



# The Apostle Paul, Servant of Christ

## Overview Study Guide Unit II, Chapter 8 "Captivity and Death"

by Lorin L Cranford



Boiling Springs, NC  
704 966-6845  
clv@cranfordville.com  
© All rights reserved

### Quick Links to Study

#### [Introduction](#)

#### [8.1.0 Paul's Final Period of Ministry](#)

#### [8.1.1 Arrest in Jerusalem](#)

#### [8.1.1.1 Arrival in Jerusalem](#)

#### [8.1.1.2 Arrest in the Temple](#)

#### [8.1.2 Imprisonment in Caesarea](#)

#### [8.1.3 The Voyage to Rome](#)

#### [8.1.4 House Arrest in Rome](#)

#### [8.1.5 Release and Resumption of Ministry](#)

#### [8.1.6 Subsequent Arrest and Execution](#)

#### [Conclusion](#)

## Chapter 8: Captivity and Death Introduction

Once Paul arrived back in Jerusalem he delivered the relief offering from the Diaspora churches in the northern Mediterranean region from the three missionary journeys. He had strong anticipation of facing trouble in the city, and sure enough troubles came his way. These difficulties would change the direction of his life. His plans for the future would be altered drastically from what he had expressed earlier in Romans 15 and elsewhere. But God remained in control of Paul's life, and sustained him through these turbulent years at the end of his life.

### 8.1.0 Paul's final period of ministry

This phase of Paul's life covers the time of his arrival back in Jerusalem around 57 AD at the end of the third missionary journey to his martyrdom at the hands of Emperor Nero in the mid-sixties. The Acts narrative from chapter twenty-one through twenty-eight provides the greatest description of the first major segment of Jerusalem to Roman house arrest. Depending on how the so-called Captivity Letters of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon are understood as to their setting, they contribute supplementary glimpses into this period of ministry. The Pastoral Epistles of First and Second Timothy, along with Titus, are our only biblical sources of information for what happens to Paul toward the end of the two plus year period of house arrest in Rome. For more details in reconstructing the chronology of this period from about 61 AD to his death a few years later, we must turn to the church fathers for understanding. The challenge here is going to be a wide variety of differing and sometimes contradictory perspectives.

### 8.1.1 Arrest in Jerusalem (AD 57), Acts 21:17-23:22

How Luke narrates this last trip of Paul to Jerusalem is interesting. He begins with a signaling of positive reception of Paul by the Christian leaders in Jerusalem, but also indicates considerable nervousness on their part with Paul's presence in the city because of rumors about his work with non-Jews in the larger Jewish population in Jerusalem (21:17-26). This leads to a decision by Paul that eventually proves disastrous. He gets involved

in a Jewish vow that leads to his arrest (21:27-36). He tries in vain to defend himself (21:37-22:29), and ends up being brought before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:10) where another attempt to defend himself is presented by Luke. A plot by the Jewish leaders to kill Paul (23:12-22) puts his life in jeopardy even though God has assured the apostle of giving testimony in Rome (23:11). This results in Paul being taken in the middle of the night under heavy Roman military escort from the city to the provincial capital at Caesarea (23:23ff).

This narration is a combination of narrative episodes and speech material presented by Luke. The dominating tone is largely negative with a growing sense of danger and huge apprehension for the life of the apostle Paul. Strangely enough, Luke never mentions the major reason for Paul traveling to Jerusalem: to deliver the massive relief offering collected among the Gentiles churches for the Jewish brothers in Jerusalem and Judea. Some isolated hints suggest he was aware of this, but for some unexplained reason he chose not to inject it into his depiction of this trip by Paul to Jerusalem.

What Luke does seem to focus on is the contrasting reception of Paul in this last visit of the apostle to the city. The Christian community now warmly welcomes him, even though somewhat nervous about his presence in the city. On the other hand, the Jewish leadership sees Paul as a great corrupter of Judaism who needs to be executed, and goes about seeking to achieve this goal. When the apostle first left the city for Damascus in the early 30s, he was the hero of the Jewish leaders, and the feared persecutor of Christians. Now on his last visit to the city in the late 50s, less than twenty-years later, the attitudes have completely reversed themselves. The Jewish leaders hate him, while the Christians esteem him as a great servant of God. Paul, the Pharisee, in years gone by, despised the Romans who controlled Jerusalem. Now these very Romans are his source of protection against assassination by the Jewish leaders.

What a huge difference Christ has made in Paul's life! Friends have become enemies, and enemies have become friends. A completely new, and totally different, lifestyle has emerged. Instead of becoming a settled, well to do Pharisaical teacher and leader of Judaism in the city, Paul has lived a rather *bag a von* life style as a Christian missionary. Totally dependent on the generosity of others for food and shelter, he has seldom lived in one place for more than a few months. He has been persecuted and opposed almost every place he traveled. His friendships have been largely with non-Jews, the kind of people he hated as a Pharisee. From a modern materialistic perspective, Christianity has not brought Paul success in life. Just the opposite. It has ruined his life. But spiritually, Christ has brought to this Jewish man, a richness of life and a contentment about life not even imaginable in the Judaism of his childhood and youth. It has pushed him to see beyond the 'tip of his nose' in unselfish service to a sinful world desperately needing a different kind of life. It has lifted his eyes above the intense and destructive racial prejudice that dominated the Jewish people of his day.

This last trip to Jerusalem would be remarkable in its contrastive reception of the apostle. It would dramatically change the direction of his life in the few remaining years before martyrdom in Rome.

#### 8.1.1.1 Paul's Arrival in Jerusalem, Acts 21:17-26

17 Γενομένων δὲ ἡμῶν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀσμένως ἀπεδέξαντο ἡμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοί.

18 Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ εἰσῆγει ὁ Παῦλος σὺν ἡμῖν πρὸς Ἰάκωβον, πάντες τε παρεγένοντο οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. 19 καὶ ἀσπασάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐξηγεῖτο καθ' ἕνα ἕνα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν διὰ τῆς διακονίας αὐτοῦ. 20 Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν εἰπόντες αὐτῷ· θεωρεῖς, ἀδελφέ, πόσαι μυριάδες εἰσὶν ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τῶν πεπιστευκότων καὶ πάντες ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου ὑπάρχουσιν· 21 κατηχήθησαν δὲ περὶ σοῦ ὅτι ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν περιπατεῖν. 22 τί οὖν ἐστίν; πάντως ἀκούσονται ὅτι ἐλήλυθας. 23 τοῦτο οὖν ποίησον ὃ σοι λέγομεν· εἰσὶν ἡμῖν ἄνδρες τέσσαρες εὐχὴν ἔχοντες ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν. 24 τούτους παραλαβὼν ἀγνίσθητι σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ δαπάνησον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἵνα ξυρῆσονται τὴν κεφαλὴν, καὶ γνῶσονται πάντες ὅτι ὡς κατήχηνται περὶ σοῦ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ στοιχεῖς καὶ αὐτὸς φυλάσσων τὸν νόμον. 25 περὶ δὲ τῶν πεπιστευκότων ἔθνῶν ἡμεῖς ἐπεστείλαμεν κρίναντες φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτοὺς τὸ τε εἰδωλόθυτον καὶ αἷμα καὶ πνικτὸν καὶ πορνείαν. 26 Τότε ὁ Παῦλος παραλαβὼν τοὺς ἄνδρας τῇ ἐχομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀγνίσθητι, εἰσῆγει εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἀγνισμοῦ ἕως οὗ προσηνέχθη ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου αὐτῶν ἢ προσφορά.

17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us warmly.

18 The next day Paul went with us to visit James; and all the elders were present. 19 After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 When they heard it, they praised God. Then they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law. 21 They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. 22 What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. 23 So do what we tell you. We have four men who

are under a vow. 24 Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law. 25 But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.” 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.

The first thing Luke stresses is the warm welcome that Paul and his group received when they arrived in Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey. They had been escorted by the brothers from Caesarea to “the house of Mnason of Cyprus” (v. 16, ἄγοντες παρ’ ᾧ ξενισθῶμεν Μνάσωνί τινι Κυπρίῳ).<sup>1</sup> This has some interesting implications since this Christian brother (ἀρχαίῳ μαθητῆ) came from Cyprus as did Barnabas who also had made his home in Jerusalem earlier, and perhaps still lived there. Thus a fellow Cyprian Jewish Christian in Jerusalem was warmly welcoming Paul and this delegation in spite of the early tension between Paul and fellow Cyprian Jewish Christian Barnabas. Perhaps this indirectly signals a reconciliation between Paul and Barnabas after some six or seven years of going their separate ways. Clearly it says something about Mnason who had a large enough home to provide lodging for a group of a dozen or so individuals. Another interesting angle is the possibility that Paul had first met Mnason on the island of Cyprus during the first missionary journey at his home there, and during subsequent trips to and through Jerusalem from that point on was able to utilize Mnason’s additional home in Jerusalem.

What Luke then describes in verse seventeen can be understood as either the initial welcome by those connected to Mnason or as a general statement regarding the response of the entire Christian community over a period of several days as Paul began meetings with the Christian leaders in the city. The use of the participle (Genitive Absolute) construction, Γενομένων δὲ ἡμῶν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, is not the normal way to express an arrival at a place, which is reflected in later copyists’ efforts at modifying it.<sup>2</sup> More likely it refers to the initial welcome

---

<sup>1</sup>“The name Mnason, possibly a Hellenized form of Manasseh (Bruce 1985: 99), may be derived from mnasion a word used in ancient Cyprus for a measure of grain. Sinaiticus replaces Mnason with Jason, a rather common name among Hellenized Jews. Mentioned only in Acts 21:16, Mnason provided lodging for Paul and his gentile companions.

“Mnason was a native of Cyprus like Barnabas (Acts 4:36). Munck (Acts AB, 209) suggests that he may have been among the Cypriots who left Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen and preached the gospel directly to the Greeks at Antioch (Acts 11:19, 20).

“The fact that Mnason is called an ‘early disciple’ has engendered considerable discussion. Rengstorf (TDNT 4:458, n280) considers Mnason a personal disciple of Jesus. Hughes (ISBE 3: 388) suggests that he was one of the 120 in Acts 1:15. Knowling (1912: 448) proposes that he was a convert of Barnabas from among the Hellenized Jews in Jerusalem. The matter is not easily resolved. Luke did not consider Jesus’ circle of disciples to be small (Luke 6:17; 19:37), therefore Mnason’s discipleship could go back to the days of Jesus’ ministry. However, in Acts 15:7 Peter uses the term ‘early’ (*archaiō*) to refer to the time when Cornelius was converted (Acts 10:1–11:18). Thus, Mnason’s conversion may have occurred at any time from early in Jesus’ ministry through the early years of the Jerusalem church.

“A textual problem in Acts 21:15–17 betrays some uncertainty as to where Mnason lived. According to D and a handful of Syriac manuscripts, Mnason’s house was in a village between Caesarea and Jerusalem. The arrival of Paul and his companions in Jerusalem is then described in v 17 where ‘the brethren’ (presumably the whole Christian church) received them gladly. But the most natural reading of the vast majority of manuscripts (contra Knowling 1912: 447) suggests that ‘the brethren’ were limited to Mnason and his associates in Jerusalem and that Paul was received ‘gladly’ by only a few. It was not until the next day that Paul met James and the elders (Acts 21:18). Verse 22 implies that the bulk of Jewish Christians were still unaware that Paul had arrived. While Delebecque (1983: 446–55) considers D Luke’s own clarification of an earlier text, it is more likely D’s copyist attempted to smooth over the Jerusalem church’s apparent snub of Paul.

“If Mnason was living in Jerusalem at that time, it is likely, as Haenchen (1965: 607) and Stählin (Apostelgeschichte NTD, 275) suggest, that he identified himself with the Hellenists of Acts 6 and the theology of Stephen (Acts 6:14). Most of Paul’s eight gentile companions were uncircumcised (cf. Acts 20:4). The typical Christian in Jerusalem would find hospitality problematic under such circumstances. But as a Hellenist, Mnason would be open to such hospitality. As an “early disciple” he was known and respected by the church at Jerusalem. As a Cypriot he had connections with people Paul knew and trusted. Thus, the “disciples of Caesarea” (Acts 21:16) considered Mnason the logical choice to host Paul and his companions in Jerusalem.

“The mention of Mnason’s name and the reference to his being an ‘early disciple’ suggest that he may have been a source of information about events in Caesarea and Jerusalem that are reported in Acts (see Bruce Acts NICNT, 402–3; Foakes Jackson and Lake 1933: 270 and Ramsay 1911: 309n).”

[Jon Paulien, “Mnason (Person)” In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 881-82.]

<sup>2</sup>{A} ξενισθῶμεν Μνάσωνί ... 17 Γενομένων δὲ ἡμῶν (with other minor variants) P<sup>74</sup> (κ Ἰάσονι) A B C E Ψ 33 36 (181 αὐτῶν for ἡμῶν) 307 453 614 945 1175 1409 1678 1739 1891 2344 2464 Byz [L P] l 1178 it<sup>ar, c, dem, gig, p, ph, ro, (w)</sup> vg syr<sup>p, h, pal</sup> cop<sup>sa, bo</sup> arm eth geo slav Chrysostom // ξενισθῶμεν. καὶ παραγενόμενοι εἰς πῖνα κώμην ἐγενόμεθα παρὰ Νάσωνι ... κακεῖθεν Ἀξιόντες ἦλθομεν Dvid according to old editions and it<sup>d</sup> (syr<sup>hmg</sup>)

received at the house of Mnason when several local believers gathered there in order to greet Paul and those traveling with him.

Although ἀσμένως is used in a later alternative reading in Acts 2:41, this is the only use of the adverb in the entire NT. It signals a very warm greeting of another.<sup>3</sup> This would prove to be very important for Paul in light of the difficulties he would have while in the city during the coming days. What a contrast to his reception the first time he came to the city as a Christian when the believing community was very skeptical of the sincerity of his professed Christian commitment. Even now in 57 AD with the mounting tensions between the Jews and the Romans all over Palestine, a Jew perceived to have compromised his Jewish religious heritage through free association with non-Jews would not generally have been welcomed in the city of Jerusalem.

Luke indicates that Paul did not waste any time after arriving in Jerusalem before beginning a series of meetings with the leaders of the Christian community in the city: Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ εἰσῆει ὁ Παῦλος σὺν ἡμῖν πρὸς Ἰάκωβον, πάντες τε παρεγένοντο οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, and on the next day Paul went with us to James, and all the elders were present. Luke has an interesting way of depicting the meeting: εἰσῆει ὁ Παῦλος σὺν ἡμῖν πρὸς Ἰάκωβον: Paul went with us to James. It is as though the delegation set up a meeting with James and Paul decided to go with them for the meeting. Some commentators believe this was done by Luke as a signal that the delegation was presenting the relief offering to James and the other leaders.<sup>4</sup> Possibly, but no clear indications emerge that this was Luke's motive.<sup>5</sup>

From the Jerusalem council meeting on (cf. Acts 15) in approx. 47-48 AD Luke has indicated that James, the Lord's brother, has served as the spiritual leader of the various house church leaders scattered across the city, whom Luke consistently refers to as οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (cf. 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18). This is his term for local church leaders, and it is modeled somewhat on the Jewish temple and synagogue model where in Acts Luke uses the identical term in reference to these leaders in Judaism (cf. 4:5, 8, 23; 6:12 ;23:14; 24:1; 25:15).<sup>6</sup> In reference to the leadership of the Christian community in Jerusalem, Luke tends to use a compound phrase οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, the apostles and the elders (cf. 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4), with the πρεσβύτεροι being more localized while ἀπόστολοι is more broadly based on regions. Of course, ἀπόστολοι is consistently a reference to the Twelve (cf. 6:2).<sup>7</sup>

---

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (With Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (With Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

<sup>3</sup>ἀσμένως adv. fr. ἄσμενος (Aeschyl.+; SIG 742, 52; PGrenf II, 14, 17f; UPZ 110, 160; 145, 31; 2 and 3 Macc; EpArist 5; Jos., Bell. 1, 309 al.; Just., D. 1, 2 al.) **gladly** ἄ. ἀποδέχεσθαι receive someone gladly (Cebeas 26, 1 ἄσμ. ὑποδέχεσθαι τινα; Philo, Rer. Div. Her. 295 v.l.; Jos., Ant. 4, 131 ἄ. δέχ. τ. λόγους) **Ac 2:41** v.l.; **21:17**.—DELG s.v. ἄσμενος. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 144.]

<sup>4</sup>εἰσῆει ὁ Παῦλος σὺν ἡμῖν πρὸς Ἰάκωβον. The verb, with πρὸς, conveys a hint of entering the presence of a great person (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 2:4:5, ὁ δ' εἰσῆει πρὸς τὸν Κυαζάρην; Herodotus 1:99:1, εἰσιέναι παρὰ βασιλέα), or of coming into a law court. 'We' are now distinguished from Paul as witnesses of the scene (though it may be—has been—conjectured that 'we' were present to convey the collection to the leaders of the Jerusalem church—Stählin 276). The first person plural does not return till 27:1, but this is because now 'Paulus steht beherrschend im Mittelpunkt der Szene' (Haenchen 582)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1005.]

<sup>5</sup>What is strange at this juncture in Acts is that Paul arrives in Jerusalem, and there is no mention of the collection that he has had taken up in Gentile Christian churches for the poor Christians of Jerusalem (see Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:1-7; 9:1-5; Rom 15:25-27, 31). Later on, it will be mentioned (24:17), but in a subdued way and hardly given the importance that it receives in Paul's own letters." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 692.]

<sup>6</sup>It is interesting to note that οἱ πρεσβύτεροι as a Christian leadership label is bracketed by the same term as a Jewish leadership label: **Jewish leaders** (chapters four through six): **Christian leaders** (chapters eleven through twenty-one): **Jewish leaders** (chapters twenty-three through twenty-five). I'm not sure that anything significant about this exists apart from the contextual frame of reference due to the narrative subjects being discussed.

But the one clear implication of this is that the example of Jewish leadership patterns played an important role in the development of early Christian leadership styles. By inference it would have been a much more influential role among Jewish Christians in Palestine than in the Christian churches of the Pauline mission with a mixture of both Jews and Gentiles. This same label, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι also functioned to designate leaders of social, political, and religious groups in the non-Jewish world of the first century Roman empire. In those churches the non-Jewish styles of leadership would clearly have played an influential role. How much a role is difficult to determine. But as has become increasingly clear from our detailed studies of the three missionary journeys of Paul, the mixture of Jew and non-Jew inside these Pauline churches was overwhelmingly non-Jewish with only minimum numbers of Jewish converts.

<sup>7</sup>Although οἱ δώδεκα, the Twelve, is only found in Acts 6:2 rather than οἱ ἀπόστολοι, the apostles, οἱ δώδεκα is the dominant way of referring to this group in the Lukan gospel: 6:13; 8:1, 42, 43; 9:1, 12, 17; 18:31; 22:3, 30, 47.



One note of significance here to not overlook. The direct discourse that runs from verse 20b through 25 is introduced by εἰπόν τε αὐτῷ, *and they said to him*. Luke narrates this as though both James and the entire group of elders are speaking to Paul with one voice. In all likelihood it was James who did the actual speaking, but Luke's emphasis is on the fact that what James said represented not just his opinion, but a consensus of the entire group. Thus later on which this decision reflects a mistake being made it is the entire group and not just James who are culpable for giving bad advice here.<sup>8</sup> Often among commentators James is the one who gets the blame rather than the entire group.

How lines of communication functioned among Christians inside Jerusalem at this period of time are not clearly defined. In the comments concerning their meeting with Paul (cf. v. 20), clear indication is given that large numbers of Jews, especially in Jerusalem, had become Christians. The strong implication from Luke's narrative depiction of this meeting suggests that believers stayed in touch with one another largely through the house church leaders periodically coming together to discuss issues, as well as to meet with visiting Christian guests like Paul and his delegation. With the rather hostile atmosphere toward Christians in the city, this would have allowed them to stay in contact but also maintain a rather low profile throughout the city.

Verses 19 through 25 describe in summary fashion the exchange between Paul and these Jerusalem leaders. The narrative takes the form of a report (v. 19) with a response (vv. 20-25). The meeting begins with the customary greetings (καὶ ἀσπασάμενος αὐτοῦς; cf. Acts 18:22; 21:7), and then Paul recounts the ministry among the Gentiles: ἐξηγεῖτο καθ' ἕνα ἕνα, ὧν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν διὰ τῆς διακονίας αὐτοῦ, *he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry*. The language here echoes earlier reports that Paul had given about ministry to the Gentiles.

**1) To the Jerusalem Christian community in the late 40s at the council meeting:** παραγενόμενοι δὲ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ παρεδέχθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, ἀνήγγειλάν τε ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν μετ' αὐτῶν, *When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them* (Acts 15:4).

**2) To the church at Antioch at the end of the first missionary journey:** παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως. *When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles* (Acts 14:26).

Luke feels no need for detailing this work by Paul here since his depictions of the third missionary journey, along with the two previous ones, provides more detailed accounting of what Paul shares with the Jerusalem Christian community leaders in this meeting.

The response of these Jewish Christian leaders is positive: Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεόν, *And upon having heard this they began rejoicing in God*. When Paul made his earlier report to the Jerusalem Christians at the end of the first missionary journey, most of the Christians rejoiced in what God was doing, but not all of the Christians were happy about this (cf. 15:5). This time at the end of the third missionary journey only the leadership was assembled to hear Paul's report. And their response was very positive.

But these leaders were also very much aware that a good segment of the Christian community was unhappy with Paul's ministry, at least with the false version of it being circulated as rumor among Christians in Jerusalem. The earlier leaders had settled the issue of Jewish demands for circumcision and Torah obedience regarding non-Jews coming into Christianity. The twisting of that issue over the following decade had produced the now current rumor that Paul was discouraging Diaspora Jews coming into Christianity from continuing to practice their Judaism. The dilemma now was how to correct this false report about Paul's ministry. Here is where Luke gives most of his attention in reporting on this meeting (vv. 20-25).

James and the local elders make several points here to the apostle.<sup>9</sup> First, they call attention to the

<sup>8</sup>This negative assessment of the advice given here is normally based on the reality that by entering into this vow Paul ended up being arrested and his life placed in serious jeopardy. Likely this would have been avoided had he not entered into this ritualistic vow.

<sup>9</sup>Form-critically considered, the episode is again a narrative. The first two verses continue the second We-Section (20:13–21:18). Luke introduces into this passage, which is derived in part from the Pauline source (especially vv 19–20a), a speech of James (21:20b–25), a Lucan composition.

“This is one of the passages in Acts that contributes much to what has been called the Paulinism of Acts, because it depicts Paul carrying out prescriptions of the law that would normally seem to be contrary to his preaching about justification by grace through faith and not through deeds prescribed by the law (see Introduction §173). Luke has already depicted Paul consecrating himself by a vow (18:18). Now Paul even pays the expenses of others who are performing the rites of such a vow, perhaps because they were too poor to pay for themselves, but on the recommendation of James.”

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale  
Page 494

massive success the Gospel has had in Jerusalem in reaching large numbers of Jews: θεωρεῖς, ἀδελφέ, πόσαι μυριάδες εἰσὶν ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τῶν πεπιστευκότων καὶ πάντες ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου ὑπάρχουσιν, “You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law” (21:20b). Luke is fond of hyperbole as πόσαι μυριάδες literary meaning ‘how many tens of thousands.’ What Luke is claiming here is that while Paul was reaching growing numbers of non-Jews on his missionary travels, Jewish Christianity in Jerusalem and Judea continued to make substantial gains as well. The Christian community in Jerusalem continued to grow during the 50s as well. And, -- this is important -- these new converts to Christianity continued to practice their Jewish religious heritage as well. That is, their Christian commitment was not perceived to stand in opposition to their being religious Jews. Thus these οἱ πρεσβύτεροι who were sharing this good news with Paul represented the same group of leaders who had listened to his early report a decade earlier (Acts 15:3-4). It would indeed be interesting to know just how many of these leaders had attended that earlier meeting where Paul and Barnabas shared what God was doing among the Gentiles.

But this substantial outreach among the Jews in the city and surrounding region also presented a problem. Evidently from Diaspora Jews traveling to Jerusalem for religious observances at the temple, they had been led to believe that not only was Paul bringing uncircumcised Gentiles into the church as believers, but more importantly, he was encouraging Diaspora Jews to give up their Jewish religious practices: κατηχήθησαν δὲ περὶ σοῦ ὅτι ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν περιπατεῖν, *They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs.* The church leaders had previously agreed on uncircumcised Gentiles coming to faith commitment through the Gospel, but to persuade religiously practicing Jews to give up their Jewish religion was another major issue.<sup>10</sup>

How could such a rumor as this find ‘traction’ among Christians in Jerusalem? Although Luke does not specify the source of the rumor about Paul, one would logically conclude that it most likely came from Diaspora Jews traveling from the Roman provinces where Paul was working to Jerusalem in order to worship in the temple. In cities such as Pisidian Antioch, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and Corinth at the synagogues, they had heard Paul present the Gospel message, and had seen some fellow synagogue Jews follow Paul into meetings at private homes after being forced out of the synagogue. Having witnessed many of the Gentile God-fearers who were attending the synagogue follow Paul into these meetings as well, they could have easily concluded that these people were mixing together apart from strict Jewish regulations regarding contact with Gentiles. Probably word came back to the synagogues that Paul had proclaimed all the people to be right with God without any demands for obeying the Torah. The conclusion came quickly that Paul was disregarding the demands of the Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 691-92.]

<sup>10</sup>“Did Paul in fact teach Jews to abandon circumcision and other provisions of the Law? ‘It was in fact so’ (Calvin 2:200). Opinions differ. Blass (229): ‘Falsum erat crimen, cf. 1 Cor. 7:18; tamen illi non sine causa metuebant, quia haec ἀδιάφορα esse Christianis ille docebat.’ Schmithals (197) argues that Paul would not have taught Jews to abandon the Law because this would have made life intolerable for Christian Jews in Palestine. In successive editions of NTD: Beyer (129), ‘... was ja durchaus der Wirklichkeit entspricht’; Stählin 277, ‘Dieser Vorwurf ist ungerecht.’ Luke appears to assume that Paul did not do what he was alleged to do; the charge was not believed by the elders, it was false, and Paul will proceed by his actions to demonstrate his innocence. It is certain that the epistles contain no explicit instruction that the circumcision of Jewish children should cease, and at 1 Cor. 7:18 Paul tells already circumcised Jews not to undo the marks of their circumcision. If he asserts that circumcision is nothing he asserts equally that uncircumcision is nothing (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 6:15). It is clear moreover that there is a great difference between the practice in which devout Jewish parents offer their children to God in circumcision, and the insistence that Gentile converts must be circumcised if they are to be saved. It is hard to believe that Paul forbade Jewish parents to circumcise their children, but he probably classed those who insisted on and made much of the rite as ‘weak’ (Rom. 14; 15; 1 Cor. 8; 10). Here however circumcision is mentioned as the outstanding example of practising the customs generally, and it is undoubtedly true that Paul taught his fellow Jews to sit loose to legal regulations, since he evidently believed (Gal. 2:12–14) that Jewish Christians might, and should, eat with Gentile Christians without any compromise on the part of the latter, and that they could buy and eat meat of any kind without making scrupulous inquiry (1 Cor. 10:25, 27). Luke was probably aware (cf. Begg. 4:271) of a body of Jewish Christians who continued to practise Jewish customs without objection from their Gentile brothers (cf. Justin, Trypho 47) and assumed that since this state of things existed it must have been not merely tolerated but supported by Paul. Delling (Studien 309), thus fails to touch the point when he writes: ‘Paulus ist in Apg. 21:21 jedenfalls dann richtig verstanden ... wenn von ihm behauptet wird, nach seiner Unterweisung (διδάσκεις) sei die Beschneidung der Abkömmlinge jüdischer Eltern überflüssig—sofern dieser Satz zumal Kinder christlicher Eltern meint—d.h. für Paulus: nicht heilsnotwendig.’ The allegation is not that Paul taught that circumcision was superfluous but that he said that it should not be done. Weiser’s statement (598), ‘Dadurch aber, dass Lukas den Vorwurf mit dem Begriff “Bräuche” (ethē) wiedergibt, deutet er selbst an, dass es sich hier nicht um die Gefährdung der religiösen Identität Israels handelt, sondern um den Bereich kulturbedingter Normen’, seems to presuppose an underestimate of the weight of ἔθος.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1008-09.]

Jewish Law and urging these Jewish converts to do the same thing. With Paul's clearly stated insistence in his letters that circumcision possessed no spiritual benefit before God (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 6:15), it was not a great leap to conclude that he then was telling Jews to not bother with having their sons circumcised. Given the emerging ultra nationalistic fervor in Palestine by the late 50s, any Christian Jew perceived as doing anything to discourage Jews to obey the Torah could pose a huge threat to the entire Christian community. Paul's long time reputation in Jerusalem would easily make him a target for all kinds of rumor.

Who was spreading such false rumors?<sup>11</sup> A text variation (*D\* 104 gig*) in verse 21 of switching *κατηγήθησαν* in the passive (*they have been told*) to the active voice *κατήχησαν* (*they told*) puts emphasis on assumed informants inside the Christian community. Perhaps Luke is assuming the Pharisee Judaizers inside the church described in Acts 15:1, 5 are the culprits and are spreading this false report about Paul and that he is now present in the city. At least, this was the clear assumption of a few of the later copyists of this text.

These *οἱ πρεσβύτεροι* in Jerusalem felt they had a real problem on their hands with Paul's presence in the city. In verses 22-25, Luke describes their proposed solution to solve this problem: Paul needs to get involved in one of the Jewish traditions regarding a vow of purification at the temple.

Their proposal is introduced very clearly as such: 22 τί οὖν ἐστίν; πάντως ἀκούσονται ὅτι ἐλήλυθας. 23 τοῦτο οὖν ποίησον ὃ σοι λέγομεν, *Therefore what is (the situation)? For certain, they will hear that you have come. Thus this which we tell you is what you must do.* The initial rhetorical question τί οὖν ἐστίν; poses the issue in light of the false rumor being spread about the apostle, which Luke has described in the previous verse (v. 21). The second statement, πάντως ἀκούσονται ὅτι ἐλήλυθας, asserts that news of Paul's presence in the city among these folks is a foregone conclusion. The 'rumor mill' worked effectively in first century Jerusalem as it tends to do in our world. The third statement, τοῦτο οὖν ποίησον ὃ σοι λέγομεν, puts their solution on the table in very strong terms before the apostle. It has the clear tone of a demand rather than a request.

Their specific instructions to Paul are contained in vv. 23b-25, and it contains three primary elements: vv. 23b-24a; v. 24; v. 25.<sup>12</sup>

**The demand for Paul to enter a vow**, v.v. 23b-24a: εἰσὶν ἡμῖν ἄνδρες τέσσαρες εὐχὴν<sup>13</sup> ἔχοντες ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν. τούτους παραλαβὼν ἀγνίσθητι σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ δαπάνησον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἵνα ξυρήσονται τὴν κεφαλὴν, *We have four men who are under a vow.*<sup>14</sup> *Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving*

---

<sup>11</sup>“*κατηγήθησαν* (*κατήχησαν*, the active, in *D\* 104 gig*, gives a different picture—the Jewish Christians of v. 20 have been spreading the report that Paul is a dissident; see below) is used in a different sense from that of the same verb in 18:25: they have been informed. No informers are named; Luke may be thinking of those mentioned in 15:1, 5. Since Luke evidently believed the charge to be false (see below on this) he must be thinking of trouble-makers who spread false reports. But he does not name them; they do not appear on stage. The general picture of a harmonious apostolic age is retained, but it is clear that at most only the surface is smooth. Of the passive verb Page (222) writes, ‘The word certainly describes Paul’s opponents as acting with deliberate purpose, and suggests that they were in a position of authority and “teachers”.’ This impression is strengthened if the active (see above) is read, but it is quite possible that two letters, ηθ, dropped out by accident. ‘The reader knows this [report] to be a canard, for Paul has from the very start himself shown a commitment to the Jewish ethos by circumcising his coworker [Timothy]’ (Johnson 290). This is a fair observation as far as Luke’s own understanding and intention are concerned.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1007.]

<sup>12</sup>“The story presupposes that Jewish Christians in Palestine, in Luke’s day and before it, continued to observe the provisions of the Law. This is brought out by Fitzmyer (Essays 280), ‘Jewish practices were still admitted as part of the Christian way of life in Jerusalem as late as c. AD 58, when Paul after a long apostolate among the Gentiles went through the rite of the Nazirite at James’s request (21:23–26).’ Cf. Black (Scrolls, 15, 82f.). The point is perhaps more strongly made if Paul did not go through the rite of the Nazirite.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1013.]

<sup>13</sup>“To vow,’ ‘to dedicate,’ ‘vow.’ It is not always possible to distinguish this sense sharply from 1 [prayer].<sup>9</sup> It appears twice in the NT at Ac. 18:18; 21:23,<sup>10</sup> the noun alone being used. Since the reference is to Jews,<sup>11</sup> and to the shaving of the hair of the head, it must refer to the Nazirite vow. Two different details in 21:23ff. make this conclusion unavoidable (cf. Str.-B., II, 80 ff., 747 ff., 755 ff.).<sup>12</sup>” [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:777.]

<sup>14</sup>“**vow**, a promise to abstain from something not ordinarily prohibited (e.g., the vow of the Nazirite, Num. 6), or, more commonly, an offer to pay God for help he gives. The first vow mentioned in the OT is Jacob’s, who promised God worship and tithing in return for his protection (Gen. 28:20; 31:13). Similar vows are the vow of Israel to ‘devote’ (i.e., sacrifice) all of Arad to God (Num. 21:1-3), Jephthah’s vow of a living being (Judg. 11:30), Hannah’s vow of Samuel’s service (1 Sam. 1:11), Absalom’s of worship (2 Sam. 15:7-8), and the unspecified vow of sailors for safety from shipwreck (Jon. 1:6). Apostate Israel is said to have vowed to offer incense to the queen of heaven (Jer. 44:25).

“Animals sacrificed in payment of vows must be without blemish (Lev. 22:17-25; Mal. 1:14), must not be firstlings (who already belong to God; Lev. 27:16-28), and are a communion sacrifice that must be eaten in two days (Lev. 7:16-17; see the sacrificial



of their heads.<sup>15</sup> In the first century Jewish system of 'merits' as key to earning one's salvation, the making and keeping of vows played an important role.<sup>16</sup> Although Jewish Christians had come under God's grace in faith surrender to Christ, the traditions of their ancestors continued to impact their expressions of religious devotion to God. One of those areas that surface in the pages of the New Testament is in regard to various kinds of vows that were a part of the Jewish religious tradition in the first century.

From all indication this particular vow is anchored in the temporary Nazaritic vow described in Num. 6:2-21. The exact intention of the vow by these four Jewish Christian men is not stated. Thus we don't know the motives behind their participation in this religious rite. They evidently were nearing the end of a minimum thirty day vow (*m. Nazir* 6:3; cf. Josephus, *War* 2.313) and needed help with the expenses of completing the vow with the ritualistic shaving of their head by the priest in the temple etc. Paul is urged to *τούτους παραλαβὼν ἀγνίσθητι σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ δαπάνησον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἵνα ξυρήσονται τὴν κεφαλὴν*, *Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads*. It would not have been possible for Paul to have undertaken a Nazaritic vow due to the time constraints. Instead, what he was urged to do was something he most likely would have done anyway: to undergo a seven rite of purification required of all who came from outside the Promised Land in order to worship in the temple (cf. Num. 19:12).<sup>17</sup> Whether or not this was a good idea has been debated by commentators for many centuries in light of how subsequent events unfolded. From all indication Paul felt that it was completely within the framework of his Christian commitment and would help alleviate problems for the Jewish Christian brothers in Jerusalem. The Gospel was impacting large numbers of Jews in the city; Paul would desire to contribute to that outreach rather than hinder it. Remember his earlier words to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 9:19-23.<sup>18</sup>

---

specifications in Num. 15:1-16). Payment can be made in money with set values for each animal (Lev. 27), with adjustments made for the poor. Payment of vows was ultimately centralized (Deut. 12). Vows did not have to be made (Deut. 23:22), but once made, they had to be paid (Num. 30; Deut. 21:21-23). A woman's vow could be cancelled by her husband or, if she lived in her father's house, by her father, if the man acted the same day (Num. 30). Psalms such as 56:12-13 and 66:13-15 mention the individual offering and payment of vows (cf. Pss. 22:26; 61:8; 116:14, 18). In the NT, Acts records that the apostle Paul, to fulfill a vow, cut his hair (18:18), but we are given no details about the nature or purpose of that vow."

[Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 1115.]

<sup>15</sup>"The account which follows certainly raises difficulties if we look closely at Jewish prescriptions about vows, but these result from Luke's inexact knowledge of these prescriptions. Considered in itself, his account contains no contradiction. εὐχή, 'vow,' can mean a Nazirite vow (Num 6:1-21; Philo Ebr. 2);<sup>5</sup> shaving the head is a part of the Nazirite vow.<sup>6</sup> After 'four men who have taken a vow' (RSV, 'are under a vow'), the reading ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν, 'upon themselves' (P<sup>74</sup> A C D), as opposed to ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν, 'on their own initiative' (B 8), is to be preferred (cf. Num 6:7; 30:7).<sup>7</sup> The vow was considered as a good work. Its duration was at least thirty days. The release from the vow (shaving the head and bringing the hair as an offering, plus other offerings, Num 6:13-21) entailed a considerable expense. Making this contribution on behalf of a Nazirite also counted as a good work (Josephus *Ant.* 19.294)." [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 180.]

<sup>16</sup>"The construction εὐχὴν ἔχοντες ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν at 21:23 is influenced by the LXX (Nu. 6:7; 30:7; Mal. 1:14) and also by the view that in his long hair the Nazirite bears on his head a sacrificial gift dedicated to God (Nu. 6:9, 19 etc.). The particularly common expressions εὐχεσθαι εὐχὴν and ἀποδιδόναι εὐχὴν show us how strong was the impulse to transfer εὐχή to the dedicated gift itself, e.g., Lv. 22:23; 23:38. So also on inscr., Ditt. Syll.3, 1142 (1/2nd cent. A.D.), Ditt. Or., II, 716 (3rd cent. A.D.), Milet., I, 7 (1924, No. 304 (late) εὐχὴν ἀνέθηκεν or ἀνέστησεν). Often εὐχὴν means 'as the gift of dedication, as the sacrifice at a vow' (cf. LXX Lv. 7:6; Ditt. Or., II, 655, 7 [24 B.C.]; *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, 20 [1920], 238 f., Theadelphia, 2nd cent. B.C.).<sup>13</sup> Mostly κατ' εὐχὴν and (late) ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς signify 'in virtue of a vow' (Preisigke *Sammelbuch*, IV, 7287 [23 B.C.]; Ditt. Or., I, 418, 3 [41 A.D.]; IG, XII, 1, 902 and 911 f.; *Publications of the Princeton Univ. Archaeol. Expeditions to Syria in 1904/1905 and 1909*, III B (1922) 925, late. Nazirite, Jos. *Ant.*, 4, 72; Bell., 2, 313; Philo *Spec. Leg.*, I, 247 ff. εὐχ- for 'to vow' or 'vow' is rare in Philo." [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:777.]

<sup>17</sup>"Haenchen is likely correct that Paul is undertaking different sort of ritual of purification, the sort required of those who come from foreign, unclean lands (*m. Oholot* 2:3; 17:5; 18:6). This sort of rite could be completed in seven days (cf. Num. 19:12), and thus Paul would have been in position to accompany the four to the temple at the end of their vow, pay the expenses for the closing sacrifices of these men (Num. 6:13-20), as well as conclude his own rite. As Larkin says, both the LXX and Luke use purification terminology (αγνίσθητι here) to refer to both the process of removing ritual impurity (Num. 19:12) and undergoing a Nazaritic vow (Num. 6:3, 5).<sup>23</sup> Thus Paul can be said to join them in a purification rite.<sup>24</sup>" [Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 649.]

<sup>18</sup>1 Cor. 9:19-23. 19 For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am



**The perceived benefit of doing this**, v. 24b: καὶ γνώσονται πάντες ὅτι ὧν κατήχηνται περὶ σοῦ οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἀλλὰ στοιχεῖς καὶ αὐτὸς φυλάσσων τὸν νόμον, *Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law.*<sup>19</sup>

The objective stated by James and the elder leadership in Jerusalem was for Paul to disprove this false rumor by these actions of ritualistic observance and to demonstrate his commitment to Jewish traditions. Their thinking was that Paul needed to debunk this false rumor by concrete action. One might question the wisdom of this thinking in light of what happened in the temple later. Could the same apostle who had bluntly accused Peter at Antioch years before of being hypocritical over refusing table fellowship with Gentiles<sup>20</sup> now submit to this demand without himself becoming a hypocrite to the Gentiles? Scholars debate the answer to this question,<sup>21</sup> but Paul didn't as v. 26 illustrates.

**Reaffirmation of earlier agreement concerning the Gentile believers**, v. 25: περὶ δὲ τῶν πεπιστευκῶτων ἔθνῶν ἡμεῖς ἐπέστειλαμεν κρίναντες φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτοὺς τό τε εἰδωλόθυτον καὶ αἷμα καὶ πνικτὸν καὶ πορνείαν, *But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.*

Concerning the Gentiles, the Jerusalem leadership and James simply allude to the council meeting (not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

19 Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδοῦλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω· 20 καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω· 21 τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους· 22 ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής, ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω. 23 πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένομαι.

<sup>19</sup>“The structure of the verse is complicated by a variant reading. ζυρήσονται (future indicative) is read by P<sup>74</sup> & B\* D<sup>c</sup> E 33 614 1175 1891 2495 al; ζυρήσονται (aorist subjunctive) is read by A B<sup>2</sup> C D\* (so NA26; D\* seems in fact to read ζυρῶνται—so e.g. Ropes's text of D in Begg. 3:207). All witnesses appear to have as the next verb the future indicative, γνώσονται. If a subjunctive is read in immediate connection with ἵνα it seems natural to separate it from γνώσονται: Pay their expenses in order that they may shave ...; and (then) all will know ... If however both verbs are future it becomes more natural (though by no means necessary) to coordinate them: ... in order that they may shave ... and that all may know ... The difference in meaning is perhaps not very great. According to BDR § 442:2d the καί (before γνώσονται) may be ‘nach Konjunktiv das Futur verbindend zur Bezeichnung des weiteren Ergebnisses’. They add (n. 8) ‘Durch καί wird die Folge gewissermassen verselbständigt, ohne dabei aber ein selbständiger Satz zu werden (die Folge gehört in den ἵνα-Satz hinein ...)’. Here undoubtedly that all should know is the intention of the proposed action.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1010-11.]

<sup>20</sup>**Gal. 2:11-12.** 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.

11 Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν. 12 πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἔθνῶν συνήσθιεν· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστειλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς.

