

ONE STORY | ONE SAVIOR - UNIT 7 | LESSON 18

Letters – The Promise Explained Through the KING’S Church

God is a PROMISE Completing God




JESUS as the 1) **PROMISED KING** has 2) **RESCUED** His people through His Perfect Law Keeping Life and Sacrificial, Substitutionary Death on the Cross, whereby 3) **DEFEATING** the enemy of sin and death, and is 4) **RESTORING** them to the PLACE OF REST where Heaven and Earth are rejoined and God reigns and abides 5) so that His people shall be with Him forever for their **JOY**.

Paul’s Journey to Rome

“He Sent For Paul And Heard Him Speak About
Faith In Christ Jesus” (24:24)

Acts 21-28

Acts 24:²⁴ After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and **he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.**

	THE HEAD - To Know Jesus well enough to be able to share Him with others. Q – Do you know the gospel and can you share the gospel?
	THE HEART - To Choose to know Jesus through the study of the biblical text. Q – Where can you go to learn more of Jesus?
	THE HAND - To Pray that you will hold fast to Christ when facing persecution. Q – What kind of “things” might you do now to strength yourself for the day of conflict?

EMPHASIS

The **EMPHASIS** of this lesson is . . .

The unbelieving hate Jesus enough to want those who love Him to die. The gospel sometimes causes His people to suffer. Throughout our structure we will see how those who rejected Jesus wanted Paul dead!

In these chapters, Paul gave “six” speeches defending himself before religious and civil authorities in Jerusalem and Caesarea, culminating in his masterful defense before Agrippa.

LITERARY CONTEXT

The very thing James was trying to answer and avoid (21:19-26) happened (21:27-31a)!

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

“Introduction and Timeline

This portrayal of Paul is part of a theme in Acts emphasizing the continuity between Jesus Christ and His Apostles who followed Him. **In these chapters, Paul gave five speeches defending himself before religious and civil authorities in Jerusalem and Caesarea, culminating in his masterful defense before Agrippa (see Acts 22:1–21; 23:1–10; 24:10–21; 25:8–11; 26:1–29).** Paul used these opportunities not only to defend himself against unjust charges but also to **bear testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.** These speeches represent fulfillments of the Lord’s prophecy that Paul would testify before kings and rulers (see Acts 9:15). In addition, **Paul’s journey to Rome helped fulfill Jesus’s commission** to the Apostles to take the gospel “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).”¹

- “The evidence from the ‘pastoral letters’ suggests that the outcome of Paul’s trial before Nero in 62AD was positive, and Paul was acquitted at that time (see 2 Timothy 4:16, where Paul refers to his ‘first’ trial). This is hardly surprising as over two years earlier, in **Caesarea** in 59AD, the Roman governor Festus and King Herod Agrippa II had agreed that “There is no reason why this man should die or be put in jail” (Acts 26:31). Indeed, Agrippa had said to Festus, “We could let this man go free, but he has asked Caesar to hear his case” (Acts 26:32).
- After his acquittal in 62AD, Paul left **Rome** and probably embarked on a ‘fourth missionary journey’

“The apostle is a prisoner in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30). Although Paul is a prisoner, he is allowed to live by himself guarded only by a Roman soldier (Acts 28:16). Shortly after his arrival in the city he speaks with Jewish religious leaders regarding his arrest (Acts 28:17 - 29). During his imprisonment He is given the privilege of being able to receive visitors and continue to preach the Gospel (Acts 28:17 - 31).”²

Acts “29” – We do not have any record of what happens after Acts 28 except the Pastoral Letters of Timothy and Titus.

STRUCTURE

In these chapters (Acts 21-28), Paul gave five [Maybe Six if we count his “speech” on the boat {Acts 27}] speeches defending himself before religious and civil authorities in Jerusalem and Caesarea, culminating in his masterful defense before Agrippa.

Look for the common themes throughout Paul’s defense / testimony. What are they?

FIRST SPEECH

1. Acts 21:37-22:29. Paul testified to Jews at the “castle” (a military compound, probably the Antonia Fortress).

Paul's suffering (21:31-33; 22:24)

- Acts 22:14 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 15 'For **you will be a witness for Him** to all men **of what you have seen and heard.**

SECOND SPEECH

2. Acts 22:30-23:6, 11–14. Paul testified to Jewish leaders who were members of the Sanhedrin (22:30).

Paul's suffering (23:12-15; 24:10)

- Acts 23:6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; **I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!**"

THIRD SPEECH

3. Acts 23:23-24:1–6, 9–16, CHAP. 24–25. Paul testified to the High Priest Ananias (24:1), other Jewish elders, and the Roman governor Felix (23:24, 26; 24:21).

Paul's suffering (24:4, 5; 25:3)

- Acts 24:14 "But this I admit to you, that **according to the Way** which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, **believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets [This is pretty cool – Notice also 26:22, 23; 28:23];** 15 **having a hope in God**, which these men cherish themselves, that **there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.**
- ²⁴ After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and **he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.**

[2 Years pass {24:27}]

FOURTH SPEECH

4. Acts 25:13-26:30 Paul testified to Festus (25:13) and King Agrippa (26:1).

Paul's suffering (25:24)

- Acts 25:¹⁹ Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about **a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive.**
- Acts 26:6 "And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; 7 the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.

FIFTH SPEECH [?]

5. Acts 27:1-28:10 – Paul Sails for Rome

- Acts 27:²⁵ So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.

SIXTH SPEECH

6. Acts 28:23–31 Paul testified in Rome before the local leaders of the Jews (28:17).

- Acts 28:20 "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.**"
- Acts 28:23 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 testifying 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. ²⁴ Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.
- ³¹ **proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ** with all boldness and without hindrance.

[2 years pass {28:30}]

QUESTION? – What book did Paul use to persuade his audience concerning Jesus?

Answer - THE 'OLD' TESTAMENT!

Paul used these opportunities not only to defend himself against unjust charges but also **to bear testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ**. These speeches represent fulfillments of the Lord's prophecy that Paul would testify before kings and rulers (see Acts 9:15). In addition, Paul's journey to Rome helped fulfill Jesus's commission to the Apostles to take the gospel "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

JESUS IN THE TEXT

How was the kingdom of God expanding?

Is the message of Jesus found in the Law and in the Prophets?

Is the good news for everyone both Jews and Gentiles?

APPLICATION

1. Begin now to study the Scripture well enough to know who Jesus is and what He has done at the cross.
2. Make time to study the Scripture with others.

3. What are some situations where talking about Jesus is difficult? How do you feel and what can you do?

VISUALS | CRAFTS

1. Get material from Voice of the Martyrs.
2. Get material from Open Door Ministries.
3. Highlight those who suffer for Christ.
4. Use construction paper and make a chain link necklaces and write on them you can't, but God can, and Jesus did. The necklaces remind us of Paul's chains and of those worn by our brothers and sisters in countries where they hurt Christians because of the gospel. You can also staple the links together and around the child's wrists.

MEMORY VERSE

Acts 28:²⁰ For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since **it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.**"

RESOURCES

ENDNOTES

¹ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/new-testament-teacher-manual/the-acts-of-the-apostles/lesson-34-acts-21-28?lang=eng>

² <https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/apostle-paul-fourth-missionary-journey-map.html>