Jerusalem. It was made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees, along with the high priest. They made decisions about religious and legal matters for the Jewish people. Paul was brought before the Sanhedrin to explain why the Jews were accusing him ([Acts 22:30-23:1](#)).

High Priest – The leader of the Jewish priests who served in the temple. He was considered the most important religious authority in Israel. In this story, the high priest was Ananias, who ordered Paul to be struck ([Acts 23:2](#)).

Tribune – A Roman military officer in charge of about 1,000 soldiers. In this story, the tribune was Claudius Lysias, the commander who kept rescuing Paul from danger and later sent him safely to Governor Felix ([Acts 22:24; 23:10, 23](#)).

After five days, the high priest Ananias traveled to Caesarea with some elders and a spokesman named Tertullus to present their case against Paul ([Acts 24:1](#)). Tertullus was likely a professional lawyer, perhaps even a Gentile, hired to present their accusations in the strongest possible light before the Roman governor. He began with exaggerated flattery, praising Felix for bringing peace and reforms to the province ([24:2–3](#)). In truth, civil unrest

had only grown worse under Felix, who was hated by the Jews and notorious for taking bribes and using violence. Still, Tertullus hoped such words would win Felix's favor.

Tertullus then presented three carefully crafted charges (24:4–6). First, he claimed that Paul was a public nuisance who stirred up riots among Jews all over the Roman world. Because Rome did not tolerate disorder, this accusation painted Paul as a threat to peace. Second, he accused Paul of being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, referring to Christians as if they were a suspicious and possibly subversive movement. Since Rome recognized Judaism as a legal religion but had not yet officially distinguished Christianity from Judaism, this description was intentionally vague, designed to raise suspicion in Felix's mind. Third, he accused Paul of profaning the temple, which would have been the most serious charge of all. The Sadducees, who worked closely with the Romans, were responsible for keeping order in the temple, and any disturbance there could spark Roman intervention. Though this charge was false, it was cleverly chosen to alarm Felix. After Tertullus finished, the other Jews present joined in, adding their voices to support the accusations (24:9).

When Felix motioned for Paul to reply, Paul began his defense respectfully. He noted that Felix had been the judge over the nation for many years. Unlike Tertullus's flowery words, Paul's opening was honest and straightforward (24:10). He explained that it had been only twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem to worship, not nearly enough time to organize riots or rebellions (24:11). He denied causing unrest in the temple, the synagogues, or the city (24:12). Furthermore, his accusers could not prove the charges they were making (24:13).

Paul then gave his testimony of faith. He explained that he worshiped the God of his ancestors, believing everything written in the Law and the Prophets, but that he followed "the Way," which his opponents called a sect (24:14). His true "crime" was that he shared the same hope of resurrection as many of his accusers—that both the righteous and the wicked would be raised (24:15). Because of this hope, Paul said, he always sought to keep a clear conscience before both God and man (24:16).

He went on to explain why he had been in Jerusalem. He had come to bring gifts for the poor and to present offerings at the temple (24:17). He was ritually purified and worshiping when some Jews from Asia started the riot against him (24:18; cf. 21:27–36). Yet these Jews were not even present in court to bring their charges, violating the Roman requirement for accusers to appear face to face with the accused (24:19). The only thing Paul admitted to was proclaiming the resurrection of the dead, which was a theological disagreement among Jews, not a political crime (24:20–21).

Felix, who already had some knowledge about "the Way," decided to postpone a verdict until Claudius Lysias, the Roman commander who had arrested Paul, could come down from Jerusalem (24:22). In the meantime, he ordered Paul to be kept in custody, but not in chains. Paul was given some liberty, and his friends were allowed to visit and take care of him (24:23).

Some days later, Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish and the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 24:24). Felix may have hoped Drusilla's background would give her

more insight into Paul's case. Together, they listened to Paul speak about faith in Christ Jesus. Paul boldly reasoned with them about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment. These topics struck at the heart of Felix's personal corruption and immorality. Felix was alarmed and told Paul, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity, I will summon you" (24:25). Though troubled, Felix was not interested in repentance. Instead, he hoped that Paul would offer him a bribe for his release, so he often sent for Paul and talked with him (24:26).