<sup>21</sup>“Did Paul στοιχεῖν, φυλάσσων τὸν νόμον? Would he have done so even on one special occasion with the intention of proving to Palestinian Jewish Christians that he like them was still a good Jew as well as a Christian? According to Bornkamm (4:160f.) this was no more than an application of the principle stated in 1 Cor. 9:19–24. ‘So zeigt Apg 21:10–26 wenigstens an einem historisch gesicherten Beispiel, was Paulus mit seiner 1 Kor 9:19ff. erklärten Bereitschaft, ‘frei von allem allen zum Knecht’ zu werden, gemeint hat. Bekanntlich isr gerade diese letzte Handlung des Paulus im Tempel für ihn zum Verhängnis geworden. Mit anderen Worten: seine Treue zu dem 1 Kor 9:20 formulierten Wort hat ihn in Gefangenschaft und Tod geführt’ (161). Davies takes a similar view: ‘That the apostle no longer recognized the authority of the Jewish Law did not signify that every legal observance was closed to him when he was among Jews: his very freedom from the Law enabled him to submit to it when he so desired ... He was merely practising in Acts 21:17ff. his policy, or rather strategy, as revealed in 1 Cor. 9:19ff. ... Acts does not contradict the Epistles on Paul's attitude to the Temple’ (192). (The epistles show no attitude to the Temple!). See also Begg. 4:273: ‘... in what way was he a Jew to the Jews if not by observing the Law when he was with them?’ So also many others; but the real question here is not whether on occasion Paul would do what Jews did: 1 Corinthians 9 proves conclusively that he was prepared to do this. The question is whether Paul was prepared to use a special occasion such as the one described in order to suggest something that was not true, namely that he too (καὶ αὐτός, he just like the ardent Jews who suspected his loyalty) was regularly observant of the Law as understood within Judaism. Readiness to do this is not covered by 1 Corinthians 9. The issue is not only a moral one. Paul, one would think, must have observed that a single action such as that suggested to him could not prove the point, and that if his motives were suspected this would enrage the Jews even more than simple apostasy. Undoubtedly the plan, as described in Acts, misfired. That is, the demonstration proposed by James was ill adapted to its purpose—unless indeed we are to suppose (cf. Brandon, Fall 135) that James's real but secret motive was to discredit Paul in the eyes of the Gentile church. ‘Occasional conformity’ is an arrangement that does little credit to the parties on either side of the contract. For Haenchen's suggestion regarding what took place see above, p. 1000f.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1012-13.]

agreement almost a decade earlier (cf. Acts 15). Their recollection of the agreement -- as recorded here by Luke -- harmonizes with the record of the original agreement in 15:29: ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας, ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε, *that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.* What is interesting is that the original letter was targeting the church at Antioch in Syria. But these Jewish Christian leaders here assume that the letter applies to all Gentile believers as a general principle. The positive side is that these Jewish Christian leaders still honor the terms of that agreement concerning Gentiles. Time and political pressure in Jerusalem had not eroded their stance on Gentiles not needing to convert to Judaism in order to be a Christian.

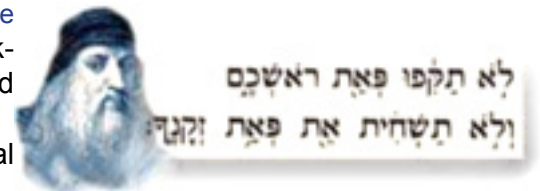
Why did James mention this agreement to Paul? Some modern commentators wrongly assume that this is the first time Paul had heard about it. If there is a discernible motive for mentioning it here during this meeting in the late 50s, it perhaps was more for the benefit of Paul's traveling companions, most all of whom were not present at the council meeting in the late 40s when the agreement was reached.<sup>22</sup> But Luke does not signal why James mentioned this earlier agreement, and thus modern conclusions are but guessing as to why.<sup>23</sup>

Verse 26 describes Paul's willingness to honor this request from James and the local Jerusalem leaders: Τότε ὁ Παῦλος παραλαβὼν τοὺς ἄνδρας τῆ ἑχομένη ἡμέρα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀγνισθεῖς, εἰσῆει εἰς τὸ ἱερόν διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἀγνισμοῦ ἕως οὗ προσηνέχθη ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου αὐτῶν ἢ προσφορά, *Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.* This verse functions literarily as climatic to the 17-26 narrative, and also as an introductory header to vv. 27-36.

The following day (Τότε...τῆ ἑχομένη ἡμέρα) after meeting with James and the elders in Jerusalem Paul moves to keep his agreement with them. Luke highlights prompt compliance by Paul. His actions are described seemingly in terms of a Nazirite vow, described in Num. 6:4 and 1 Macc. 3:49. This entering into the temple with these Jewish Christian brothers was to report the intended time of the completion of the vow: διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἀγνισμοῦ. The length of time formally stated to the priests in the temple was seven days, as is reflected in the next verse.

What one needs to observe is a sequence of events that does not usually come out clearly in most translations. Paul first παραλαβὼν τοὺς ἄνδρας τῆ ἑχομένη ἡμέρα, *after having taken the men with him the following day.* Parallel in occurrence is σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀγνισθεῖς, *after having been purified with them.* This is followed by εἰσῆει εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, *he began entering the temple,* which signals the beginning of a daily process of ritual actions in the temple for the next seven days. This daily entering into the temple serves as a repeated declaration that he -- and the other men -- are moving toward completing the number of days for the requirements of the vow: διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἀγνισμοῦ, *publicizing the completion of the days of purification.* At the end of this required time a special sacrifice would be offered up by the men with Paul paying for its cost: ἕως οὗ προσηνέχθη ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου αὐτῶν ἢ προσφορά, *until when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.* What Luke describes here is a religious ritual taking place over at least a week and, as v. 27 indicates, it gets interrupted before it is completed.

We are provided with a few of the details involved in the ritual



<sup>22</sup>“Jewish Christians are not asking that Gentiles should be made Jews, only that Jews should not be made Gentiles, through the abandonment of circumcision and other legal requirements. This concern is clear, and it is easy to see (though not from Acts) how it would arise. When Paul expected Jews to eat with Gentiles he was asking them to give up some of their Jewishness. This may account sufficiently for the reference here to the Decree though perhaps not for the citation of all the details. It has often been pointed out that, on the surface, it seems that Paul is being informed of the Decree as if he knew nothing about it, although, according to Acts, he was present when it was formulated, approved of it, and was one of its sponsors. The repetition may be introduced in order to inform Paul's companions, or to remind the reader (see Wilson, Law 81; cf. Gentiles 190); it may be that this is how the Decree was introduced in the ‘We’-source; it may be that we have here a trace of a divergent tradition which did not represent Paul as having previously been concerned with the Decree (see Maddox, 60). The last of these possibilities (not incapable of being combined with others) may well be true; but as suggested above Luke's presentation of the matter is not impossible: Here is a new point; the old one (conditions for the admission of Gentiles) was settled long ago.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1013-14.]

<sup>23</sup>“The pressing historical question has been ‘would Paul have done this?’ Issues of this nature are almost irresolvable. Even if it can be shown that this act was not consistent with Paul's principles,<sup>45</sup> only fools apply their principles with perfect consistency.” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 546.]



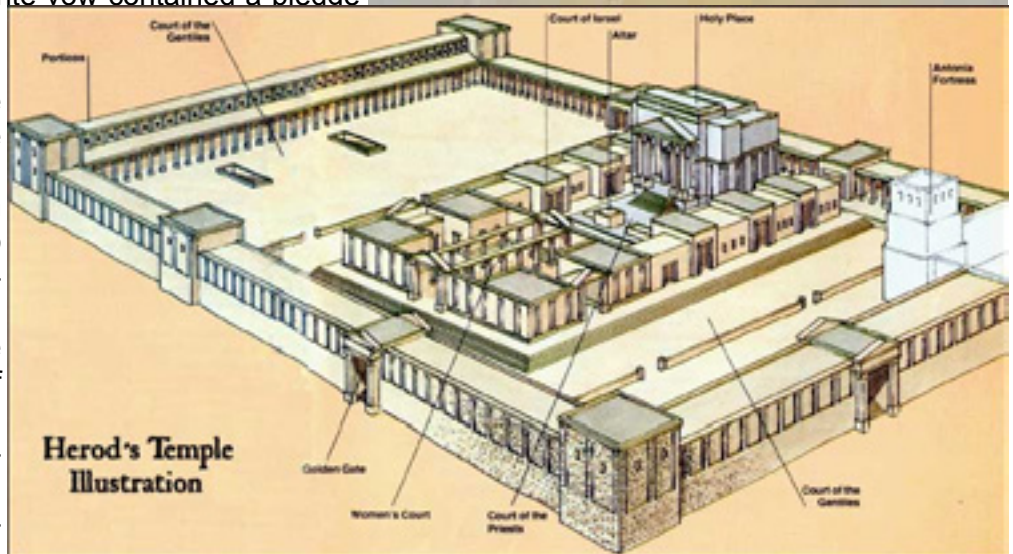
in verse 26.<sup>24</sup> Jewish sources describe the rituals of concluding the period of the vow in terms of a formal shaving of one's head in the outer court of the temple. The collected hair would be added to the mandatory peace offering and thus burnt in the fire on the altar. The offering would be made once the individual had gone through the *mikveh*, a ritual bath of purification.<sup>25</sup>

The initial depiction in v. 24 included two items: 1) ἀγνίσθητι<sup>26</sup> σὺν αὐτοῖς, *be purified with them*, and 2) δαπάνησον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἵνα ξυρήσονται τὴν κεφαλὴν, *pay for them so that they can have their heads shaved*. The rite of purification both began and ended with the water bath and pledge to abstain from alcohol; these two actions marked the beginning and the end of the vow. Additionally, the Nazirite vow contained a pledge to not cut one's hair until the end of the vow. These beginning and ending rituals would take some time. The concluding ritual by the beginning of the Christian era had to be completed in the Jerusalem temple.<sup>27</sup> A Nazirite vow had to last at least 30 days as the minimum time, and in the beginning ritual the individual would declare formally the intended length of the vow.

What Luke then is describing is that Paul went through the standard rite of purification required of every Jew who had traveled outside the Holy Land before offerings and sacrifices could be offered in the temple. But he participated

**Numbers 6:13-20**

*“Now this is the law for the Nazirite when the period of his separation is over. He is to be brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. There he is to present his offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made without yeast—cakes made of fine flour mixed with oil, and wafers spread with oil.*”



<sup>24</sup>“Nazirites (*na'zuh-rīts*; Heb., ‘dedicated’ or ‘consecrated [ones]’), men or women who entered a consecrated state upon their own or a parent’s vow (Num. 6:1-21; 1 Sam. 1:1-11; Judg. 13:1-7). There were three main conditions for entering and remaining in this holy state: refrain from the fruit of the vine and other intoxicants, not allow a razor to touch one’s hair for one’s term as a Nazirite, not go near a dead body—not even that of one’s own father or mother (Num. 6:1-7). In the last condition the rigor is comparable to that required elsewhere only of the high priest (cf. Lev. 21:10-12 and 21:1-4). The first condition was also a distinguishing feature of the Rechabites (Jer. 35). Upon completion of a term the Nazirite could drink wine (Num. 6:20), and some were tempted to do so before (Amos 2:10-11).] “Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 689-90.]

<sup>25</sup>“After following these requirements for a designated period of time (which would be specified in the individual’s vow), the person would immerse in a mikveh and make three offerings: a lamb as a burnt offering (*olah*), a ewe as a sin-offering (*hatat*), and a ram as a peace offering (*shelamim*), in addition to a basket of unleavened bread, grain offerings and drink offerings, which accompanied the peace offering. They would also shave their head in the outer courtyard of the Temple (the Jerusalem Temple for Judaism) and then place the hair on the same fire as the peace offering. (Numbers 6:18)” [“Nazirite,” Wikipedia.org]

<sup>26</sup>“In the NT ἀγνίζω is used in Jn. 11:55 of the cultic purification of the Jews prior to the Passover. It is then used of cultic purification within the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem which kept to the OT Law and laid on Paul a demand of this kind in Ac. 21:24, 26; 24:18. The ongoing participation of the primitive community in the temple cultus made observance of the traditional external cultic regulations unavoidable. In particular, visiting the temple after returning from the Gentile world demanded additional cultic purification.<sup>2</sup> NT religion did not fashion any such rules of its own. Hence this aspect drops away as NT religion attains fuller understanding of itself. However, the term occasionally finds a new use to denote full moral purity as the decisive presupposition for the reception of salvation (Jm. 4:8; 1 Pt. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:3).” [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 1:123.]

<sup>27</sup>This is the major reason why such vows play almost no role in modern Judaism. Since there is no temple where the vow can be properly concluded, to enter into a Nazirite vow means a permanent vow lasting the remainder of the individual’s life. Modern Orthodox Judaism strongly discourages the making of such vows today, for this very reason. Once a vow is made, it cannot be terminated by any other way than the proper sacrifices etc. in the Jerusalem temple.



as a patron to the four Jewish Christian brothers who were nearing the end of their Nazirite vow and needed financial support for paying for the ritual shaving of their heads by a certified rabbi in the temple, as well as funding for the cost of the rather elaborate set of animal and grain sacrifices that had to be bought and offering up in the inner court of the temple.

Verse 26 indicates that on the next day after meeting with James and the elders, Paul 1) ἀγνισθεῖς, *was purified*, by the proper rituals of temple purification; 2) διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἀγνισμοῦ, publicly declared the intended end of the Nazirite vows for the four men at seven days later; and 3) ἕως οὗ προσηνήχθη ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου αὐτῶν ἢ προσφορά, proper sacrifices would be offered up in the temple at the end of the seven days.

Thus the following seven days were to be focused on proper concluding of the vows with the required purification rites and sacrifices. Unfortunately, Paul would not get to complete these commitments, since the uproar against him erupted a day or so before the end of the seven days (cf. v. 27).



#### 8.1.1.2 Arrest in the Temple, Acts 21:27-36

27 Ὡς δὲ ἔμελλον αἱ ἑπτὰ ἡμέραι συντελεῖσθαι, οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι θεασάμενοι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ συνέχεον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον καὶ ἐπέβαλον ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας 28 κράζοντες· ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται, βοθηεῖτε· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ τόπου τούτου πάντας πανταχῆ διδάσκων, ἔτι τε καὶ Ἑλλήνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καὶ κεκοίνωκεν τὸν ἅγιον τόπον τούτον. 29 ἦσαν γὰρ προεωρακότες Τρόφιμον τὸν Ἐφεσίον ἐν τῇ πόλει σὺν αὐτῷ, ὃν ἐνόμιζον ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν εἰσήγαγεν ὁ Παῦλος. 30 ἐκινήθη τε ἡ πόλις ὅλη καὶ ἐγένετο συνδρομὴ τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ ἐπιλαβόμενοι τοῦ Παύλου εἶκον αὐτὸν ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ εὐθέως ἐκλείσθησαν αἱ θύραι. 31 Ζητούντων τε αὐτὸν ἀποκτεῖναι ἀνέβη φάσις τῷ χιλιάρχῳ τῆς σπειρῆς ὅτι ὅλη συγχύννεται Ἰερουσαλήμ. 32 ὃς ἐξαυτῆς παραλαβὼν στρατιώτας καὶ ἑκατοντάρχας κατέδραμεν ἐπ’ αὐτούς, οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες τὸν χιλιάρχον καὶ τοὺς στρατιώτας ἐπαύσαντο τύπτοντες τὸν Παῦλον. 33 τότε ἐγγίσας ὁ χιλιάρχος ἐπελάβετο αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκέλευσεν δεθῆναι ἀλύσειν δυσίν, καὶ ἐπυθάνετο τίς εἶη καὶ τί ἐστιν πεποικῶς. 34 ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλο τι ἐπεφώνουν ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ. μὴ δυναμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλές διὰ τὸν θόρυβον ἐκέλευσεν ἄγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν. 35 ὅτε δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀναβαθμούς, συνέβη βαστάζεσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν διὰ τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου, 36 ἠκολούθει γὰρ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ κράζοντες· αἶρε αὐτόν.

27 When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd. They seized him, 28 shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. 30 Then all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. 31 While they were trying to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 Immediately he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the tribune came, arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; he inquired who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. 35 When Paul came to the steps, the violence of the mob was so great that he had to be carried by the soldiers. 36 The crowd that followed kept shouting, “Away with him!”

What Luke describes in this series of episodes is the Hellenistic Jewish reaction by the visitors from Asia (vv. 27-30), followed by the inciting of the people of Jerusalem (vv. 30-31), and the rescue of Paul by the Romans (vv. 32-36).

**Hellenistic Jews from Asia cause an uproar, vv. 27-30.** In the single sentence which makes up these verses the two main clause verbs are συνέχεον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον καὶ ἐπέβαλον ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας 28 κράζοντες, *they began stirring up the entire crowd and thrusting their hands on him screaming out....* The expansion elements flesh out these two core actions.

When did these actions take place? According to Luke, Ὡς δὲ ἔμελλον αἱ ἑπτὰ ἡμέραι συντελεῖσθαι.

The background assumption of this temporal expression seems to be Num. 6:9.<sup>28</sup> Evidently during the period of their vow, the four men Paul was sponsoring had incurred some kind of defilement and were going through the required seven period of purification. Or, perhaps it implies that Paul was completing the seven period of ritual purification from having traveled outside the promised land and thus become ritually impure.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of precise reference, the Greek expression could be understood to mean either toward the end of the seven day period, or toward the end of the seventh day. The latter idea is clearly the intent of the fifth century codex D alternative reading συντελουμένης δὲ τῆς ἑβδόμης ἡμέρας, *when the seventh day was nearing completion*. But the first meaning of toward the end of the week is the more natural meaning of the adopted reading of the text.<sup>30</sup> Although not overly significant to the general thrust of idea expression in the passage, the first meaning does clearly imply that Paul was prevented from completing the ritual of purification by these Asian Jews.<sup>31</sup>

The source of this opposition to Paul is designated as οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι, *the Jews from Asia*.<sup>32</sup> They knew Paul to the extent that they were aware of his earlier ministry in Ephesus, the provincial capital of Asia, and they recognized him by his appearance. According to Acts 19:8-9, Paul had spent three months presenting the Gospel in the Jewish synagogue community in Ephesus before opposition forced him out of the synagogue. Very possibly these 'Asian Jews' now in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost celebration were some of the τινες ἑσκληρύνοντο καὶ ἠπείθουν κακολογοῦντες τὴν ὁδὸν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πλήθους, *certain ones became stubborn in their opposition and refused to believe thus speaking evil words against the way before the crowd* (v. 9). The presence and blessing of God on the preaching of the Gospel brought in great numbers of converts to Christianity among

---

<sup>28</sup>Num. 6:9-12. If someone dies very suddenly nearby, defiling the consecrated head, then they shall shave the head on the day of their cleansing; on the seventh day they shall shave it. 10 On the eighth day they shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting, 11 and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for them, because they incurred guilt by reason of the corpse. They shall sanctify the head that same day, 12 and separate themselves to the LORD for their days as nazirites, and bring a male lamb a year old as a guilt offering. The former time shall be void, because the consecrated head was defiled.

9 εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν ἐν ἧ ἡμέρᾳ ἐξάπινα ἐπ' αὐτῷ, παραχρῆμα μιανθήσεται ἡ κεφαλὴ εὐχῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ξυρήσεται τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἢ ἂν ἡμέρα καθαρῶσθαι· τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ ἑβδόμῃ ξυρηθήσεται.† 10 καὶ τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ ὀγδόῃ οἴσει δύο τρυγόνας ἢ δύο νεοσσούς περιστερῶν πρὸς τὸν ἱερέα ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου,† 11 καὶ ποιήσει ὁ ἱερεὺς μίαν περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ μίαν εἰς ὀλοκαύτωμα, καὶ ἐξλάσεται περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ ἱερεὺς περὶ ὧν ἥμαρτεν περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἀγιάσει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ,† 12 ἢ ἡγιάσθη κυρίῳ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς εὐχῆς, καὶ προσάζει ἄμνον ἐνιαύσιον εἰς πλημμέλειαν, καὶ αἱ ἡμέραι αἱ πρότεροι ἄλογοι ἔσονται, ὅτι ἐμίανθη κεφαλὴ εὐχῆς αὐτοῦ.†

<sup>29</sup>αἱ ἑπτὰ ἡμέραι are most naturally understood in terms of Num. 6:9 to mean that the four men who had undertaken (Nazirite) vows had incurred some uncleanness, for removing which a seven day period was necessary. Alternatively (see e.g. Beyer 132; Pesch 2:224) Paul might have needed to remove uncleanness due to his residence abroad. This would require seven days in view of Num. 19:11-13—a passage which is relevant because uncleanness caused by life outside Palestine was caused 'weil man befürchtete, dass dort überall verunreinigende Gräber auch in verborgenen vorhanden sein möchten' (StrB 2:759). D gig (syp) have συντελουμένης δὲ τῆς ἑβδόμης ἡμέρας, the seventh day was coming to its end, which is an alternative expression for the same time, for ὡς δὲ ἐμελλον means when the seven days were about to be completed (though Bruce 1:394 thinks that they were about to begin). E. Schwartz, referred to in *Begs*. 4:274, conjectured ἑβδομάδες in place of ἑπτὰ ἡμέραι: the seven weeks (between Passover and Pentecost) were about to be completed. This would introduce an otherwise surprisingly absent second reference to the Pentecost of 20:16, but it has no other virtue, and a reference to Pentecost in the midst of a passage dealing with vows would be very odd. H. Sahlin (NovT 24 (1982), 188) suggested that the number seven crept into the text from a marginal ζ', intended as a contraction of ζῆται, meaning 'This is doubtful; look it up', and misunderstood as a numeral." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1018-19.]

<sup>30</sup>Paul's later explanation of this in 24:11 does not throw much additional light on the exact time frame: δυναμένου σου ἐπιγνώνα ὅτι οὐ πλείους εἰσὶν μοι ἡμέραι δώδεκα ἀφ' ἧς ἀνέβην προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, *As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem*. He indicates that no more than twelve days had passed from his arrival in Jerusalem until the mob seized him in the temple.

Further, in 24:18 Paul states in his defense speech:

17 δι' ἐτῶν δὲ πλείονων ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων εἰς τὸ ἔθνος μου παρεγενόμην καὶ προσφοράς, 18 *ἐν αἷς εὐρόν με ἡγνισμένον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ οὐ μετὰ ὄχλον οὐδὲ μετὰ θορύβον*, 17 *Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. 18 While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance.*

<sup>31</sup>Paul's purificatory process lasted for seven days; there was a special ceremony of purification on the third day and the seventh day.<sup>43</sup> He had practically completed all that was required of him<sup>44</sup> when a riot broke out in the temple courts." [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 408-09.]

<sup>32</sup>In his later defense speech Paul refers to them the same way (cf. 24:19): *τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι*, οὓς ἔδει ἐπὶ σοῦ παρεῖναι καὶ κατηγορεῖν εἴ τι ἔχοιεν πρὸς ἐμέ, *But there were some Jews from Asia—they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me.*

both Jews and Gentiles over the subsequent two plus year ministry of Paul after leaving the synagogue (19:10, 17-18). Although the later riot in Ephesus that forced Paul to leave the city was started by Demetrius, a Gentile, the Jewish synagogue put forward their leader, a man named Alexander, to try to distance the Jews in the city from having any connection to Paul and what he was advocating (19:32-34). The picture painted by Luke is that although receptive to the Gospel in the beginning of Paul's work in Ephesus, the Jewish community turned against Paul after the early months and vigorously opposed him during the bulk of the nearly three years he ministered in the city. From all indications this opposition arose in large part because of the success of Paul's preaching in making Jewish converts to Christianity.

Now some of these same Jewish opponents from Ephesus were in Jerusalem and they spotted Paul also in the city: θεασάμενοι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, *having seen him in the temple* (21:27).<sup>33</sup> This second temporal marker to the verbal actions provides more detail into the reason for their angry reaction against Paul. Whether these men spotted Paul in the larger court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women or further into the inner court, passed the Nicaonor Gate where only Jewish males were permitted, is not clear. This much smaller inner court would have been more likely since a much smaller number of people would have been present. Since from all indication this event happened during the Jewish festival of Pentecost,<sup>34</sup> massive crowds of Jewish people from all over the Roman empire were in the city in order to worship in the temple. In Hebrew the festival is *Shavuot* (שבועות) and in modern times it celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, and is very distinct from the Christian celebration of Pentecost.



Where ever they spotted him,<sup>35</sup> the combination of their animosity against Paul plus seeing him enter a part of the temple where only Jewish males were permitted worked overtime with their imagination. They assumed that he had brought an uncircumcised Gentile into this part of the temple. Such -- if it had been true -- would have caused the entire inner court of the temple to have been defiled, and thus would have shut down the sacrificing of animals until the proper rituals of cleansing could have been performed by the priests. This provided the opportune moment to take revenge on Paul for what they had seen he do and say back in Ephesus. Getting rid of him in Jerusalem would have been easier for them than in Ephesus, in part because Paul had established

<sup>33</sup>One must remember the huge size of Herod's temple at the beginning of the Christian era. It was over twice the size of the original temple built by Solomon centuries earlier. The grounds on which it stood was a piece of land over 1,000 by 1,500 feet in size. The supporting retaining wall around the perimeters -- portions of which still exist -- was built with huge stones, each one more than 15 feet long and 13 feet thick. The beginning retaining wall when Herod first began construction around 20 BCE contained limestone rocks more than 30 feet long. Over 10,000 workers were employed in this construction process that was not completed until 64 AD, less than seven years before the Romans would demolish the temple completely. The outer court of the Gentiles itself contained some 35 acres of space allowing for crowds of several thousand people to gather just in this outer part of the temple. For more background see "The Temple," Bible-History.com.

<sup>34</sup>Interestingly, according to the modern Jewish calendar, Pentecost in the Jewish year of 5773 (= 2013 Christian calendar) is scheduled from sunset May 14, 2013 to nightfall, May 16, 2013. ["Shavu'ot," *Judaism 101 online*]

<sup>35</sup>F.F. Bruce thinks that these Jews spotted Paul in the Court of Israel where only Jewish men were allowed:

Some of these Asian Jews had come to Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost, and finding Paul there, they determined to take more effective action against him now than they had found possible in Ephesus. Among the Gentile friends who had come with Paul to Jerusalem was the Ephesian Trophimus, whom these Asian Jews recognized when they saw him in Paul's company. When they later came on Paul in the temple, in the Court of Israel,<sup>46</sup> discharging the ritual obligations which he had undertaken, they took it into their heads that Trophimus was still with him. But this was a capital offense: Gentiles might visit the outer court of the temple (which for this reason was sometimes called the Court of the Gentiles), but they were forbidden to penetrate any of the inner courts on pain of death. The Roman authorities were so conciliatory of Jewish religious scruples in this regard that they authorized the death sentence for this trespass even when the offenders were Roman citizens.<sup>47</sup> That no Gentile might unwittingly enter into the forbidden areas, notices in Greek and Latin were fixed to the barrier separating them from the outer court, warning Gentiles that death was the penalty for further ingress.<sup>48</sup> Two of these notices (both in Greek) have been discovered—one in 1871 and one in 1935—the text of which runs: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the temple and enclosure. Any one who is caught trespassing will bear personal responsibility for his ensuing death."<sup>49</sup>

[F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 409.]



friendships with several significant government officials in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:31).<sup>36</sup>

They did not follow any legitimate procedure, such as alerting the temple police whose duty it was to protect the integrity of the temple. Rather, they resorted to mob violence by these two actions: συνέχεον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον καὶ ἐπέβαλον ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας, *they began stirring up the whole crowd of people and putting their hands on him*.<sup>37</sup> Later on when defending himself before King Agrippa (Acts 26:11), Paul will describe this same event in blunter terms: ἔνεκα τούτων με Ἰουδαῖοι συλλαβόμενοι [όντα] ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐπειρῶντο διαχειρίσασθαι, *For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me*. This later depiction had the effect of putting the crowd beyond the boundaries of Roman law in the eyes of King Agrippa, since the crowd had no authority to impose execution on anyone.

The content of their accusations against Paul are contained in verse 28: κράζοντες· ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται, βοηθεῖτε· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ τόπου τούτου πάντας πανταχῆ διδάσκων, ἔτι τε καὶ Ἑλληνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ κεκοίνωκεν τὸν ἅγιον τόπον τοῦτον, shouting, *“Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”*

First they appealed to the masses of other Jews present in the temple to assist them in subduing this single individual Paul: ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται, βοηθεῖτε, *fellow Israelites, help us!* The second part is their accusation against Paul. The heart of the first part is simply οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, *this is the man*. Their problem was with his teaching: ὁ κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ τόπου τούτου πάντας πανταχῆ διδάσκων, *the one teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the Law and this place*. This is more serious than the depiction of the rumor floating around Jerusalem about Paul that was mentioned by James (v. 21): ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν περιπατεῖν, *you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs*.<sup>38</sup> The Asian Jews made more sweeping charges against Paul. But in reality, just these charges alone would not have prompted the Romans to have allowed any execution, and especially of a Roman citizen.

The second part of their accusation is what would have caught the attention of the Roman authorities: ἔτι τε καὶ Ἑλληνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ κεκοίνωκεν τὸν ἅγιον τόπον τοῦτον, *more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place*. To be clear, non-Jews could legitimately enter the outer Court of the Gentiles in the temple. Likely this was as far as Trophimus had gone, if he actually did go to the temple with Paul. Only by bringing a non-Jew into the inner Court of Israel would there have been a serious violation of the temple code that the Romans had agreed to honor. This could have been an ‘honest’ mistake if these Asian Jews had seen Paul and Trophimus together in the outer Court of the Gentiles that day. But in reality, they had spotted the two together earlier in the week somewhere else in the city: ἦσαν γὰρ προεωρακότες Τρόφιμον τὸν Ἐφέσιον ἐν τῇ πόλει σὺν αὐτῷ, ὃν ἐνόμιζον ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν εἰσήγαγεν ὁ Παῦλος, *For they had previously seen Trophimus the*

<sup>36</sup>Acts 19:30-31. 30 Paul wished to go into the crowd, but the disciples would not let him; 31 even some officials of the province of Asia, who were friendly to him, sent him a message urging him not to venture into the theater.

30 Παύλου δὲ βουλομένου εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν δῆμον οὐκ εἶων αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταί· 31 τινὲς δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἀσιαρχῶν, ὄντες αὐτῷ φίλοι, πέμψαντες πρὸς αὐτὸν παρεκάλουν μὴ δοῦναι ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸ θέατρον.

<sup>37</sup>This language has echoes of the trumped up charges brought against Stephen nearly a quarter of a century earlier, and in which Paul had participated as a Pharisee opponent of Christianity.

Acts 6:12-14. 12 *They stirred up the people* as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, *seized him*, and brought him before the council. 13 They set up false witnesses *who said*, “This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.”

12 *συνεκίνησάν τε τὸν λαὸν* καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τοὺς γραμματεῖς καὶ *ἐπιστάντες* συνήρπασαν αὐτὸν καὶ ἤγαγον εἰς τὸ συνέδριον, 13 ἔστησάν τε μάρτυρας ψευδεῖς *λέγοντας*· ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος οὐ παύεται λαλῶν ῥήματα κατὰ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἁγίου [τούτου] καὶ τοῦ νόμου· 14 ἀκηκόαμεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθνη ἃ παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς.

<sup>38</sup>“The emphasis lies on the participial phrase; BDR § 270:1, n. 2. But the phrase is not consistent with the charge brought in 21:21. There Paul is alleged by Jewish Christians to teach Jews not to observe the Law; here he teaches all men, and this must mean all Gentiles, since he teaches against the people (λαός) as well as against the Law and ‘this place’ (the Temple). Cf. the charges against Stephen, which include a reference to ‘this place’ (6:13, 14). In the epistles Paul does not teach against the people (see especially Romans 9–11, though on the other side 1 Thess. 2:14–16); his teaching about the Law is notoriously complex, with positive and negative elements; he does not refer to the Temple. Luke of course does not mean to suggest that the accusations in this verse were justified.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1019-20.]

Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. When they spotted Paul again, this time in the temple and probably in the Court of the Israelites, they falsely assumed that Trophimus had gone with him into this forbidden area of the temple. Luke’s depiction of their thinking, ὃν ἐνόμιζον ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν εἰσῆγαγεν ὁ Παῦλος, whom they were supposing that Paul had taken into the temple, raises serious questions about whether they actually believed this or were just drawing this conclusion as a justification of seizing Paul.<sup>39</sup> Luke’s choice of terms, especially νομίζω, points more toward the latter motivation rather than a sincere conviction that Paul had defiled the temple. Paul later pin points their real motivation differently: they despised his preaching of the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> Trophimus was just a convenient excuse that would enable them to enlist the support of the Jewish crowd in the temple.

Paul’s friend is described as Τρόφιμον τὸν Ἐφέσιον, *Trophimus the Ephesian*. Τρόφιμος is mentioned by name three times in the New Testament: Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Tim. 4:20.<sup>41</sup> The biblical record indicates that he was a native of Ephesus, and that he traveled with Paul as a part of the delegation from Corinth to Jerusalem

<sup>39</sup>Luke had a wide choice of vocabulary to use in this depiction of their thinking:

**E Suppose, Think Possible (31.29–31.34)**

**31.29 οἶμαι; νομίζω; δοκέω<sup>a</sup>; ὑπολαμβάνω<sup>d</sup>:** *to regard something as presumably true, but without particular certainty—‘to suppose, to presume, to assume, to imagine, to believe, to think.’*

οἶμαι: μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὅτι λήμψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου ‘for that man must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord’ Jas 1:7; οὐδ’ αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρῆσαι τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία ‘I imagine that the whole world could not hold the books that would be written’ Jn 21:25.

νομίζω: οὗ ἐνομιζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι ‘where we presumed there would be a place of prayer’ Ac 16:13.

δοκέω: εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ‘if anyone among you thinks that he is a wise person by this world’s standards’ 1 Cor 3:18.

ὑπολαμβάνω: οὐ γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς ὑπολαμβάνετε οὗτοι μεθύουσιν ‘these men are not drunk as you suppose’ Ac 2:15; ὑπολαμβάνω ὅτι ᾧ τὸ πλεῖον ἐχαρίσατο ‘I suppose the one to whom the most was forgiven’ Lk 7:43.

In some languages the equivalent of ‘to suppose’ or ‘to presume’ is ‘to think somewhat’ or ‘to think perhaps’ or ‘to think a little.’ In some instances the lack of certainty is spelled out clearly as ‘to think, but not with certainty’ or ‘to think, but not to know’ or ‘to think, but not to be sure.’

**31.30 δοκεῖ** (impersonal form): *to hold an opinion based upon appearances which may be significantly different from reality—‘to seem, to appear, to assume, to think.’* τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν πλησίον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονέναι; ‘which one of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor?’ Lk 10:36; τί σοι δοκεῖ; ‘what do you think?’ Mt 17:25.

**31.31 τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον:** (an idiom, literally ‘those things according to the face’) *that which seems to be so—‘outward appearance, what things seem to be.’* τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε ‘you look at outward appearances’ 2 Cor 10:7.

**31.32 ὑπονοέω; ὑπόνοια, ας f:** *to have an opinion based on scant evidence, often with the implication of regarding a false opinion as true—‘to imagine, to conjecture, to suspect, to falsely suspect, to be suspicious, suspicion.’*

ὑπονοέω: περὶ οὗ σταθέντες οἱ κατηγοροὶ οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν ἔφερον ὧν ἐγὼ ὑπενόουν πονηρῶν ‘when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I had suspected’ Ac 25:18.

ὑπόνοια: ἐξ ὧν γίνεται ... ὑπόνοια πονηραὶ ‘this causes ... people to suspect evil’ or ‘... to suspect falsely’ or ‘... be suspicious’ 1 Tm 6:4.

**31.33 ἐκζήτησις, εως f:** *to form ideas which are unrelated to reality, normally with a negative connotation—‘speculation, worthless speculation, imaginings.’* αἰτίνες ἐκζητήσεις παρέχουσιν ‘these promote worthless speculations’ 1 Tm 1:4. It is also possible to understand ἐκζήτησις in 1 Tm 1:4 as meaning ‘controversies’ or ‘arguments’ (see 33.442).

**31.34 ἄκακος<sup>b</sup>, ον:** *pertaining to being unsuspecting or naive with regard to possible deception—‘unsuspecting, naive.’* διὰ τῆς χρηστολογίας καὶ εὐλογίας ἐξαπατῶσιν τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἀκάκων ‘by their fine words and flattering speech they deceive the minds of naive people’ Ro 16:18. It may be possible to spell out the implications of ἄκακος in Ro 16:18 by translating ‘the minds of people who do not suspect lies.’

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 368-69.]

<sup>40</sup>Acts 26:19-21. 19 “After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. 21 *For this reason* the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

19 Ὅθεν, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, οὐκ ἐγενόμην ἀπειθῆς τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὄπτασι 20 ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐν Δαμασκῷ πρώτων τε καὶ Ἱερουσόλυμοις, πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπήγγελλον μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἄζια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας. 21 *Ἔνεκα τούτων* με Ἰουδαῖοι συλλαβόμενοι [ῶντα] ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐπειρῶντο διαχειρίσασθαι.

<sup>41</sup>Acts 20:4. He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, *as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.*

συνείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ Σώπατρος Πύρρου Βεροιαῖος, Θεσσαλονικέων δὲ Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σεκοῦνδος, καὶ Γάϊος Δερβαῖος καὶ Τιμόθεος, *Ἀσιανοὶ δὲ Τύχικος καὶ Τρόφιμος.*

2 Tim. 4:20. Erastus remained in Corinth; *Trophimus I left ill in Miletus.* Ἐραστός ἐμεινεν ἐν Κορίνθῳ, *Τρόφιμον δὲ ἀπέλιπον ἐν Μιλήτῳ ἀσθενοῦντα.*

at the end of the third missionary journey. Some years later when Paul came through Asia including Ephesus, Trophimus became sick and Paul left him at Miletus.<sup>42</sup> While with Paul in Jerusalem, he became the center of controversy via the accusation of these Asian Jews against Paul.

**The mob incitement of the residents of Jerusalem**, vv. 30-31. The next scene described by Luke centers on the mob reaction against Paul that almost cost the apostle his life. Two segments of this are depicted by Luke. First, there was the mob violence against Paul (v. 30) and at the same time mention that reports of this were rushed to the Roman commanding military officer (v. 31).

The reaction of the crowd inside the inner court of the temple to the cry for help by the Asian Jews (v. 28a) was answered massively and word spread quickly into the city itself: ἐκινήθη τε ἡ πόλις ὅλη, **Then all the city was aroused**. The sense of the verb κινέω here is to cause a disturbance. Luke describes the entire city becoming **arouse in alarm** and anger that the temple had been defiled. Keep in mind that all this is happening during

<sup>42</sup>“The meaning of the name Trophimus is based on the Greek word *tropheia*, which can refer either to ‘service as a wet-nurse’ or to the nourishment thus provided. Therefore, the name Trophimus could mean ‘foster child’ or ‘nourishment,’ depending on whether the emphasis was placed on the one being nourished or on the nourishment being provided.

“The individual so named is mentioned three times in the NT (Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Tim 4:20), always as a companion of Paul’s in his travels. An Ephesian Christian (Acts 21:29), Trophimus, along with TYCHICUS, apparently represented the Asian churches who participated in the collection Paul intended to bring to Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1–4). There is some uncertainty in the manuscript tradition of Acts 20:3–6 as to whether Trophimus and Tychicus were traveling with Paul from the beginning or whether they joined the group only in Troas or Philippi (see Delebecque 1983: 556–64; 1984: 365). In any case, Trophimus and the others sailed with Paul along the coast of Asia Minor, across the Mediterranean Sea to Tyre, and eventually arrived in Jerusalem.

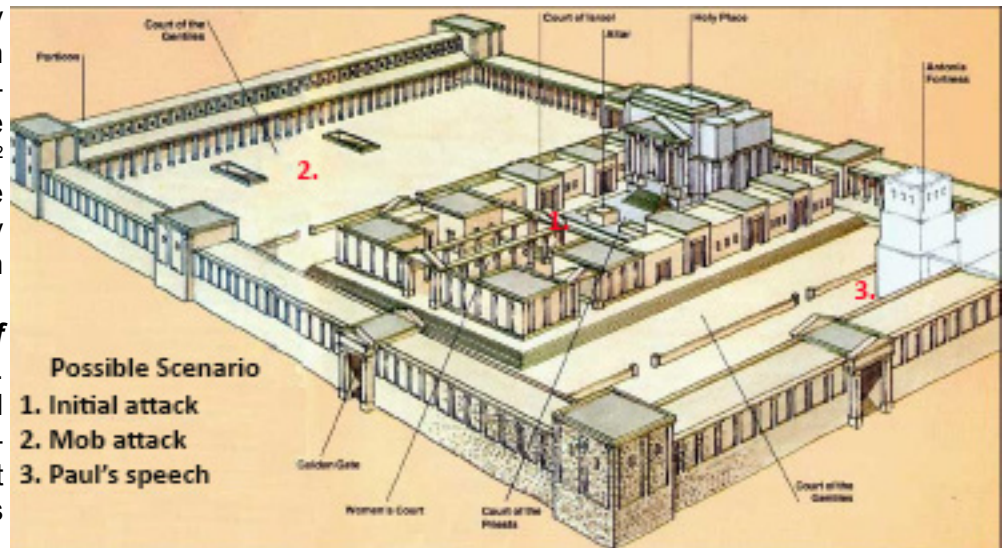
“Jews from the province of Asia (Acts 21:27), having seen Paul and Trophimus together in Jerusalem (Acts 21:29), supposed that Paul had taken Trophimus into the inner courts of the temple (Acts 21:28). If Trophimus was an uncircumcised gentile convert to Christianity, such an action would have defiled the temple, according to Jewish law. Since Paul was attempting to follow Jewish law carefully in this instance (Acts 21:26), he would not have needlessly jeopardized his mission by bringing Trophimus into the inner courts. Thus, Trophimus was the circumstantial, but innocent cause of Paul’s arrest (cf. Acts 24:6).

“2 Tim 4:20 mentions that Paul left Trophimus behind in Miletus (a city not far from Ephesus), because he was sick. If this is a reference to the trip mentioned in Acts 20–21, it stands in apparent contradiction to Acts 21:29. Since he rules out any later trips through Miletus, Throckmorton (IDB 4: 713) considers Acts and 2 Timothy irreconcilable. Robeck (ISBE 4: 923), on the other hand, argues that Paul’s imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30) was followed by a release, during which he again traveled to Miletus and was forced to leave Trophimus behind due to illness. 2 Tim 4:6–18, therefore, would refer to a harsh and lonely later imprisonment. It can be legitimately asked, however, whether traditional support for such a scenario arises from historical fact or from attempts to reconcile the apparent contradiction.

“Other attempts at reconciliation focus on alternative interpretations of the language of Acts 21:29 and 2 Tim 4:20. Erbes (1909: 207–13) argues creatively that the city in which Asian Jews saw Paul and Trophimus together (Acts 21:29) was not Jerusalem but Ephesus. They recognized Paul in the temple because they had seen him at home with someone they knew well. This, however, is far from the most natural reading of Acts 21:29. Dibelius and Conzelmann (*The Pastoral Epistles Hermeneia*, 125), on the other hand, suggest that Miletus (milêôt) in 2 Tim 4:20 may be a corruption of the word Malta (melitê). Thus, Trophimus could have accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and on toward Rome (Acts 27), but have been left sick on the island of Malta while Paul and his fellow prisoners completed their journey. If this were so, it is strange that Trophimus was not mentioned in Acts 27:2. Therefore, the tradition of a post-Acts journey, in spite of the problems, is probably the best explanation of the available information.

“Rutherford (ISBE 5: 3023–24) notes the possibility that Trophimus could be the highly praised but unnamed individual who, according to 2 Cor 8:16–24, was to travel with Titus to represent Paul in Corinth. This ‘brother’ (2 Cor 8:18–20) was one of those involved in the collection for Jerusalem. But his identification with Trophimus must remain uncertain for lack of evidence.”

[Jon Paulien, “Trophimus (Person)” In , in , vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 667.]



- Possible Scenario**
1. Initial attack
  2. Mob attack
  3. Paul's speech
1. Paul was seized by the Jews from Asia in the Court of Israel (Acts 21:27)
  2. Paul was dragged out of the temple proper to the Court of Gentiles (Acts 21:30)
  3. Paul spoke to the crowd from the steps of the Roman barracks (Acts 21:40)



the Pentecost festival, which meant that additional thousands of people were crowded into the city beyond the normal population. The electric atmosphere of the festival made such news extremely alarming. Luke then says ἐγένετο συνδρομή τοῦ λαοῦ, *a forming of a mob of the people took place*.<sup>43</sup> The noun συνδρομή paints a graphic picture of people running together in chaos so that a mob is formed. In such a state the crowd is easily controlled and virtual slaves to the wishes of the people leading them. The third action of this group was ἐπιλαβόμενοι τοῦ Παύλου εἶλκον αὐτὸν ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ, *after having seized Paul, they began dragging him out of the temple*. Luke's language depicts very rough treatment, which was intentional on the part of these group leaders. The precise meaning of ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ, *out of the temple*, is the inner courts of the temple where non-Jews were forbidden. This was the temple proper and did not include the Court of the Gentiles that surrounded the complex and had few if any restrictions about access (see the above graphic).<sup>44</sup> The final action was εὐθέως ἐκλείσθησαν αἱ θύραι, *immediately the gates were closed*.<sup>45</sup> This would be the final time Paul would ever set foot in the temple in Jerusalem. If Luke had any symbolic intent in this fourfold depiction, it had to be a sad time for Paul. In the midst of completing the rite of purification, he was suddenly and unjustly dragged out of the temple by a mob intent on killing him.<sup>46</sup> Never again would he set foot in the house of God that had been central to his worship since childhood.

The other point (v. 31) Luke makes is that a report of these events rapidly reached the commanding officer of the Roman troops stationed in the Fortress of Antonia located on the northeast corner of the Court of the Gentiles.<sup>47</sup> The Romans were never far away during major festivals, as Josephus notes in his descriptions, and

<sup>43</sup> συνδρομή, ἦς, ἡ (συντρέχω) **formation of a mob by pers. running together, running together** (Cephisodorus [V/IV B.C.] in Aristot., Rhet. 3, 10, 1411a, 29; Polyb. 1, 69, 11; Diod S 3, 71, 3; 15, 90, 2; 3 Macc 3:8; Ath., R. 21, 74, 5) ἐγένετο σ. τοῦ λαοῦ *the people rushed together* **Ac 21:30** (Polyb. 1, 67, 2; Jdth 10:18 ἐγένετο συνδρομή).—DELG s.v. δραμεῖν. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 967.]

<sup>44</sup>“Marshall (348) follows Jeremias (*Jerusalem* 210) in thinking that the gates of the inner courts, not the outer gates of the Temple, were closed.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1021.]

<sup>45</sup>“When the process of dragging Paul out was complete, the doors were shut. Or perhaps, the gate was shut, since θύραι, plural, was used of the folding doors of such a gate as the Temple may be supposed to have had. Presumably once the supposed offender was outside the Temple authorities closed the gate(s) in order to prevent further profanation—by the murder of Paul?” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1021.]

<sup>46</sup>“Some commentators have seen symbolic significance in the brief statement that ‘immediately the doors were shut’; and such a significance may well have been intended by Luke. T. D. Bernard, for example, in his Bampton Lectures for 1864, says of this incident: “ ‘Believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets’ and ‘having committed nothing against the people or customs of [his] fathers’, he [Paul] and his creed are forced from their proper home. On it as well as him the Temple doors are shut.”<sup>51</sup> For Luke himself, this may have been the moment when the Jerusalem temple ceased to fill the honorable role hitherto ascribed to it in his twofold history. The exclusion of God’s message and messenger from the house once called by his name sealed its doom: it was now ripe for the destruction which Jesus had predicted for it many years before (Luke 21:6).” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 410.]

<sup>47</sup>“(240) Next to this, and before you come to the edifice of the tower itself, there was a wall three cubits high; but within that wall all the space of the tower of Antonia itself was built upon, to the height, of forty cubits. (241) The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, it might seem to be composed of several cities, but by its magnificence, it seemed a palace; (242) and as the entire structure resembled that of a tower, it contained also four other distinct towers at its four corners; whereof the others were but fifty cubits high; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was seventy cubits high, that from thence the whole temple might be viewed; (243) but on the corner where it joined to the two cloisters of the temple, it had passages down to them both, through which the guard (244) (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways among the cloisters, with their arms, on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations; (245) for the temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia a guard to the temple; and in that tower were the guards of those three.” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), War 5.240-245].

Josephus also describes an incident here during a Passover celebration in the early 60s, just shortly after this episode at Pentecost which Luke describes. Some 20,000 Jews were killed inside the outer court by the Romans in an incident:

3. (105) Now, while the Jewish affairs were under the administration of Cumanus, there happened a great tumult at the city of Jerusalem, and many of the Jews perished therein; but I shall first explain the occasion whence it was derived. (106) When that feast which is called the Passover was at hand, at which time our custom is to use unleavened bread, and a great multitude was gathered together from all parts to that feast, Cumanus was afraid lest some attempt of innovation should then be made by them; so he ordered that one regiment of the army should take their arms, and stand in the temple cloisters, to repress any attempts of innovation, if perchance any such should begin; (107) and this was no more than what the former procurators of Judea did at such festivals; (108) but on the fourth day of the feast, a certain soldier let down his breeches, and exposed his privy members to the multitude, which put those that saw him into a furious rage, and made them cry out that this impious action was not done

thus it didn't take long for news to reach the Roman commander. Luke does not indicate who made the report, although the likelihood is that the soldiers doing watch guard duty in the towers spotted it and relayed the information to the commanding officer. Being always on alert for such disturbances, the Romans responded quickly and effectively. In Acts 23:26 we learn that the commander's name was Κλαύδιος Λυσίας, *Claudius Lysias*. He was commander of a cohort of soldiers: τῷ χιλιάρχῳ τῆς σπείρης. This is the Greek equivalent to the Latin *tribunus (militum)*, commander of a thousand soldiers, although the cohorts seldom ever were at maximum strength.

Luke calls the word sent to the commander a φάσις, which was "not a formal report; nearer to *rumour*."<sup>48</sup> The core of the report was ὅτι ὅλη συγγύνεται Ἰερουσαλήμ, *that all Jerusalem was in an uproar*.<sup>49</sup> This compares to the earlier references: συνέχεον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον, *they began stirring up the entire crowd* (v. 27), and ἐκινήθη τε ἡ πόλις ὅλη καὶ ἐγένετο συνδρομή τοῦ λαοῦ, *all the city began to be aroused and a mob was formed of the people* (v. 30). All this took place, Luke says, Ζητούντων τε αὐτὸν ἀποκτεῖναι, *and while they were trying to kill him*.<sup>50</sup> That their intent was to kill the apostle is made clear by Paul himself later in Acts 26:21 in his speech before King Agrippa.<sup>51</sup> Paul was being mistreated severely, but evidently some hesitancy about killing him quickly in the outer court of the temple was present in the minds of some in the crowds. They could incur the wrath of the Romans for such an action, and especially once it was determined that they had killed a Roman citizen. The Asian Jews knew well the status of Paul with the Roman government from their observation earlier in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:33-34). This gave the Romans enough time to get to Paul before the crowd managed to take his life.

**Paul's rescue from the mob by the Romans**, vv. 32-36. Although the Romans would later become his executioners, at this point they became his rescuers. Coming from the very close by Antonia's Fortress meant that it didn't take long for a contingent of Roman troops to reach the mob where they were beating up Paul in the outer court of the temple: ὃς ἐξαυτῆς παραλαβὼν στρατιώτας καὶ ἑκατοντάρχας κατέδραμεν ἐπ' αὐτοῦς, *Immediately he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them*. The 'he' in the text is Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune, in charge of maintaining peace and order in the city during the festival of Pentecost (cf. v. 31).<sup>52</sup> The presence of at least two centurions, ἑκατοντάρχας (note the plural form), suggests a minimum of two hundred soldiers coming with them. Literally Luke says this large body of troops 'came running down upon them.' They came hurriedly and

---

to reproach them, but God himself; nay, some of them reproached Cumanus, and pretended that the soldier was set on by him; (109) which when Cumanus heard, he was also himself not a little provoked at such reproaches laid upon him; yet did he exhort them to leave off such seditious attempts, and not to raise a tumult at the festival; (110) but when he could not induce them to be quiet, for they still went on in their reproaches to him, he gave order that the whole army should take their entire armor, and come to Antonia, which was a fortress, as we have said already, which overlooked the temple; (111) but when the multitude saw the soldiers there, they were affrighted at them, and ran away hastily; but as the passages out were but narrow, and as they thought their enemies followed them, they were crowded together in their flight, and a great number were pressed to death in those narrow passages; (112) nor indeed was the number fewer than twenty thousand that perished in this tumult. So, instead of a festival they had at last a mournful day of it; and they all of them forgot their prayers and sacrifices, and betook themselves to lamentation and weeping; so great an affliction did the impudent obscenity of a single soldier bring upon them.

[Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), Ant. 20:106f]

<sup>48</sup>C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1021.

<sup>49</sup>"The report was that the whole of Jerusalem συγγύνεται (so  $\kappa^*$  A B D 33 (1175)  $\rho\epsilon$   $\nu\gamma$ ; συγκέχρται is read by P<sup>74</sup>  $\kappa^e$  E  $\Psi$  M d g i g), was in an uproar." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1022.]

<sup>50</sup>"The subject of ζητούντων (which would be αὐτῶν, the members of the crowd) is not expressed; such omission of the pronoun in a genitive absolute is both classical and Hellenistic: Zerwick § 50; BDR § 423. One would have supposed that a serious attempt to kill Paul would have succeeded long before word could be brought to the tribune." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1021.]

<sup>51</sup>**Acts 26:19-21.** 19 After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. 21 *For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.*

19 Ὅθεν, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, οὐκ ἐγενόμην ἀπειθῆς τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὄπτασια 20 ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐν Δαμασκῶ πρώτον τε καὶ Ἱερουσαλόμεις, πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπήγγελλον μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας. 21 Ἔνεκα τούτων με Ἰουδαῖοι συλλαβόμενοι [ὄντα] ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐπειρῶντο διαχειρίσασθαι.

<sup>52</sup>"At the end of the verse the margin of the Harclean Syriac adds with asterisk the words, 'See therefore that they do not make an uprising,' which Hilgenfeld, Blass, and Clark render into Greek, ὅρα οὖν μὴ ποιῶνται ἐπανάστασιν (the word ἐπανάστασις, however, does not occur in the New Testament)." [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 430.]

burst into the midst of the riotous crowd of Jews without hesitation.

The crowd's response to the Romans is simply: οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες τὸν χιλιάρχον καὶ τοὺς στρατιώτας ἐπαύσαντο τύπτοντες τὸν Παῦλον, *When they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul*. The one thing the Romans had zero tolerance for was an unruly crowd causing a disturbance. The sight of several hundred Roman soldiers marching in quick step formation toward you would truly be a strong message to lay off your beating up on this Jewish man named Paul.

When the dust settled somewhat, Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune, quickly began the standard interrogation in order to determine what was going on: τότε ἐγγίσας ὁ χιλιάρχος ἐπελάβετο αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκέλευσεν δεθῆναι ἀλύσειν δυσὶν, καὶ ἐπυνθάνετο τίς εἶη καὶ τί ἐστιν πεποιηκώς, *Then the tribune came, arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; he inquired who he was and what he had done*. He took this as a serious issue and was determined to 'get to the bottom of it' as quickly as possible.



The use of two chains to restrain Paul most likely signals a chain in each wrist connected to a Roman soldier on either side of him. All this happened in the court yard where the crowd had been beating on Paul. Taking Paul into custody served two purposes: it prevented a possible criminal from escaping, but it also protected him from the crowd as well. What Lysias didn't know at this point was that by chaining Paul he himself had committed a serious violation of Roman law in putting into chains a citizen of Rome.

The interrogation centered on questioning the crowd rather than Paul: καὶ ἐπυνθάνετο τίς εἶη καὶ τί ἐστιν πεποιηκώς, *and he began questioning about who he might be and what he might have done*. The standard use of the optative mood verb, εἶη, and the periphrastic perfect verb phrase, ἐστιν πεποιηκώς, reflect a more classical style of Greek writing.<sup>53</sup> The first verb expresses some uncertainty as to Paul's identity, while the second verbal phrase probes exactly what this individual had done that so agitated the crowd.

This approach only generated chaos for the Roman tribune with no real answers at all: ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλο τι ἐπεφώνουν ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ, *Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another*. What emerged is what often is the case in a mob situation. No clear reason for the agitation is forthcoming from the mob. All they know is that they don't like this man. The Asian Jews who had started this mess in the inner court of the temple to begin with had made false, slanderous accusations against Paul inside the temple (cf. vv. 27-29). But all this was lost in the mob mentality that took over by the time the Romans arrived in the outer court to prevent Paul from being killed. A legitimate reason for wanting the death of an individual turned into a mindless determination to kill, whatever the reason might have been originally.

Wisely Lysias decided to change the location where the atmosphere could calm down and enable him to determine what really was going on: μὴ δυναμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλές διὰ τὸν θόρυβον ἐκέλευσεν ἄγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν, *and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks*. Luke compliments this Roman officer as genuinely seeking γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλές, *to know the certainty of the situation*.<sup>54</sup> Before he took action he wanted to be certain of what had really taken place. In the out-

<sup>53</sup>“The first dependent verb is optative, the second (periphrastic perfect—cf. v. 29) indicative. If the two dependent questions are to be distinguished, the former indicates uncertainty, the latter the conviction that the man (whoever he might be) had certainly committed some crime. So Bruce 1:397; M. 1:199; and BDR § 386:1, n. 2. But Page (225) thinks it possible that τίς εἶη καὶ τί εἶη πεπ. may have been avoided as ugly.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1022.]

<sup>54</sup>ἀσφαλής, ἐς (s. ἀσφάλεια; Hom. et al.; Epict., ins, pap, LXX, TestSol, Philo, Joseph., Just.; Ath., R.)

**1. pert. to being stable, firm** ἄγκυρα **Hb 6:19** (w. βέβαιος, as Cebes 18, 3; 31, 1; Sext. Emp., Adv. Math. 8, 374; BGU 419, 18; Wsd 7:23; Dio Chrys. 34, 17 and 37; cp. 33, 17). τὸν ἄ. θεμέλιον the sure foundation 1 Cl 33:3 (cp. Wsd 4:3).

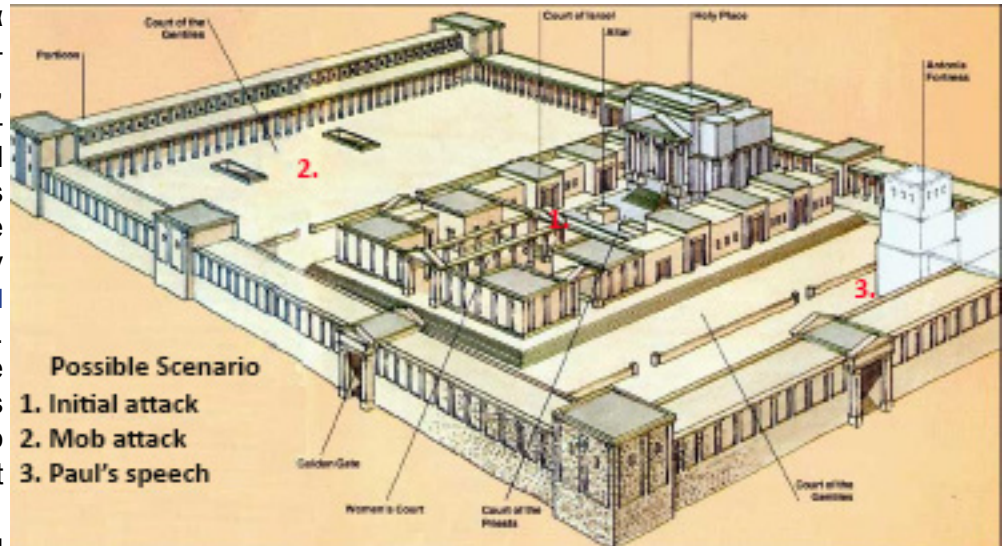
**2. fig.** (Philo, Exs. 153; Jos., Bell. 2, 524) **pert. to expression that ensures certainty about someth., certain**, ἀσφαλές τι γράφειν write someth. definite **Ac 25:26**; τὸ ἄ. the certainty = the truth (in ref. to ferreting out the facts; cp. Mitt-Wilck, I/2, 17, 8 [Traj.] ἵνα τὸ ἄ. ἐπιγνώ) γνῶναι **21:34; 22:30**; ἡ ἄ. γνώσις 1 Cl 1:2; Dg 12:4.

**3. pert. to being in someone's best interest, safe, secure** (Demosth. 10, 70 βίος ἄ.; Jos., Ant. 3, 41 ἄ. καὶ σῶφρον=the safest



er court the mob atmosphere (διὰ τὸν θόρυβον<sup>55</sup>) made this impossible to determine. Consequently, he did the sensible thing and ordered the soldiers to take Paul back around to Antonia's Fortress on the other side of the temple proper: ἐκέλευσεν ἄγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. Here the overpowering presence of hundreds of Roman soldiers would calm down the crowd so that he could get some straight answers.

The Jewish mob sensing this did not want to see it happen but were powerless to prevent it: ὅτε δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀναβαθμοῦς, συνέβη βαστάζεσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν διὰ τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου, ἠκολούθει γὰρ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ κρίζοντες· αἶρε αὐτόν, When Paul came to the steps, the violence of the mob was so great that he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!" These people were intent on getting rid of the apostle by violent means (διὰ τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου), but could not overpower the Roman soldiers. They sought to block him being taken up the flight of stairs from the outer courtyard of the temple into the Fortress where they would have no access to him. But overcoming a couple of hundred Roman soldiers, along with the presence of a few thousand soldiers inside the barracks who could assist, was not possible. But in order to make their point vividly to the Romans this crowd following along screamed at the top of their collective voice: αἶρε αὐτόν, Away with him! Luke's words here remind us of Jesus' trial before Pilate.<sup>56</sup> And the crowd will shout out these words again



1. Paul was seized by the Jews from Asia in the Court of Israel (Acts 21:27)
2. Paul was dragged out of the temple proper to the Court of Gentiles (Acts 21:30)
3. Paul spoke to the crowd from the steps of the Roman barracks (Acts 21:40)



and wisest) ὑμῖν (ἐστὶν) ἀσφαλές it is (a) safe (course) for you **Phil 3:1**. ἀσφαλές εἶναι ISm 8:2.—B. 756; 1237. DELG s.v. σφάλλω. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 147.

<sup>55</sup>θόρυβος, ον, ὁ (s. prec. two entries; Pind., Hdt. et al.; OGI 48, 9; IMagnMai 114, 3; pap, LXX, Philo, Joseph.; loanw. in rabb.).

1. a raising of voices that contributes to lack of understanding, *noise, clamor* **Ac 21:34**; MPol 8:3; 9:1 (for the expr. μέγας θ. s. Hs 9, 3, 1 in 3a below; Jos., Ant. 17, 184); AcPl Ha 1, 28 (sc.).

2. a state of confusion, *confusion, unrest* 1 Cl 57:4 (Pr 1:27).

3. a state or condition of varying degrees of commotion, *turmoil, excitement, uproar* (X., An. 3, 4, 35; Appian, Bell. Civ. 2, 118, §494)

a. of the milling about of a throng: *of mourners* **Mk 5:38** (though mngs. 1 and 2 are also poss.); of a crowd of workers Hs 9, 3, 1

b. of the noise and confusion of excited crowds (Philo, In Flacc. 120; Jos., Bell. 1, 201; 2, 611) **Mk 14:2**; **Ac 20:1**; γίνεται θ. (cp. PTeht 15, 3 [114 B.C.] θορύβου γενομένου ἐν τῇ κόμῃ) **Mt 26:5**; **27:24**; GJs 21:1, foll. by ἕως παύσεται ὁ θ. in 25:1. μετὰ θορύβου (Polyaenus 6, 41, 1; Ezk 7:11; Jos., Ant. 5, 216) with a disturbance **Ac 24:18**.—DELG. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 458.]

<sup>56</sup>**Luke 23:18**. Then they all shouted out together, "Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!"

Ἀνέκραγον δὲ παμπληθεὶ λέγοντες· αἶρε τοῦτον, ἀπόλυσον δὲ ἡμῖν τὸν Βαραββᾶν.

**John 19:14-15**. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" 15 They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor."

14 ἦν δὲ παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα, ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἑκτη. καὶ λέγει τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις· ἶδε ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν. 15 ἐκραύγασαν οὖν ἐκεῖνοι· ἄρον ἄρον, σταυρώσον αὐτόν. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· τὸν βασιλέα ὑμῶν σταυρώσω; ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς· οὐκ ἔχομεν βασιλέα εἰ μὴ Καίσαρα.

(22:22) in order to drown out Paul's defense speech from the second landing overlooking the outer courtyard (see graphic).

What now becomes clear is the accuracy of the earlier prophecy of Agabus at Caesarea (cf. 21:10-11).

10 While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

10 Ἐπιμερόντων δὲ ἡμέρας πλείους κατήλθεν τις ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας προφήτης ὀνόματι Ἄγαβος, 11 καὶ ἔλθων πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ ἄρας τὴν ζώνην τοῦ Παύλου, δῆσας ἑαυτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εἶπεν· τάδε λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· τὸν ἄνδρα οὗ ἐστὶν ἡ ζώνη αὕτη, οὕτως δῆσουσιν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ παραδώσουσιν εἰς χεῖρας ἐθνῶν.

For some time even earlier Paul had felt apprehension about what would happen when he traveled to Jerusalem, as he wrote to the Romans from Corinth before leaving for Jerusalem.<sup>57</sup> He affirmed this to the Ephesian leaders in his speech at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem.<sup>58</sup> And now it was unfolding, broadly speaking within the general framework of how it had been predicted earlier. The specifics of how it would happen were not known by Paul in advance, however.

### 8.1.1.3 Paul Defends Himself, Acts 21:37-22:29

What follows next in Acts is a lengthy summation of Paul speaking to the crowd from the safety of the stair landing several feet above the crowd.<sup>59</sup> He impresses the tribune with his language skills in both Greek and Hebrew, something the tribune did not possess as a Roman soldier, just Greek and Latin for him.

In typical ancient rhetorical fashion, Luke frames the speech itself, 22:1-21 with a narrative introduction, 21:37-40, and a narrative conclusion, 22:22-29. Within the speech itself, Paul makes a formal introduction (22:1-5) which is followed by two main points: 22:6-16 and 22:17-21. Most likely Paul had other intended points to make, but the crowd drowned



<sup>57</sup>Rom. 15:30-32. 30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, 31 *that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea*, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

30 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς [, ἀδελφοί,] διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ πνεύματος συναγωνίσασθαι μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, 31 *ἵνα ῥυθθῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπειθοῦντων ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ* καὶ ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ εὐπρόσδεκτος τοῖς ἁγίοις γένηται, 32 ἵνα ἐν χαρᾷ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν.

<sup>58</sup>Acts 20:22-24. 22 And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, *not knowing what will happen to me there*, 23 *except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me*. 24 But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.

22 Καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ δεδεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ *τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ συναντήσοντά μοι μὴ εἰδώς*, 23 *πλὴν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατὰ πόλιν διαμαρτύρεται μοι λέγον ὅτι δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις με μένουσιν*. 24 ἀλλ' οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιῶμαι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμίαν ἑμαυτῷ ὡς τελειῶσαι τὸν δρόμον μου καὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἣν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, διαμαρτύρασθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>59</sup>“The space devoted to Paul in custody,<sup>50</sup> 21:33–28:31, is longer than that describing his missionary work (chaps. 13–19).<sup>51</sup> This brute fact is not devoid of importance in assessing the purpose of the book. ‘History of the early church’ will not do. By this point readers can be forgiven for thinking that they are reading a biography of Paul. The model is not Josephus’s *Antiquities*. The Gospel genre provides a vastly more fruitful basis for comparison. One-fourth of Acts is devoted to Paul in custody, a period of no more than one tenth of the three decades covered in Acts.<sup>52</sup> Within Luke and Acts, this and the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (Luke 9–19) are the longest sections. Luke’s defense of Paul is only in part personal. By defending Paul, Acts defends gentile Christianity on more than one front.

“These apologetic efforts are internal. Jews would not have read them and discovered that Paul was not as bad as reputed, nor would polytheists have worked through this book to learn that the Christian movement was utterly devoid of subversive tendencies. For those who prized the Israelite background of the movement, Paul fell somewhere on the spectrum between a problem and an enemy. Those for whom this background had a limited appeal had no desire to emphasize it. The extremes of these sentiments would appear as the ‘Jewish Christianity’ of the Ps.-Clementines and the theology of Marcion. The force of this debate was already so strong when Luke wrote that he could not even mention Paul’s letters, which he both knew and used. Likewise, the collection, delivery of which was the purpose of Paul’s trip to Jerusalem, was too controversial to mention and was best left on the cutting-room floor.”

[Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 556.]



out his speech before he could complete it.

### 8.1.1.3.1 Narrative Introduction, Acts 21:37-40

37 Μέλλων τε εἰσάγεσθαι εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν ὁ Παῦλος λέγει τῷ χιλιάρχῳ· εἰ ἔξεστίν μοι εἰπεῖν τι πρὸς σέ; ὁ δὲ ἔφη· Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις; 38 οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ὁ πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναστατώσας καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων; 39 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Παῦλος· ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος μὲν εἰμι Ἰουδαῖος, Ταρσεύς τῆς Κιλικίας, οὐκ ἀσήμου πόλεως πολίτης· δέομαι δέ σου, ἐπιτρέψόν μοι λαλήσαι πρὸς τὸν λαόν. 40 ἐπιτρέψαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ὁ Παῦλος ἔστῳς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν κατέσεισεν τῇ χειρὶ τῷ λαῷ. πολλῆς δὲ σιγῆς γενομένης προσεφώνησεν τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ λέγων·

37 Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” The tribune replied, “Do you know Greek? 38 Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?” 39 Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city; I beg you, let me speak to the people.” 40 When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence; and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

The narrative introduction sets the scenario for the speech in a fascinating manner. It begins with a dialogue with the Roman tribune in Greek and then proceeds to the speech being made to the crowd in Aramaic. Of course, Luke records all this only in Greek, rather than in both languages. This because his targeted readers only read Greek and not Aramaic.

The introduction begins with a dialogue between Paul and Claudius Lysias (vv. 37-39), and then proceeds to set up the defense speech in v. 40.

The dialogue between Paul and the tribune is very civil and polite. It begins with a request to speak from Paul: 37 Μέλλων τε εἰσάγεσθαι εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν ὁ Παῦλος λέγει τῷ χιλιάρχῳ· εἰ ἔξεστίν μοι εἰπεῖν τι πρὸς σέ; Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” Unlike the roaring crowd shouting at the Roman military officer, Paul politely asks for permission to speak.

Paul’s asking the question in good Koine Greek catches the officer off guard, since renegade Jews were not supposed to know other languages outside Hebrew and Aramaic even though an Egyptian would probably have been able to speak some Greek.<sup>60</sup> Thus he responds with a question: ὁ δὲ ἔφη· Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις; οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ὁ πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναστατώσας καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων; The tribune replied, “Do you know Greek? Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?” The officer thought that he had bagged a really valuable rebel, but was he ever surprised. The full thrust of his first question Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις; is γινώσκεις λαλήσαι Ἑλληνιστὶ; Do you know how to speak Greek? He did not ask him whether Paul knew the Greek language and culture.<sup>61</sup> What has occasioned considerable discussion down through the years is the difference in the numbers between Luke and Josephus. Luke says this fellow led 4,000 fighters into the dessert, but Josephus says in the *Jewish Wars* that he had some 30,000 followers and elsewhere even different numbers.<sup>62</sup> Despite the

<sup>60</sup>“On the very precipice of torture,<sup>30</sup> Paul raises a polite question that causes the tribune to make a 180-degree turn in his character assessment. His question is best understood as a reference to the quality of Paul’s Greek accent, since a Jewish rebel<sup>31</sup> from Egypt was likely to have spoken some Greek.<sup>32</sup> Paul exhibited the fluency of an educated native speaker, a fellow who had just disembarked from the train from Princeton rather than some peasant just off the boat from Palermo.” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 553.]

Note an interesting contrast in Lucian’s *Navigium* 2 of an Egyptian boy:

“He spoke in a slovenly manner, one long, continuous prattle; he spoke Greek, but his accent and intonation pointed to his native land” (καὶ ἐφθέγγετο ἐπισεσυρμένον τι καὶ συνεχές καὶ ἐπίτροχον, Ἑλληνιστὶ μὲν, ἐς τὸ πάτριον δὲ τῷ ψόφῳ καὶ τῷ τῆς φωνῆς τόνῳ).

[Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 183.]

<sup>61</sup>“On the general question involved here see S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (1965) and J. N. Sevenster, *Do you know Greek?* (1968). Sevenster concludes (188): ‘Divers literary and archaeological data from different centuries agree in their testimonial to a knowledge of Greek in broad layers of the Jewish population in Palestine. And they contain not a single manifest indication that this was lacking during certain periods in the first three centuries AD’ See also ND 5:5–40, on bilingualism. Paul is recognized as a ‘productive bilingual.’” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1024.]

<sup>62</sup>“No doubt the false prophet to whom reference is made by Josephus. Whilst Felix was governor he gathered the people around him on the Mount of Olives to the number of 30,000, and foretold that at his word the walls of the city would fall. But Felix attacked him and the impostor fled although the majority (πλεῖστοι) of his followers were captured or slain, Jos., B.J., ii., 13, 5. In another



different numbers of followers it is clear that this fellow created a considerable uprising in Jerusalem during the mid 50s. And this was not the first time such had happened in Jerusalem, as Acts 5:36-37 indicates.<sup>63</sup>

Paul's skills with Greek prompts another question to which Claudius Lysias assumes a negative answer.<sup>64</sup> By the quality of Paul's speaking Greek to him, the officer assumes that Paul is not the Egyptian rebel that he first assumed.<sup>65</sup> Although clearly known in that time, we are initially at a loss to know who the officer was alluding to with this remark. But thanks to the Jewish historian Josephus (*Bell.* 2:261-263 and *Ant.* 20:169-172) we have some information about this fellow.<sup>66</sup> This happened during the governorship of Felix (52 - 58 AD), thus it was a relatively recent event in Jerusalem when Paul is arrested in 58 AD. During the period growing uprisings against the Roman presence in Judea were increasing. One important note: this fellow should be distinguished from the Sicarii, the *Assassins*,<sup>67</sup> originating out of Galilee who were increasing and becoming more successful in

---

account, *Ant.*, xx., 8, 6, Josephus states that 400 were killed and 200 wounded, so that he evidently contradicts himself and his numbers are untrustworthy. For the various attempts to reconcile these different notices, cf. Krenkel, *Josephus und Lukas*, p. 243." [W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Volume II: Commentary (New York: George H. Doran Company), 454.]

<sup>63</sup>**Acts 5:34-37.** 34 But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time. 35 Then he said to them, "Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared. 37 After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered.

34 ἀναστὰς δὲ τις ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ Φαρισαῖος ὀνόματι Γαμαλιήλ, νομοδιδάσκαλος τίμιος παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ἐκέλευσεν ἔξω βραχὺ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι 35 εἶπέν τε πρὸς αὐτούς· ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται, προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τούτοις τί μέλλετε πράσσειν. 36 πρὸ γὰρ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀνέστη Θεουδᾶς λέγων εἶναι τινα ἑαυτόν, ᾧ προσεκλήθη ἀνδρῶν ἀριθμὸς ὡς τετρακοσίων· ὃς ἀνηρέθη, καὶ πάντες ὅσοι ἐπέιθοντο αὐτῷ διελύθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο εἰς οὐδέν. 37 μετὰ τοῦτον ἀνέστη Ἰούδας ὁ Γαλιλαῖος ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ἀπογραφῆς καὶ ἀπέστησεν λαὸν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ· κάκεῖνος ἀπώλετο καὶ πάντες ὅσοι ἐπέιθοντο αὐτῷ διεσκορπίσθησαν.

<sup>64</sup>Ancient Greek had many more ways of setting up a question than is found in almost all modern western languages. A common pattern for asking questions often predisposed the expected answer from the other individual, either a yes this is so / I do this or a no this is not so / I did not do this. Here the οὐκ with the verb εἶ sets up the question in terms of "you aren't this fellow, are you?"

<sup>65</sup>"The tribune's failure to investigate or verify these assertions exhibits the force of Paul's personality, which positively radiated refinement and gentility. Paul does not wear his heart on his sleeve. He says nothing about his Roman citizenship. For Lysias just now, Tarsus will do. Within thirty-five verses the following characters emerge: (1) victim of mob (reader's perspective), (2) Egyptian revolutionary terrorist (tribune's perspective), (3) cultivated citizen of Tarsus (tribune's perspective), (4) highly skilled orator (temple audience's perspective), (5) well-educated, ardent, observant Jew (reader's perspective), (6) Roman citizen (soldiers' perspective). Oratorical handbooks recommended that different credentials were suitable for different audiences.<sup>35</sup> Luke's Paul had certainly grasped that advice." [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 554.]

<sup>66</sup>**The Jewish Wars.** "5. (261) But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; (262) these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his that were to break into the city with him, (263) but Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, while all the people assisted him in his attack upon them, insomuch that, when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away, with a few others, while the greatest part of those that were with him were either destroyed or taken alive; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed every one to their own homes and there concealed themselves." [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).]

**Antiquities of the Jews.** "(169) Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. (170) He said farther, that he would show them from hence, how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. (171) Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen, from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. (172) But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more. And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all; and when any persons would not comply with them, they set fire to their villages, and plundered them." [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).]

<sup>67</sup>The words of the officer, τοὺς τετρακισχίλιους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων, *four thousand men of the assassins*, in v. 38 do not imply the Jewish Sicarii movement, although the Greek terminology is used here. Often commentators confuse the two groups in failing to recognize a difference between σικάριος literally meaning *dagger* used figuratively in informal meaning, i.e., *assassin / terrorist*, and in formal meaning with the plural σικάριοι, i.e., *Sicarii*. A careful reading of Josephus' depictions of both groups makes the distinction very clear. Clearly Luke is not referring to the Sicarii in his reference here. These folks would not have tolerated an Egyptian leader, unlike those who were deceived by this fellow. .

the 50s.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps there was some disappointment for the officer in realizing that he had not captured this highly sought after Egyptian revolutionary leader.

Paul, in reply to the questions from the office, ignores the questions and answers instead with a declaration of who he is, rather than who he is not (v. 39): εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Παῦλος· ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος μὲν εἰμι Ἰουδαῖος, Ταρσεύς τῆς Κιλικίας, οὐκ ἀσήμου πόλεως πολίτης· δέομαι δέ σου, ἐπίτρεψόν μοι λαλήσαι πρὸς τὸν λαόν, *Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city; I beg you, let me speak to the people."* He makes two assertions and a request.

**First** Paul declares, ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος μὲν εἰμι Ἰουδαῖος, *I myself indeed am a Jewish man*. The very emphatic claim is in contradiction to the officer thinking him to be an Egyptian. The apostle proudly claimed his Jewish heritage to this Roman soldier. **Second**, he declares Ταρσεύς τῆς Κιλικίας, οὐκ ἀσήμου πόλεως πολίτης, *I am a Tarsian from Cilicia, a citizen of not an unimportant city*.<sup>69</sup> Thus Paul declares himself to be a Diaspora Jew.

Numerous questions surface here immediately. Central is the particular sense of πολίτης. Does this mean official citizenship or merely a resident? The term comes off of πόλις, *city*, and means a person connected to a particular city. Usually the term πολίτης designates an individual involved in the political life of a city in the ancient Greek tradition of those whose status as a πολίτης meant they participated in the decision making processes of the city.<sup>70</sup> This is distinct from οἱ ἐν τῷ πολιτεύματι, *those in the government*. The πολίτης could assemble with other citizens in the town theater on occasion in order to vote in various decisions put before the ἐκκλησία τῶν πολιτῶν, *assembly of the citizens*. Additionally certain rights and privileges came to such individuals, depending on the circumstance of the city where he was a πολίτης. However, in the Jewish literature this term takes on a different meaning closer to that of neighbor or fellow Jew, similar to resident.<sup>71</sup> In Luke's two other uses of this term (Lk. 15:15; 19:14) the meaning is closer to resident, since the Greek implications of citizenship embedded in πολίτης would have no relevancy to city designations inside Palestine. Add to this the meaning of Ταρσεύς, *a native of Tarsus* (Ταρσός), which does not carry with it the idea of citizenship, only a designation of one's home town. Clearly in Acts 22:3 the claim is made for Tarsus to be the place of Paul's birth, and he is also referred to as a Tarsian in Acts 9:11.

If Luke uses πολίτης here to technically mean official citizenship in the city of Tarsus for Paul, then an unanswerable question arises: how did Paul acquire such? From existing records it is clear that the vast majority of Diaspora Jews never acquired citizenship status in the towns where they lived and were born.<sup>72</sup> If Paul did acquire

<sup>68</sup>**The Jewish War.** "4. (258) There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, who laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. (259) These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government, and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty; (260) but Felix thought this procedure was to be the beginning of a revolt; so he sent some horsemen and footmen, both armed, who destroyed a great number of them." [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).]

<sup>69</sup>"The claim to citizenship of a Greek city is unusual in a Jew, and possible only where a special constitution made a body of Jewish citizens possible' (Hemer 1989: 127). But there is evidence that there were Jews who were citizens of Greek cities (as, for example, inscriptions from the synagogue recently excavated at Sardis demonstrate; Philostr. VA 6.34 presupposes that Jews were known to be citizens of Tarsus), and there are indications that the refoundation of the city by Antiochus Epiphanes may have created this possibility (cf. above)." [W. Ward Gasque, "Tarsus (Place)" In vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 334.]

<sup>70</sup>"Similarly, the πολίτης is one who shares with others in the πόλις as such, in the πόλις in its political quality, Plat. *Prot.*, 339e; *Apol.*, 37c; *Eur. Fr.*, 360 (TGF, 467, 11 ff.). He is thus a 'citizen' (of the town or state) with all the active and passive privileges appertaining thereto and in distinction from resident aliens and slaves, Aristot. *Pol.*, III, 1, p. 1275a, 7 and 22. Thus even apart from women and children the citizens are only one part<sup>12</sup> of the total population." [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:517.]

<sup>71</sup>"With the move from non-biblical to biblical Gk. there is a pronounced change of climate. This is reflected in the statistics. πόλις is still found at every turn. But πολιτεία, πολιτεύμα, πολιτεύομαι, are found only a few times in 2-4 Macc., πολιτεύμα only once, πολιτεύεσθαι once also in Est. 8:12 p. Except in 2 and 3 Macc. even πολίτης occurs only half-a-dozen times in various books of the Palestinian Canon, where it is an inexact term for Heb. words denoting the neighbour or fellow-countryman. The many derivatives and compounds in the Gk. lex.<sup>43</sup> do not occur at all apart from πολιορκεῖν and πολιορκία. In respect of πόλις the theoretical content is unmistakably quite different from what is found in the non-biblical world." [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:522.]

<sup>72</sup>"Whether Jews were citizens (in the strict sense of the term) of Hellenistic cities is discussed at length by Tcherikover (309-22), with reference to the views of other writers. His conclusion is: 'Three conclusions may be drawn from all this historical material. 1. The civic status of Diaspora Jews was not uniform, and the extent of their rights depended on when, how, and for what purpose the Jews came to a given country outside Palestine. 2. The organized Jewish community as a whole stood juridically outside the Greek city,

official citizenship in his home town, he would have been among a very small group of Diaspora Jews who held such citizenship. Luke employs a litotes here in affirming the importance of the city of Tarsus: τῆς Κιλικίας, οὐκ ἀσήμου πόλεως, of Cilicia, of a not insignificant city.<sup>73</sup> This is simply an indirect way of claiming high significance for the city. The combined impact of this assertion by Paul is a vigorous correction of the Roman officer's mistaken identity of him as the Egyptian revolutionary.

His request to Lysias is made with urgency: δέομαι δέ σου, ἐπίτρεψόν μοι λαλῆσαι πρὸς τὸν λαόν; I beg you, let me speak to the people.<sup>74</sup> The verb ἐπιτρέπω is often used for making requests in the imperative mood verb form; in the indicative mood etc. it describes giving permission to someone (cf. ἐπιτρέψαντος in v. 40). The Aorist imperative form here of ἐπίτρεψόν adds intensity in the sense of urgency to the request. The polite tone, rather than a demanding tone, is signaled by δέομαι δέ σου, but I beg you.

What is really fascinating is that the Roman officer would grant such a request: ἐπιτρέψαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ὁ Παῦλος ἐστῶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν κατέσεισεν τῆ χειρὶ τῷ λαῷ. πολλῆς δὲ σιγῆς γενομένης προσεφώνησεν τῆ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ λέγων, When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence; and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying. The genitive absolute construction ἐπιτρέψαντος αὐτοῦ, he granted permission, reflects an astounding shift in attitude by Lysias toward Paul. While thinking him to be the Egyptian revolutionary, no permission would ever have been granted to this leader that would give him the chance to whip up the emotions of the crowd against the Romans.<sup>75</sup> But the brief exchange between these two men speaking to one another in Greek convinced the Roman officer that it was safe to allow Paul to speak to this Jewish crowd. And so permission was given to Paul.<sup>76</sup>

Luke simply says: ὁ Παῦλος ἐστῶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν κατέσεισεν τῆ χειρὶ τῷ λαῷ, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence. Rather remarkable is Paul's ability to get the attention of the crowd with a hand gesture (κατέσεισεν τῆ χειρὶ τῷ λαῷ). He had been beaten up by the crowd, was bound in chains with Roman soldiers chained to him on either side (cf. v. 33), a noisy crowd continued shouting for his execution (v. 36).



and the Jews who lived in it had no civic rights there. 3. Isolated Jews could acquire civic rights individually' (331). These points may be accepted, especially perhaps the first. Most of the evidence available refers to Egypt, and in particular to Alexandria; for Asia, see Trebilco. It would be fallacious to assume that conditions obtaining elsewhere applied also to Tarsus. We have little information about Jews in this city: a Jew of Tarsus was buried at Joppa (CIJ 2:925, cited by Safrai and Stern, 1:147, n. 6); an archisynagogue of the province of Cilicia is mentioned by Epiphanius, Haer. 30:11. That there was a partly Cilician synagogue in Jerusalem (6:9) suggests a fairly considerable Jewish population, but how many resided in Tarsus is unknown. It may be that Paul (Luke) uses πολίτης in a loose sense: resident in, rather than enrolled citizen of, Tarsus. So Tajra (78–80)." [[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1026.]