For two whole years, Paul remained in custody. Although Felix seemed to recognize his innocence, he was unwilling to release him, instead wanting to curry favor with the Jewish leaders. In AD 60, Felix was removed from office for mishandling a violent conflict between Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea, and Porcius Festus succeeded him as governor. But before leaving, Felix, wishing to please the Jews, left Paul in prison (24:27).

Throughout his imprisonment, Paul never wavered in his testimony about Christ and the resurrection. Though his circumstances seemed long, drawn out, and hopeless, Paul continued to trust God's plan and used every opportunity—even conversations with corrupt rulers—to proclaim the gospel.

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY

Remind your group that we are studying the New Testament. Throughout the book of Acts, Paul traveled on missionary journeys, sharing the Gospel and helping to gather groups of new believers into the first churches.



TELL THE STORY - Acts 24

Last week, we learned that Paul was put on trial before the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. The Pharisees and Sadducees argued so fiercely about what Paul said that the Roman commander had to step in and protect him. That night, the Lord encouraged Paul, telling him that just as he had shared the gospel about Jesus in Jerusalem, he would one day share it in Rome. But the very next morning, a group of Jews secretly plotted to kill Paul. God used Paul's nephew to warn the commander, who quickly sent Paul safely to Caesarea under guard. Today, in [Acts 24](#), we'll see Paul stand before the Roman governor, Felix, as the Jewish leaders bring their charges against him—and we'll see how Paul used this trial as another chance to share about Jesus.

Paul had narrowly escaped death in Jerusalem. The Jews planned to kill Paul, but the Roman soldiers took him to Caesarea, where he would be safe. Paul was still a prisoner. The Roman leaders wanted to figure out why the Jews hated Paul so much. Paul met with the rulers to try to explain what was happening.

First, Paul met with Felix, the governor. Felix ordered the Roman guard to watch Paul, but also to give him some freedom by allowing Paul's friends to come and serve him. A few days later, Felix and his wife went for a meeting with Paul. Paul talked about faith in Jesus. He spoke about righteousness and self-control, and explained that one day God would judge the world. Felix was afraid of what Paul said. He sent Paul away, but they met with each other many times over the next two years. When a new governor came into power, Felix did not release Paul from prison.

Throughout the Bible, we read about God's plan to save people from their sins. Paul knew the importance of sharing the good news with the world. He wanted everyone to understand what Jesus had done, and he was willing to do whatever it took so that people could hear the message.

While Paul was in prison, God gave Paul many opportunities to share the gospel with people in positions of power. Paul took advantage of those opportunities. Paul didn't waste his time complaining or moping about. Instead, he trusted God and shared the good news with all who would listen.



RETELL THE STORY

Have students re-tell the story as best they can.



SHARE THE GOSPEL

God chose Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. Paul met with people repeatedly to share the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Because Jesus has the power to save people from sin, Paul was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

How did Felix respond to Paul telling him God would judge the world? (*Acts 24:24-25*)

Felix became afraid. Like all people, Felix was a sinner and deserved judgment for his sin. He had heard about “the Way” or the good news of Jesus, but had not trusted in Jesus. Paul was bold and used the opportunity to share how Felix could be saved from his sin.

Felix was afraid when he heard God was going to judge the world. Do we need to fear God’s judgment if we are in Christ? There is no condemnation or punishment for those who are in Christ. Jesus took the punishment for our sins on Himself when He died on the cross. We are set free from the law of sin and death.

Paul shared the gospel with his enemies and even those in authority over him. Would this be difficult for you? Why? Paul’s boldness and love for others came from the Holy Spirit within him. The grace of God had transformed Paul, enabling him to see that anyone, even our enemies, can be saved. Paul was once an enemy of the church, but now risked his life for Jesus.

Paul met with Felix over and over again and shared the gospel. Should we ever give up sharing Jesus with others? Why? We continue to share the good news because it is the only way for people to be saved. We cannot make people believe, but we can trust God to work in people’s hearts as they hear the truth about Jesus.

What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?

Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me live on mission?

PRAYER PROMPTS

Thank You, Lord, that through Jesus, people can have their sins forgiven and live with You forever. Help us make the most of every opportunity to share the good news with others so that they can be saved.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - God is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD ➡

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD ➡➡

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?