<sup>73</sup>“οὐκ ἀσήμου πόλεως, ‘a very characteristic Hellenistic addition’ which ‘touches the theme, with the help of an erudite quotation from the classics, of half the municipal orations of Dio of Prusa’ (Sherwin-White 179f.). Sherwin-White is presumably thinking of Euripides, Ion 8, ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις (cf. Hercules Furens 849); but the litotes is not uncharacteristic of Luke (see on 12:18), who could have made it up himself. Hemer (127) accepts the allusion to Euripides. Conzelmann (124) quotes Dittenberger, OGIS 2:578:7f., Τάρσος, ἡ πρώτη κ[αὶ μεγίστη] καὶ καλλίστη μ[ητροπόλις]. Paul when speaking to the crowd refers again (22:3) to his Tarsiate origin, but then (see the note) depreciates it in comparison with his connection with Jerusalem. Paul does not refer to his Roman citizenship till 22:25.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1027.]

<sup>74</sup>“It is significant that Paul asks the tribune to allow him to speak ‘to the people’ (21:39). He uses the word customarily employed in Acts to refer to the Jewish people (3:23; 4:8; 7:17).” [William H. Willimon, *Acts*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988), 165.]

<sup>75</sup>Some commentators remain very skeptical of the reliability of this statement by Luke: “Paul’s request to speak to the people and the granting of that request are inconceivable.” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 184.]

<sup>76</sup>“Third, the outcome is permission for Paul to speak to the crowd. Why would the tribune give his permission (v. 40)? Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.148–53, supplies at least one reason: ‘When rioting breaks out in a great city, and the rampaging rabble goes so far that stones fly ... for anger can supply that kind of weapon—if it so happens, they look round and see some dedicated ... man, ... they quiet down, willing to stop and listen. Then he prevails in speech over their fury ... and placates them’ (cf. Acts 19:35–40). The tribune hopes Paul’s speech to the crowd will end the rioting. Perhaps it will reveal the cause of the disturbance as well.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 190-91.]



We don't know exactly what he did beyond signal by waving his hand.<sup>77</sup> The verbal expression κατασιώ τῆ χειρὶ is used three times in Acts: 12:17; 13:16; 21:40.<sup>78</sup> Merely calling for them to be quiet would not have worked since their noise in shouting would have drown out his voice. Assuming the accuracy of the above archaeological drawing, Paul would have been standing on the landing (ἐστῶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν<sup>79</sup>) some three or so meters above the floor level where the crowds were, and thus rather visible to them.

Once the crowd quietened down, Paul began speaking to them in Aramaic: πολλῆς δὲ σιγῆς γενομένης προσεφώνησεν τῆ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ λέγων· and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: The προσεφώνησεν from προσφωνέω is used three times by Luke in the sense of an individual speaking to a crowd of people: Lk. 23:20; Acts 21:40; 22:2. The idea is of speaking very loudly in order to be heard by a large number of people. It is for this reason that Luke employs the frequent Hebraistic construction προσεφώνησεν...λέγων, he called out, saying....

When Paul began speaking, however, it was not in the Greek he had used in conversation with the Roman officer. Rather he spoke τῆ Ἑβραϊδὶ<sup>80</sup> διαλέκτῳ.<sup>81</sup> The two Greek words Ἑβραϊς and Ἑβραϊστί both mean either Hebrew or Aramaic, since the Greeks made no distinction between the two languages.<sup>82</sup> To be sure, both Semitic languages look alike, sounded very similar in oral speaking etc. Several forms of Aramaic were current in the middle east at this period of time. Very likely Paul used the Judean version of Aramaic, over against the Galilean version of Aramaic that Jesus spoke.<sup>83</sup> As is indicated in 22:2, by speaking in Aramaic to this Jewish

<sup>77</sup>κατέσεισεν. Cf. 13:16 and other passages for the orator's gesture, several times referred to in Acts. D has καὶ σεῖσας, which could easily have arisen as a mechanical error. This Western reading can be reasonably connected, as one of a number of participles (ἐστῶς ... σεῖσας ... γενομένης) with προσεφώνησεν, but the Old Uncial text yields a preferable sentence. For τῷ λαῷ, D syr have πρὸς αὐτούς. For σιγῆς γενομένης, B 945 1739 1891 pc have γεν. σιγ.; D has ἡσυχίας γεν. Cf. Xenophon, Cyropaedia 7:1:25, πολλὴ σιγή." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1027.]

<sup>78</sup>Scene two (Acts 21:40–22:29) also begins with (a) Paul's actions (21:40–22:21). Paul stands on the steps, motions with his hand to the people like an orator. Different types of gestures used in antiquity are reflected in Acts. In Acts 12:17 there is a gesture for silence (upraised right hand with little finger extended); in 13:15 a gesture to signal the beginning of a speech (right hand's first two fingers extended with third and fourth fingers folded and thumb tucked); in 19:33 a gesture for the beginning of a defense speech (middle finger placed against thumb and the other three fingers extended); in 24:10 a gesture of approval, giving permission to speak (thumb and first finger form a circle with the other fingers extended); 26:1 a gesture for the beginning of a defense speech; here in 24:10 either a gesture for silence or a gesture signaling the beginning of a speech, preferably the former (cf. 'when there was a great hush' in v. 40). (Shield 178–200) He addresses them in Hebrew (i.e., Aramaic) with his defense (22:1)." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 191.]

<sup>79</sup>ἀναβαθμός, οὔ, ὁ (Hdt. et al.; Aelian, NA 6, 61; 11, 31; Cass. Dio 65, 21; 68, 5; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 77; PSI 546, 3; LXX; DELG s.v. βαίνω p. 157) step, pl. flight of stairs. Of the stairs that led fr. the temple court to the tower Antonia: ὅτε ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοὺς ἅ. when he came to the steps **Ac 21:35**; ἐστῶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἅ. (cp. 2 Ch 9:19) vs. **40**. Schürer I 366.—M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 58.]

<sup>80</sup>τῆ Ἑβραϊδὶ (ιδίᾳ, P<sup>74</sup> A) διαλέκτῳ. Cf. 22:2; 26:14. Probably Aramaic is intended. 'That Aramaic and not Hebrew was really the language of the people is proved by Aramaic proverbs and sentences which occur not only in the Midrashim, but also in the Mishna, and first and foremost by rabbinical Hebrew itself, which is either an aramaicized Hebrew or a hebraicized Aramaic, and so presupposes Aramaic to have been the language of the country' (Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua* (1929), 16). Cf. also Dalman (*Words of Jesus* (1909), 1–12, especially 6f.). But see M. H. Segal (*A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (1958), 1–20, especially 5–10); the Dead Sea Scrolls also attest the currency of Hebrew. See also however NS 2:20–28: 'The principal language spoken by Jews in the various regions of Palestine during the final centuries of the pre-Christian era was Aramaic' (20, with extensive bibliography). Also important is the discussion of bilingualism in ND 5:5–40, especially 23 with the literature referred to there." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1027–28.]

<sup>81</sup>διάλεκτος, ου, ἡ (s. διαλέγομαι; Aristoph., Hippocr. et al.; LXX, TestJob 48ff; Just., A I, 33, 7; Tat.) language of a nation or a region (so Aristot., Probl. 10, 38 p. 895a, 6 τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μία φωνή, ἀλλὰ διάλεκτοι πολλαί; Polyb. 1, 80, 6; 3, 22, 3; 39, 1, 3; Diod S 1, 37, 9; Plut., Mor. [Apophth.] 185f Περσικὴ δ.; SIG 1267, 30; IAndrosIsis, Kyme 31 pl.; IMaronIsis 27 sg.; PGM 13, 139; 444; 699; Esth 9:26; Da 1:4; Philo, Mos. 2, 38, Jos., C. Ap. 1, 180 al.—AThumb, Hdb. d. griech. Dialekte 1909, 22f; RMunz, Über γλώττα u. διάλεκτος: Glotta 11, 1921, 85–94) **Ac 1:19; 2:6, 8** (unless in these two last verses a regional variety of a language is meant); **21:40; 22:2; 26:14**; Papias (2:16). δ. τι νη παρηλλαγμένῳ Dg 5:2.—B. 1261. Frisk, and DELG s.v. λέγω. M-M. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 232.]

<sup>82</sup>But a distinction was made in Hebrew: אַרַמִּית ('arāmī) = Aramaic, while אִבְרִית (ibri) = Hebrew.

<sup>83</sup>Luke uses τῆ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ, 'in the Hebrew dialect.' This phrase will appear again in 22:2; 26:14. It is debated whether this would mean that Paul spoke to the people of Jerusalem in the sacred language of the Temple, i.e., Hebrew, in which most of the OT was written, or in Aramaic, the Semitic sister language that was most commonly used in Palestine at that time. It is undoubtedly the

crowd they paid close attention, since not all of them most likely could have understood him had he have spoken in Greek. Plus, speaking in Greek would have only confirmed in their minds further that Paul was guilty of polluting the temple as the instigators of the riot had claimed.<sup>84</sup>

What is intriguing but unanswerable is how much of Paul's speech to the crowd that the Roman officer understood. Very likely, little or none of it made sense to him, unless he had assistants close by who translated or summarized Paul's words over into Latin or perhaps Greek. Without such help, Lysias' decision to let Paul speak to the crowd in another language was a huge vote of confidence in Paul by him.

### 8.1.1.3.2 Speech Introduction, Acts 22:1-5

22.1 Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες, ἀκούσατέ μου τῆς πρὸς ὑμᾶς νυνὶ ἀπολογίας. 2 ἀκούσαντες δὲ ὅτι τῇ Ἑβραϊῶν διαλέκτῳ προσεφώνει αὐτοῖς, μᾶλλον παρέσχον ἡσυχίαν. καὶ φησὶν· 3 ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκριβείαν τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου, ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον· 4 ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου δεσμεύων καὶ παραδιδούς εἰς φυλακὰς ἀνδράς τε καὶ γυναῖκας, 5 ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, παρ' ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολὰς δεξάμενος πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς εἰς Δαμασκὸν ἐπορευόμην, ἄξων καὶ τοὺς ἐκέισε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν.

22.1 "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I now make before you." 2 When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet. Then he said: 3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. 4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

Quite interestingly Luke presents the beginning of Paul's defense speech in two parts: v. 1, 3-5, with v. 2 as an interruption to the speech. The customary beginning of flattering words, Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες. *Men brothers and fathers*, open the speech that proceeds then to provide Jewish credentials for Paul, vv. 3-5. The 'interruption' highlights the intense listening to Paul by the crowd because of his speaking to them in Aramaic. Literarily, it also signals another interruption still to come when the apostles mentions Gentiles (cf. vv. 21-22).

Once more it must be remembered that this is Luke's interpretation of Paul's words, and also that he is merely summarizing the essence of Paul's speech rather than giving a verbatim account. This literary shaping of the speech will highlight some larger concerns for Luke. Here they seem to be the drawing of sharp distinctions between Christianity and Judaism with the debate that raged between these two groups for the first century or so of the Christian movement.<sup>85</sup>

Paul begins with the formal words: Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες, ἀκούσατέ μου τῆς πρὸς ὑμᾶς νυνὶ ἀπολογίας, *Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I now make before you*.<sup>86</sup> Note how this opening statement of Paul compares with that of Stephen before the Sanhedrin in 7:2, Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες, ἀκούσατε, *Men*

---

latter, because, when this phrase (or *hebraïsti*) is used elsewhere in the NT (e.g., John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16; Rev 9:11; 16:16), it is usually accompanied by Greek transcriptions of words that are Aramaic, not Hebrew. See Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.," *WA*, 29–56; EDNT, 1.370. For a highly questionable attempt to identify it as Hebrew, see J. M. Grintz, "Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language in the Last Days of the Second Temple," *JBL* 79 (1960): 32–47; H. Ott, "Um die Muttersprache Jesu: Forschungen seit Gustaf Dalman," *NovT* 9 (1967): 1–25, esp. 22; S. Safrai, "Spoken Languages in the Time of Jesus," *Jerusalem Perspectives* 4/1 (1991): 3–8, 13." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 701.]

<sup>84</sup>Of course, the version of the speech that we have is written in Greek, rather than in Aramaic. Luke had to translate the original speech over into Greek from the original Aramaic. Whether or not he was present in the crowd that day and personally heard Paul speak is unclear. Likely he wasn't because of safety factors. But later on he would have had opportunity to ask Paul for a recounting of what he had said to the crowd in the temple court yard that day. This provided the foundation for the speech content that we have available to us here in Acts 22.

<sup>85</sup>"The issue which was most important at the moment, the charge of defiling the temple, is not dealt with; this is a proven literary technique. At the conclusion, once again the device of interruption is employed, after Luke has allowed Paul to say everything that he wants him to in this passage.<sup>1</sup> Here Luke is setting forth the fundamental debate between Christianity and Judaism." [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 186.]

<sup>86</sup>"The simple address without *πατέρες* is more common; here Paul is showing proper respect to a gathering which will include his seniors as well as contemporaries and juniors. He asks their attention (*ἀκούσατε*)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1033.]

brothers and fathers, listen.... Luke makes it clear that these early Christian leaders understood the proper protocol when giving a formal speech to a group of people. They were not ignorant, disrespectful ruffians, as they were sometimes accused of being. Additionally, although not apparent in the translation, Luke's construction of ἀκούσατέ with the genitive case object τῆς...ἀπολογίας stresses Paul's desire that they listen and understand clearly what he is going to say. He really wants them to understand what he is doing and why.

Paul's speech is identified as an ἀπολογία, a defense. The term can refer to the content of a speech, or the act of giving a defense speech.<sup>87</sup> Usually the setting is that of a court proceeding (cf. Acts 25:16 and 2 Tim. 4:16), but other settings are possible also (cf. 2 Cor. 7:11; Phil. 1:7; 1 Pet. 3:15). Here Paul speaks to a Jewish crowd highly agitated with him over charges of him having polluted the temple.

Luke interrupts the beginning of the speech with a commentary note in verse two: ἀκούσαντες δὲ ὅτι τῇ Ἑβραϊῶν διαλέκτῳ προσεφώνει αὐτοῖς, μᾶλλον παρέσχον ἡσυχίαν, *When they heard him addressing them in Aramaic, they became even more quiet.* In interesting expression, Luke literally says, "they caused quietness to happen more."<sup>88</sup> By speaking in the language best understood by the crowd, he caught their attention more and gained for the moment enough quietness that he could begin his speech. Luke does not give clear indication of the size of this crowd (cf. 21:30, 34-36); rather he provides characterizations: ἡ πόλις ὅλη, *the entire city* (v. 30); τοῦ λαοῦ, *the people* (v. 30); τῷ ὄχλῳ, *the crowd* (v. 34); τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου, *the violence of the crowd* (v. 35); τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ, *the multitude of the people* (v. 36). When taken together the impression is of a rather large number of people gathered in the outer courtyard of the temple. When at least 200 plus Roman soldiers descend on them (v. 32), they cease beating Paul immediately.

After the interruption, Luke formally sets up the speech with καὶ φησὶν, "and he said." This stands in contrast to προσεφώνησεν...λέγων, *He called out saying* (21:40) which is somewhat repeated in v. 2, προσεφώνει αὐτοῖς, *he was calling out to them.* The verb φημί is typically used to introduce direct discourse containing a more formal speech.

In vv. 3-5 (a single Greek sentence), Paul recounts his personal history as a Jew like the crowd.<sup>89</sup> First, he stresses his Jewish connections to both Tarsus and Jerusalem: ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῶ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρῶου νόμου, *I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law.* This combined emphasis on both cities underscores Paul's Diaspora Jewish roots. The linking of three participle modifiers to the finite verb ἐγὼ εἰμι -- γεγεννημένος (*born*), ἀνατεθραμμένος (*brought up*), πεπαιδευμένος (*educated*) -- stresses a threefold stage in Paul's pre-Christian life.

<sup>87</sup>Defense speeches are found in a variety of ancient Mediterranean sources (e.g., Livy 3.45.6-11; 26.30.11-31.11; 40.9.1-15.16; 42.41-42; 45.22-24; 38; 47-49; 39.47-49; 39.36.7-37.17; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 9.29-32; Appian, *Roman History* 3.52-61; Q. Curtius Rufus, *Alexander* 6.10.1-37; 7.1.18-2.11; Tacitus, *Annals* 6.8; 13.21; 16.21-35; Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.4.1-4 §§ 91-126). This one is arranged in a chiasmic pattern (Bligh, 97).

A—Paul comes from the Gentile world to Jerusalem (v. 3)

B—Paul persecuted the Way (vv. 4-5a)

C—Paul's journey from Jerusalem to Damascus (v. 5b)

D—Paul's vision on the road to Damascus (vv. 6-11)

E—Ananias restores Paul's sight (vv. 12-13)

**F—Ananias tells Paul of his mission (vv. 14-15)**

E'—Ananias urges Paul to receive baptism (v. 16)

D'—Paul's vision in Jerusalem (vv. 17-18a)

C'—Paul is commanded to leave Jerusalem (v. 18b)

B'—Paul speaks of his days as a persecutor (vv. 19-20)

A'—Paul is sent from Jerusalem to the Gentiles (v. 21)

"The chiasmic pattern's center indicates the speech's main point: Paul's mission to be Jesus' witness before all people of what Paul has seen and heard (v. 15)."

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 191-92.]

<sup>88</sup>παρέσχον ἡσυχίαν is a standard phrase. See Job 34:29; Josephus, *Ant.* 5:235, τοῦ πλῆθοϋς ἡσυχίαν αὐτοῦ παρασχόντος; Plutarch, *Coriolanus* 18 (222), παρέσχεν αὐτῷ σιωπὴν καὶ ἡσυχίαν ὁ δῆμος. Silence naturally implies a measure of attention. D has ἡσύχασαν. The meaning is unchanged; as frequently, the Western text displays freedom with the wording of the text rather any difference in the understanding of its meaning." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1034.]

<sup>89</sup>Verses 3-5 constitute a typical exordium of an ancient defense speech, presenting the character of the speaker as favorably as possible." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 192.]



Tarsus, the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia, was a large, affluent city with a substantial Greek cultural heritage and educational orientation.<sup>90</sup> It was famous for its focus on Greek education.<sup>91</sup> Just mentioned three times in the NT by name -- all in Acts: 9:30; 11:25; 22:3 -- the city and its impact on Christian thought the apostle Paul loom large over the centuries.<sup>92</sup> At first glance, one might question an emphasis on Tarsus for Paul's birthplace since the charge against him was for bringing a non-Jew into the temple, something more likely from a Jew born outside Palestine where Gentile influences were stronger. But one should recall that those bringing this charge against Paul were οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι, *Jews from Asia*, and thus Diaspora Jews like Paul (cf. 21:27). Although the Palestinian Jews at times held deep seated prejudices against the so-called Hellenistic Jews -- as Acts 6:1-7 reflects even inside early Christianity -- the Diaspora Jews considered themselves to be Jewish on the same level as those born and raised in Palestine (e.g., ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται, *fellow Israelites*, in 21:28).

But Paul spent at least his later teen years and young adulthood in the city of Jerusalem: ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, *having been brought up in this city*.<sup>93</sup> He had deep connections to Jerusalem as well. And these centered on his advanced education with the Jewish scribe Gamaliel: παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου, *at the feet of Gamaliel having been trained according to the strictness of the ancestral law*. The Jewish scribe Gamaliel was a legendary teacher in mid-first century Judaism and highly revered by devout Jews of that time.<sup>94</sup> Through much of his young adult life Paul had been taught by this Jewish teacher and had adopted his views. What the crowd needed to understand was that they were wanting to execute a student of one of their most devout teachers of the Law.

This is further underscored by the next statement: ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον, *being zealous for God, just as all of you are today*. Notice that Paul did not say, ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ νόμου, *being zealous for the Law*. He spoke to a legitimate common ground: a passion to do God's will. The key difference was in how that divine will should be determined. Of course, some questioning of just how far καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον, *just as you all are today*, should be pressed is present here. With their attempt to mur-

<sup>90</sup>For a more detailed discussion see *The Apostle Paul: Servant of Christ*, chapter one, pages 22-23.

<sup>91</sup>"Tarsus also became a center of intellectual life (Finegan 1981: 53). To reform the administrative structure of the city, Augustus sent his former tutor, Athenodorus, the Stoic philosopher, who was himself one of the city's most illustrious sons. Athenodorus and his successor, Nestor the Academic (tutor of Marcellus, the nephew and intended heir of Augustus), initiated not only civic reforms, including the requirement that citizens must have a net worth of at least 500 drachmae, but also significant cultural and educational institutions. According to Strabo (14.5.131), the people of Tarsus in the 1st century C.E. were keen students of philosophy, the liberal arts and the entire encyclopaedia of learning; this was true to such a degree that it surpassed both Athens and Alexandria as a center of culture and learning, even though people did not, as a rule, come from other regions to study in its schools. Native Tarsians, however, went on to study elsewhere and frequently held educational and civil posts of importance throughout the empire. A less-flattering picture of Tarsus during the 1st century is found in Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the neo-Pythagorean sage. According to the story, Apollonius (who would have been a contemporary of Paul) went to Tarsus at the age of fourteen to study with the rhetorician Euthydemus but was shocked by the frivolous and luxury-loving atmosphere of the city and withdrew to a more congenial environment (VA 1.7). This account, written nearly two centuries after the event, is probably influenced by knowledge of two orations by Dio Chrysostom, in which he addresses the Tarsians and castigates them for their lack of moral earnestness (Bruce 1977: 35)." [W. Ward Gasque, "Tarsus (Place)" In vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 333-34.]

<sup>92</sup>The related term Ταρσεύς meaning a native of the city shows up twice and only in Acts: 9:11; 21:39.

<sup>93</sup>Which city is meant by τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, *in this city*, grammatically depends on whether the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun ταύτῃ refers back literally to Ταρσῶ or orally to Paul implying this city where they were gathered, i.e., Jerusalem. The close connection of παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ, *at the feet of Gamaliel* with πόλει ταύτῃ, tips the scales decisively in favor of πόλει ταύτῃ meaning Jerusalem. In actuality, however, which ever city is intended it impacts the statement only about five to eight years by marking the point when Paul came to Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel -- whether as an older teenager or as a young adult.

Far too much distinction has existed in Pauline studies over whether Tarsus -- symbol of Hellenistic thinking -- or Jerusalem -- symbol of Jewish thinking -- dominated Paul's theology. Early twentieth century scholarship that stressed the hellenistic aspect argued passionately that 'this city' meant Tarsus and thus Paul lived in Hellenism in his formative growing up years. Greater balance in understanding came about beginning in mid-twentieth century Pauline scholarly circles. But occasionally the sometimes bitter debate over Jerusalem or Tarsus still surfaces in Pauline studies.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. **Acts 5:34**. ἀναστὰς δὲ τις ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ Φαρισαῖος ὀνόματι Γαμαλιήλ, νομοδιδάσκαλος τίμιος παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ἐκέλευσεν ἔξω βραχὺ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι

But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time.

A somewhat similar picture emerges in the Jewish Mishnah:

*Soṭa 9.15* has it that "When Rabban Gamaliel the elder died, the glory of the law ceased and purity and abstinence died" (Neusner 1984: 33, 34).

[Bruce Chilton, "Gamaliel (Person)" In vol. 2, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 904.]

der Paul before the Romans rescued him, one might question just how sincere their passion for God was, in light even of the teaching of the Law against murder. But Paul is seeking to establish rapport with his audience here, rather than knit picking a minor point.

The next phase of his Jewishness is set forth in verses four and five where Paul outlines his past persecution of Christians in his days as a Pharisee. The initial statement ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου, *this very way I persecuted to death*, expresses the primary action of Saul the Pharisee.<sup>95</sup> Again Christianity is picture as ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν, *this way*. It was a way of living largely understood to be inside Judaism. Paul acknowledges his persecution of the Christian movement: ἐδίωξα, which has already been affirmed by Luke in Acts: cf. 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 21 (also 22:19-20; 26:11). Paul himself in his writings mentions this as well: Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; 1 Cor. 15:9. The details of this early persecution of believers are spelled out with some particulars.<sup>96</sup>

1) ἄχρι θανάτου, *until death*. This is mentioned elsewhere in Acts as well in 26:10. The objective was not so much to seek the execution of believers but rather to force them to repudiate their Christian commitment, as is indicated in 26:11.

2) δεσμεύων καὶ παραδιδούς εἰς φυλακὰς ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, *binding them and handing them over for imprisonment, both men and women*. Arrest and trial before the Jewish authorities was a major strategy of Paul for stopping the growth of this religious movement.

Paul alludes to the potential witness of the high priest and the members of the Sanhedrin: ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, *as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about*

<sup>95</sup>The grammar structure is somewhat unusual with ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα, making the relative ὃς the subject of a first person singular verb. *I who persecuted this way...* But this in large part grows out of the very lengthy sentence structure in vv. 2b-5.

<sup>96</sup>In both Acts and Paul's letters his opposition to the Christian movement as a Pharisee is depicted in a variety of ways:

**Acts 9:1-2.** Ἦ δὲ Σαῦλος ἐτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου, προσελθὼν τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ 2 ἠτήσατο παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιστολάς εἰς Δαμασκὸν πρὸς τὰς συναγωγὰς, ὅπως ἐάν τις εὔρη τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντας, ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, δεδεμένους ἀγάγῃ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ.

*1 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

**Acts 9:13-14.** 13 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ Ἀνανίας· κύριε, ἤκουσα ἀπὸ πολλῶν περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τούτου ὅσα κακὰ τοῖς ἀγίοις σου ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ· 14 καὶ ὧδε ἔχει ἐξουσίαν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων δῆσαι πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομά σου.

*13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name."*

**Acts 22:4-5.** 4 ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου δεσμεύων καὶ παραδιδούς εἰς φυλακὰς ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, 5 ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, παρ' ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολάς δεξάμενος πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς Δαμασκὸν ἐπορευόμην, ἄξων καὶ τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν.

*4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.*

**Acts 26:9-11.** 9 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἑμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πρᾶξαι, 10 ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβὼν ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον. 11 καὶ κατὰ πάσας τὰς συναγωγὰς πολλάκις τιμωρῶν αὐτοὺς ἠνάγκαζον βλασφημεῖν περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς ἐδίωκον ἕως καὶ εἰς τὰς ἕξω πόλεις.

*9 Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. 11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.*

**Gal. 1:13.** Ἦκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ ὄρθου ἀυτήν,

*You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it.*

**Phil. 3:6a** κατὰ ζήλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν  
*as to zeal, a persecutor of the church*

**1 Cor. 15:9.** Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ·

*For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

**1 Tim. 1:12-13.** 12 Χάρη ἔχω τῷ ἐνδυναμώσαντί με Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, ὅτι πιστόν με ἠγήσατο θέμενος εἰς διακονίαν 13 τὸ πρότερον ὄντα βλάσφημον καὶ διώκτην καὶ ὑβριστήν, ἀλλ' ἠλεήθην, ὅτι ἀγνοῶν ἐποίησα ἐν ἀπιστίᾳ·

*12 I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,*

me. They had awareness of his actions. Why? They had authorized it, as Paul states: παρ' ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολὰς δεξάμενος πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς Δαμασκὸν ἐπορευόμην, ἄξων καὶ τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν, *From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.* Paul recounts the earlier authorization by these Jerusalem leaders that allowed him to travel to Damascus with authority to arrest Jewish Christians in the city to bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. Note that to this Jewish audience he speaks of the synagogue leaders as τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς, *brothers*. He is not referring here to Christian brothers. These letters merely recommended Paul as a devout Jew seeking to purge from Judaism all who were seen to be corrupting it. The letters did not grant Paul legal authority to arrest individuals, since the Jerusalem Sanhedrin could not grant such authority outside of Judaea, where their authority was confined.<sup>97</sup> But as the recognized leaders of Judaism they could ask the synagogue leaders in Damascus to cooperate with Paul in his objectives. Paul asserts to this audience that these very leaders could vouch for his passion as a Pharisee.

One should note that the present leaders alluded to here of the Sanhedrin in 58-59 AD, namely the high priest, were not the same individuals in this position who earlier granted Paul authority to go to Damascus in 33 AD (cf. Acts 9:1-2).<sup>98</sup> But Paul knows that these current leaders were well aware of his earlier actions some 25 years earlier.<sup>99</sup> Thus, παρ' ὧν, *from them*, must be taken in a generalized sense of *from these leaders* but not in a specific sense of *from these particular leaders*.

<sup>97</sup>“As under the Greek rulers the Jews were allowed a large measure of self-government, many points of civil and religious administration fell to the lot of the high priests and the gerousia to settle. But when, after the Machabean wars, both the royal and priestly powers were invested in the person of the Hasmonean kings, the authority of the Sanhedrin was naturally thrown in the background by that of the autocratic rulers. Still the Sanhedrin, where a majority of Pharisees held sway, continued to be ‘the house of justice of the Hasmoneans’ (“Talm.,” Aboda zara, 36b; Sanh., 82a). A coup d’état of John Hyrcanus towards the end of his reign brought about a ‘Sadducean Sanhedrin’ (“Antiq.,” XVI, xi, 1; Sanh., 52b; Megillat Taanith, 10), which lasted until Jannæus; but owing to the conflicts between the new assembly and Alexander, it was soon restored, to be again overthrown by the Pharisaic reaction, under Alexandra. The intervention of Rome, occasioned by the strife between the sons of Alexandra, was momentarily fatal to the Sanhedrin in so far as the Roman proconsul Gabinius, by instituting similar assemblies at Gadara, Jericho, Amathonte, and Sapphora, limited the jurisdiction of the gerousia of Jerusalem to the city and the neighbouring district (57 B.C.). In 47, however, the appointment of Hyrcanus II as Ethnarch of the Jews resulted in the restoring of the Sanhedrin’s authority all over the land. One of the first acts of the now all-powerful assembly was to pass judgment upon Herod, the son of Antipater, accused of cruelty in his government (“Antiq.,” XI, ix, 4). The revengeful prince was not likely to forget this insult. No sooner, indeed, had he established his power at Jerusalem (37 B.C.), than forty-five of his former judges, more or less connected with the party of Antigonos, were put to death (“Antiq.,” XV, i, 2). The Sanhedrin itself, however, Herod allowed to continue; but this new Sanhedrin, filled with his creatures, was henceforth utilized as a mere tool at his beck (as for instance in the case of the aged Hyrcanus). After the death of Herod, the territorial jurisdiction of the assembly was curtailed again and reduced to Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, the ‘ethnarchy’ allotted to Archelaus. But this condition of affairs was not to last; for after the deposition of the Ethnarch and the annexation of Judea to the Roman province of Syria (A.D. 6), the Sanhedrin, under the control of the procurators, became the supreme authority of the Jewish people; only capital sentences pronounced by the assembly perhaps needed confirmation from the Roman officer before they could be carried into execution. Such was the state of things during the public life of the Saviour and the following thirty years (Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:55; 15:1; Luke 22:66; John 11:47; Acts 4:15; 5:21; 6:12; 22:30; 23:1 sq.; 24:20; “Antiq.,” XX, 9:1; x; “Bell. Jud.,” II, 15:6; “Vita,” 12, 13, 38, 49, 70). Finally when the misgovernment of Albinus and Gessius Florus goaded the nation into rebellion, it was the Sanhedrin that first organized the struggle against Rome; but soon the Zealots, seizing the power in Jerusalem, put the famous assembly out of the way. Despite a nominal resurrection first at Jamnia, immediately after the destruction of the Holy City, and later on at Tiberias, the great Beth-Din of Jerusalem did not really survive the ruin of the nation, and later Jewish authors are right when, speaking of the sad events connected with the fall of Jerusalem, they deplore the cessation of the Sanhedrin (Sota, ix, end; Echa Rabbathi on Lam., v, 15).” [“Sanhedrin,” *Catholic Encyclopedia* online]

<sup>98</sup>“This is a puzzling remark, because the high priest at the time of Paul’s arrest in a.d. 58 would have been Ananias, son of Nedebeaus (cf. 23:2, 5; 24:1). MS 614 even adds the name Ananias. He is hardly the same as the one who might have commissioned Paul to go to Damascus ca. a.d. 36. That would rather have been Joseph Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas (see Note on 4:6). In the ‘council’ (presbyterion) or the ‘Sanhedrin’ (synedrion, Luke 22:66) of Jerusalem, however, there may well have been elders who did remember the commission of which Paul speaks. See J. Jeremias, “Presbyterion ausserchristlich bezeugt,” *ZNW* 48 (1957): 127–32.” [*Acts of the Apostles, Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries*, p. 706]

<sup>99</sup>The high priests during the first century:

AD 6-15: Annas, son of Seth

AD 16-18: three of Annas’ sons served one year each (Ismael, Eleazar, Simon)

**AD 18-36?: Joseph Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas**

AD 36-37: Jonathan, son of Annas replaces Caiaphas for one year

AD 38-46: Theophilus, Simon / Cantheras, Mattathias, Elionus, Joseph

**AD 47-60: Ananias appointed high priest**

AD 61-70: Jesus, son of Damneus, Jesus, son Gamaliel, Mattathias, son of Theophilus, Phinehas, son of Samuel

For a more detailed listing see “High Priest,” *Jewish Encyclopedia* online.



### 8.1.1.3.3 Speech Point One: Conversion, Acts 22:6-16

6 Ἐγένετο δὲ μοι πορευομένῳ καὶ ἐγγίζοντι τῇ Δαμασκῷ περὶ μεσημβρίαν ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περιεστράψαι φῶς ἰκανὸν περὶ ἐμέ, 7 ἔπεσά τε εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; 8 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπεκρίθην· τίς εἶ, κύριε; εἶπέν τε πρὸς με· ἐγὼ εἶμι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος, ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 9 οἱ δὲ σὺν ἐμοὶ ὄντες τὸ μὲν φῶς ἐθέασαντο τὴν δὲ φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν τοῦ λαλοῦντός μοι. 10 εἶπον δέ· τί ποιήσω, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν πρὸς με· ἀναστὰς πορεύου εἰς Δαμασκὸν κάκεῖ σοι λαληθήσεται περὶ πάντων ὧν τέτακταί σοι ποιῆσαι. 11 ὡς δὲ οὐκ ἐνέβλεπον ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου, χειραγωγούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν συνόντων μοι ἦλθον εἰς Δαμασκόν.

12 Ἀνανίας δὲ τις, ἀνὴρ εὐλαβῆς κατὰ τὸν νόμον, μαρτυρούμενος ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν κατοικοῦντων Ἰουδαίων, 13 ἔλθων πρὸς με καὶ ἐπιστὰς εἶπέν μοι· Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ, ἀνάβλεψον. κἀγὼ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἀνέβλεψα εἰς αὐτόν. 14 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν προεχειρίσατό σε γνῶναι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, 15 ὅτι ἔση μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὧν ἐώρακας καὶ ἤκουσας. 16 καὶ νῦν τί μέλλεις; ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

6 "While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 8 I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" Then he said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 I asked, "What am I to do, Lord?" The Lord said to me, "Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do." 11 Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

12 A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, 13 came to me; and standing beside me, he said, "Brother Saul, regain your sight!" In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him. 14 Then he said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; 15 for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name."

Paul moves on next to recount his conversion experience on the Damascus road before reaching the city. Luke provides us with three versions of this experience by Paul: Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18. Essential harmony among the three exists but several very distinct differences surface among them as well.<sup>100</sup>

Here Paul centers his emphasis upon the encounter with Christ before reaching the city (vv. 6-11) and the meeting with Ananias in the city (vv. 12-16). The charts below will compare the parallel accounts in Acts.

#### **Encounter with Christ**, vv. 6-11.

Scene:	Acts 9:	Acts 22:	Acts 26:
<b>2. Damascus Road</b>	<b>vv. 3-8.</b> 3 <i>Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.</i> 4 <i>He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"</i> 5 <i>He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.</i> 6 <i>But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."</i> 7 <i>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one.</i> 8 <i>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.</i>	<b>vv. 6-11.</b> 6 <i>While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me.</i> 7 <i>I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"</i> 8 <i>I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" Then he said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting."</i> 9 <i>Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me.</i> 10 <i>I asked, "What am I to do, Lord?" The Lord said to me, "Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do."</i> 11 <i>Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.</i>	<b>vv. 12-18.</b> 12 <i>With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,</i> 13 <i>when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions.</i> 14 <i>When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads."</i> 15 <i>I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.</i> 16 <i>But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.</i> 17 <i>I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you</i> 18 <i>to open their eyes so that they may turn 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."</i>

<sup>100</sup>For an in depth examination of these texts along with relevant texts in Paul's letters, see chapter two "Paul's Conversion" in this study guide.

All three narratives emphasize the encounter happened as Paul was approaching Damascus. Both of Paul's recollections place the experience around noon time during a particular day. The encounter is depicted in terms of an unexpected bright light flashing before Paul. In Luke's narrative (chap. 9) and Paul's first recollection (chap. 22) only he fell to the ground, but in the second recollection (chap. 26) everyone in the group fell to the ground. All three speak of hearing a voice, but the second recollection mentions that Hebrew was the language being spoken. Uniformly the question put to Paul by the voice is presented as the same: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' (Σαούλ Σαούλ, τί με διώκεις;). But only chap 26 adds the statement, It hurts you to kick against the goads. A dialogue follows with Paul asking the voice to identify itself. The answer given is essentially the same but with variation in wording with each account.

At this point, the sequencing of scene units begins to vary considerably. The first two accounts mention that those traveling with Paul saw the light but did not understand the voice that spoke to Paul, even though this is presented in different terms. No mention of this is given in the third account. More dialogue is presented in chap. 22 that is omitted in the other two accounts: I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me. . . . In the first two accounts Christ commands Paul to go into Damascus to learn what he is supposed to do. But the instructions that -- in these two accounts -- will be given by Ananias are collapsed into this dialogue with Christ on the Damascus road in chap. 26 with no mention of Ananias given in that account.

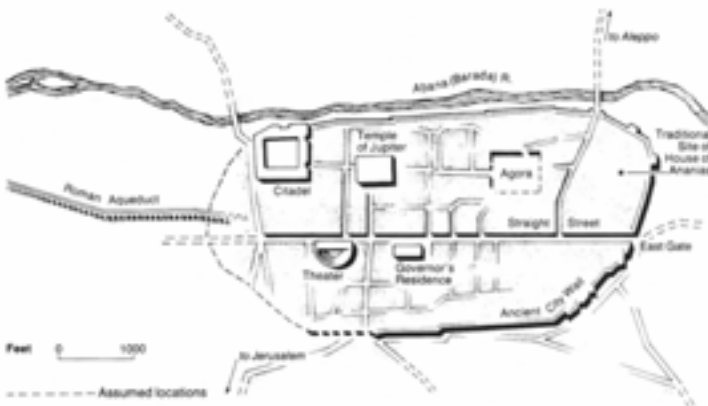
What emerges here is a life changing experience for Paul. It was dramatic, and most likely needed to be in order to turn his life around in the drastic manner required for the divinely appointed mission for him.

**Meeting with Ananias**, vv. 12-16.

Acts 9:9-19a (NRSV)	Acts 9:9-19a (SBL-GNT)	Acts 22:12-16 (NRSV)	Acts 22:12-16 (SBL-GNT)
<p><i>9 For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. 10 Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." 11 The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 16 I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."</i></p>	<p><i>9 καὶ ἦν ἡμέρας τρεῖς μὴ βλέπων, καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδὲ ἔπιεν. 10 Ἦν δὲ τις μαθητὴς ἐν Δαμασκῷ ὀνόματι Ἀνανίας, καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν ὁράματι ὁ κύριος· Ἀνανία. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Ἴδου ἐγώ, κύριε. 11 ὁ δὲ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν· Ἀναστάς πορεύθητι ἐπὶ τὴν ῥύμην τὴν καλουμένην Εὐθείαν καὶ ζήτησον ἐν οἰκίᾳ Ἰούδα Σαῦλον ὀνόματι Ταρσέα, ἰδοὺ γὰρ προσεύχεται, 12 καὶ εἶδεν ἄνδρα ἐν ὁράματι Ἀνανίαν ὀνόματι εἰσελθόντα καὶ ἐπιθέντα αὐτῷ χεῖρας ὅπως ἀναβλέψῃ. 13 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ Ἀνανίας· Κύριε, ἤκουσα ἀπὸ πολλῶν περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τούτου, ὅσα κακὰ τοῖς ἀγίοις σου ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ· 14 καὶ ὧδε ἔχει ἐξουσίαν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων δεῖξαι πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομά σου. 15 εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος· Πορεύου, ὅτι σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς ἐστίν μοι οὗτος τοῦ βαστάσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν τε καὶ βασιλέων υἱῶν τε Ἰσραὴλ, 16 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑποδείξω αὐτῷ ὅσα δεῖ αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου παθεῖν.</i></p>		

Acts 9:9-19a (NRSV)	Acts 9:9-19a (SBL-GNT)	Acts 22:12-16 (NRSV)	Acts 22:12-16 (SBL-GNT)
<p>17 So Ananias went and entered the house. <b>He laid his hands on Saul and said,</b> “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight <b>and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”</b> 18 And immediately <b>something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized,</b> 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.</p>	<p>17 ἀπήλθεν δὲ Ἀνανίας καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, <b>καὶ ἐπιθεὶς ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας εἶπεν·</b> Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ, ὁ κύριος ἀπέσταλκέν με, Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθεῖς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἣ ἤρχου, ὅπως ἀναβλέψῃς <b>καὶ πλησθῆς πνεύματος ἁγίου.</b> 18 καὶ εὐθέως <b>ἀπέπεσαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὡς λεπίδες,</b> ἀνέβλεψέν τε καὶ ἀναστάς ἐβαπτίσθη, 19 καὶ λαβὼν τροφὴν ἐνίσχυσεν.</p>	<p>12 A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, 13 came to me; and <b>standing beside me,</b> he said, “Brother Saul, regain your sight!’ In that very hour I regained my sight <b>and saw him.</b> 14 Then he said, “<b>The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; 15 for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay?</b> Get up, be baptized, <b>and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.’</b></p>	<p>12 Ἀνανίας δὲ τις, ἀνὴρ εὐλαβῆς κατὰ τὸν νόμον, μαρτυρούμενος ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν κατοικούντων Ἰουδαίων, 13 ἐλθὼν πρὸς με <b>καὶ ἐπιστὰς</b> εἶπέν μοι· Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ, ἀνάβλεψον. κἀγὼ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ <b>ἀνέβλεψα εἰς αὐτόν.</b> 14 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν <b>προεχειρίσατό σε γνῶναι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, 15 ὅτι ἐση μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὧν ἐώρακας καὶ ἤκουσας. 16 καὶ νῦν τί μέλλεις;</b> ἀναστάς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου <b>ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.</b></p>

In this segment, Paul recounts his meeting with Ananias inside the city itself. This is only paralleled to some extent by Luke’s initial account



in chapter nine. Paul makes no mention of it in his second recollection in chapter twenty-six. But the essence of the message delivered to Paul through Ananias is presented as coming directly from Christ on the Damascus road in this account.<sup>101</sup>

The trip from Jerusalem to Damascus was a lengthy journey even though major roads could be followed throughout the journey. We have not way of knowing just how far outside the city Paul was when Christ appeared to him. Paul first was hosted by unnamed individuals in the city: Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus (22:11). In this speech Paul ignores the initial appearance of Christ to Ananias at his home in the city (9:10-16). Instead, he highlights the meeting between this reluctant believer and Paul, as the above chart emphasizes. In 9:11, Ananias is given instructions by Christ on how to find Paul at the home of a Judas who lived on the street called Straight in the city.

The character of Ananias as a devout Jew is stressed to Paul’s Jewish audience. This differs from Luke’s depiction of Ananias as a μαθητῆς, disciple, in 9:10. But given the different objectives for each account, such a shift of emphasis by Paul is entirely appropriate. As a Jewish Christian, Ananias met both qualifications. When



<sup>101</sup> Acts 26:16-17. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn 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.’



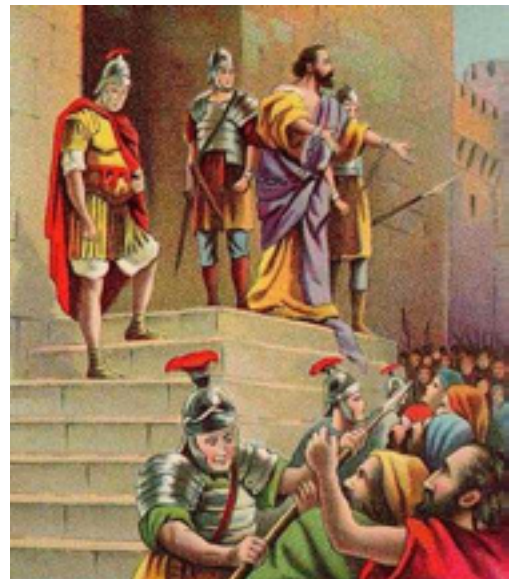
they met, Paul describes the miracle of his recovered sight (vv. 12-13). More important is Ananias' words to Paul regarding the divine mission to evangelize the entire world (vv. 14-16); note especially ἔση μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὧν ἑώρακας καὶ ἤκουσας, you will be a witness to Him to all humanity of what you have seen and heard. Paul needs to submit to Christian baptism as an open public confession of his faith in Christ. Nothing better could signal the dramatic change in Paul's life than doing this. The language of Paul here could be taken to link Paul's conversion to his baptism. But, neither other account makes such a connection, and clearly presents Paul's conversion taking place on the Damascus road. Thus in the context of Acts, one best understands the apostle's description here as the subsequent public confirmation of what had already taken place prior to reaching the city. As a public action that would clearly be reported extensively in the Jewish communities of Damascus, his baptism was the logical marker of the beginning of his Christian life which people could identify with. Paul's speech implies the compliance that Luke earlier described in 9:18b, καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐβαπτίσθη, and having gotten up he was baptized.

#### 8.1.1.3.4 Speech Point Two: Sent to the Gentiles, Acts 22:17-21

17 Ἐγένετο δὲ μοι ὑποστρέφαντι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐν ἑκστάσει 18 καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν λέγοντά μοι· σπεῦσον καὶ ἔξελθε ἐν τάχει ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ, διότι οὐ παραδέξονται σου μαρτυρίαν περὶ ἐμοῦ. 19 κἀγὼ εἶπον· κύριε, αὐτοὶ ἐπίστανται ὅτι ἐγὼ ἤμην φυλακίζων καὶ δέρων κατὰ τὰς συναγωγὰς τοῦς πιστεύοντας ἐπὶ σέ, 20 καὶ ὅτε ἐξεχύνητο τὸ αἷμα Στεφάνου τοῦ μάρτυρός σου, καὶ αὐτὸς ἤμην ἐφροσῶς καὶ συνευδοκῶν καὶ φυλάσσω τὰ ἱμάτια τῶν ἀναιρούντων αὐτόν. 21 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με· πορεύου, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰς ἔθνη μακρὰν ἐξαποστελῶ σε.

17 After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw Jesus saying to me, "Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me." 19 And I said, "Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him." 21 Then he said to me, "Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles." "

Paul next shifts to being back in Jerusalem after his Christian conversion in Damascus. He skips over the three year period of activity in and around Damascus described both in Acts 9 and Gal. 1. Plus he does not mention the difficulty of linking up to the believing community in Jerusalem as described by Luke in Acts 9:26-30. Instead, he reveals an experience with God while the apostle was worshiping in the Jerusalem temple. The vision Paul received was a warning directly from God to flee the city for his own safety. Acts 9:28-30 speaks of a Jewish plot to kill Paul as the motivation for the believers to help Paul flee the city.<sup>102</sup> Paul in his speech here attributes his motivation to leave Jerusalem as coming from Christ's personal warning for him to flee the city. Additionally, he acknowledges his involvement in the death of Stephen, that is described in Acts 7:57-60. He was willing to remain in the city and even to die for Christ in the example of Stephen earlier. But Christ had different plans for him and thus instructed him to leave the city quickly. The reason for the command πορεύου is given as ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰς ἔθνη μακρὰν ἐξαποστελῶ σε. The NRSV along with many other English translations fails to capture the nuanced meaning of the Greek here. A more accurate translation would move along the lines of "because I will commission you for Gentiles far away." It was not a sending of Paul into Gentile territory out of the reach of the Jerusalem authorities. Rather, this was a divine commissioning of Paul to minister to Gentiles far from Jerusalem.<sup>103</sup> This makes it easy to understand the very hostile reaction of the crowd.



Paul's recollection of the events in Jerusalem upon his return from Damascus stress different aspects to

<sup>102</sup>Acts 9:28-30. 28 καὶ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, παρρησιαζόμενος ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου, 29 ἐλάλει τε καὶ συνεζήτει πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς, οἱ δὲ ἐπεχείρουν ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν. 30 ἐπιγόντες δὲ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ κατήγαγον αὐτόν εἰς Καισάρειαν καὶ ἐξαπέστειλαν αὐτόν εἰς Ταρσόν.

28 So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. 30 When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

<sup>103</sup>“ἐξαποστελῶ, future, is surprising; was not the Lord sending Paul then, in the present? D improves to ἐξαποστέλλω, E to ἀποστέλλω. B has the simple future, ἀποστελῶ. The tense is probably affected by the thought that the fulfilment of the mission belongs to the future.” [C.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2, 1998, p. 1045.]

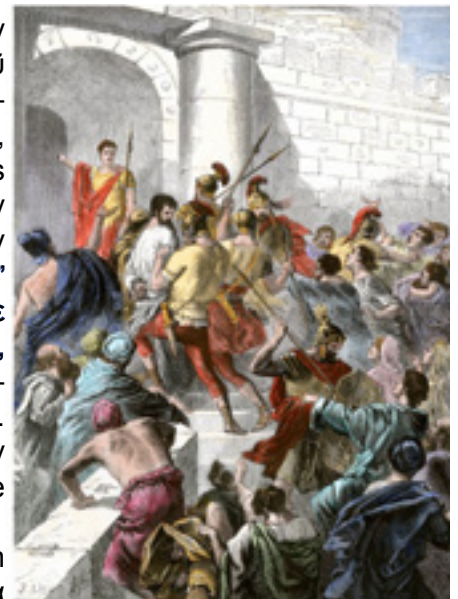
either what Luke describes in Acts 9 or what Paul describes in Galatians 1. The reason for these differences is clearly the literary and historical objective of each of the three accounts. Each account stresses what is relevant to the purpose behind each narrative. Thus the three complement one another, not contradict one another. In this speech before the hostile crowd in the outer court of the Jerusalem temple, Paul stresses his obedience to the instructions of Christ in a spiritual revelation (γενέσθαι με ἐν ἐκστάσει,<sup>104</sup> v. 17) presenting Christ as divine. This was the most relevant point to his objective in his speech to this crowd.

#### 8.1.1.3.5 Narrative Conclusion, Acts 22:22-29

22 Ἦκουον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄχρι τούτου τοῦ λόγου καὶ ἐπήραν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν λέγοντες· αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν. 23 κραυγαζόντων τε αὐτῶν καὶ ῥιπτούντων τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ κονιορτὸν βαλλόντων εἰς τὸν ἄερα, 24 ἐκέλευσεν ὁ χιλιάρχος εἰσάγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν, εἶπας μάλιστα ἀνετάζεσθαι αὐτὸν ἵνα ἐπιγνῶ δὲ ἦν αἰτίαν οὕτως ἐπεφώνουν αὐτῷ. 25 ὡς δὲ προέτειναν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἱμασίν, εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν ἐστώτα ἑκατόνταρχον ὁ Παῦλος· εἰ ἄνθρωπον Ῥωμαῖον καὶ ἀκατάκριτον ἔξεστιν ὑμῖν μαστίζειν; 26 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης προσελθὼν τῷ χιλιάρχῳ ἀπήγγειλεν λέγων· τί μέλλεις ποιεῖν; ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος Ῥωμαῖός ἐστιν. 27 προσελθὼν δὲ ὁ χιλιάρχος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· λέγε μοι, σὺ Ῥωμαῖός εἶ; ὁ δὲ ἔφη· ναί. 28 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ ὁ χιλιάρχος· ἐγὼ πολλοῦ κεφαλαίου τὴν πολιτείαν ταύτην ἐκτησάμην. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ γεγέννημαι. 29 εὐθέως οὖν ἀπέστησαν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ οἱ μέλλοντες αὐτὸν ἀνετάζειν, καὶ ὁ χιλιάρχος δὲ ἐφοβήθη ἐπιγνοῦς ὅτι Ῥωμαῖός ἐστιν καὶ ὅτι αὐτὸν ἦν δεδεκώς.

22 Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” 23 And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and tossing dust into the air, 24 the tribune directed that he was to be brought into the barracks, and ordered him to be examined by flogging, to find out the reason for this outcry against him. 25 But when they had tied him up with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who is uncondemned?” 26 When the centurion heard that, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? This man is a Roman citizen.” 27 The tribune came and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.” 28 The tribune answered, “It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship.” Paul said, “But I was born a citizen.” 29 Immediately those who were about to examine him drew back from him; and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

The crowd reacts violently to the idea that any Jew could be divinely commissioned to serve non-Jews. But Luke’s language, Ἦκουον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄχρι τούτου τοῦ λόγου, implies a growing resentment to what they were hearing that reaches the boiling point with the mentioning of Gentiles. After all, the charge of having brought a Gentile into the inner court of the temple was what had triggered this outburst to begin with. Once they heard ‘Gentiles’ they verbally reacted with αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” The crowd picks up the chant at the beginning of this episode (cf. 21:36): αἶρε αὐτόν, Away with him! It has echoes of Isa. 53:8 which is quoted in Acts 8:33, ὅτι αἶρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ, for His life is taken from the earth. The extent of Jewish prejudice against non-Jews surfaces here in dramatic fashion. Although coming as the demands of a mob in a frenzy, the attitude is that any Jew dealing with non-Jews in a positive manner doesn’t deserve to continue living.



The verbal chaos was accompanied by the traditional near eastern rants expressing outrage: κραυγαζόντων τε αὐτῶν καὶ ῥιπτούντων τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ κονιορτὸν βαλλόντων εἰς τὸν ἄερα, And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and tossing dust into the air. These actions with intentional symbolism built into them were aimed at showing their displeasure with Paul and what he had said -- and perhaps also what he had supposedly done with the non-Jewish men who accompanied him to the temple (cf. 21:28-29). The first action, ῥιπτούντων τὰ ἱμάτια, ripping off their garments, describes stripping out of the outer garment and waving it around in the air.<sup>105</sup> Commentators differ over the motive for

<sup>104c</sup>The original Greek of ‘trance’ here is ἐκστασις, which connects Paul’s account with the other instances of trances, dreams, and special revelations throughout the book of Acts and beyond (→4:24–30; →7:47–48; →7:59–60; →16:9) and perhaps also with the office of ‘prophets’ and ‘prophetesses’ (→21:9–10).” [Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 241]

<sup>105c</sup> ῥιπτ. τὰ ἱμάτια: not throwing off their garments as if preparing to stone Paul (for which Zöckler compares 7:58, and see Plato, *Rep.*, 474 A), for the fact that the Apostle was in the custody of the Romans would have prevented any such purpose. The verb may be used as a frequentative, ῥιπτεῖν, *jactare*, ῥιπτειν, *jacere*, while some of the old grammarians associate with it a suggestion of



the ῥιπτέω action, but it seems most likely as a symbolic expression of rage and anger.<sup>106</sup> The second action, κονιορτὸν βαλλόντων εἰς τὸν ἄερα, **throwing dust into the air**, more clearly is an expression of rage in ancient middle eastern culture. Of course, not a lot of dust could be found on the stone floor of the outer court of the temple, but they managed to find enough to make the symbolic gesture.

The Roman tribune did not understand what was happening since Paul was speaking to the crowd in Aramaic rather than Greek. Thus in the midst of the mob chaos, he followed the standard procedure for Roman military officers: ἐκέλευσεν ὁ χιλιάρχος εἰσαγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν, εἶπας μάλιστα ἀνετάξεσθαι αὐτὸν ἵνα ἐπιγνῶ δι' ἣν αἰτίαν οὕτως ἐπεφώνουν αὐτῷ, **the tribune directed that he was to be brought into the barracks, and ordered him to be examined by flogging, to find out the reason for this outcry against him.** Interrogation after flogging was standard procedure. Thus the action did not represent particular anger toward Paul. Normally the Romans began questioning a prisoner only after beating him into unconsciousness and then waking him up. The reasoning was that in this way the prisoner would be far less likely to lie to them in the interrogation.



Just as the soldiers are poised to begin the flogging Paul raises the issue of flogging a Roman citizen to the commander: ὡς δὲ προέτειναν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἱμάσιν, εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν ἐστῶτα ἑκατόνταρχον ὁ Παῦλος· εἰ ἄνθρωπον Ῥωμαῖον καὶ ἀκατάκριτον ἔξεστιν ὑμῖν μαστίζειν, **But when they had tied him up with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who is uncondemned?”**<sup>107</sup> Roman law strictly forbid such action against a citizen, and especially prior to conviction of a crime.<sup>108</sup> This struck fear in the Roman centurion supervising the flogging and so he immediately went to report this to the tribune: ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης προσελθὼν τῷ χιλιάρχῳ ἀπήγγειλεν λέγων· τί μέλλεις ποιεῖν; ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος Ῥωμαῖός ἐστιν, **When the centurion heard that, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? This man is a Roman citizen.”** This was proper procedure for the centurion, since the tribune would bear ultimate responsibility for such an illegal action against a citizen. One could rightfully ask, “How could Paul prove that he was a citizen?” The simple answer is that when citizenship was granted a leather based certificate in small size which was issued containing the necessary legal documentation validating citizenship for the individual.<sup>109</sup> This “id” was to be

earnestness or effort, others of contempt, Grimm-Thayer, sub v. (for the form in LXX cf. Dan., Theod., ix., 18, 20). The word here rather means ‘tossing about their garments,’ a manifestation of excitement and uncontrollable rage, cf. Ovid, Am., iii., 2, 74, and also instances in Wetstein, cf. Chrys., who explains ῥιπτάζοντες, ἐκτινάσσοντες. Dean Farrar refers to *Pal. Expln. Fund.*, 1879, p. 77, for instances of the sudden excitability of Oriental crowds, and for similar illustrations see Hackett, *in loco*.” [Robertson W. Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. 2, Commentary (New York: George H Doran Co., n.d.)]

<sup>106c</sup>Take off clothing (Aristoph., Eccl. 529; Pla., Rep. 5, 474a τὰ ἱμάτια) as a statement of protest Ac 22:23 (s. Field, Notes 136).” [Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. s.v. ῥιπτῶ, ῥιπτέω]

<sup>107c</sup>Paul lets it be known that his case is still *res incognita*, ‘a case uninvestigated.’ He has not only not been sentenced, but there has been no proper scrutiny of his case. Paul invokes his *civitas*, ‘citizenship.’ Recall 16:37. The technical term for such scourging was *verberatio*, which could not be inflicted on a Roman citizen. See the Augustan *Lex Julia de vi publica*, in Ulpian’s *Digesta iuris romani* 48.6.7, which forbade such flogging of Roman citizens. Cf. Cicero, *Or. Verrin.* 2.5.66 §170; H. J. Cadbury, “Roman Law and the Trial of Paul,” *Beginnings*, 5.297–338, esp. 319; Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*, 57–59.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 712]

<sup>108c</sup>For the *Lex Porcia* and *Lex Julia*, which (with certain exceptions) forbade the lashing of a Roman citizen, see 16:37, with the notes. Sherwin-White (71) points out with reference to the present passage that ‘the narrative of Acts agrees with the *lex Julia* except that it adds the qualification “uncondemned”’. He proceeds to discuss this addition, which seems to imply that ‘the provincial authority might administer a flogging after sentence, presumably in a case in which a Roman citizen had not exercised his right of appeal, or alternately (sic) in a special category of cases at present unknown in which the *lex Julia* did not apply’ (71f.). The discussion is probably unnecessary. To ἄνθρωπον Ῥωμαῖον Paul adds καὶ ἀκατάκριτον, and the καὶ seems to justify the translation ‘a Roman—and uncondemned (perhaps untried—re incognita) at that’. Cf. Taira (83f.).” [C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1048]

<sup>109c</sup>Barrett 1998, 1048. Cf. Suetonius, *Nero* 12; Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 148–49. Witherington 1998, 682–83, notes the possibility, ‘that Paul had a *libellus*, which recorded that the person concerned had this or that sort of citizenship or status, with the original remaining in the municipal registers of the person’s hometown’. The penalty for a false claim to citizenship was severe and could involve death (cf. Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.24.41; Suetonius, *Claud.* 25). Cf. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 129–34.” [David G. Peterson, *The Acts* Page 527



carried by the individual continuously for showing to proper authorities upon questioning. Although Luke does not mention this, the normal assumption would be that Paul had his copy with him and could produce it if needed.

This news prompts the tribune to quickly come to the interrogation room where Paul was in order to conduct his own questioning of Paul: προσελθὼν δὲ ὁ χιλιάρχος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· λέγε μοι, σὺ Ῥωμαῖός εἶ; ὁ δὲ ἔφη· ναί, **The tribune came and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.”** Paul asserted then that indeed he was a *civis romanus*. This seemed incredulous to the officer that a Jew like Paul could possess Roman citizenship, and thus further questioning was called for: ἀπεκρίθη δὲ ὁ χιλιάρχος· ἐγὼ πολλοῦ κεφαλαίου τὴν πολιτείαν ταύτην ἐκτησάμην. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ γεγέννημαι, **The tribune answered, “It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship.” Paul said, “But I was born a citizen.”** It was obvious that Paul was not a wealthy person, and given the tribune’s experience at purchasing his citizenship,<sup>110</sup> he could not comprehend how this Jew could possibly have acquired citizenship. Paul’s answer was astounding not only to him but to the other soldiers in the room: εὐθέως οὖν ἀπέστησαν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ οἱ μέλλοντες αὐτὸν ἀνετάζειν, καὶ ὁ χιλιάρχος δὲ ἐφοβήθη ἐπιγνοὺς ὅτι Ῥωμαῖός ἐστιν καὶ ὅτι αὐτὸν ἦν δεδεκώς, **Immediately those who were about to examine him drew back from him; and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.** The exact circumstances of how Paul was born with Roman citizenship are unknown,<sup>111</sup> but that he had been granted Roman citizenship at birth clearly impressed these Romans and signaled to them a person of possible noble birth. That they had illegally bound him could mean very serious trouble for them, should Paul press charges against them.

No mention is made of the dismissing of the Jewish mob by the tribune. Most likely when Paul was taken inside by the soldiers, the crowd realized the futility of further effort to kill him. And thus they gradually left the temple area for their homes. Still angry, but unable to carry out their wishes to get rid of Paul.

#### 8.1.1.4 Paul Before the Council, Acts 22:30-23:10

The next series of scenes in Luke’s narrative places Paul before the Jewish leadership and presents him with another different challenge.

Some challenges in understanding the precise dynamics exist here.<sup>112</sup> Seemingly the tribune left Paul in chains overnight after realizing his mistake in ‘binding Paul’ as a Roman citizen. It is unclear how the Roman officer had authority to convene a meeting of the Jewish Sanhedrin, since Jewish sources seem to point otherwise. Normal protocol in such an inquiry by a Roman would have commenced with the tribune outlining his dilemma and then asking for the assistance of the Sanhedrin to answer his questions. Most of these questions arise out of a modern way of understanding a historical situation, and typically were of little or no interest to an ancient writer.

*of the Apostles*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 609]

<sup>110</sup>“The ‘much money’ that the commander had to pay might have been a bribe given to officials in an imperial secretariat or provincial administration to have his name put on the list of candidates for citizenship to be presented to the emperor. See Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 60.17.5–7. Since his name is Claudius Lysias (23:26), the *nomen* Claudius may indicate that he had attained citizenship under the emperor Claudius, since it was customary for citizens-to-be to pay a considerable sum of money and take the emperor’s family name.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 712]

<sup>111</sup>“We do not know how and when Paul’s family acquired Roman citizenship. Ramsay argued that it stemmed from 171 b.c., when Tarsus received its constitution as a Greek city and many of the socially elite in Tarsus and Cilicia were made citizens (*Cities of St. Paul*, p. 185). Cadbury proposed that Pompey, in settling the eastern provinces during the 60’s b.c., transferred a number of Jewish prisoners to Tarsus, set them free, and bestowed Roman citizenship upon them (*Book of Acts*, pp. 73–74). But Roman citizenship was not a corollary of citizenship in a Greek city-state, nor were former prisoners or slaves considered fit subjects for enfranchisement. Most likely one of Paul’s ancestors received Roman citizenship for valuable services rendered to a Roman administrator or general (perhaps Pompey) in either the Gischala region of northern Palestine or at Tarsus.” [Frank E. Gaebelein, Merrill C. Tenney, and Richard N. Longenecker. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 9: John and Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 528]

<sup>112</sup>“On the day after the riot, the commandant, faithfully seeking clarification of Jewish legal questions that were understandably beyond his capacity directed the Sanhedrin to convene and brought his charge before them. This creates another parallel with the trials of Jesus (Luke 22:54–71). Reasonable as these plans may appear, they have cast Paul into the lions’ den, since readers know that execution lies in store for believers haled before this body (6:12–7:60; cf. 5:33). The plans are not, however, truly reasonable, for they presume that the tribune commanding the Jerusalem garrison can convene the religious council and set its agenda, an unlikely prerogative of his office, and — the crux of the problem — why he does so. If Roman law is not at issue, Lysias has no need to detain Paul, whom he could allow to be taken into custody by the temple police, whose leaders could have referred the prisoner to the Roman governor, as described in the process against Jesus. Furthermore, the circumstances would have required the Roman officer to make some opening remarks, explaining the nature of his inquiry and requesting the assistance of the Sanhedrin. The essential point for the narrative is that this body could have executed Paul. Without that presupposition, Paul’s conduct is utterly inexplicable, as is the sequel (23:14).” [Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 571]

Very probably some if not most of our tensions are artificially created by our line of reasoning. Luke's agenda was to highlight Paul's dilemma in coming before this Jewish body who had the track record of executing all other Christians appearing before them up to this point: cf. 5:33; 6:12-7:60.

#### 8.1.1.4.1 Preparing to Defend Himself, Acts 22:30

30 Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον βουλόμενος γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλές, τὸ τί κατηγορεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἔλυσεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκέλευσεν συνελθεῖν τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ πᾶν τὸ συνέδριον, καὶ καταγαγὼν τὸν Παῦλον ἔστησεν εἰς αὐτοὺς.

30 Since he wanted to find out what Paul was being accused of by the Jews, the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and the entire council to meet. He brought Paul down and had him stand before them.

This sentence by Luke sets up the appearance of Paul before the Sanhedrin on the following day. The initial time marker, Τῇ ἐπαύριον, sets the scene up on the following day after the upheaval in the temple court yard. Very likely the assembly took place in mid morning in the temple complex. The motivation for Claudius Lysias calling the meeting is stated as his intention to discover (βουλόμενος γνῶναι) what was behind the Jewish accusation against Paul, τὸ τί κατηγορεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. And he wanted to learn this with certainty, τὸ ἀσφαλές.<sup>113</sup> That is, the Roman commander wanted to know the facts of the matter rather than just hearsay. Out in the chaos of the courtyard earlier he had not been able to determine this as 21:34 states using the same language: μὴ δυναμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλές διὰ τὸν θόρυβον, but he was not able to learn the facts of the situation because of the uproar. During the interrogation that he conducted of Paul inside the barracks of Antonia's Fortress, he had learned Paul's side of the story. Now he wanted to hear the opponents' side of the story. But instead of choosing members of the Jewish mob, he turned to the temple leadership, perhaps expecting to get a more credible perspective on the problem.

The above is structured as a causal secondary idea that was foundational to the main clause expression ἔλυσεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκέλευσεν συνελθεῖν τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ πᾶν τὸ συνέδριον, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the council to assemble. The chronology of arrest (ἐκέλευσεν δεθῆναι ἀλύσειν δυσίν, he ordered him to be bound with two chains, 21:33) and release (Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον...ἔλυσεν αὐτὸν, and on the next day...he released him, 22:30) doesn't work well with the discovery of Paul's Roman citizenship during the late afternoon to early evening interrogation of Paul by the Romans (22:22-29).<sup>114</sup> As 22:29 clearly expresses, their shock at realizing what they almost did to a Roman citizen would prompt an immediate release of Paul from Roman custody. But in all likelihood this sequence issue we in modern western thought patterns have created. Ancient history and biography writers seldom ever concerned themselves with such sequential precision. The much more likely implication of Luke's statement is simply that Paul had already been released from Roman custody the night before, and his appearance the next day before the assembled Jewish leaders was not as a prisoner of Rome, but voluntarily as a Roman citizen cooperating with the Roman commander's quest to get to the bottom of the issue that had provided the riot the day before in the outer courtyard of the temple. Claudius Lysias possessed authority to issue a formal ban against anyone harming the Roman citizen Paul, should he determine that the accusations against him by the Jewish mob were baseless. This would have given Paul a huge shield against the murderous desires of many of the Jews in Jerusalem. Thus it was greatly in Paul's self interest to defend himself in this 'pre-trial' inquiry moderated over by the Roman tribune.<sup>115</sup>

Paul had spent the night in Antonia's Fortress under protection of the Roman soldiers. And thus when

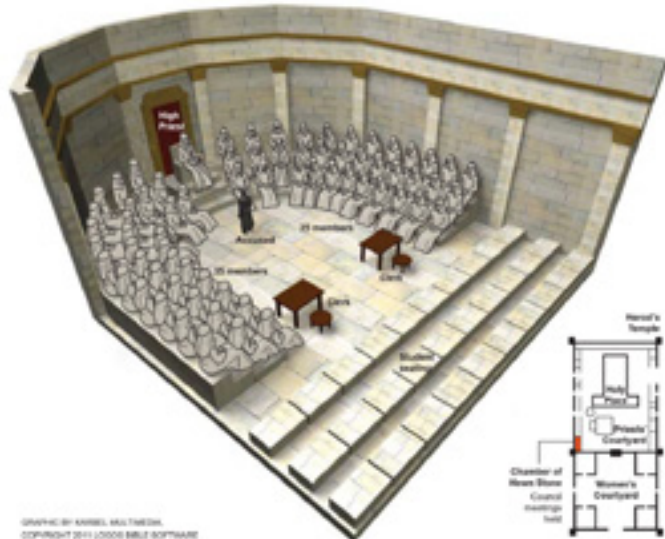
<sup>113</sup>The construction of the issue is stated by Luke in more eloquent, classical Greek style. Literally the object of γνῶναι, to learn, is τὸ ἀσφαλές, τὸ τί κατηγορεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, the certainty, that is, what was being charged by the Jews. The adjective ἀσφαλής, -ές, is turned into a neuter gender noun, as the direct object. Then the explanatory indirect question τί κατηγορεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, what was charged by the Jews, is attached to the direct object in apposition by reproducing the neuter gender article τὸ as the connecting link between the two. The interrogative pronoun τί can mean both 'what' and 'why.' Something Luke deliberately plays off of here. That is, Claudius Lysias wanted to know both the content of the accusation and also the motivation behind the accusation. We can't do such things in English, and such is seldom ever found in everyday usage of ancient Greek. But in more classical style, this sort of expression is very common.

<sup>114</sup>Several copyists of this text centuries later recognized the possible tension here and substituted ἔλυσεν, he released, with either πέμψας, having sent for (614 pc sy<sup>h\*\*</sup>), or ἔπεμψεν, he sent for. (Western text mss).

<sup>115</sup>ἐκέλευσεν can only mean that the tribune ordered the Jewish Council to meet. It is doubtful (see above) whether he would have the authority to do this (Haenchen 612; Schneider, 2:330), but the Romans may well have used the official body as a means of obtaining information about Jewish matters, and in this case the Council would be glad to be called out; it would give them an opportunity to formulate and present a case against an adversary. Wilson (*Law* 67) thinks that the tribune intended to be and was present at the meeting; Luke does not say this, and, though it would be consistent with v. 10, it cannot be regarded as certain. He may have been content to receive a report. The report that reached him in v. 10 was not what he hoped for." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1056.]

## The Sanhedrin

The Jewish high court of justice consisted of 71 men and was led by the high priest. The council could decide almost any fate of its people—except the death penalty, which was decided by the Romans. The court was located within the Chamber of Hearings inside Herod's Temple.



the inquiry<sup>116</sup> was convened the next morning Paul was καταγαγὼν τὸν Παῦλον, *escorted down*, into the meeting room, most likely one of the several meeting halls at the edge of the courtyard and below the second floor level of Antonia's Fortress in the corner of the courtyard.

Paul was escorted by the soldiers into the meeting hall and stood before them: τὸν Παῦλον ἔστησεν εἰς αὐτούς, *he stood Paul facing them*.<sup>117</sup> The groups present are designated by Luke as τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ πᾶν τὸ συνέδριον, *the chief priests and all the council*.<sup>118</sup> The common way of referring to the Jewish leadership in the NT is reflected in the following terminology: συνέδριον, βουλή, γερουσία, συμβούλιον.<sup>119</sup> One insightful reference about the composition of this group comes in John 11:47a, Συνήγαγον οὖν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συνέδριον, then *the chief priests and the called a meeting of the Sanhedrin*. This makeup of the group will play an important role as

<sup>116</sup>The basis for labeling this a 'pretrial inquiry' rather than an official trial, either Roman or Jewish is multifold with two central reasons. **First** a Roman tribune had no official authority, *imperium*, by which he could order a trial to be conducted. Only a Roman governor or magistrate could do that. Claudius Lysias was neither. **Second**, conducting such 'inquiries' before he made his own ruling in regard to accusations brought against Paul was the normal procedure to be followed by Roman regulations. Should grounds be found to violating some Roman law, then the tribune could file formal charges before the governor or a duly constituted Roman magistrate. It actually reflects well on Claudius Lysias that he went to these lengths to correctly understand the situation before making a ruling on whether any substance was in the Jewish accusations that would merit some kind of formal trial later on. As a Roman citizen, Paul stood under the protective shield of the Roman government against any harm until a formal legal process could be carried out and some specific penalty could be leveled against him defining punishment for having broken a Roman law. Whether he broke some Jewish law was legally irrelevant to the situation with Paul standing as a citizen of Rome. Without this citizenship, the dynamics would have been totally different for Paul, who would have been completely at the mercy of the tribune of whether or not to hand him over to the Jewish council for punishment within the framework of Jewish law. Additional signals of an 'inquiry' rather than a trial include the highly irregular opening of a trial with the defendant making the opening statement.

<sup>117</sup>The confusion concerning the number and character of the sanhedrin(s) is related to uncertainty about the structure and leadership of 1st century Jewish society in Palestine. The biblical Hebrew terms for leadership groups (*sôd*; *'edâ*), and the later Hebrew term *bêt dîn*, give no clear indication of the composition, jurisdiction, or powers of the assemblies so designated. Likewise, the Greek political terminology adopted as words for Jewish governing bodies, especially *boulê*, *gerousia*, *symbolion*, *synedria* and *synedrion* (all translated "council" in RSV), is general and imprecisely used." [Anthony J. Saldarini, "Sanhedrin," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 975.]

<sup>118</sup>While the exact makeup and nature of the Jewish governing body in first-century Palestine is uncertain, the varying depictions of the Sanhedrin reveal a group consisting of priests and religious teachers who meet to decide on legal matters with religious, political, and social ramifications." [Douglas Mangum, "Sanhedrin," ed. John D. Barry and Lazarus Wentz, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012).]

<sup>119</sup>The label 'Sanhedrin' is based on the Greek word συνέδριον (*synedrion*), which is a general word for 'council' and can be used for local governing assemblies as well as for the high council in Jerusalem. The ancient sources apply a variety of Greek and Hebrew terms to describe Jewish governing bodies. None are used consistently or in a technical sense. For example, the Greek words βουλή (*boulê*), γερουσία (*gerousia*), and συμβούλιον (*symbolion*), can all designate some sort of governing assembly and all are often translated 'council.' In biblical Hebrew, the various terms for an assembly or council include סֹד (*sod*) and עֲדָה (*edah*). Rabbinic texts prefer the term בֵּית דִּין (*beith din*), or 'house of judgment,' to refer to their governing assembly in charge of deciding Jewish legal matters." [Douglas Mangum, "Sanhedrin," ed. John D. Barry and Lazarus Wentz, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012).]



Paul addresses the group.

### 8.1.1.4.2 Paul tangles with the High Priest, Acts 23:1-5

23.1 Ἀτενίσας δὲ ὁ Παῦλος τῷ συνεδρίῳ εἶπεν· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ πάση συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ πεπολίτευμαι τῷ θεῷ ἄχρι ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας. 2 ὁ δὲ ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀνανίας ἐπέταξεν τοῖς παρεστώσιν αὐτῷ τύππειν αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα. 3 τότε ὁ Παῦλος πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπεν· τύππειν σε μέλλει ὁ θεός, τοῖχε κεκονιαμένε· καὶ σὺ κάθη κρίνων με κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ παρανομῶν κελεύεις με τύππεσθαι; 4 οἱ δὲ παρεστώτες εἶπαν· τὸν ἀρχιερέα τοῦ θεοῦ λοιδορεῖς; 5 ἔφη τε ὁ Παῦλος· οὐκ ἤδην, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀρχιερεὺς· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἄρχοντα τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐκ ἐρεῖς κακῶς.

23.1 While Paul was looking intently at the council he said, “Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God.” 2 Then the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth. 3 At this Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?” 4 Those standing nearby said, “Do you dare to insult God’s high priest?” 5 And Paul said, “I did not realize, brothers, that he was high priest; for it is written, “You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people.’ “

Luke presents us with a Defense Speech here in summary fashion recapping the major portions of what Paul said to the assembled Jewish leaders.<sup>120</sup> And again, just as Peter defended himself before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17-42), now Paul does something similar, as Luke continues his literary strategy of parallelism between these two early leaders of Christianity.

The literary structure of the speech is somewhat ragged simply because Paul’s speech was suddenly interrupted at the very beginning by the high priest. Thus the presentation is less a formal speech than a dialogue between Paul and individuals connected to the council: Paul, 23:1; council, 23:2; Paul, 23:3; council; 23:4; Paul, 23:5, 6; council, 23:7-9; chaotic conclusion, 23:10. As an ‘inquiry’ by the Roman tribune to throw light on the nature of the anger against Paul, the chaotic way the meeting unfolds provides Claudius Lysias a vivid picture of the irrationality of the Jewish leaders. What Luke stresses is the very insightful use of a ‘divine and conquer’ strategy by Paul in turning the issue away from him and on to the hugely divisive theological issue of the resurrection (vv. 7-9). Thus the Pharisees sided with this former Pharisee and against the Sadducees (v. 9). For the very pragmatically trained Roman military officer, just watching this convinced him that his sole job was to protect the Roman citizen Paul from these irrational Jews (cf. v. 29). As he will later tell the representatives of these people, any formal charges against Paul must be done according to Roman protocol and in a Roman court (v. 30). He wasn’t about to let them get their hands on Paul in Jerusalem.

Luke sets up the speech in verse one with one of his favorite verbs, Ἀτενίσας, denoting Paul’s intense gaze straight at the members of the council with absolutely no fear or hesitancy at all. Once Paul had fixed this piercing gaze on them, he began to speak. Remember that he is speaking to them in Aramaic, and not in Greek, just as he did with the mob in the temple courtyard the day before. This is certain even though Luke does not state it directly. No Jew would have ever been allowed to address the Sanhedrin in any language other than that of the Jews. The only uncertainty here is whether Paul spoke in Hebrew or Aramaic -- Paul spoke both well. But Luke is giving us the essence of what Paul said in Greek.

His initial statement provoked controversy right at the beginning:

<sup>120</sup>Cf. Acts 4:1-22; 6:8-8:1a; 21:27-22:29; 22:30-23:10; 24:1-23; 25:13-26:32. Note: we should not assume that Luke reports everything said and done at this meeting. He focuses only on Paul’s participation in the meeting.



looked | 6 of 14

Ac 3:4 Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.”

Ac 6:15 And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Ac 11:6 As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air.

Ac 13:9 But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

Ac 14:9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed,

Ac 23:1 While Paul was looking intently at the council he said, “Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God.”

gaze | 4 of 14

Ac 1:10 While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them:

Ac 7:55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

2 Co 3:7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses’ face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside,

2 Co 3:13 not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside.

stare | 3 of 14

Lk 22:56 Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, “This man also was with him.”

Ac 3:12 When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?”

Ac 10:4 He stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” He answered, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

fixed | 1 of 14

Lk 4:20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ πάση συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ πεπολίτευμαι<sup>121</sup> τῷ θεῷ ἄχρι ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας, *Men, brothers, with a completely clear conscience I have lived out my life to God up to this very day.* Exactly what Paul meant by a πάση συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ must be defined contextually, and not absolutely.<sup>122</sup> Taken absolutely, then what Luke says elsewhere about Paul's participation in the killing of Stephen and other Christians would make him a liar who deserved to be rebuked by the high priest. What Paul meant by this was simply that he consistently lived true to his convictions of right and wrong and the will of God as he understood them at any given moment.<sup>123</sup> But clearly implicit here is that his understanding underwent drastic modification in his Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ. His 'conscience' was first shaped by Judaism, but later by the Gospel -- and those are two different sets of values.

The reaction of the high priest Ananias<sup>124</sup> was in line with his known character, although completely uncalled for here: ὁ δὲ ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀνανίας ἐπέταξεν τοῖς παρεστώσιν αὐτῷ τύπτειν αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, *Then the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth.* Compare a similar experience by Jesus

<sup>121</sup>The use of πεπολίτευμαι here for living one's life is distinctive. The verb πολιτεύομαι is only used here and in Phil. 1:27 in the entire NT. Literally, it means to function as a citizen with dominant meanings of possessing citizenship or exercising administrative responsibility as a head of state etc. Only in a figurative meaning can it designate living one's life. In this meaning the tone is living as a citizen in such a way to bring honor to the city that one belongs to. This is clearly distinct from ζᾶω or βιώω that stress being alive. The verb πολιτεύομαι stresses behavior consistent to some set of values or obligations.

This would express Luke's interpretive understanding of the meaning of Paul's statements since no exactly equivalent verb existed either in Hebrew or Aramaic. The writing of Acts initially to the Roman nobleman Theophilus in Macedonia (Acts 1:1) may very well have guided Luke in his very Greek choice of terms here.

<sup>122</sup>It is a measure of the 'afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults' (2 Cor. 6:4-5) of Saint Paul's ministry that this is only one in a series of speeches delivered by him in self-defense, which appear here in five successive chapters of the Acts of the Apostles:<sup>1</sup>

1. to a Jewish audience, speaking in Aramaic (22:3-21);
2. to the Jewish Sanhedrin (23:1-6), interrupted by various outbursts;
3. to Felix, Roman governor of Judea (24:10-21), in response to the official indictment as stated by Tertullus the lawyer-  
orator (ρήτωρ) (24:2-8);
4. to Porcius Festus, another Roman governor of Judea (25:8-11);
5. to King Agrippa (26:2-23);

<sup>1</sup>These apologies are, also because of the variation in the audience, excellent examples of how the classic Aristotelian definition of 'pathos, the frame of mind of the audience,'<sup>2</sup> shifted in Christian rhetoric as it was being addressed to Jews or to Gentiles (→24:1-2); and it is instructive to pay attention both to the differences and to the common elements between the apologies, as in the present one.

[Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 245.]

<sup>123</sup>His claim to have led his life until that day in all good conscience in God's sight was a bold claim, but not an unparalleled claim from Paul. Not long afterward he assured the procurator Felix that it was his constant care to maintain a clear conscience in relation to God and human beings alike (24:16); we may compare his review of his earlier life in Phil. 3:6, where he claims that he was, 'as to righteousness under the law, blameless.'<sup>1</sup> Conscience is spoken of as an independent witness to one's behavior. Paul might well appeal to the testimony of conscience as he stood before the supreme court of Israel; it was on no righteousness of his own, however, that he relied for justification in the heavenly court (Phil. 3:9). The purest conscience was an insecure basis of confidence under the scrutiny of God: 'I am not aware of anything against myself,' he told the Corinthian Christians, "but I am not thereby justified; it is the Lord who judges me" (1 Cor. 4:4).<sup>2</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 424.]

<sup>124</sup>He served as high priest from 47 to 59 AD and was infamous among Jews for his greed.

The high priest at this time was Ananias, son of Nedebeaus, who received the office from Herod of Chalcis (younger brother of Herod Agrippa I) in A.D. 47 and held it for eleven or twelve years. He brought no credit to the sacred office. Josephus tells how his servants went to the threshing floors to seize the tithes that ought to have gone to the common priests,<sup>3</sup> while the Talmud preserves a parody of Ps. 24:7 in which his greed was lampooned:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
that Yohanan<sup>4</sup> ben Narbai,<sup>5</sup> the disciple of Pinqai,<sup>6</sup> may go in  
and fill his belly with the divine sacrifices!"<sup>7</sup>

Some five years before this time he had been sent to Rome by the legate of Syria on suspicion of complicity in a sanguinary conflict between Judaeans and Samaritans, but was cleared and restored to the high priesthood by the Emperor Claudius, thanks to the advocacy of the younger Agrippa.<sup>8</sup> His great wealth made him a man to be reckoned with even after his deposition from office; and he did not scruple to use violence and assassination to further his interests. His pro-Roman policy, however, made him an object of intense hostility to the militant nationalists in Judaea, and when the war against Rome broke out in A.D. 66 he was dragged by insurgents from an aqueduct in which he had tried to hide, and put to death along with his brother Hezekiah. His son Eleazar, captain of the temple, took fierce reprisals on his assassins.<sup>9</sup>

[F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 425.]

in John 18:22. In any judicial inquiry such actions by an accuser would trigger immediate disciplining of the individual. And clearly as stated in the later Talmud the rights of a defendant such as Paul were spelled out in detail and prohibited such actions. Thus what became abundantly evident was that the high priest was the one unquestionably breaking the Torah, rather than Paul. The Roman tribune got a clear picture of the character of both the high priest and the rest of the Sanhedrin, which, given Ananias' questionable reputation among both Jews and Romans, he probably already had some awareness of.

By catching Paul off guard with this action, Paul responds with anger to the high priest: τότε ὁ Παῦλος πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπεν, *then Paul said to him*. It may be debated whether Paul spoke out of turn with what he said: τύπτειν σε μέλλει ὁ θεός, τοῖχε κεκονιαμένε· καὶ σὺ κάθη κρίνων με κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ παρανομῶν κελεύεις με τύπτεσθαι; *“God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?”* One must always remember the normal bluntness of verbal exchanges in the ancient world that would be considered very inappropriate in many modern western cultures. But in Paul's world such bluntness was fully expected and considered normal.

Thus Paul addresses the highpriest as a τοῖχε κεκονιαμένε. The literal meaning of a plastered wall can suggest several derivative figurative meanings. It may move the same direction as Jesus calling the Pharisees τάφοις κεκονιαμένοις, *whitewashed tombs*, in Matt. 23:27. If so, then Paul calls Ananias a hypocrite who appears to be something he isn't. Both of these seem to play off of Ezekiel's condemnation of false prophets in Ezek. 13:14-15. Or the image could convey the picture of instability. The plaster outer covering hides fundamental instability and weakness in the wall. Perhaps the choice here is a both and choice rather than an either or choice. In either instance the image of a plastered wall is closely linked to the beginning statement that Paul makes: τύπτειν σε μέλλει ὁ θεός, τοῖχε κεκονιαμένε, *God is going to strick you down, you plastered wall*. Paul is pronouncing the judgment of God on Ananias here, without realizing that in less than a decade Ananias would be murdered by the insurgents who led the Jewish rebellion against Rome at the beginning of the first Jewish war in the late 60s. They found him hiding in Jerusalem and brutally killed him because of his pro-Roman stance that had enabled him to accumulate large wealth at the expense of Jewish peasants.

The pronouncement of doom by Paul is followed up by a rhetorical question: καὶ σὺ κάθη κρίνων με κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ παρανομῶν κελεύεις με τύπτεσθαι; *Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?* The question is an accusation of the high priest being the violator of the Torah rather than Paul. And in reality this was a valid accusation in light of the Jewish interpretive history of Torah passages such as Lev. 19:15.<sup>125</sup> Thus in one sense the murder of Ananias a few years later might be perceived as the judgement of God on him that Paul here pronounces. I suspect that Claudius Lysias was really getting interested in what was being said, as he watched Paul turn the tables on the high priest to become the accused rather than the accuser.

One of the interesting questions here is the identity of the 'bystanders' in verse four: οἱ δὲ παρεστῶτες εἶπαν· τὸν ἀρχιερέα τοῦ θεοῦ λοιδορεῖς; *Those standing nearby said, “Do you dare to insult God's high priest?”* The identical terminology is used in verse two to describe those who slapped Paul on the mouth: τοῖς παρεστῶσιν αὐτῷ. Evidently these same individuals caution Paul in a rather positive tone now. Seemingly they were following orders from a superior in the first instance but now voluntarily reflect a more sympathetic stance toward Paul with their words. It is significant that the reference is to τὸν ἀρχιερέα τοῦ θεοῦ, *God's high priest*. They call upon Paul to respect the position of high priest, even though the person occupying it is not worthy of respect. The use of the plural form of both participles should not be taken to suggest multiple individuals first hit and then spoke to him. One individual did this representing the others, and thus Luke describes it as a group action. Again, notice the similarity to Jesus' experience in John 18:22.<sup>126</sup>

Paul's reaction to their words is apologetic in tone: ἔφη τε ὁ Παῦλος· οὐκ ᾔδην, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀρχιερέως· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἄρχοντα τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐκ ἔρεῖς κακῶς, *And Paul said, “I did not realize, brothers, that he was high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people.’* This stands somewhat in contrast to Jesus'

<sup>125</sup>See Lev. 19:15 which may be regarded as requiring fair play for the person accused. Sanhedrin and Makkoth go out of their way to emphasize this requirement, though there is no special prohibition of striking the accused. Paul had not at this stage been formally accused of crime, much less found guilty. Demosthenes uses παρανομεῖν, συνειδήσις, πολιτεύεσθαι, κονιᾶν: ‘... est-ce un hasard?’ asks Delebecque (110). Not exactly chance; Demosthenes, and, at this place, Luke are both concerned with the operation of courts. It is not surprising that their vocabularies overlap.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1060.]

<sup>126</sup>**John 18:22.** ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος εἷς παρεστηκὼς τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ἔδωκεν ῥάπισμα τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰπόν· οὕτως ἀποκρίνη τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ; *When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?”*



more defensive response in John 18:23.<sup>127</sup> Older commentators have problems with Paul saying that he did not recognize the high priest. If Paul had a clear visual sight of Ananias, it indeed is hard to understand what Paul said. Clearly from Paul's initial blast in verse three, he knew that the orders to strike him had come from Ananias, the high priest. Ananias came to this position in 47 AD, about the time of the Jerusalem council meeting with the Christian leaders. Paul was in the city at that time, then again at the end of the second missionary journey in the early fifties around 52 AD (Acts 18:22). Now it was in the late fifties when this encounter took place. One would expect such a prominent person to be easily recognizable. The very distinctive robes that the high priest would have made him stand out from the other priests present in the room. But evidently not for Paul. Yet, he did realize that the high priest did give orders for him to be struck. The lack of precise details leaves us wondering how this happened.<sup>128</sup> But it does not provide a basis for concluding lack of sincerity in Paul's apologetic words -- something a few commentators conclude.

One should note that here, as well as in verse one, Paul addresses the council and priests as ἀδελφοί, **brothers**. The meaning attached to the term here is the meaning the word had as direct address in Judaism long before Christianity came into being. That meaning is "fellow Jews." Mostly Paul will use ἀδελφοί to refer to fellow Christians in his writings, and even in dialogues inside Acts. But not here.

In typical Pauline manner, the apostle grounds his apologetic words in scriptural principle: γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι, **for it is written that...** With his statement ἄρχοντα τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐκ ἐρεῖς κακῶς, Paul paraphrases Exodus 22:28 (LXX 22:27), θεοῦς οὐ κακολογήσεις καὶ ἄρχοντα τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐ κακῶς ἐρεῖς. **You shall not revile God, or curse a leader of your people.** The Torah demanded respect for spiritual leaders of covenant Israel, just as Paul made similar demands for Christian leaders (cf. 1 Tim. 6:1). Thus he felt obligated to follow this injunction from the Torah. Thus by showing such respect to the high priest, Paul demonstrated to the Roman tribune the quality of his character over against that of the high priest who had just exhibited the opposite in his lack of respect for both Paul and for the Torah.

#### 8.1.1.4.3 Paul throws the Council into Confusion, Acts 23:6-10

6 Γνοῦς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων, περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι. 7 τοῦτο δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἐγένετο στάσις τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων καὶ ἐσχίσθη τὸ πλῆθος. 8 Σαδδουκαῖοι μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα, Φαρισαῖοι δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν τὰ ἀμφοτέρα. 9 ἐγένετο δὲ κραυγὴ μεγάλη, καὶ ἀναστάντες τινὲς τῶν γραμματέων τοῦ μέρους τῶν Φαρισαίων διεμάχοντο λέγοντες· οὐδὲν κακὸν εὐρίσκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ· εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἄγγελος; 10 Πολλῆς δὲ γινομένης στάσεως φοβηθεὶς ὁ χιλιάρχος μὴ διασπασθῆ ὁ Παῦλος ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐκέλευσεν τὸ στράτευμα καταβὰν ἀρπάσαι αὐτὸν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν ἄγειν τε εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν.

6 When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead." 7 When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.) 9 Then a great clamor arose, and certain scribes of the Pharisees' group stood up and contended, "We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" 10 When the dissension became violent, the tribune, fearing that they would tear Paul to pieces, ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force, and bring him into the barracks.

A second scene in Paul's defense presentation reflects his communication skills at a virtual genius level. Luke typically signals the point of this section in the temporal participle phrase introducing the first sentence of this paragraph: Γνοῦς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων. As he observed these two religious / political parties that dominated the membership of the council, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, he recognized an opportunity to turn the discussion away from him and on to the religious issue that had generated the hostility against him. Additionally, such a re-direction would further identify to the Roman tribune that the controversy was in reality a religious squabble over differing beliefs inside Judaism.

<sup>127</sup>**John 18:23.** ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ κακῶς ἐλάλησα, μαρτύρησον περὶ τοῦ κακοῦ· εἰ δὲ καλῶς, τί με δέρεις; **Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"**

<sup>128</sup>Those who think that Paul suffered from defective sight have sometimes found evidence for it here: not a convincing explanation. A more widely accepted explanation is that Paul was speaking ironically. So e.g. Calvin (2:229): 'I myself agree with Augustine, and have no doubt that this excuse is ironical.' 'Paul manie l'ironie' (Delebecque 110); also Marshall (364). But Haenchen (610) is probably right in arguing that the address ἀδελφοί (v. 1) and the quotation of Exod. 22:27 show that this is not irony. Bauernfeind (257) finding that irony is improbable concludes that we know too little to be able to explain the text." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1061–1062.]

Remember that by the mid 50s even with Paul's mission to the Gentiles, Christianity was perceived both inside by Christians and outside by non-Christians, including Jews, as a religious movement inside Judaism, not as a distinctly different and independent religious movement separate from Judaism. Such thinking will be established by the end of the first Christian century, but not at all at the middle of the century.

Only by studying the history of these two religious groups in ancient Judaism can one begin to grasp just how much they utterly disliked one another. The animosity was generated by numerous dynamics: religious belief, economic origin and power bases, size and influence over the Jewish people etc. Add to that the general cultural love of a blunt, intense argument over theology, and Paul saw a real opportunity here. As a former Pharisee, he knew these debates well and probably had participated in them prior to becoming a Christian. Thus Luke says ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ, **he cried out in the Sanhedrin**. The verb ἔκραζεν defines speaking in loud, demanding tones rather than in a normal manner.<sup>129</sup>

What Paul shouted out was simply: ἀνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων, περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι, **Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead**. Again notice the same manner of addressing the group with ἀνδρες ἀδελφοί as he did at the beginning in v. 1. This was a polite, engaging manner of speaking to this group. Paul makes two declarations in Aramaic that Luke translates over into Greek. First, Paul claims his Jewish heritage as a Pharisee: ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων, **I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees**. This group came mostly out of the peasant ranks of Jews and few had an aristocratic background, like the Sadducees who exclusively came from Jewish 'blue blood' families. The theological debate that Paul will inject originated out of a dramatically different definition of "Bible" between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Sadducees excluded everything beyond the five books of Moses from "sacred scripture." Only the Torah of Moses was divinely authoritative. The remainder of the Hebrew Old Testament along with the subsequent scribal traditions represented only human commentary on the Torah and thus possessed no divine authority. On the other hand, the Pharisees insisted on all of the Hebrew Bible as divinely authoritative. But even more, the developing scribal interpretation of the Torah represented the same level of divine authority and thus was absolutely binding. This, in turn, produced radically different views about life and death. For the Sadducees nothing existed beyond death for people. Everything to be accomplished and experienced happened in this life. But in the emerging scribal traditions of the Pharisees were radically different interpretations of some statements in the later prophets and beyond. Death signaled a move into life beyond the grave. Final judgment came then which determined one's eternal fate either in Heaven or Hell. But in order to stand before God in final judgment one had to be reunited back into body and spirit. Thus, the teaching on the necessity of a resurrection of the body. This was a concept which the Sadducees ridiculed as utter stupidity, and contrary to the Torah of God.

This was the heart of Paul's training and heritage as a Pharisee. When he says he was a υἱὸς Φαρισαίων, **son of Pharisees**, note that he is not saying that his father was a Pharisee -- as understood by a few of the church fathers. Paul did not say υἱὸς Φαρισαίου, **son of a Pharisee**. What he was clearly affirming is that he completely accepts certain of the beliefs of the Pharisees, and that his beliefs have originated out of those in the Pharisee tradition. And over against those of the Sadducees!

And the key belief that he affirms of the Pharisees is the resurrection of the dead: περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι, **concerning hope and the resurrection of the dead I am being judged**. It is carefully framed to illustrate compatibility with the Pharisees' belief, but not too detailedly stated so as to betray the profound differences that existed between the Pharisees' understanding and Paul's Christian understanding. The Pharisees clearly expected to find divine favor in final judgment that would guarantee them eternal life with

And the key belief that he affirms of the Pharisees is the resurrection of the dead: περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι, **concerning hope and the resurrection of the dead I am being judged**. It is carefully framed to illustrate compatibility with the Pharisees' belief, but not too detailedly stated so as to betray the profound differences that existed between the Pharisees' understanding and Paul's Christian understanding. The Pharisees clearly expected to find divine favor in final judgment that would guarantee them eternal life with

<sup>129c</sup> κρᾶζω is a word like 'croak,' It uses kr + vowel + guttural to suggest a rough or raucous sound, It is based on the croaking of ravens.<sup>1</sup> The meaning is a. 'to croak or cry with a loud and raucous voice': σὺ δ' αὖ κέκραγας κἀναμυχθίζῃ (or ἀναμυχθίζῃ) (groan deeply), *Aesch. Prom.* 743 v1.; ποίου κέκραγας ἀνδρὸς ᾧδ' ὑπέφρονα; *Soph. Ai.*, 1239; Κάτων ... ἐδυσχέραϊνε (to be dissatisfied) καὶ ἐεκκράγει, *Polyb.*, 31, 2, 5 v1. It is used of an ass in Job 6:5 and of childbirth in Is. 26:17. It is a warcy in Jos. 6:16: εἶπεν Ἰησοῦς ... κεκράξατε (of the capture of Jericho).<sup>2</sup> A second sense is b. 'to demand with cries': κέκραγεν ἐμβάδας (men's shoes), *Aristoph. Vesp.*, 103; ἐκέκραξεν δὲ ὁ λαὸς πρὸς φαραῶν περὶ ἄρτων, Gn. 41:55; cf. Ex. 5:8.3" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 898.]



God in Heaven. The foundation of such expectation (ἐλπίδος) was the superior level of obedience to the Torah beyond that of regular Jews not so passionate about obeying the Laws of God. At this point Paul's expectation and that of the Pharisees radically differed, since his expectation of spending eternity with God was centered in the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. Had either he given this much detail or had the council quizzed him about such details, his strategy of splitting the group would not have worked.

Was Paul being deceptive here? Not at all! He did share what he honestly had in common with the Pharisees, the expectation of a life eternal with God in Heaven. His point was to emphasize what he legitimately shared in common with the Pharisees, and that ultimately this common belief was the real target of the temple leadership who were Sadducees.

In verses seven and eight, Luke describes the impact of what Paul said to the group. The apostle did indeed achieve his objective, since immediately the focus shifted away from him and on to the theological issue of the resurrection and life after death: τοῦτο δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἐγένετο στάσις τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων καὶ ἐσχίσθη τὸ πλῆθος, *When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.* Two key terms depict the resulting situation: ἐγένετο στάσις and ἐσχίσθη. The noun στάσις defines the situation in terms of serious disagreement that included shouting and intense emotions being expressed. On the milder side of its meaning is bitter difference of opinion, while at the other end of the definition spectrum is violent clashes between opposing groups.<sup>130</sup> Added to this depiction is the subsequent main clause declaration ἐσχίσθη τὸ πλῆθος, *and the group become split.* By τὸ πλῆθος, Luke clearly means τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ πᾶν τὸ συνέδριον, *the chief priests and all the council*, that he introduced in 22:30. The Aorist passive indicative verb ἐσχίσθη from σχίζω defines the crowd has being torn into two bitterly hostile pieces. It signals far more than just a difference of opinion on the topic of the resurrection and after life. The atmosphere in the meeting hall quickly became bitterly tense and hostile, and filled with shouting of insults and criticisms back and forth. In other words, chaos began descending on the meeting quite rapidly.

The following statement in verse eight is given as a cause for this division in order to help Luke's targeted reader(s) to understand why such an uproar would break out over Paul's statements: Σαδδουκαῖοι μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα, Φαρισαῖοι δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν τὰ ἀμφότερα. *For on the one side the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or a spirit, but on the other side the Pharisees confess all these things.* It is interesting to observe that Luke's evaluation of the belief system of the Sadducees goes well beyond denying the resurrection, and includes angels and a spirit.<sup>131</sup> This creates something of a problem.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>130</sup>στάσις, εως, ἡ

**1. condition of being in a certain position or state of affairs, existence, occurrence** στάσιν ἔχειν be in existence, be standing (Polyb. 5, 5, 3; Plut., Mor. 731b ἔχ. γένεσιν καὶ στάσιν) **Hb 9:8** (also prob. is place, position [Hdt. 9, 24 al.; Dioid S 12, 72, 10; 13, 50, 9; LXX; En 12:4]). Stability was a dominant concern in administration of a state. If the focus is on the process leading up to establishment of a position, change is a dominant component, hence

**2. movement toward a (new) state of affairs, uprising, riot, revolt, rebellion** (opp. ἡσυχία [q.v. 1] civil harmony, peaceful conduct; since Alcaeus 46a, 1 D.2 [ἀνέμων στάσις=tumult of the winds]; Aeschyl., Hdt.; Sb 6643, 18 [88 B.C.]; PLond VI, 1912, 73 [41 A.D.]; Philo; Jos., Ant. 20, 117; Tat. 19, 3; loanw. in rabb.) against the civil authority **Mk 15:7; Lk 23:19** (of an uprising: Dio Chrys. 21 [38], 14 γενομένης στάσεως), **25; Ac 19:40**. Against the leaders of a Christian congregation 1 Cl 1:1. W. διχοστασία 51:1. But it is difficult to differentiate in 1 Cl betw. this sense and the foll. one, with focus on the component of discord.

**3. lack of agreement respecting policy, strife, discord, disunion** (Dioid S 12, 14, 3 στάσεις ἐν τ. οἰκίαις; Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 45 §193 ἡ Καίσαρος κ. Αντωνίου στάσις; IG IV2/1, 687, 13; PStras 20, 10; Jos., Ant. 18, 374 al.; Tat. 16, 3) 1 Cl 46:9. W. ἔρις 3:2; 14:2 (στάσεις). W. ἔρις and σχίσματα 54:2. W. σχίσμα 2:6. W. ζήτησις **Ac 15:2**. τὴν καταβολὴν τῆς στ. ποιεῖν lay the foundation of the discord 1 Cl 57:1. ἡσυχάζειν τῆς ματαίας στ. cease from that futile dissension 63:1. Specif. of a difference in opinion, dispute (Aeschyl., Pers. 738; Apollon. Paradox. 6 τὴν γινομένην στάσιν τοῖς Πυθαγορεῖσι προειπεῖν; Diog. L. 3, 51; Philo, Rer. Div. Her. 248; Jos., Vi. 143 γίνεται στ.; Tat. 1, 1 al.) **Ac 23:7, 10** (Polyaenus, Exc. 40, 3 στάσεως γενομένης). κινεῖν στάσεις (v.l. στάσιν) τισί create dissension among certain people **Ac 24:5**.—DELG. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 940.]

<sup>131</sup>In light of the repetition in verse nine εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἄγγελος *but what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?*, the term πνεῦμα should be taken as almost a synonym of ἄγγελος, both referring to supernatural beings existing in Heaven. Even if a 'human spirit' in Heaven is affirmed here, the Pharisees stand at odds with Jesus who in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus indicated no human being in eternity -- in Hell in this case -- could communicate with folks on earth.

<sup>132</sup>“The statement that the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection is not a problem. It is a widely recognized fact about the Sadducees; see Mt. 12:18 (and parallels); Josephus, *War* 2:165 (ψυχῆς τε τὴν διαμονὴν καὶ τὰς καθ' ἕδου τιμωρίας καὶ τιμὰς ἀναπροῦσιν), and other passages. Cf. *Sanhedrin* 10:1.

“But the statement that the Sadducees do not believe in angels or spirits, if taken in its most obvious sense, has no parallel, and indeed can have none, for the Sadducees accepted the authority of the written Torah, and the Pentateuch contains many references to



Both angels and the idea of a human spirit are abundantly present in the Torah that served as exclusive scripture to the Sadducees. Plus nothing in ancient Jewish literature about the Sadducees suggests their denial of angels and a human spirit. Some efforts at resolving this tension center on a precise meaning of τὰ ἀμφότερα. Normally it alludes to two things with the meaning of both,<sup>133</sup> but in ancient Greek as well as with many modern western languages except for English, comparisons of two or more items are expressed often the exact same way. If the meaning ‘both’ is correct, then what Luke attributes to the denial of the Sadducees and affirms for the Pharisees is that resurrection can go either into becoming an ‘angel’ or a ‘spirit.’ But this creates as many new problems as it solves with the original problem. The most natural meaning is simply that the three ideas rejected by the Sadducees are affirmed by the Pharisees. Proving from secondary ancient sources that Luke knew what he was talking about in such a statement remains impossible. But the central issue of the resurrection is well established by this secondary literature.

The end result of the commotion is described first in verse nine: ἐγένετο δὲ κραυγὴ μεγάλη, καὶ ἀναστάντες τινὲς τῶν γραμματέων τοῦ μέρους τῶν Φαρισαίων διεμάχοντο λέγοντες· οὐδὲν κακὸν εὐρίσκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ· εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἄγγελος; Then a great clamor arose, and certain scribes of the Pharisees’ group stood up and contended, “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” Two core declarations are made by Luke. First, ἐγένετο δὲ κραυγὴ μεγάλη, and a loud shouting took place. The phrase κραυγὴ μεγάλη signals a lot of loud shouting taking place.<sup>134</sup> The verb form of this noun, κραυγάζειν, surfaces in Acts 22:23 describing the mob rioting in the temple courtyard. The spokesmen for the Pharisees were τινὲς τῶν γραμματέων, some of the scribes. These were the ‘experts’ in the Torah among the Pharisees, who could speak angelic and spiritual beings, in whose existence the Sadducees must have believed. ‘... wirkliche radikal Bestreitung aller Engel- und Geistermetaphysik liess sich mit dem AT aber doch schlechthin nicht vereinigen! Es gibt auch kein einziger Zeugnis sonst, das diese Angabe der AG bestätigte’ (Bauernfeind 255). Bauernfeind, assuming that the statement is correct, finds the origin of this scepticism in Hellenistic free-thinking; cf. StrB (2:767), ‘Die Leugnung von Engeln und Geistern seitens der Sadduzäer lässt sich aus jüdischen Quellen nicht belegen, entspricht aber ganz ihrer Diesseitigkeitsreligion.’ Starting from a different point Conzelmann (129), followed by Schille (427), puts the matter thus: Luke knows that the Sadducees do not believe in resurrection but does not know why; he makes them therefore rationalists, who must in consequence deny also angels and spirits. Cf. also Roloff (328). A new explanation was given by D. Daube (JBL 109 (1990), 493–7), as follows. The theme that is of substance to Paul is resurrection, but this is viewed under two aspects, (1) the final resurrection, and (2) the span between death and resurrection, ‘which, in widespread belief, a good person spends in the realm or mode of angel or spirit’ (493). It is not claimed that the Sadducees denied outright the existence of spiritual beings — they could not have done so—only that they denied the existence of an interim state, in which those who had died existed as angels or spirits, these being more or less synonymous terms (see 1 Enoch 22:3, 7; 45:4–5; Mt. 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk. 20:36). Thus in v. 9 the spirit or angel that may have spoken to Paul is Jesus between death and (final) resurrection. Cf. Weiser (617). Daube’s article was taken up by B. T. Viviano and J. Taylor (JBL 111 (1992), 496–8), who ‘take the two nouns ἄγγελος and πνεῦμα as standing in apposition to ἀνάστασιν, and ... translate ‘the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection either as an angel (i.e. in the form of an angel) or as a spirit (i.e. in the form of a spirit) but the Pharisees acknowledge them both’ ’ (498). Viviano and Taylor refer to an essay by S. T. Lachs in Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies 6 (1977), 35–42 as the origin of their view; but cf. already Bengel (475): ‘Spiritus angelo oppositus, dicit hic spiritum hominis defuncti.’” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1065–1066.]

<sup>133</sup>Some ancient copies (P<sup>74</sup> L 104. 323. 1241 pm) that read μηδὲ instead of μήτε after ἀνάστασιν point in this direction by generating the meaning, they say there is no resurrection, not even an angel nor a spirit. But these are mostly late mss and very secondary textual evidence.

<sup>134</sup>κραυγῆ, ἦς, ἡ (s. prec. entry; Eur., X. et al.; Vett. Val. 2, 35; PPetr II, 45 III, 25 [246 B.C.]; POxy 1242 III, 54; PTebt 15, 3; LXX; En 104:3; PsSol 1:2; TestJob 33:2; EpArist; Joseph.; Ath. 11:1).

### 1. a loud cry or call, shout lit.

**a. shout(ing), clamor** of excited persons **Eph 4:31**. Of people shouting back and forth in a quarrel: ἐγένετο κ. μεγάλη *there arose a loud outcry* **Ac 23:9** (cp. Ex 12:30; without μεγ. X., Cyr. 7, 5, 28). Of people who incite one another to enjoy a spectacle AcPl Ha 4, 6.

**b. a loud (articulate) cry** κ. γέγονεν w. direct discourse foll. there arose a shout **Mt 25:6** (EGrässer, D. Problem der Parousieverzögerung, ZNW Beih. 22, ’57, 124f). ἀνεφώνησεν κραυγὴ μεγάλη καὶ εἶπεν w. direct discourse foll. **Lk 1:42**; cp. **Rv 14:18** v.l. Of fervent prayer (Ps 17:7; 101:2; Jon 2:3) μετὰ κ. ἰσχυρᾶς with loud crying **Hb 5:7** (cp. Diod S 19, 83, 3 and Ath. 11:1 μετὰ πολλῆς κραυγῆς—μετὰ κ. as Diod S 11, 36, 1; Nicol. Dam.: 90, Fgm. 130, 25 p. 409, 20 Jac.; UPZ 8, 17 [161 B.C.]; EpArist 186; Jos., Bell. 2, 517). ἀκουσθῆναι ἐν κ. τὴν φωνὴν ὑμῶν so that your voice is heard in loud cries B 3:1 (Is 58:4).—τρία μυστήρια κραυγῆς, ἅτινα ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ θεοῦ ἐπράχθη three mysteries (to be) loudly acclaimed, which were quietly accomplished by God IEph 19:1. The three ‘mysteries’ are the virginity of Mary, her childbearing, and the death of Jesus. In contrast to God’s quiet performance, Ign appears to have in mind their public proclamation in a cultic setting as part of the divine design, with a responsory cry of acclamation. Others interpret κ. here as the proclamation itself.

### 2. outcry in grief or anxiety, wailing, crying

(cp. Ex 3:7; 11:6; Esth 4:3; Is 65:19; TestJob 33:2) Rv 21:4.—DELG. M-M. TW. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 565–566.]

authoritatively for the Pharisee view. And did they speak, since Luke describes them as διεμάχοντο λέγοντες, fighting for their view as they spoke. The verb here is extra strong like κραυγή and στάσις, and stronger than διαλέγεσθαι, to argue for. In summarizing the essence of their argument to the Sadducees Luke states οὐδὲν κακὸν εὕρισκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ· εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἄγγελος; we find nothing wrong with this man; and what if a spirit or an angel spoke to him? The direct object οὐδὲν κακὸν specifies nothing in violation of the Torah that would merit some kind of formal judgment by the Sanhedrin. The second declaration in the form of a rhetorical question is highly abbreviated.<sup>135</sup>

Their first point is rather astounding: οὐδὲν κακὸν εὕρισκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ, Nothing bad we find in this man. This former Pharisee had won them over to his point, but not necessarily to his religious beliefs beyond the core idea of the resurrection. Under different circumstances these people would never have made such a declaration. The sense here of κακὸν is something in violation with the Torah, rather than some moral impropriety as would normally be the case. Although in English we would define such as ‘nothing wrong with this man,’ the original Greek expression locates the potential failure as inside him, thus suggesting something rather serious.

Their second point offers something of a rationale for the first statement: εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἄγγελος; and what if a spirit or an angel spoke to him? This elliptical English translation is the best way to render the very abbreviated Greek expression.<sup>136</sup> Because the opposing Sadducees bitterly rejected the idea of angels or spirits, this rationale takes a particular dig at them. But clearly Paul’s recounting of Christ speaking to him on the Damascus road is not affirmed as Paul presented it. Rather what Paul heard -- within their depiction -- was some angel or spirit talking. And even this possibility is presented very tentatively.

Once these Pharisees got this point ‘on the table’ complete chaos erupted in the meeting: Πολλῆς δὲ γινομένης στάσεως..., And when extreme dissension broke out... This temporal genitive absolute participle clause provides the occasion prompting the action by the tribune. The conflict between these two groups of the council began degenerating into violent action against each other.

What Claudius Lysias did is spelled out as φοβηθεὶς ὁ χιλιάρχος μὴ διασπασθῆ ὁ Παῦλος ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ἐκέλευσεν τὸ στράτευμα καταβὰν ἀρπάσαι αὐτὸν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν ἄγειν τε εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν, being fearful that Paul might be torn into pieces, the tribune ordered the soldiers to go down to take him by force from their midst and to bring him into the barracks. His concern for Paul was motivated by his obligation to protect the apostle as a Roman citizen. And Paul was getting ‘roughed up’ in the crossfire between the Pharisees and Sadducees in the meeting room.<sup>137</sup> The ἀρπάσαι αὐτὸν ἐκ μέσου



<sup>135c</sup>The verse concludes with a conditional sentence that lacks an apodosis (supplied by *M* sa: μὴ θεομαχῶμεν, which is as effective a supplement as ‘was können wir dagegen machen?’ (BDR § 482:2, n. 3)). It is best perhaps to supply ‘What’ and treat the whole as a question (cf. Jn 6:62). Delebecque (111), however, says that this is not *aposiopesis*; the scribes dare not continue.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1067]

<sup>136c</sup>The Greek construction here is actually that of a protasis of a conditional sentence (ei de), but it lacks an apodosis; thus the translation as a hypothetical, ‘perhaps.’ The mss of the Byzantine text tradition fill in the gap by supplying as an apodosis, ‘let us not fight against God,’ which makes their position resemble the one recommended in 5:39. The Pharisaic willingness to recognize some sort of transcendental experience (that they can fit within their categories and at the same time use against the Sadducees) works to Paul’s purpose, but also falls far short of recognizing the key point, which is the reality of the resurrection in Paul’s experience of Jesus as Lord.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 399.]

<sup>137c</sup>διασπασθῆ, torn apart, is probably used literally, as it is at Herodotus 3:13:2 (τοὺς ἄνδρας κρεοργηδὸν διασπᾶσαντες): something more than a debate was in progress. Cf. Demosthenes 5:5 (58), μόνον οὐ διεσπᾶσθην. στράτευμα is not here an army but a military detachment — the force available and thought suitable. It is clear that if the tribune was not present in the council (see v. 30)

αὐτῶν underscores that Paul was being rescued from the Sanhedrin, not that he was resisting the Roman soldiers. I suspect the apostle was very happy to see them enter the meeting room and take him away from the clutches of the council seeking to kill him.

The physical aspects of where everyone was situated in Luke's depiction are relatively easy to understand. The inquiry was being conducted in one of the meeting chambers in the outer court of the temple not far from Antonia's Fortress, the Roman barracks and headquarters, that was located on the corner NW outside wall of the temple. Thus in just a matter of a few minutes a brigade of Roman soldiers were on the spot to rescue Paul. They then escorted him to the barracks in the Antonia's Fortress where he would spend the night, courtesy of the Romans.

### 8.1.1.5 Paul's Vision, Acts 23:11

11 Τῆ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν· θάρσει· ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὕτως σε δεῖ καὶ εἰς Ῥώμην μαρτυρῆσαι.

11 That night the Lord stood near him and said, "Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome."

The phrase Τῆ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ signals that Paul had through the next day and into the night to reflect on what had happened to him. The NRSV is in error with its rendering "That night." It wasn't the night at the end of the day of his appearance before the council, but the following night when the vision happened. During that day, Paul must have pondered heavily on what he had come to understand several months before while in Corinth; cf. Rom. 15:31.<sup>138</sup>

But as Christ had signaled to him repeatedly that troubles lay ahead in Jerusalem,<sup>139</sup> in the midst of those troubles came the additional message that Paul must go to Rome, as he had thought was to be the case when he wrote Romans from Corinth several months beforehand. What Paul didn't know then, and only was beginning to understand somewhat now, was how he was going to travel to Rome. The plan God had to get him to Rome was considerably different than what Paul had been thinking.

The narrative introduction to the vision sets up the scene: ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν, *having come to stand by him, the Lord said*. Paul had received such assurances from Christ previously: at Corinth (Acts 18:9-10); at Jerusalem after conversion (Acts 22:17-21).<sup>140</sup> This is set up to happen at night as a dream vision (Τῆ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ), like the one in Acts 18:9-10, but distinct from Paul's earlier experience in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21).<sup>141</sup>

---

he was near at hand and available to take any necessary steps." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1067.]

<sup>138</sup>**Rom. 15:30-31.** 30 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς [, ἀδελφοί,] διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ πνεύματος συναγωνίσασθαι μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, 31 ἵνα ῥυσθῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπειθούντων ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ εὐπρόσδεκτος τοῖς ἀγίοις γένηται, 32 ἵνα ἐν χαρᾷ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν.

30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

<sup>139</sup>Compare the repeated mentionings of this on the trip from Corinth to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey: (Acts 19:21, at Ephesus before Corinth), Acts 20:22-24 (at Miletus); 21:4 (at Tyre); 21:10-14 (at Caesarea).

<sup>140</sup>**Acts 18:9-10.** 9 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος ἐν νυκτὶ δι' ὄραματος τῷ Παύλῳ· μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ σιωπῆσης, 10 διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοὶ τοῦ κακῶσαι σε, διότι λαὸς ἐστὶν μοι πολλὸς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ.

9 One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people." 11 He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

**Acts 22:17-21.** 17 Ἐγένετο δὲ μοι ὑποστρέψαντι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐν ἐκστάσει 18 καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν λέγοντά μοι· σπεῦσον καὶ ἔξελθε ἐν τάχει ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ, διότι οὐ παραδέξονται σοὶ μαρτυρίαν περὶ ἐμοῦ. 19 κἀγὼ εἶπον· κύριε, αὐτοὶ ἐπίστανται ὅτι ἐγὼ ἤμην φυλακίζων καὶ δέρων κατὰ τὰς συναγωγὰς τοὺς πιστεύοντας ἐπὶ σέ, 20 καὶ ὅτε ἐξεχύνετο τὸ αἷμα Στεφάνου τοῦ μάρτυρός σου, καὶ αὐτὸς ἤμην ἐφεστῶς καὶ συνευδοκῶν καὶ φυλάσσων τὰ ἱμάτια τῶν ἀναιρούντων αὐτόν. 21 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με· πορεύου, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰς ἔθνη μακρὰν ἐξαποστελῶ σε.

17 "After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw Jesus saying to me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.' 21 Then he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

<sup>141</sup>"Luke's comment on this incident is thus not that Paul has used a clever trick to get out of trouble but that he has borne the witness he was intended to bear and that the Lord has protected him and will continue to do so." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical* Page 539



The words of encouragement from Christ are built around a command with a reason: θάρσει· ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὕτως σε δεῖ καὶ εἰς Ῥώμην μαρτυρῆσαι. *Keep up your courage! For just as you have given witness to the things about me in Jerusalem, it is thusly necessary to give witness in Rome.* First comes the admonition θάρσει, *Keep up your courage!* This Aorist imperative has a distinctive twist with the verb θαρσέω being used only seven times in the entire NT, and six of these instances with Jesus giving encouragement to various individuals during His earthly ministry: Mt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mk. 6:50; 10:49; (Luke 23:43); John 16:33. An alternative form λαμβάνειν θάρσον, *to take courage*, shows up in Acts 28:15 where other believers give Paul encouragement. Often the appearance of an angel is accompanied by the admonition, μὴ φοβοῦ, *don't be afraid.* (Mt. 1:20; 28:5; Lk 1:13, 30; 2:10) along with Jesus' speaking to others (Mt. 10:31; 14:27; 17:7; 28:10; Mk. 6:50; Lk. 5:10; 12:7; 12:32; Jn. 6:20; 12:15). In the vision at Corinth (Acts 18:9), Jesus' words to Paul were μὴ φοβοῦ.

Clearly Christ was not finished with Paul's ministry yet, and had more for him to do in Rome. This is the basis for the admonition to Paul: ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὕτως σε δεῖ καὶ εἰς Ῥώμην μαρτυρῆσαι. The comparative structure of this statement is seen in ὡς... οὕτως... καὶ, *as...thus also.* The causal coordinate conjunction γὰρ sets this up as the basis for the admonition. The impersonal verb δεῖ signals this is a divinely mandated necessity.

What emerges from this experience is how Christ encourages His servants during times of stress and hardship. He did not coddle the apostle with promises to get Paul out of this tight spot. Christ knew full well in advance about the impending assassination plot that would be hatched the next morning, as well as all the hardships that would be a part of the trip to Rome after a two plus year stay at Caesarea. But Christ had a job for Paul in Rome and He would navigate the apostle through all these dangers in order to get him to Rome. In a pleasure oriented society the craving for encouragement means promises of deliverance from all the dangers and hardships. But this is not the way of Christ -- either then or now.

#### 8.1.1.6 The Plot to Kill Paul, Acts 23:12-22

12 Γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας ποιήσαντες συστροφὴν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς λέγοντες μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν ἕως οὗ ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸν Παῦλον. 13 ἦσαν δὲ πλείους τεσσαεράκοντα οἱ ταύτην τὴν συνωμοσίαν ποιησάμενοι, 14 οἵτινες προσελθόντες τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις εἶπαν· ἀναθέματι ἀνεθεματίσαμεν ἑαυτοὺς μηδενὸς γεύσασθαι ἕως οὗ ἀποκτείνωμεν τὸν Παῦλον. 15 νῦν οὖν ὑμεῖς ἐμφανίσατε τῷ χιλιάρχῳ σὺν τῷ συνεδρίῳ ὅπως καταγάγῃ αὐτὸν εἰς ὑμᾶς ὡς μέλλοντας διαγινώσκειν ἀκριβέστερον τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἐγγίσει αὐτὸν ἔτοιμοι ἐσμεν τοῦ ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν. 16 Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀδελφῆς Παύλου τὴν ἐνέδραν, παραγενόμενος καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ Παύλῳ. 17 προσκαλεσάμενος δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ἓνα τῶν ἑκατονταρχῶν ἔφη· τὸν νεανίαν τοῦτον ἀπάγαγε πρὸς τὸν χιλιάρχον, ἔχει γὰρ ἀπαγγεῖλαι τι αὐτῷ. 18 ὁ μὲν οὖν παραλαβὼν αὐτὸν ἤγαγεν πρὸς τὸν χιλιάρχον καὶ φησὶν· ὁ δέσμιος Παῦλος προσκαλεσάμενός με ἠρώτησεν τοῦτον τὸν νεανίσκον ἀγαγεῖν πρὸς σὲ ἔχοντά τι λαλήσαι σοι. 19 ἐπιλαβόμενος δὲ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ χιλιάρχος καὶ ἀναχωρήσας κατ' ἰδίαν ἐπυνθάνετο, τί ἐστὶν ὃ ἔχεις ἀπαγγεῖλαι μοι; 20 εἶπεν δὲ ὅτι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι συνέθεντο τοῦ ἐρωτήσαι σε ὅπως αὔριον τὸν Παῦλον καταγάγῃς εἰς τὸ συνέδριον ὡς μέλλον τι ἀκριβέστερον πυνθάνεσθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ. 21 σὺ οὖν μὴ πεισθῆς αὐτοῖς· ἐνεδρεύουσιν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες πλείους τεσσαεράκοντα, οἵτινες ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν ἕως οὗ ἀνέλωσιν αὐτόν, καὶ νῦν εἰσὶν ἔτοιμοι προσδεχόμενοι τὴν ἀπὸ σοῦ ἐπαγγελίαν. 22 ὁ μὲν οὖν χιλιάρχος ἀπέλυσεν τὸν νεανίσκον παραγγείλας μηδενὶ ἐκλαλήσαι ὅτι ταῦτα ἐνεφάνισας πρὸς με.

12 In the morning the Jews joined in a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who joined in this conspiracy. 14 They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the council must notify the tribune to bring him down to you, on the pretext that you want to make a more thorough examination of his case. And we are ready to do away with him before he arrives." 16 Now the son of Paul's sister heard about the ambush; so he went and gained entrance to the barracks and told Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to report to him." 18 So he took him, brought him to the tribune, and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you; he has something to tell you." 19 The tribune took him by the hand, drew him aside privately, and asked, "What is it that you have to report to me?" 20 He answered, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more thoroughly into his case. 21 But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him. They have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they kill him. They are ready now and are waiting for your consent." 22 So the tribune dismissed the young man, ordering him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of this."

The following day brought more danger to the apostle: Γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας ποιήσαντες συστροφὴν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς λέγοντες μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν ἕως οὗ ἄποκτείνωσιν τὸν Παῦλον, *In the morning the Jews joined in a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.* The hatred of Paul, although thwarted the day before by the rescue of Paul by the Roman soldiers, continued to bowl and now concentrated among those siding with the chief priests and Sadducees in a heinous plot to kill Paul completely beyond the law of either the Jews or the Romans.<sup>142</sup>

The core assertion of the sentence in verse twelve οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς declares that *the Jews bound themselves by an oath.* The fascinating part is the literal meaning of the verb. Made up of ἀνάθεμα and τίθημι meaning to place under a curse, this compound verb ἀναθεματίζω<sup>143</sup> highlights an individual asking God to curse him should he fail to keep his oath. The absolute irony is that the will of God has been revealed to Paul the night before in the vision that Paul will survive this experience in Jerusalem and go on to Rome. To this same God these men pledge themselves to kill Paul before he got out of Jerusalem, thus in direct disobedience to the Heavenly will.<sup>144</sup> Religious bigotry like this is doomed to failure! But in reality such plotting was becoming commonplace in the late 50s in Jerusalem as the atmosphere heated up to explode in the first Jewish war against the Romans beginning in open warfare in the middle 60s.<sup>145</sup>

The identity of these men is debated among scholars. The text simply says οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, *the Jews*, although a few manuscripts read τινες τῶν Ἰουδαίων, *some of the Jews.*<sup>146</sup> That only a few individuals were involved is made clear in the next statement indicating that 40 men were together in this oath.

The expansion elements to this core statement further define the situation. First is Γενομένης ἡμέρας, *when it became day.* Thus the plotting against Paul got underway the following morning after his vision that night. Next is ποιήσαντες συστροφὴν. Used only twice in the NT, in Acts 19:40 συστροφή means a riot, but here with the participle ποιήσαντες, it designates a conspiracy or plot.<sup>147</sup> The third qualifier is the particle with the indirect discourse attached to it: λέγοντες μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν ἕως οὗ ἄποκτείνωσιν τὸν Παῦλον, *saying that they would*

<sup>142c</sup>Revolutionary-minded Jews considered some assassinations pious acts; Herod the Great had once executed ten Pharisees who had formed an association by oath for the purpose of killing him. If Paul's enemies eventually broke their oaths to kill him, Jewish law would simply require them to bring atonement offerings to the temple; thus their oath here does not mean they would literally starve." [Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Ac 23:12–13.]

<sup>143</sup>ἀναθεματίζω (s. ἀνάθεμα and DELG s.v. τίθημι p. 1117) fut. ἀναθεματιῶ LXX; 1 aor. ἀνεθεμάτισα. Pass. fut. 3 sg. ἀναθεματισθήσεται 2 Esdr 10:8; pf. ptc. ἀναθεματισμένον Num. 18:14 (LXX mostly=carry out a curse: Num 21:2f; Dt 13:16; 20:17; Josh 6:21 al.) to invoke consequences if what one says is not true

**a. trans. put under a curse** τινά someone (cp. curse-tablets from Megara [IDefixWünsch 1, 5, 8, s. ἀνάθεμα 2]) pleonastically ἀναθέματι ἅ. ἑαυτὸν Ac 23:14 s. ἀνάθεμα 3; ἅ. ἑαυτὸν vss. 12, 21, 13 v.l. (cp. En 6:4 ἀναθεματίσωμεν πάντες ἀλλήλους μὴ ... μέχρις οὗ ...; ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἀλλήλους vs. 5).

**b. intr. curse** ἤρξατο ἀναθεματίζειν καὶ ὁμύναι means that Peter put himself under curses and took oaths in the course of his denial Mk 14:71 (OSeitz, TU 73, '59, 516–19; HMerke, CFDMoule Festschr., '70, 66–71).—M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 63.]

<sup>144c</sup>As Jesus had predicted, these men were convinced that they were doing God's will by plotting to kill one of his servants (John 16:2)." [Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1366.]

<sup>145c</sup>Illegal and violent solutions of inter-party problems were becoming frequent in Jerusalem, as the time of the 'dry tree' approached (Lk. 23:31), and the plot of the forty fanatical assassins is typical of the times. They could count on the cooperation of at least a 'rump' of the Sanhedrin (12–15). This time God's deliverance was effected, not by angel intervention as in 12:6–10, but by means of Paul's nephew." [F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 1307.]

<sup>146</sup>{B} συστροφὴν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι P<sup>74</sup> κ A B C E (Ψ 614 οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι συστροφὴν) 33 36 81 181 307 453 610 945 1175 1678 1739 1891 2344 2464 I 1178 it<sup>c</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup> arm eth geo (Chrysostom) // τινες τῶν Ἰουδαίων συστροφὴν 1409 Byz [(L συστροφὴν τινες) P] (it<sup>ar, c, dem,</sup> sig. h, p, ph, w vg) (syr<sup>p</sup>) (cop<sup>samm</sup>) slav // ... ] βοήθειαν συστραφέντες τινες τῶν Ἰουδαίων P<sup>48</sup>

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2000).]

<sup>147</sup>συστροφή, ἤς, ἡ (συστρέφω)

**1. a tumultuous gathering of people, disorderly/seditious gathering or commotion** (Hdt. 7, 9; Polyb. 4, 34, 6; Jos., Bell. 4, 601) Ac 19:40 (here in contrast to a regularly scheduled assembly, cp. vs. 39). ποιήσαντες συστροφὴν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι Judeans came together in a mob 23:12. But in the last pass. the word may also mean

**2. the product of a clandestine gathering, plot, conspiracy** (Am 7:10 συστροφὰς ποιεῖται; Ps 63:3) Ac 23:12 (s. 1 above).—DELG s.v. στρέφω. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 979.]

neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.<sup>148</sup> This pledge expresses the intensity -- and stupidity -- of their determination to get rid of the apostle. Although the oath could be revoked through a complicated process, one wonders just how hungry and thirsty these men became before they went through the process of revoking their oath. By the next morning Paul had been safely escorted by the Romans out of the city completely unharmed by these men, who then had no possibility of carrying out their intention to kill Paul.

Verse thirteen specifies that the group included some forty or so men: ἦσαν δὲ πλείους τεσσαράκοντα οἱ ταύτην τὴν συνωμοσίαν ποιησάμενοι, *There were more than forty who joined in this conspiracy*. In verse twelve Luke labeled this action a conspiracy, συστροφὴν, and now in he calls it a συνωμοσίαν, which the NRSV also translates as ‘conspiracy.’ A συστροφή when used as an object of ποιεῖται is, by definition, “the product of a clandestine gathering,” with the translation meaning of a plot, or a conspiracy.<sup>149</sup> But συνωμοσία comes from συνόμνυμι, meaning “to swear together with, to conspire,” and also with ποιεῖται carries the sense of creating such a conspiracy.<sup>150</sup> Clearly both terms are alluding to the same action with the demonstrative pronoun attached to the second term: ταύτην τὴν συνωμοσίαν, *this conspiracy*. Although the words come together in a common central meaning, the nuances of emphasis on the idea of a plot are different.

In continuing the sentence begun in verse thirteen, the adjectival relative clause with the direct discourse in verses fourteen and fifteen details the details of their demand made to the chief priests and elders: 14 οἵτινες προσελθόντες τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις εἶπαν· ἀναθέματι ἀνεθεματίσαμεν ἑαυτοὺς μηδενὸς γεύσασθαι ἕως οὗ ἀποκτείνωμεν τὸν Παῦλον. 15 νῦν οὖν ὑμεῖς ἐμφανίσατε τῷ χιλιάρχῳ σὺν τῷ συνεδρίῳ ὅπως καταγάγῃ αὐτὸν εἰς ὑμᾶς ὡς μέλλοντας διαγινώσκειν ἀκριβέστερον τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἐγγίσει αὐτὸν ἔτοιμοί ἐσμεν τοῦ ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν, *14 who went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the council must notify the tribune to bring him down to you, on the pretext that you want to make a more thorough examination of his case. And we are ready to do away with him before he arrives.”* Luke labels the council here as τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, *to the chief priests and to the elders*, while initially in 22:30 he referred to them as τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ πᾶν τὸ συνέδριον, *the chief priests and all the council*.<sup>151</sup> This difference between the two labels most likely reflects the non-participation of the Pharisee members of the council in this authorization to kill Paul. Clearly in the direct discourse (v. 15), these men converse only with the chief priests: ἐμφανίσατε τῷ χιλιάρχῳ σὺν τῷ συνεδρίῳ, *you together with the Sanhedrin must notify the tribune*.

In their words to the chief priests, they begin with a recounting of their oath in slightly different terms: ἀναθέματι ἀνεθεματίσαμεν ἑαυτοὺς μηδενὸς γεύσασθαι ἕως οὗ ἀποκτείνωμεν τὸν Παῦλον, *With a curse we have*

<sup>148</sup>“The sense of ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς is given by v. 14 where ἀναθέματι is added. Those who thus agreed undertook to accept the ban (חרם) of the synagogue if they failed to accomplish that which they pledged themselves to do. The abstinence from eating and drinking (which if adhered to must in this case have resulted in death) is augmented by the religious sanction. Derrett (Law 347) draws attention to Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 2:12, 13, where Philo refers to those who excuse their wrong-doing on the ground that they are fulfilling vows. ‘There are those who swear at random (ἐὰν τύχη, perhaps, as opportunity offers) to commit acts of theft or sacrilege or rape and adultery or assaults and murders or other similar crimes and carry them out without hesitation on the pretext that they must be faithful to their oaths.’ Philo properly points out the overriding authority of the prior (implied) oath to observe the law, which forbids such acts. Josephus (*Ant.* 20:163f.; cf. *War* 2:254–6), however, describes the use of hired assassins in Jerusalem for revenge on private and public enemies, though it exaggerates somewhat to describe this (W. Foerster, *Palestinian Judaism in NT Times* (1964, 1967), 105, n. 8) as the assassination of opponents of the Law. Cf. Sanhedrin 9:6. It was possible to be released from certain vows; see Nedarim 3:1–3 (‘Four kinds of vows the Sages have declared to be not binding: vows of incitement, vows of exaggeration, vows made in error, and vows [that cannot be fulfilled by reason] of constraint ...’).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1072.]

<sup>149</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 979.

<sup>150</sup>“**συνωμοσία, ας, ἡ** (συνόμνυμι ‘to swear together with, conspire’) **conspiracy, plot** (Thu., Aristoph. et al.; ins; PMilVogl 287, 9; Ezk 22:25 Sym.; Jos., *Ant.* 15, 288; 16, 111) **συνωμοσίαν ποιεῖσθαι form a conspiracy** (Polyb. 1, 70, 6; Diod S 3, 57, 5; Herodian 7, 4, 3) **Ac 23:13**.—B. 1363.—DELG s.v. ὄμνυμι. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 978.]

<sup>151</sup>“The Greek word synedrion, ‘Sanhedrin,’ literally a ‘sitting down with,’ is widely attested in Greek literature, Ptolemaic Egypt, and elsewhere. It is one of a number of general words for meetings and assemblies. It is used of the meetings of city councils, the Areopagus council in Athens, meetings of representatives of allied cities, the assembly of the Roman senate, and meetings of high officials. In later Hellenistic Greek, synedrion denotes various kinds of law courts and this is the sense given the term in the NT and Mishnah (HJP<sup>2</sup> 2:205). In the Roman period it was used of provincial assemblies (Kennard 1962), a usage which also fits Josephus and the NT. Finally, it is used for the councils of smaller, less official groups such as private associations and boards of trade (Hoenig 1953:3–11; Mantel IDBSup, 784).” [Anthony J. Saldarini, “Sanhedrin,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 976.]



bound ourselves together to taste nothing until we kill Paul. Similar language is used here to that in v. 12: ἀναθέματι ἀνεθεματίσαμεν ἑαυτοὺς, with a curse we have bound ourselves together. The addition of ἀναθέματι with the middle voice verb ἀνεθεματίσαμεν is slightly more formal depiction of an oath made before God. The infinitive phrase μηδενὸς γεύσασθαι, to taste nothing, incorporates the μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν, neither to eat nor to drink in v. 12. The temporal clause ἕως οὗ ἀποκτείνωμεν τὸν Παῦλον, until we kill Paul, is essentially the same as ἕως οὗ ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸν Παῦλον, until they kill Paul, in verse 12 with the appropriate shift to the first person plural verb in direct discourse as opposed to the third person plural verb for indirect discourse in v. 12.



**Antonia's Fortress**

The precise accuracy of this design may be questionable. Here Paul would have come out on to the roof of the columns in the outer wall of the temple to speak to the crowds from the steps pictured above. But this model located in Jerusalem today is generally regarded as accurate. The meeting chambers of the Sanhedrin were located both on the outer walls of the temple court yard as well as just inside the interior building of the temple itself. With non-Jewish Romans present in the chamber for the meeting, the likelihood of one of the chambers on the outer wall being used is greater.

The main part of their words come in verse 15 as an implication (οὖν) of their oath; they demand an action from the chief priests to enable them to carry out their plan to kill Paul. This second sentence in the direct discourse lays out the heart of their plot: νῦν οὖν ὑμεῖς ἐμφανίσατε τῷ χιλιάρχῳ σὺν τῷ συνεδρίῳ ὅπως καταγάγη αὐτὸν εἰς ὑμᾶς ὡς μέλλοντας διαγινώσκειν ἀκριβέστερον τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἐγγίσει αὐτὸν ἔτοιμοί ἐσμεν τοῦ ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν, Now then, you and the council must notify the tribune to bring him down to you, on the pretext that you want to make a more thorough examination of his case. And we are ready to do away with him before he arrives.

This compound / complex sentence in structure centers around the first main clause making a demand on these leaders. Insight comes from the use of the verb ἐμφανίσατε to describe how they were to approach the tribune. The literal idea of ἐμφανίζω is to make something clear with details. These men wanted the chief priests to do more than make a simple request to interrogate Paul a second time. They want the leaders to work out a detailed plan on bringing Paul from the barracks of Antonia's Fortress to the meeting chamber inside the temple outer court. With their knowledge of this plan, they can then plot out the best means of attacking the soldiers escorting Paul in order to get at him to kill him. Somewhere between the barracks and the meeting hall they will attack the group and kill Paul, and probably some Roman soldiers as well. Assuming Claudius Lysas would only assign a detail of a few soldiers to escort Paul this short distance, these Jews are confident in being able to overpower them. When one pauses to reflect on the fact that just a few meters away were barracks containing several thousand Roman troops ready to move at a moment's notice, the insanity of their plotting becomes clear. The resulting carnage that the Romans would inflict on the Jewish people in and around the temple, should their plot succeed, would have been massive leading to the death of thousands of Jews -- as had happened several times already in the first century. The implicit approval of this plan by these temple leaders reflects the blind rage they felt as well.

These men even lay out to the chief priests what to say to the tribune in the ὅπως clause: ὅπως καταγάγη αὐτὸν εἰς ὑμᾶς ὡς μέλλοντας διαγινώσκειν ἀκριβέστερον τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ, so that he may bring him down to us as going to examine more thoroughly the things concerning him. This very literal translation seeks to reflect the core idea laid out in the instructions given to the chief priests. On the pretext of further examination of Paul they were to insist on Paul being brought down from the Roman military barracks to the same council meeting room. In no possible way could they get at Paul under the protection of the massive number of Roman troops inside their garrison at Antonia's Fortress. Their plan was to catch him inside the temple grounds with but a small number of troops escorting him to the meeting chambers: ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἐγγίσει αὐτὸν ἔτοιμοί ἐσμεν τοῦ ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν, and before he gets close (to you) we are prepared to do away with him. With forty of them and hopefully only a handful of troops protecting Paul, they could overpower the troops and kill Paul in the process. Being inside the temple

grounds they would simply vanish in the resulting chaos into the large crowds of worshippers already in the temple for the Pentecost festivities. On the surface it sounded like a good plan for ancient Jewish terrorists. But it involved getting the Jewish leaders into deception and that could have enormous negative consequences for them from the Romans as well. The mentality of the Romans would have been to kill off every Jew with even a hint of connection to such an attack.

The strangest aspect of all this is their inability to keep it a secret: Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀδελφῆς Παύλου τὴν ἐνέδραν, *And after hearing about the ambush, the son of Paul's sister...* For the first time in the Acts narrative we learn of a nephew of Paul living in the city of Jerusalem with his mother, Paul's sister.<sup>152</sup> Nothing else is said anywhere in the NT about them. How did the nephew find out about the plot? This is the puzzle of the text that Luke provides no clues about. The speculation of commentators ranges from Howard Marshall's suggestion (Acts, 368) that it become widely known on the one end of the guessing game. On the other end is Roloff's (Apg., 331) assertion that he was an 'insider' Zealot who picked up on it. Probably Marshall's claim is closer to what actually happened. The other point of speculation is whether this young man was a Christian? Some take his reported remark about 'the Jews' (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) in v. 20 to signal that he was. But this actually offers no clue either way because the phrase is Luke's reporting of what he said and could just as easily reflect the consistent referencing to the Jews throughout Acts. The hope is that he and his mother were Christians, but we have no way of knowing from Luke's depiction of this incident.<sup>153</sup>

But what Luke, in a rather interesting grammar structure, makes clear is that the young man went straight to Paul inside Antonia's Fortress to inform him about the plot. The core clause is scattered in pieces through the sentence: Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀδελφῆς Παύλου τὴν ἐνέδραν, παραγενόμενος καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ Παύλῳ, which states, *the son of Paul's sister informed Paul*. The verb ἀπαγγέλλω means to give a report about something, and in this instance about the plot against Paul's life. Beyond the modifying element indicating his hearing about the plot ( Ἀκούσας...τὴν ἐνέδραν), the second set of participle modifiers define the young man gaining entrance into the Roman military barracks in order to give his report to Paul: παραγενόμενος καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν, *after having come to and having entered into the barracks*. From the implicit time table in the narrative, it would seem that the plot was made early in the morning (Γενομένης ἡμέρας, v. 12), sometime during the day the nephew heard about it and went to the barracks at least by the mid to late afternoon to report to Paul. When the tribune learned about it from the young man, he gave orders for a regiment of several hundred soldiers to be ready by the τρίτης ὥρας τῆς νυκτός, *the third hour of the night*, v. 23 (= 9 o'clock in the evening) to escort Paul out of Jerusalem. That the nephew could gain access to Paul inside the military barracks sheds important light on how Paul was staying there. It points toward Paul being in protective custody rather than penal custody.<sup>154</sup>

When Paul learned of this plot, he immediately took action to get word to the Roman tribune: προσκαλεσάμενος δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ἓνα τῶν ἑκατονταρχῶν ἔφη· τὸν νεανίαν τοῦτον ἀπάγαγε πρὸς τὸν χιλιάρχον, ἔχει γὰρ ἀπαγγεῖλαί τι αὐτῷ, Paul called one of the centurions and said, *"Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to report to him."* The centurions were roughly the army sergeants of the Roman military. In Antonia's Fortress there were many of them present because of the large number of troops present in the city during the festival of Pentecost. Thus events began moving quickly once Paul learned of the plot against him. That Paul could interact with the centurion is further indication of his being in protective custody there in the military bar-

<sup>152c</sup>In the circum-Mediterranean world, the closest emotional bond is between mother and son, but a very close second, nearly equal to this, is brother and sister. In the light of this cultural fact, it is quite surprising that Paul never mentions a sister in his letters. On the other hand, the fact that his married sister resides in Jerusalem suggests other interesting connections. Since the ideal marriage partner in the Mediterranean world is a patrilateral parallel cousin, Paul's sister was married to their father's brother's (= uncle's) son. The wife always leaves her family home to live with the groom in his father's compound. In this case, the brother of Paul's father lived in Jerusalem. Paul's father likely lived there too. Paul and his family may well have moved to Jerusalem from Tarsus when Paul was quite young." [Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 161.]

<sup>153c</sup>We have no idea how Paul's nephew learned of the plot, nor do we know whether Paul's sister and/or her family shared Paul's understanding of Jesus and were Jesus followers. The fact of the nephew's concern for Paul's life basically testifies to the strength of Middle Eastern kinship bonds 'no matter what' or 'in spite of everything and anything.' In the Middle East, blood is indeed thicker than water and stronger than conflicting ingroup beliefs. Had Paul denounced the God of Israel, he would most probably be disowned by the family." [Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 161.]

<sup>154c</sup>Paul's nephew has access to him; his residence in the barracks is protective rather than penal, though, if the authorities were favourable, prisoners under charge or even undergoing punishment could be visited (cf. 27:3)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1075.]

racks.

The centurion promptly complied with Paul's request: ὁ μὲν οὖν παραλαβὼν αὐτὸν ἤγαγεν πρὸς τὸν χιλιάρχον καὶ φησίν· ὁ δέσμιος Παῦλος προσκαλεσάμενός με ἠρώτησεν τοῦτον τὸν νεανίσκον ἀγαγεῖν πρὸς σέ ἔχοντά τι λαλήσαι σοι, *So he took him, brought him to the tribune, and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you; he has something to tell you."* The reference to Paul by the centurion as ὁ δέσμιος Παῦλος, *the prisoner Paul*, raises some question about the protective custody although such would not be unusual for someone in the general custody of the Roman military no matter what the status of that custody was. Inside the Roman military command center, no none soldier would be given unrestricted freedom to move about inside the barracks.

A tone of secrecy is present in the text, since the centurion did not know what information this young Jewish boy had that was so important for the tribune to know. This tone is continued in how the tribune quizzes Paul's nephew: ἐπιλαβόμενος δὲ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ χιλιάρχος καὶ ἀναχωρήσας κατ' ἴδιαν ἐπυνθάνετο, τί ἐστὶν ὃ ἔχεις ἀπαγγεῖλαί μοι; *The tribune took him by the hand, drew him aside privately, and asked, "What is it that you have to report to me?"* The phrase κατ' ἴδιαν, *privately*, suggests that the tribune did not trust everyone in the command center and thus wanted to keep private whatever information this nephew of his prisoner Paul might pass on to him.

In verses 20-21, the nephew's report is described as the third of the four repetitions of the story of the plot. From it we learn a few more details about what was going on. First a repetition with more details: οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι συνέθεντο τοῦ ἐρωτῆσαι σε ὅπως αὔριον τὸν Παῦλον καταγάγῃς εἰς τὸ συνέδριον ὡς μέλλον τι ἀκριβέστερον πυνθάνεσθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ, *The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more thoroughly into his case. Instead of referring to the chief priests and council as making the request, these people are simply labeled οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, the Jews. Perhaps this is more Luke's term than that of the nephew, who evidently spoke Greek in addition to his native Aramaic. To the leaders the demand was made that they insist on a meeting with the tribune: ὑμεῖς ἐμφανίσατε τῷ χιλιάρχῳ, you must notify the tribune. Now that is depicted as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι συνέθεντο τοῦ ἐρωτῆσαι σε, the Jews have agreed to ask you. Here we learn that the meeting was to be held the next day: αὔριον. Thus the nephew met with the tribune the same day that the men hatched up their plot to kill Paul. Whereas the request in v. 15 was for Paul to be brought εἰς ὑμᾶς, to you, now it is for him to be brought εἰς τὸ συνέδριον, to the Sanhedrin. While the pretended objective was ὡς μέλλοντας διαγινώσκειν ἀκριβέστερον τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ, as to be going to examine more precisely the things about him, in v. 15. now it is stated as ὡς μέλλον<sup>155</sup> τι ἀκριβέστερον πυνθάνεσθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ, as going to inquire something more precisely concerning him.*

Second, the nephew urges the tribune to not be misled by their request: σὺ οὖν μὴ πεισθῆς αὐτοῖς, *thus do not be persuaded by them*. Then a reason (γὰρ) is given for this encouragement to the tribune: ἐνεδρεύουσιν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες πλείους τεσσαράκοντα, οἵτινες ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν ἕως οὗ ἀνέλωσιν αὐτόν, καὶ νῦν εἰσὶν ἔτοιμοι προσδεχόμενοι τὴν ἀπὸ σοῦ ἐπαγγελίαν, *for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him. They have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they kill him. They are ready now and are waiting for your consent*. Notice that the forty men plotting to kill Paul are lumped together with the council leaders: ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες πλείους τεσσαράκοντα, *of them more than forty men*. No distinction in responsibility from these men and the council leaders is made. Thus would be important when the Romans decided to punish those involved in this plot. They would go after the leaders along with these forty plus men. What in v. 16 was labeled τὴν ἐνέδραν, the ambush, is now called ἐνεδρεύουσιν αὐτόν, *they are planning to ambush him*. Their oath is repeated essentially the same. But further the nephew reports: καὶ νῦν εἰσὶν ἔτοιμοι προσδεχόμενοι τὴν ἀπὸ σοῦ ἐπαγγελίαν, *and now they are prepared and are waiting for you consent*. Already by the late afternoon, the

<sup>155</sup>μέλλον is probably the reading we should accept, but there is great textual variation. (a) μέλλον κ\* 33 1891 pc; (b) μέλλον P<sup>74</sup> A B E 81 453 pc; (c) μέλλοντα M; (d) μέλλοντες 630 al lat sy; (e) μέλλοντας 2127 pc; (f) μέλλοντων κ2 Ψ 36 614 945 1175 1739 2495 al.

“(a) is the reading that gives the required sense, since, in the terms of the plot, it is the Sanhedrin that wishes to carry out further investigation. *Begs.* 4:292 is prepared to accept this, though as an emendation — the occurrence of the reading in κ\* is accidental. But since κ\* is joined by 33 this need not be so. Ropes (*Begs.* 3:219) thinks (b) an orthographical variation of (a). This is possible, since the two words would be pronounced identically, but some scribes at least will have understood μέλλον to be masculine singular nominative, and to refer to the tribune. It is difficult to make sense of (c), though it is widely supported; Ropes describes it as ‘particularly unfortunate’. Probably one must refer it back to σε and give it the same meaning as (b) (understanding this as written, masculine nominative). (d), (e), (f) will all, in rather odd ways, give the same sense as (a): They (= the Sanhedrin) wish to make a further inquiry.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1076.]



forty men were ready to make their attack, and were waiting for the tribune to agree to bring Paul to the meeting the next morning.

The reaction of the tribune is given in verse twenty-two: ὁ μὲν οὖν χιλιάρχος ἀπέλυσεν τὸν νεανίσκον παραγγείλας μηδενὶ ἐκλαλῆσαι ὅτι ταῦτα ἐνεφάνισας πρὸς με, *So the tribune dismissed the young man, ordering him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of this."* Claudius Lysias then sent the nephew away with strict instructions to not say anything to anyone about informing him of this plot. Very wisely the Roman commander wanted to be able to act upon this report with complete secrecy in order to minimize the danger to Paul and to avoid a confrontation with this group of radical Jews trying to kill Paul. The interesting aspect is how completely he trusted the report of the young man about such a planned action. But given the highly tense atmosphere in the city during this period of time, and especially during one of the major Jewish festivals like Pentecost, it is not surprising that he would have confidence in the accuracy of the nephew's report.

### 8.1.2 Imprisonment in Caesarea (AD 57-60),<sup>156</sup> Acts 23:23-26:32

The next series of events take Paul from Jerusalem to the port city of Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast where he will spend the next two plus years confined to Roman custody. The provincial governor over Judea was based there and he was the one who had final authority regarding whether Paul should be charged with some violation of Roman law or not.

Due to Paul's Roman citizenship considerable effort was made to give him full protection from the Jewish efforts to harm him. At Caesarea Paul was far safer from assassination plots than in Jerusalem. Getting him from Jerusalem to Caesarea was no easy task and involved the use of several hundred soldiers, some of whom were horse mounted calvary. They had to escort Paul down out of the mountain roads and passes for about half the distance until the terrain turned into coastal flatlands where he could be more easily defended from an ambush attack.

This episode in Paul's life proved to be full of both surprises and disappointments. Any hope for a speedy resolution of the efforts of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem vanished as he settled into a lengthy fight to keep them at bay through using the Romans and their obligations to him as a Roman citizen. Although brought to safety in Caesarea the apostle would find himself rather much a pawn in the hands of the Roman leaders who didn't find anything really wrong with him but were being coerced repeatedly by the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem. With political tensions steadily increasing between Rome and the Jews in Palestine, they were not sure whether the protection of one Jew, even though a Roman citizen, was worth risking major uprisings among the people.



#### 8.1.2.1 Protecting Paul in Jerusalem, Acts 23:23-30

23 Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος δύο [τινὰς] τῶν ἑκατονταρχῶν εἶπεν· ἐτοιμάσατε στρατιώτας διακοσίους, ὅπως πορευθῶσιν ἕως Καισαρείας, καὶ ἵππεῖς ἑβδομήκοντα καὶ δεξιολάβους διακοσίους ἀπὸ τρίτης ὥρας τῆς νυκτός, 24 κτήνη τε παραστήσαι ἵνα ἐπιβιβάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον διασώσωσιν πρὸς Φήλικα τὸν ἡγεμόνα, 25 γράψας ἐπιστολὴν ἔχουσαν τὸν τύπον τοῦτον· 26 Κλαῦδιος Λυσίας τῷ κρατίστῳ ἡγεμόνι Φήλικι χαίρειν. 27 Τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον συλλημφθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ μέλλοντα ἀναιρεῖσθαι ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐπιστάς σὺν τῷ στρατεύματι ἐξειλάμην μαθὼν ὅτι Ῥωμαῖός ἐστιν. 28 βουλόμενός τε ἐπιγνῶναι τὴν αἰτίαν δι' ἣν ἐνεκάλουν αὐτῷ, κατήγαγον εἰς τὸ συνέδριον αὐτῶν 29 ὃν εὔρον ἐγκαλούμενον περὶ ζητημάτων τοῦ νόμου αὐτῶν, μηδὲν δὲ ἄξιον θανάτου ἢ δεσμῶν ἔχοντα ἐγκλημα. 30 μηνυθείσης δὲ μοι ἐπιβουλῆς εἰς τὸν ἄνδρα ἔσεσθαι ἐξαυτῆς ἔπεμψα πρὸς σὲ παραγγείλας καὶ τοῖς κατηγοροῖς λέγειν [τὰ] πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπὶ σοῦ.

23 Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, "Get ready to leave by nine o'clock tonight for Caesarea with two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. 24 Also provide mounts for Paul to ride, and take him safely to Felix the governor." 25 He wrote a letter to this effect: 26 "Claudius Lysias to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, but when I

<sup>156</sup>Possibly the prison epistles written during this period.



mous for. One always sought to have an overpowering force behind when facing an enemy. Josephus suggests another possible reason for this large number: in the *Wars of the Jews* 2:540-553, he describes the dangers of traveling the roads in Judea during this period of time. Some slight possibility exists in the way Luke structures the depiction that the last group of two hundred, δεξιολάβους διακοσίους, were drawn from permanently stationed Roman ‘policemen’ in the city rather than from troops stationed temporarily in Antionia’s Fortress for the festival. But this is more speculation because of modern commentators’ difficulty of such a large number of Roman soldiers being assembled for this task of escorting one man.

In addition to orders given to these two centurion to assemble a large contingent of soldiers, instructions are also given about providing a horse for Paul to ride: κτήνη τε παραστήσαι ἵνα ἐπιβιβάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον διασώσωσιν πρὸς Φήλικα τὸν ἡγεμόνα, and a mount to put Paul on so that by riding they can safely take Paul to Felix the governor. Interestingly some of the manuscripts in the Western text tradition add at this point: ἐφοβήθη γὰρ μήποτε ἀρπάσαντες αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτείνωσιν καὶ αὐτὸς μεταξύ ἐγκλησιν ἔχη ὡς ἀργύριον εἰληφώς,...., for he was fearful lest the Jews having seized Paul kill him and he consequently would be accused of having taken a bribe. Although such a reason is clearly plausible in that circumstance, the weight of manuscript evidence does not favor it being a part of the original text. What is clear is that the tribune was under heavy obligation to protect the safety of a Roman citizen. Thus he took extra precaution to do just this.

The second point of this first pericope is the letter drawn up by the Roman tribune, Claudius Lysias, to the Roman governor, Felix. This outlined the situation with Paul. Interestingly, Luke signals in v. 25 that he did not have access to a copy of the letter and thus is summarizing its contents as he understood them to be: γράψας ἐπιστολὴν ἔχουσιν τὸν τύπον τοῦτον, He wrote a letter to this effect: What one should remember is that such an official internal governmental document as this would have been composed in Latin, not in Greek. Thus Luke is giving us in Greek his understanding of the essence of the Latin letter.

The letter format follows the standard form in the ancient world:

**Praescriptio:**

**Superscriptio:** Κλαύδιος Λυσίας, *Claudius Lysias*

**Adscriptio:** τῷ κρατίστῳ ἡγεμόνι Φήλικι, *to His Excellency governor Felix*

**Salutatio:** χαίρειν, *greetings*

**Body:** vv. 27-30.

**Conclusio:** ἔρρωσο or ἔρρωσθε [ερρωσο (–σθε P 1241 *pm*) κ Ε Ψ (81). 1739 *M* vg<sup>cl</sup> sy], *Farewell*.

What is of particular interest is the recounting of a different sequence of events from the one Luke had provided earlier in the Acts text. Two points of variance emerge. The tribune claims to have brought troops into the outer court of the temple to rescue Paul from the mob because he had learned that Paul was a Roman citizen. According to Luke Claudius Lysias didn’t learn of Paul’s Roman citizenship until well after he had rescued Paul (cf. 21:32-33, rescue; 22:25-29, citizenship discovery). Of course the tribune seeks to put himself in the best possible light to his superior. Second, through Paul’s appearance before the council the tribune reveals his conclusion that the trouble with Paul centered in internal squabbles over the Jewish law that had no relevance to Roman law and thus Paul was not guilty of any serious violation of Roman law: ὃν εὔρον ἐγκαλούμενον περὶ ζητημάτων τοῦ νόμου αὐτῶν, μηδὲν δὲ ἄξιον θανάτου ἢ δεσμῶν ἔχοντα ἐγκλημα (v. 29). He accurately recounts the plot against Paul but goes on to add that the leadership had appeared before him that afternoon or evening and he told them to present their charges to the governor in Caesarea. Thus the letter is generally consistent with Luke’s earlier depiction of the series of events. Plus it adds a few new details not previously presented by Luke.

Thus with everything in order, the soldiers escort Paul out of the city without incident during the night. And I suspect much to the relief of Claudius Lysias who did not travel with the group but instead remained in the barracks in Jerusalem.

### 8.1.2.2 Delivering Paul to the governor in Caesarea, Acts 23:31-35

31 Οἱ μὲν οὖν στρατιῶται κατὰ τὸ διατεταγμένον αὐτοῖς ἀναλαβόντες τὸν Παῦλον ἤγαγον διὰ νυκτὸς εἰς τὴν Ἀντιπατρίδα, 32 τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον ἔασαντες τοὺς ἵππεῖς ἀπέρχεσθαι σὺν αὐτῷ ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν· 33 οἴπινες εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν καὶ ἀναδόντες τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τῷ ἡγεμόνι παρέστησαν καὶ τὸν Παῦλον αὐτῷ. 34 ἀναγνοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐπερωτήσας ἐκ ποίας ἐπαρχείας ἐστίν, καὶ πυθόμενος ὅτι ἀπὸ Κιλικίας, 35 διακούσομαί σου, ἔφη, ὅταν καὶ οἱ κατήγοροί σου παραγένωνται· κελεύσας ἐν τῷ πραιτωρίῳ τοῦ Ἡρώδου φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτόν.

31 So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him during the night to Antipatris. 32 The next day they let the horsemen go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33 When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. 34 On reading the letter, he asked what province he belonged to, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, “I will give you



a hearing when your accusers arrive.” Then he ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod’s headquarters.

The first leg of the trip was the approximately 40 mile journey through mountain roads from Jerusalem to Antipatris: Οἱ μὲν οὖν στρατιῶται κατὰ τὸ διατεταγμένον αὐτοῖς ἀναλαβόντες τὸν Παῦλον ἤγαγον διὰ νυκτὸς εἰς τὴν Ἀντιπατρίδα, So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him during the night to Antipatris.<sup>161</sup> This approximate half-way point also signaled a move from overwhelmingly Jewish population into dominantly Gentile populated territory from Antipatris to Caesarea. Thus the danger factor to Paul greatly diminished. Located on the Plain of Sharon, Antipatris signaled being out of the mountains and into relatively flat, wide open countryside that made an ambush very difficult.

Such a trip διὰ νυκτὸς, through the night, meant a fast paced march for the foot soldiers. Thus sometime during the next day they reached Antipatris, some 37 miles from Jerusalem. The town had been created by Herod the Great in honor of Antipater his father, according to Josephus,<sup>162</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews* 16:142 (16.5.2)<sup>163</sup> and *Jewish War* 1:417(1.21.9).<sup>164</sup> It was both a safe place as well as one where men and horses could find water and supplies for the rest of their trip, either on to Caesarea or back to Jerusalem. At Antipatris the soldiers split up. The 400 foot soldiers during the following day began a trek back to Jerusalem, while the 70 cavalry men continued to escort Paul on the twenty-six or so miles along the coastal road called the *Via Maris* to Caesarea: τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον ἔασαντες τοὺς ἵππεῖς ἀπέρχεσθαι σὺν αὐτῷ ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν; The next day they let the horsemen go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. The final leg of the journey was dominantly Gentile territory and thus much less likely for an Jewish ambush. Plus this was also Samaritan territory rather than belonging to Judea.

The reception of Paul in Caesarea is described in vv. 33-35, and contains some interesting features. First is the presentation by the centurions of Paul to the Roman governor (v. 33). This is followed by his response in vv. 34-35.

In the adverbial relative clause οἵτινες εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὴν



<sup>161</sup>“Antipatris was a town founded by Herod the Great in the Plain of Sharon and named after his father, Antipater II (Josephus, Ant. 16.5.2 §§142–43; J.W. 1.21.9 §417), perhaps on the site of ancient Aphek. Its exact site is contested, but it lay about halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea Maritima, about 46 km from Caesarea and 60 km from Jerusalem. See S. Dar and S. Applebaum, “The Roman Road from Antipatris to Caesarea,” PEQ 105 (1973): 91–99.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 729.]

<sup>162</sup>Note to readers: two separate references are given in these two sources due to the two different systems of numbering of the paragraphs in the writings of Josephus. The first listing is the more common one used today, and the second system is the older one and contains a hyperlink to a website with the works of Josephus. Somewhat confusing to the lay reader, and sometimes very frustrating to those working with both the original Greek text along with translations, which adds another set of numbering of paragraphs to the two used in English translations.

<sup>163</sup>“2. (142) After this solemnity and these festivals were over, Herod erected another city in the plain called Capharsaba, where he chose out a fit place, both for plenty of water and goodness of soil, and proper for the production of what was there planted, where a river encompassed the city itself, and a grove of the best trees for magnitude was round about it; (143) **this he named Antipatris**, from his father Antipater.” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).]

<sup>164</sup>“9. (417) Herod was also a lover of his father, if any other person ever was so; for he made a monument for his father, even that city which he built in the finest plain that was in his kingdom, and which had rivers and trees in abundance, and named it Antipatris.” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).]

Καيسάρειαν και ἀναδόντες τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τῷ ἡγεμόνι, when these had entered into Caesarea and had handed over the letter to the governor, the secondary action although the first action was to present the proper documents to the governor. This would then be followed by the primary action of delivering over Paul to the governor: παρέστησαν καὶ τὸν Παῦλον αὐτῷ, they also delivered over to him Paul. As the military headquarters for the Roman provinces in Palestine, the governor lived there and exercised rule from Caesarea.<sup>165</sup>



The city was not unfamiliar to Paul. He had recently spent some time there at the end of the third missionary journey (cf. Acts 21:8-15). A substantial Christian community was already in place in the city. Philip, the evangelist, lived there with his family as one of the Christian leaders in the city. When Paul was in the city, the believers there had pleaded with him not to go on to Jerusalem because of the perceived danger to the apostle. Now their fears were being realized with Paul being brought back to the city in the custody of the Romans and with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem determined to execute him. Their opportunity now was to assist Paul during the time he would be in the city and in custody in the governor's palace. What no one could have anticipated with Paul's arrival back in the city is how long he would be confined there -- something over two years (cf. Acts 24:27). There would be multiple opportunity for ministry to the apostle during this time in the city.

Once the soldiers under the leadership of the two centurions arrived at Herod's palace which was Governor Felix's headquarters, they presented him with the letter from the tribune Claudius Lysias: καὶ ἀναδόντες τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τῷ ἡγεμόνι.<sup>166</sup> The contents of the letter were summarized by Luke in 23:26-30. Although we don't know the full contents of this letter to the governor from the tribune, it does -- in Luke's summary -- outline the situation prompting the sending of Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea.<sup>167</sup> Some modern commentators object that

<sup>165</sup>“**Caesarea** (ses-uh-ree'uh), a seaport on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean between the ancient cities of Dor and Jaffa, originally a small fortified Phoenician anchorage named Strabo's Tower. In the year 63 B.C., Pompey added the area, together with other towns on the seashore, to the Roman province of Syria. Mark Antony gave it to Cleopatra VII, but when Octavian (Augustus) won the battle of Actium, he gave the small town to Herod the Great (30 B.C.). Herod built a magnificent new city and port on the site and named it Caesarea Maritima in honor of Octavian, now Caesar Augustus. The harbor complex was given the name Limen Sebastos by Herod (Sebastos being the Greek form of Augustus).

“Caesarea was the capital of Roman government in Palestine for over six hundred years, serving as the seat of the Roman governors of the province of Judea and headquarters for the Roman legions stationed in the province. The great Jewish war against Rome began here with an uprising by the Jews in A.D. 66, and ‘Judaea Capta’ coins were minted here to commemorate their defeat. Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), proclaimed emperor by his legions while at Caesarea, raised the city to the rank of a Roman colony.

“According to Acts, Christianity was preached in Caesarea by Philip (8:40) and Peter (10:1-11:18; cf. 15:7-9), the latter being responsible for the conversion of the Roman centurion Cornelius. Limen Sebastos was the port of arrival and departure for several of Paul's journeys according to Acts (Acts 9:30; 18:22; 21:8; 27:1-2). Paul was brought to Caesarea in custody from Jerusalem (Acts 23:23-35) to stand trial before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II (Acts 24-26).

“Excavations at Caesarea Maritima have revealed streets, palaces, public buildings, a temple, a hippodrome, a theater, and a spacious sewer system from the Roman and Byzantine periods. Marine archaeologists exploring the port have discovered the immense size of the harbor and some of the Roman mole forming the ancient breakwater.

“Following the Islamic invasion of the seventh century, Caesarea declined rapidly, but Louis IX of France built a short-lived Crusader fortress at the site of the ancient harbor. See also Cornelius; Herod; Paul; Peter; Philip.”

[Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 148.]

<sup>166</sup>“ἀναδόντες: ἀναδιδόναι is used for delivering letters, e.g. Polybius 29:10(25):7; Diodorus Siculus 11:45:3; cf. IG 14:830, line 22 (LS 103). MM 32 quote papyri, including PTebt 2:448:6-11 (ii/iii AD), p 1087 τῷ ἀναδιδόντι σοι τὸ ἐπιστόλιον. A different word, παρέστησαν, is used for handing over the person.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1086-1087.]

<sup>167</sup>“Zoilus held Strato's Tower until it was taken by Alexander Jannaeus in 103 B.C.E. Its fate after this date is not clear, although its fortunes clearly declined. It had fallen into a ruinous state by the time of Herod the Great (40-4 B.C.E.).

“Having survived the tumultuous last years of the Roman civil wars, Herod continued as Rome's client king of Judea. A successful meeting with Octavian (later Augustus Caesar) led to reconfirmation of his status and to a grant of additional territory which included the coastal region embracing the ruins of Strato's Tower.

“Herod decided to build a major international port in his newly acquired land to foster several policy goals. A grand city built in the style of a Roman provincial capital and named for his imperial patron would be a tangible demonstration of his loyalty and would manifest his commitment to the traditions of Rome. In addition, Herod, who was a Jew and who would eventually rebuild the Second



the letter was inadequate in not outlining the charges against Paul etc. But the tribune had no time to formulate specific charges against Paul within Roman law because of the chaos in Jerusalem both with the crowds and with the Sanhedrin. The letter did, however, contain the most significant item about the entire situation: Paul was a Roman citizen and thus entitled to the full protection of the Roman government from any harm. The uncovering of an assassination plot against Paul prompted the extensive number of Roman soldiers escorting Paul to Caesarea, although this might not have been so obvious to Felix initially since only 70 calvary men escorted him into the city from Antipatris.

Along with the papers being delivered came the handing over of Paul to the governor: παρέστησαν καὶ τὸν Παῦλον αὐτῷ, *they presented also Paul to him*. Luke intentionally does not use specific language of delivering a prisoner to the governor, since Paul was in protective custody rather than under arrest. This language of protective custody continues with κελεύσας ἐν τῷ πραιτωρίῳ τοῦ Ἡρώδου φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτόν, *having ordered that he be guarded in the praetorium of Herod* (v. 35c). To be sure, the modern distinction between arrest and protective custom would not have seemed to have been very different for Paul at this point of time.



The central response of the governor comes in the main clause of this sentence in vv. 34-35: ἔφη, *he said*. Before he made his pronouncement directly to Paul, however, a couple of preliminary actions took place: ἀναγνοῦς δὲ καὶ ἐπερωτήσας ἐκ ποίας ἐπαρχείας ἐστίν, καὶ πυθόμενος ὅτι ἀπὸ Κιλικίας, *And after having read (the letter) and having asked from which province he belonged to, and having determined that (he was) from Cilicia*. To the modern reader this may seem unusual for the governor to ask about Paul's official residency.<sup>168</sup> But the need for this arose from the system of governmental structure in place. The middle eastern supreme headquarters for the Roman armies was located at Damascus. The administrative control included the territory from Cilicia around to Syria and all of Palestine. Felix was governor only over Palestine and was under the command of the Roman general stationed at Damascus. Usually when legal issues pertaining to a Roman citizen arose, the authorities in his home province had jurisdiction. But at this time no provincial governor was over Cilicia and it was merged into the province of Syria. Felix did not dare bother his superior with such a matter arising out of his territory of Palestine since the issue had arisen there rather than in Cilicia. Thus he has to assert jurisdiction over this case.<sup>169</sup> Thus it is doubtful that Luke is trying to paint Felix as a weak coward trying to shirk his duty -- as some commentators assume.

What Felix does say in formal language (ἔφη) to Paul is that he will hear Paul's case: διακούσομαί σου, ἔφη, ὅταν καὶ οἱ κατηγοροὶ σου παραγένωνται, *"I will hear your case," he declared, "whenever your accusers also*

Temple in Jerusalem, could show his sympathy and support for his non-Jewish subjects through the construction of a great Greco-Roman urban center complete with pagan temples and other structures (a theater, hippodrome, and amphitheater) that were inimical to his Jewish constituency. This ambitious building program was a gentile counterpoint to his rebuilding of the Jewish temple.

Herod's dream for Caesarea had an economic dimension as well. He hoped that this port, with its great harbor complex called Sebastos, would challenge and perhaps supplant Alexandria as the great emporium of the eastern Mediterranean. Finally, the erection of such an elegant city from the ruins of Strato's Tower would confirm Herod's place in history as a great statesman and master builder. With so much at stake, work on the new city proceeded rapidly. In little more than a decade (ca. 22–10/9 B.C.E.), the city was completed and dedicated with spectacular games, with the Sebastos harbor complex finished perhaps a few years earlier."

[Robert L. Hohlfelder, "Caesarea (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 798–799.]

<sup>168</sup>Some ancient copyists were also puzzled by this as well as is reflected in the text variation in some of the less important ancient manuscripts of this passage:

"τὴν ἐπιστολὴν (+ οὐ γέμων 2147) ἐπερωτήσας τὸν Παῦλον· ἐκ π. ἐπ. εἰ; ἐφη: Κιλιξ. καὶ πυθ. ἐφη: ἀκουσομαι σου ὅταν 614. 2147 (sy<sup>hmg</sup>)" [Eberhard Nestle et al., Universität Münster. Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 394.]

<sup>169</sup>"Because Paul was a native of Tarsus, which lay in Cilicia Pedias, he would have been subject to the governor of the double province Syria-Cilicia; and because that was Paul's domicile (*forum domicilii*), he would have come under the jurisdiction of the governor of that province. Vespasian only later split the province and created a separate and enlarged province of Cilicia, in A.D. 72. Although Felix was governor of the double province, that is not the full reason for his following statement, because *forum delicti*, 'the jurisdiction where the (alleged) crime has taken place,' has been Judea. Thus Felix realizes that the accusations against this native of Cilicia are being brought by Jews of Judea, a district of the province of which he is governor. Despite his reaction to the Jewish population, Felix has to handle the case." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 729.]



arrive.” The governor agrees to hear the case, but only after the Jewish leaders arrive from Jerusalem to present their charges against Paul. Interestingly, the only legitimate κατηγοροί, accusers, should have been the Jews from Asia (cf. 21:27) who first made accusations against Paul in the temple. But instead Ananias with some elders and Tertullus, their lawyer, show up five days later to make the charges (24:1). One suspects right at the beginning that this is going to turn into a political circus rather than any kind of genuine trial.

Literarily, this reference alludes back to 22:30 where Claudius Lysias sought to use the Sanhedrin as a fact-finding body to investigate the disturbance and to discover why such hatred of Paul existed among the Jews in Jerusalem. The story will continue with the arrival of Ananias and the delegation from the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

Thus Felix gives orders that Paul is to be held under guard in the palace now labeled the τῷ πραιτωρίῳ τοῦ Ἡρώδου, the *praetorium of Herod*, since it functioned as the governor’s headquarters rather than as the ruler’s palace as Herod had so built it earlier.<sup>170</sup> And so Paul begins what will turn into a two plus year stay there in the palace as he defends his Gospel and his actions before several individuals showing up to make charges against him.<sup>171</sup>

### 8.1.2.3 Paul appearing before Felix at Caesarea, Acts 24:1-23

Most all of chapter twenty-four is devoted to Paul’s initial defense of the Gospel and his actions before the Roman governor Felix. The narrative introduction to the speech is set in vv. 1-9, followed by the speech in vv. 10-21, and concluded by the narrative conclusion in vv. 22-23.

The governor is first mentioned by name (by the tribune in Jerusalem) in 23:24 as Φῆλιξ, *Felix*. He is then mentioned by name seven more times in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five.<sup>172</sup> From the Ro-



Herodian Palace Ruins at Caesarea, Israel



Antonius Felix  
from Guillaume Rouillé’s  
*Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum*

<sup>170</sup>“The palace of Herod the Great in Caesarea Maritima had become the residence (*praitōrion* [= Latin *praetorium*]) of the Roman governors of Judea since A.D. 6. It was also the place where they, as occupiers, dispensed justice; see P. Benoit, “Prétoire, Lithostroton et Gabbatha,” *RB* 59 (1952): 531–50, esp. 532–36; J. Maigret, “Paul, prisonnier à Césarée,” *BTS* 41 (1961): 3–4.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 729.]

<sup>171</sup>No model of the holding cells in the palace at Caesarea is available, but considerable discussion and ruins exist today for the Mamertine Prison located in Rome which served as a jail for prisoners awaiting a hearing before the emperor. For details see “Mamertine Prison,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org).

<sup>172</sup>Φῆλιξ, ἴκος, ὁ (ins: Sb 4601, 3 [144 A.D.]; APF II 442 no. 56, 9 [II A.D.]; POxf 3, 1 [142 A.D.]; POxy 800 [153 A.D.]; Joseph. index; Just., A I, 29, 2f; on the accent B-D-F §13; Mlt-H. 57) Antonius Felix, a freedman of the House of the Claudians and brother of Pallas, the favorite of the Emperor Claudius. In 52/53 A.D. F. became procurator of Palestine. The year of his removal is in dispute (s. Schürer I, 465, 42; ESchwartz, *NGG* 1907, 284ff), but was in the neighborhood of 60. The infamous character of his administration helped to lay the ground for the revolt of 66–70 (*per omnem saevitiam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit*, ‘he revelled in cruelty and lust, and wielded the power of a king with the mind of a slave’: Tacitus, *Hist.* 5, 9). **Ac 23:24, 26; 24:3, 22, 24f, 27; 25:14.**—Zahn, *Einl.* II3 647ff; Schürer I, 460ff; Pauly-W. I 2616–18; EMeyer III 47ff; BHHW I 469; Haenchen index.—On the question whether Pilate (s. Πιλάτος and Πόντιος), Felix, and Festus were procurators (s. ἐπίτροπος<sup>1</sup>) or prefects (s. ἑπαρχος) see the Lat. ins from Caesarea discovered and first publ. by AFrova, *Istituto Lombardo Rendiconti* 95, 761 (see also Schürer I, 358 note 22, and 359), which officially refers to Pilate as prefect. A probability is that by the time of Felix and Festus this was officially changed to procurator. The terms were sometimes used interchangeably.—Hemer, *Acts* 171–73; HTajra, *The Trial of St. Paul* ’89, 125–34.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1052.]

man records nothing of significance emerges from his military career. He served as procurator of Judea from 52-58 AD. He was of Greek descent rather than Roman, and in 58 AD returned back to Rome and vanish from public view.

This defense speech of Paul stands as the first of three times the apostle will defend himself before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa (25:8; 26:1-29). This took place over a two plus year period of time in the late 50s of the first century. Paul had multiple opportunity to present the Christian gospel before people of power and authority in that part of the ancient world -- something he could not have done under other circumstances. In God's own providential manner He was opening doors of opportunity for Paul during this period of time. With the strong support of the local Christian community in Caesarea, Paul's ministry took on a new orientation -- one that he had not anticipated ahead of time.

### 8.1.2.3.1 The Jewish charges against Paul, Acts 24:1-9

24.1 Μετὰ δὲ πέντε ἡμέρας κατέβη ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀνανίας μετὰ πρεσβυτέρων τινῶν καὶ ῥήτορος Τερτύλλου τινός, οἵτινες ἐνεφάνισαν τῷ ἡγεμόνι κατὰ τοῦ Παύλου. 2 κληθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἤρξατο κατηγορεῖν ὁ Τέρτυλλος λέγων· πολλῆς εἰρήνης τυγχάνοντες διὰ σοῦ καὶ διορθωμάτων γινομένων τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ διὰ τῆς σῆς προνοίας, 3 πάντῃ τε καὶ πανταχοῦ ἀποδεχόμεθα, κράτιστε Φῆλιξ, μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας. 4 ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπτω, παρακαλῶ ἀκοῦσαί σε ἡμῶν συντόμως τῇ σῇ ἐπιεικείᾳ. 5 εὐρόντες γὰρ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν καὶ κινούντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως, 6 ὃς καὶ τὸ ἱερόν ἐπέειρασεν βεβηλῶσαι ὃν καὶ ἐκρατήσαμεν, 8 παρ' οὗ δυνήσῃ αὐτὸς ἀνακρίνας περὶ πάντων τούτων ἐπιγνῶναι ὧν ἡμεῖς κατηγοροῦμεν αὐτοῦ. 9 συνεπέθεντο δὲ καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι φάσκοντες ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν.

24.1 Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney, a certain Tertullus, and they reported their case against Paul to the governor. 2 When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: "Your Excellency, because of you we have long enjoyed peace, and reforms have been made for this people because of your foresight. 3 We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. 5 We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him. 7 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him." 9 The Jews also joined in the charge by asserting that all this was true.

This opening paragraph serves as the narrative introduction to Paul's speech and thus sets the historical scene for what Paul had to say. In addition it is linked to the preceding pericope of 23:31-35 as a continuation of the story of Paul's experience at Caesarea.<sup>173</sup>The internal structure of the pericope begins with an introductory topic sentence depicting the arrival of the Jewish delegation in Caesarea (v. 1). Their lawyer, Tertullus, does the talking for the group and the accusations that he makes against Paul are summarized in vv. 2-8).<sup>174</sup> The scene closes with the rest of the delegation affirming the truth of these accusations (v. 9).

**The arrival of the delegation:** Μετὰ δὲ πέντε ἡμέρας κατέβη ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀνανίας μετὰ πρεσβυτέρων

<sup>173</sup>ccThe context in which these two speeches occur must be recalled, because aspects of it will appear in the speeches. The remote context is Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin (23:1-10), after his arrest in Jerusalem, in which the split occurred between the Pharisees and Sadducees who were present. There Paul declared, 'I am a Pharisee' (23:6). Part of that context is also Claudius Lysias's letter, which has admitted that nothing deserving death or imprisonment has legally been found in Paul. The more proximate context is the declaration of Felix, 'I shall hear your case when your accusers get here too' (23:35). [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 731.]

<sup>174</sup>ccThe Jews' advocate, Tertullus, who begins with an admirable *captatio benevolentiae*, must of course be supposed to have made a much longer and more detailed speech. Paul also must be supposed to have spoken at greater length; but between them the two speakers make what Luke wished to be understood as the legal points at issue. Tertullus claims that Paul, as the ringleader of the Nazoraean sect, has been stirring up unrest among Jews all over the world, and that he has attempted to profane the Temple. There is thus at issue a matter of Jewish doctrine (for Paul is leader of a αἵρεσις, with its own understanding of Judaism), but this leads to the Roman crime of *sedition* and to an act which the Romans have agreed shall be forbidden on pain of death. These accusations are repeated, explicitly or implicitly, through the remaining chapters, and Schille (436) is not wrong in describing the present scene as the 'endgültiges Zusammenprall' between Paul and Judaism. To all the charges Paul, on this occasion, replies. (1) Of course it is true that he is a Christian, but what Tertullus calls a αἵρεσις he calls a Way, and the Way consists in the worship of the ancestral Jewish God and believing all the things written in the Law and the Prophets: what Jew could object to that? It includes belief in the resurrection. (2) He has been responsible for no disturbances, in Temple, synagogue, or city. In Jerusalem there has been no time since his arrival; as for the rest of the world, there is — to say no more — no evidence. Jews of Jerusalem cannot supply it, and the Jews of Asia (who, if there were evidence, might have given it) were not present. (3) As for the Temple, he was indeed there because he had come on a charitable mission to his people and was engaged in sacrifice. He was in a state of purity; there was no tumult." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1091.]

τινῶν καὶ ῥήτορος Τερτύλλου τινός, οἵπινες ἐνεφάνισαν τῷ ἡγεμόνι κατὰ τοῦ Παύλου, *And after five days there came down the high priest Ananias with some elders and a particular lawyer Tertullus, who appeared before the governor against Paul.* Their arrival is depicted simply as Μετὰ δὲ πέντε ἡμέρας κατέβη. Thus five days after Paul arrived in Caesarea the high priest arrived in the city also. The standard Jewish verbal expression, *come down*, is used in reference to traveling northwest from Jerusalem to Caesarea. Even though geographically one did descend elevation wise several thousand feet in such a trip, the image of going down is the theological perspective of going away from the presence of God in the temple, no matter the direction one was traveling. With Luke's heightened emphasis on the Jerusalem temple both in the gospel and in Acts, he pays particular attention to this very Jewish terminology; something that everyone else completely ignored.

The delegation was led by ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀνανίας, *the high priest Ananias*. Luke makes this clear by placing Ananias as the exclusive subject of the verb κατέβη. The others merely accompanied (μετὰ) him. Who was this high priest? The name Ἀνανίας was rather common in the ancient world. Of the eleven uses of the name inside the NT four separate individuals are referenced.<sup>175</sup> But this Ananias is mentioned by name only in chapters twenty-three and twenty-four of Acts: 23:2 and 24:1. He did not enjoy much of a positive career as high priest according to the Jewish historian Josephus.<sup>176</sup> He was totally corrupt and could be very brutal with people. That he would head up the delegation traveling to Caesarea to push the case against Paul reflects how deeply the desire to get rid of Paul was in Jerusalem.

The rest of the delegation was composed of πρεσβυτέρων τινῶν καὶ ῥήτορος Τερτύλλου τινός, *some elders and a certain lawyer Tertullus*. The first designation is of a representative group of the members of the Sanhedrin who had been present at the hearing in Jerusalem.<sup>177</sup> Whether any of these were Pharisees is doubtful in light of the positive stance taken toward Paul by them at the temple hearing. The other individual was Tertullus who is labeled a ῥήτορος, from the nominative form ῥήτωρ, -ορος, ὁ (*rhētōr*). This single use inside the

<sup>175</sup> Ἀνανίας, οὐ, ὁ (also Ἀν-; אַנָּיָה) (AscIs 2:9; EpArist 48; Joseph.—Diod S 20, 97, 7 Ἀνανίας is the name of a Rhodian general. See also Athen. 12, 3, 511c Ἀνάτιος or Ἀνανίος) Ananias.

1. *one of the three youths in the fiery furnace* 1 Cl 45:7 (cp. Da 3:24 LXX; Just., A I, 46, 3).

2. *a member of the Christian community in Jerusalem, husband of Sapphira* Ac 5:1, 3, 5 (cp. the scene in Jos., Ant. 8, 266–73).—WBornemann, A. u. S.: Christl. Welt 13, 1899, 987–91; RSchumacher, A. u. S.: ThGl 5, 1913, 824–30. P-HMenoud, Goguel Festschr., '50, 146–54; Haenchen, ad loc.

3. *a Christian in Damascus, who instructed Paul and baptized him* Ac 9:10, 12f, 17; 22:12 (EFascher, Z. Taufe des Paulus: TLZ 80, '55, 643–48).

4. *a Jewish high priest, son of Nedebaeus*, in office c. 47–59 (Jos., Ant. 20, 103; 131; 205; 208–10; 213, Bell. 2, 243; 426; 429; 441f) Ac 22:5 v.l.; 23:2; 24:1. See Schürer II 231.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 68.]

<sup>176</sup> Ananias, the son of Nedebaeus, was high priest under Claudius and Nero ca. 47–58 C.E. Paul appears before him claiming innocence (Acts 23:1–10), and Ananias orders one of the attendants to strike him on the mouth (cf. John 18:22–23). Paul retorts with the prophetic (Haenchen Acts Meyerk, 637) statement, 'God shall strike you, you whitewashed wall,' and points out that such an action is contrary to the law according to which Paul is supposedly being judged. When informed that he is speaking against the high priest, Paul apologizes with a scriptural citation (Exod 22:28). Later (Acts 24:1), Ananias leads the Jewish accusers of Paul before Felix.

"Lüdemann (1987: 252–53, 258) sees Paul's presentation before the high priest whom he insulted and the names of Ananias and the lawyer Tertullus in Acts 24:1 as historical, because there was no good reason for creating such a tradition. The presence of Ananias in Acts 24:1 reveals for Luke the weight that the Jewish officials attached to Paul's case. Finally, it is hard to see how Paul could have been ignorant of Ananias' office. Did he not know who gave the command to strike him or was Paul being ironical: one would not expect a high priest to transgress the law (Munck Acts AB, 223)?

"Josephus provides further information. Ananias was assigned the high priestly office by Herod, king of Chalcis (Ant 20 §103). After an outbreak of violence between the Jews and Samaritans, the governor of Syria, Quadratus, sent Ananias and others off in chains to Caesar (JW 2 §243; Ant 20 §131), but they were rescued through the influence of Agrippa II. Ananias may have enjoyed something of a reputation among the people; he certainly used his wealth to bribe individuals and to pay court to the procurator, Albinus, and the high priest who succeeded him. Through the capture of his son and other household members, the Sicarii forced Ananias to convince Albinus to release many of their followers. On the other hand, Ananias' slaves went to the threshing floors and took by force the tithes of the priests. They beat those who refused to yield. As a result, some poor priests died from starvation (Ant 20 §205–13). During the Jewish War, Ananias was seen as a friend of the Romans and his house was burned. Although he managed to flee to the palace of Herod the Great, he and his brother, Ezechias, were later caught and killed by Zealots (JW 2 §426, 429, 441–42)."

[Robert F. O'Toole, "Ananias (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 225.]

<sup>177</sup> πρεσβυτέρων τινῶν; *M sy<sup>p</sup> have τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, failing to see the impossibility of all the elders' appearing in Felix's court.*" [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1093.]



NT stands in contrast to the adjective νομικός, ἤ, ὄν used 8 of the 9 NT instances as a noun to refer to a lawyer. These are focused in Luke (7:30; 10:25; 11:45, 46, 52; 14:3) and Matthew (22:35) and refer to an individual who was an expert in Jewish law. Most of these are Pharisees. Paul in Tit. 3:13 refers to Zenas as a Christian lawyer in ministry service to Christ as he and Apollos passed through Cyprus in the early 60s. Luke's use of ῥήτορος here in Acts 24 is more appropriate since the focus is upon Tertullus acting as spokesman for the Jewish delegation in presenting their case before Felix the governor.<sup>178</sup> His name is Roman rather than Jewish and the label ῥήτωρ may suggest familiarity with Roman law, more than with Jewish law. But this is not entirely clear by the way that Luke describes his speech.<sup>179</sup>



Although not clear in the English translations, the entire delegation and not just Tertullus is responsible for presenting the case against Paul: οἵτινες ἐνεφάνισαν τῷ ἡγεμόνι κατὰ τοῦ Παύλου, **who appeared before the governor against Paul**. The plural relative pronoun and verb make it clear that the entire group is standing before<sup>180</sup> the governor, and not just their lawyer. He is merely speaking in their behalf.

What a sight this must have been. A Roman military governor known to be corrupt and brutal; a Jewish high priest with a similar and even worse reputation leading the Jewish delegation. Both despising one another intensely, but willing to work together -- above or beyond the law -- if it advanced their own personal situation. Paul was coming up against this and also a lawyer skilled in manipulating the law and truth for the advantage of those he represented. Humanly speaking the odds were not in Paul's favor.



**Accusations made by Tertullus:** The speech begins with the narrative introduction in v. 2a: κληθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἤρξατο κατηγορεῖν

<sup>178</sup> ῥήτωρ, ορος, ὄ orig. ‘public speaker, orator’ (since Soph.; Thu. 8, 1, 1 et al.; ins, pap; Philo, Vi. Cont. 31; Jos., Ant. 17, 226; 19, 208), **then specif. a speaker in court, advocate, attorney** (Dio Chrys. 59 [76], 4; POxy 37 I, 4 [49 A.D.]; 237 VII, 25; BGU 969 I, 8; 15 al. in pap; Preisigke, Fachw. 1915) **Ac 24:1**, here as prosecuting attorney; on the form of Tertullus's speech s. BWinter, JTS 42, '91, 505–31.—DELG s.v. εἶρω (2). M-M. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 905.]

<sup>179</sup> Tertullus (*tuh-r-tuhl'uhs*), the prosecutor, according to Acts 24:1-8, who represented the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem before the Roman procurator Felix when charges were brought against Paul in Caesarea. The author of Acts, in good classical style, produces a speech in which Tertullus makes the charges. Tertullus may have been a Jew or he may have been a professional Roman advocate (the name is Roman). A reading in Codex Bezae (the important ‘Western’ text of Acts) presumes that he was Jewish and that it was only the Romans who stood in the way of Paul getting what Tertullus regarded as his just deserts from the Jews (Acts 24:6b-7, which is missing from many ancient manuscripts and thus also from the RSV). The fact that Felix postponed Paul's trial suggests that Tertullus was not entirely successful in his plea (Acts 24:22-23).” [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 1036.]

<sup>180</sup> ἐμφανίζω fut. ἐμφανίσω; 1 aor. ἐνεφάνισα; 1 aor. pass. ἐνεφανίσθη (s. ἐμφαίνω; Eur., Pla., X., et. al.; ins, pap, LXX, En; TestSol 3:7; TestAbr B 4 p. 109, 1 [Stone p. 66]; Philo, Joseph.) ‘make apparent’

**1. to lay open to view, make visible** ἐ. σεαυτόν τινι **J 14:22** (cp. Ex 33:13, [18] ἐμφάνισόν μοι σεαυτόν). Pass. w. act. sense become visible, appear τινί to someone (Diog. L., Prooem. 7 αὐτοῖς θεοὺς ἐμφανίζεσθαι λέγοντες; Philo, Leg. All. 3, 101; Jos., Bell. 6, 47, Ant. 1, 223; Wsd 17:4; τοῖς μὴ ἀπιστοῦσιν αὐτῷ Did., Gen. 248, 19) πολλοῖς Mt 27:53. σοί Hn 3, 1, 2; cp. 3, 10, 2. τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ before God's face (of Christ's appearance before God in heaven) **Hb 9:24**.

**2. to provide information, make clear, explain, inform, make a report** (Hippol., Ref. 8, 9, 8) esp. of an official report to the authorities (as PMagd 11, 9 [= PEnteux 27, 9; 221 B.C.]; UPZ 42, 18 [162 B.C.]; PEleph 8, 3; 2 Macc 11:29) τὶ πρὸς τίνα someth. to someone: inform **Ac 23:22**; w. ὅτι foll. (X., Cyr. 8, 1, 26) make clear **Hb 11:14**.—τινί w. ὅπως foll. **23:15** (cp. PSI 442, 23 [III B.C.] ταῦτα δὲ ἐνεφάνισά σοι, ὅπως ἂν μηδεὶς σε παρακροῦηται). Fig. extension: of matters that transcend physical sight or mere verbal statement reveal, make known (cp. Wsd 1:2; Philo, Leg. All. 3, 27) ἐμφανίσω αὐτῷ ἐμαυτόν I will reveal myself to that person **J 14:21**.

**3. to convey a formal report about a judicial matter, present evidence, bring charges** τινί τι (X., Mem. 4, 3, 4; Diod S 14, 11, 2; Esth 2:22; Jos., Ant. 4, 43) GPt 11:43. ἐ. τινὶ κατὰ τινος bring formal charges against someone (Jos., Ant. 10, 166) **Ac 24:1; 25:2**; ἐ. περί τινος concerning someone **25:15** (cp. PHib 72, 4 [III B.C.]; PSI 400, 2; 2 Macc 3:7; En 22:12; Jos., Ant. 14, 226).—DELG s.v. φαίνω B. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 325–326.]

ὁ Τέρτυλλος λέγων, and after he (Paul) was called, Tertullus began to accuse him saying. . . . Paul was brought in by the soldiers from the holding cell section of the governor's palace in stood before the governor in the meeting room specified for receiving guests and special meetings. The defendant had to be present whenever charges against him were presented.<sup>181</sup> Since this was a Roman setting and not a Jewish legal process as had been the hearing before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem a week or so earlier, the parameters of Roman law prevailed in this legal process.

Luke describes Tertullus' action as ἤρξατο κατηγορεῖν, he began to accuse (him). The verb κατηγορέω references making legal accusations against someone usually in a court setting.<sup>182</sup> What Luke introduces with the participle λέγων, saying, is not a verbatim reproduction of the speech that Tertullus gave to the Roman governor.<sup>183</sup> No lawyer then or now ever gives a 15 second speech making charges against someone in a courtroom.<sup>184</sup>

The first statement in Luke's summation reflects the customary captatio benevolentiae of such speeches made before a high governmental dignitary: πολλῆς εἰρήνης τυγχάνοντες διὰ σοῦ καὶ διορθωμάτων γινομένων

<sup>181c</sup>According to Sherwin-White (*Roman Society*, 48), the basic elements of the procedure are all present: the charge is made and sustained by private plaintiffs (first Jews from Asia; then religious authorities from Jerusalem, who now appear before the governor with an advocate); the governor takes his seat on his tribunal (*pro tribunali*) and acts with the assistance of his *consilium*, 'council' (25:6, 10, 12)." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 731.]

<sup>182</sup>κατηγορέω impf. κατηγοροῦν; fut. κατηγορήσω; 1 aor. κατηγορήσα; aor. pass. 3 sg. κατηγορήθη (AscIs 3:5) (Trag., Hdt. +; loanw. in rabb.) gener. 'speak against'

### 1. nearly always as legal t.t.: *bring charges in court*

**a. before a human judge:** against someone τινά someone Mk 3:2 v.l.; τινός (Hdt., Aristoph., Pla. et al., also SIG 173, 37; 780, 8; PPetr III, 21g, 14; PEdgar 33 [=Sb 6739], 4; AscIs 3:6) Mt 12:10; Mk 3:2; Lk 6:7; 11:54 v.l.; 23:2, 10; J 8:6; Ac 25:5. τί τινας accuse someone of a thing (Trag., X., Demosth. et al., also 1 Macc 7:25) κατηγοροῦν αὐτοῦ πολλά Mk 15:3 (for πολλά cp. PLond 893, 12 [40 A.D.] πολλά κ.); cp. vs. 4. οὐχ ὡς τοῦ ἔθνους μου ἔχων τι κατηγορεῖν not that I had any charge to bring against my own people Ac 28:19. This may also be the place for περι πάντων τούτων, ὧν ἡμεῖς κατηγοροῦμεν αὐτοῦ of which we accuse him 24:8; sim. 25:11, if this is a case of attraction of the relative ὧν = τούτων ἅ. But it is also poss. to take it as a double gen. (cp. Demosth. 21, 5 παρανόμων ἐμελλον αὐτοῦ κατηγορεῖν; Dositheus 68, 2 βίας σου κατηγορῶ).—Also τινός περί τινας (Thu. 8, 85, 2; X., Hell. 1, 7, 2; Jos., Ant. 13, 104) Ac 24:13. κατά τινας (X., Hell. 1, 7, 9) w. gen. or (in the case of attraction, s. above) acc. of thing Lk 23:14. Abs. (OGI 218, 95 [III B.C.]; POxy 237 VIII, 21) Ac 24:2, 19. Pass. be accused ὑπό τινας by someone (Thu. 1, 95, 3 ἀδικία κατηγορεῖτο αὐτοῦ ὑπό τ. Ἑλλήνων; 2 Macc 10:13; Philo, Mut. Nom. 206) Mt 27:12. τί κατηγορεῖται ὑπό τ. Ἰουδαίων Ac 22:30. ὁ κατηγορούμενος the accused (PCairMasp 63, 2) 25:16.

**b. before God's tribunal** κατηγορήσω ὑμῶν πρὸς τ. πατέρα J 5:45a (for the constr. w. πρὸς cp. 1 Macc 7:6; 2 Macc 10:13). ὁ κατήγορ . . . ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς ἐνώπιον τ. θεοῦ ἡμῶν Rv 12:10 (for the acc. s. PLond I, 41, 10 p. 28 [161 B.C.] ὁ βουκόλος κατηγορήσεν αὐτάς). Subst. ὁ κατηγορῶν the accuser (cp. Jos., C. Ap. 2, 137) J 5:45b.

**2. without legal connotation accuse, reproach** (X., Mem. 1, 3, 4; Aelian, VH 9, 17; Herodian 6, 9, 1; Philo, Plant. 80; SB V/2, 7835, 17 [New Docs 1, 28]) Job αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖ he accuses himself 1 Cl 17:4. Abs., of thoughts Ro 2:15.—B. 1439. DELG s.v. ἀγορά. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 533.]

<sup>183c</sup>Tertullus's speech is seriously unbalanced. Granting that a captatio benevolentiae is a good thing, 30 percent of Tertullus's speech is devoted to this amenity. There are nearly three verses of exordium, two of narration, and one of peroration." [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 595.

<sup>184c</sup>ῥήτορος Τερτύλλου τινός. To judge from the papyri the use of a ῥήτωρ, a barrister or advocate (Latin, *causidicus*), to represent participants in a suit was a common practice. MM 563f. quote POxy 1:37. col. 1:4f. (AD 49), Ἀριστοκλῆς ῥήτωρ ὑπὲρ Πισούριος(?); 2:237. col. 7:25 (AD 186), Δίδυμος ῥήτωρ ἀπεκρίνατο μὴ χωρὶς λόγου τὸν Σεμπρόνιον κεκεινῆσθαι; and refer to other papyri. It should not be assumed that the practice was uniform or that professional advocates could be used in every kind of court or every kind of case (cf. *Begs.* 5:320). Use was not mandatory and probably indicates the importance or complexity of the case. It is interesting that the case referred to in the second quotation above bears some resemblance to the complaint made by the Jews against Paul: it is not (they allege) without ground that they move against him. It is often supposed that Tertullus was himself a Jew, no doubt a Greek-speaking Jew of the Diaspora. Knox (*Hell. El.* 30, n. 2) compares Josephus's journey to Rome (*Life* 13) on behalf of a number of priests whom Felix had sent there λόγον ὑπέξοντας τῷ Καίσαρι. The argument that Tertullus was a Jew rests to a great extent on the first person plural ἐκρατήσαμεν in v. 6. But an advocate would associate himself with his clients, and the reference to 'all the Jews' in v. 5 has been held to show that Tertullus was a Gentile (Stählin 294). One cannot be certain. If the need for an advocate was linguistic rather than legal it implies that the High Priest and his colleagues could not (or possibly would not) use Greek well enough to use it in court. See Lieberman (*Greek in Jewish Palestine*) and Sevenster (*Do you know Greek?*), neither of whom, however, discusses this passage.

"The name Tertullus is derived from Tertius (as Catullus from Catius, Lucullus from Lucius). It occurs in Pliny, Epistles 5:15(14):1. The *usus provincialis* was regarded as good training for young lawyers (Cicero, pro Caelio 30 (12))."

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1093–1094.]

τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ διὰ τῆς σῆς προνοίας,<sup>185</sup> πάντῃ τε καὶ πανταχοῦ ἀποδεχόμεθα, κράτιστε Φῆλιξ, μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας, with enjoying great peace through you and having implemented reforms for this people through your foresight, both in every way and every where we welcome (this), most excellent Felix, with complete thanksgiving.<sup>186</sup> Hardly a single word of this phoney flattery reflected either truth or the real attitude of the Jewish delegation that day. The first phrase, πολλῆς εἰρήνης τυγχάνοντες διὰ σοῦ, claims that Felix had brought peace by ridding the countryside of bandits. Not the view of many Jews in this region during this period of time.<sup>187</sup> The second claim, διορθωμάτων γινομένων τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ διὰ τῆς σῆς προνοίας, is even more phoney since it was his brutal treatment of Jews that got him in trouble with emperor Nero.<sup>188</sup> The main clause asserting the positive response of the Jewish delegation to these claims of accomplishment is perhaps the worst lie of all! The only thing that Tertullus said honestly was the direct address of the governor as κράτιστε Φῆλιξ, which by custom was the correct form of addressing a government official such as Felix. Josephus (*Ant* 20.182-184) had this to say of Felix:

(182) Now, when Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix by Nero, the principal of the Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea went up to Rome to accuse Felix; and he had certainly been brought to punishment, unless Nero had yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother Pallas, who was at that time had in the greatest honor by him. (183) Two of the principal Syrians in Cesarea persuaded Burrhus, who was Nero's tutor, and secretary for his Greek epistles, by giving him a great sum of money, to disannul that equality of the Jewish privileges of citizens which they hitherto enjoyed. (184) So Burrhus, by his solicitations, obtained leave of the emperor, that an epistle should be written to that purpose. This epistle became the occasion of the following miseries that befell our nation; for, when the Jews of Cesarea were informed of the contents of this epistle to the Syrians, they were more disorderly than before, till a war was kindled.<sup>189</sup>

After the customary 'buttering up' of the governor (vv. 2-3) comes in v. 4 the also customary promise to be brief in the comments of the lawyer as a part of the *captatio benevolentiae* (vv. 2-4): ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπτω, παρακαλῶ ἀκοῦσαί σε ἡμῶν συντόμως τῇ σῇ ἐπιεικείᾳ, but so as not to detain you further, I politely request that you hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. The expression is intended to affirm the governor as having many duties and the group is respectful of his time.<sup>190</sup> Not so subtly is the indirect expectation that Felix

<sup>185c</sup>διὰ τῆς σῆς προνοίας. πρόνοια is *prudentia*; see 2 Macc. 4:6; Rom. 13:14; (12:17). πρόνοια is one of the standard virtues of the Hellenistic ruler. 'Rühmend von der πρόνοια des Herrschers (nach Dio Chrysostom Oratio 3:43 eine πρόνοια ἀνθρώπων κατὰ νόμον), Feldherrn oder Staatsmannes zu sprechen, wird im Hellenismus stehender Brauch, vgl 2 Makk 4:6 ..., Epistle of Aristeas 30: πρόνοια βασιλικῆς οὐ τέτυχε, Diodorus Siculus 29 fragment 19 (von Hannibal) ... PHerms 119B3:3 ...' (J. Behm, in TWNT 4:1006). See also S. Lösch, 'Die Dankesrede des Tertullus', Theol. Quartalschrift 112 (1931), 310ff.; M. P. Charlesworth, 'Providentia et Aeternitas', HThR 29 (1936), 107-32. There is further papyrus evidence in ND 3:143. It is clear that Tertullus (or Luke?) knows the proper style to use." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1095.]

<sup>186c</sup>Tertullus begins his accusation with the customary *captatio benevolentiae*; see Quintilian, *De Institutione Oratoria* 4:1; Cicero, *De Oratore* 2:78, 79 (319-325); Lucian, *Bis Accusatus* 17; for πολὺς in such paragraphs, Thucydides 1:80.1; 2:35.1; 3:37.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 5:1:4 (Conzelmann 131)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1094.]

<sup>187c</sup>Tertullus might speak of the 'great peace' enjoyed by the people of Judaea as a result of Felix's administration, but there were many Judaeans who, if they had known it in time, would have applied to this 'peace' the epigram about the Romans which Tacitus puts into the mouth of the Caledonian hero Calgacus: 'they make a desert and call it peace.'<sup>47</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 439.]

<sup>188c</sup>However, it was during Felix's term as procurator that rebellion firmly took hold in Palestine (HJP<sup>2</sup> 1: 460), so Felix was an obvious candidate for blame. Josephus reports that he paid a large sum to induce the closest friend of Jonathan, the high priest, to arrange for the high priest's murder by sicarii (*Ant* 20.162ff.). Jonathan, it is said, had annoyed Felix by repeatedly urging him to be a better governor; yet Felix had evidently taken strong (if not entirely honest, and perhaps even counterproductive) actions to deal with the growing disorder (*Ant* 20.161; *War* 2.252ff.). Indeed, Josephus' account of Felix's suppression of Jewish rioters at Caesarea shows that he tried persuasion before force and that, having made his point, withdrew his troops at Jewish request and referred the matter to Nero (*Ant* 20.177-78; *War* 2.270; cf. *Life* 13). It is against this background of severe and growing disorder that we must understand Felix's detention of Paul (*Acts* 24:26-27). Felix's reputation will not have been helped by his slave origins; his 'servile nature' seems to be the burden of Tacitus' critique of him (*Hist.* 5.9; cf. Pliny Ep. 7.29 on Pallas). However, it must be observed that our sources are unanimous in their hostility toward Felix and it may very well be that their judgment is essentially sound (Schürer HJP<sup>2</sup> 1: 462-66)." [David C. Braund, "Felix (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 783.]

<sup>189</sup>Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).

<sup>190c</sup>It was customary also to promise brevity, as Tertullus does here (v. 4); the promise was sometimes kept, sometimes not, but it was calculated to secure goodwill for the speaker at the outset of his speech. So was such flattery as the reference to Felix's clemency or moderation<sup>6</sup> — a reference singularly unsuited to a ruler whose ferocity is attested by both Josephus and Tacitus." [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 439.]



will favorably hear and agree to the charges against Paul: τῆ σῆ ἐπιεικεία.<sup>191</sup> Thus far in his speech Tertullus has done nothing but give phoney flattery to Felix in the hopes of softening him up for the charges against Paul.

In vv. 5-6 the Jewish case against Paul is put on the table for the governor: 5 εὐρόντες γὰρ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν καὶ κινοῦντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως, 6 ὃς καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐπέειρασεν βεβηλώσαι ὃν καὶ ἐκρατήσαμεν, 5 We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him.<sup>192</sup> Four specific charges are leveled against Paul by Tertullus.<sup>193</sup> **First**, Paul was τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν, this man a pestilent fellow. Paul is cast as a public menace being a trouble maker who plagued society.<sup>194</sup> No evidence is offered; only an assertion is made. **Second**, Paul is καὶ κινοῦντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην, and one agitating division among all the Jews over the world. The phrase κινοῦντα στάσεις carries heavy tones of *seditio* that would be of significance to the Romans who could care less about any theological underpinning of it.<sup>195</sup> Still no proof is offered, only an accusation.

---

<sup>191</sup>τῆ σῆ ἐπιεικεία (B\* spells ἐπεικεία; on various questions of spelling in this word see M. 2:89, 314, 348). Moule (IB 45) notes but does not explain the unusual dative. Clearly Felix is being asked to listen and to act with ἐπιεικεία — towards the Jews. The word is hard to translate. See H. Preisker (TWNT 2:585–7); further parallels in Betz (209, n. 3). It denotes reasonableness, fairness, in general and especially perhaps in a judge, who is prepared not to break the laws but to give them an understanding, non-legalist interpretation. Most significant is the personification of ἐπιεικεία in Plutarch's Caesar 57 (734); καὶ τό γε τῆς ἐπιεικειᾶς ἱερὸν οὐκ ἀπὸ τρόπου δοκοῦσι χαριστήριον ἐπὶ τῆ πράτῃτῃ ψηφίσασθαι. Note the parallel with πράτῃτῃ. [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1096.]

<sup>192</sup>A number of MSS (E Ψ 33 (323 614) 945 1739 (2495) pm gig vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>pl</sup>) contain a considerable paraphrase given in some printed copies of the NT as the end of v. 6, v. 7, and the beginning of v. 8. The whole sentence runs as follows.

καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἡμέτερον νόμον ἠωελήσαμεν κρῖναι (κρίνειν, 614 2495 pc). παρελθὼν δὲ Λυσίας ὁ χιλιάρχος μετὰ πολλῆς βίας ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν ἀπήγαγεν, κελεύσας τοὺς κατηγοροὺς αὐτοῦ ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ (πρός, E 2464 pc) σε.

See Clark (xlvii); Ropes (Begs. 3:225); Delebecque (115).

“This describes the events of 22:22–23:30 from the Jewish point of view and in very compressed form. An editor no doubt thought that some such cross-reference was necessary in order to explain what was taking place. Luke's narrative, written from a non-Jewish, or anti-Jewish, point of view certainly suggests something other than a peaceful Jewish trial according to law—a lynching, rather; and, according to Luke's story, the tribune was not the first to use violence. Is Luke (or his editor) deliberately setting out to represent the Jews as guilty of falsehood? Is he himself guilty of misrepresenting in his narrative Jewish intention fairly set out in Tertullus's speech? Cf. the letter ascribed to Claudius Lysias. Probably neither; he is using traditional material which reflects two points of view. Dibelius (151, n. 32), cautiously suggests that the long text is original.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1099.]

Translation of missing verse 7: “But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands, 8 ordering his accusers to come before you.”

<sup>193</sup>Against Paul he charges four things: (1) Paul is a pest; (2) he is an agitator, stirring up trouble among Jews all over the world; (3) he is a ringleader of the Nazoreans; and (4) he has tried to desecrate the Temple. Thus, Tertullus makes out his case of *seditio*, political rebellion.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 732.]

<sup>194</sup>Π. λοιμός, ἢ, ὄν (LXX) comp. λοιμότερος

**1. pert. to being diseased, pestilential, diseased**, of birds of prey ὄρνεα ... ὄντα λοιμὰ τῆ πονηρία αὐτῶν B 10:4. For the names of the birds in this pass. s. Lev. 11:13–16. B views them as typical of certain persons.

**2. subst., of humans public menace/enemy** (1 Macc 15:21 of wanted criminals) B 10:10 (Ps 1:1 ‘pestilent pers.’). οἱ λοιμότεροι the more troublesome ones IPol 2:1. εὐρόντες τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν we have found this man to be a public enemy **Ac 24:5** (the noun λοιμός as designation of a person dangerous to the public wealth [cp. Lat. pestis] in Demosth. 25, 80; Aelian, VH 14, 11. The adj. in Libanius, Or. 1, 186 F. τὸν λοιμὸν Γερώντιον. S. Ἐλύμας and OHoltzmann, ZKG 14, 1894, 495–502).—DELG. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 602.]

<sup>195</sup>στάσεις (M sy sa have στάσιν): again ch. 22 is chiefly in mind, but (from the Jewish point of view), other events earlier in Paul's career would be relevant, e.g. 17:6. Theological questions (such as resurrection) are now set aside; the issue now is *seditio*, which a Roman court, unconcerned with theology, would be bound to take very seriously. πᾶσιν (om. P<sup>74</sup>) ... κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην emphasizes that it is not the Jerusalem incident alone (see v. 6) that is complained of. The Jews had become a universal people, to be found in every part of the Empire, and a disturbance that threatened their peaceful relations with the Roman administration would constitute the basis of a movement that Felix could not ignore. Sherwin-White (51f.) draws attention to this, referring (following F. Cumont, RHR 91 (1925), 3–6) to the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians (see H. I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (1924), 23–6). The relevant passage (lines 98–100) runs: ... εἰ δὲ μή, πάντα τρόπον αὐτοὺς ἐπεξελεύσομαι καθάπερ κοινήν τεινα (sic) τῆς οἰκουμένης νόσον ἐξεγείροντας. Luke's λοιμός recalls νόσος in the letter. Sherwin-White comments, ‘The similarity is deliberate. It is evident that the narrative of Acts is using contemporary language. The charge was precisely the one to bring against a Jew during the Principate of Claudius or the early years of Nero. The accusers of Paul were putting themselves on the side of the government. The procurator would know at once what the pros-

**Third**, Paul is πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Paul is given credit for being the leader of the Christian movement, something that the apostles in Jerusalem would have taken issue with.<sup>196</sup> Interestingly, this is the only time in the NT that Christians are labeled Nazarenes, elsewhere in the NT the term is in the singular as a reference to Jesus.<sup>197</sup> Some of the early church fathers confused this reference as designating a small sect of Jewish Christians absolutely hostile to Paul that emerged in the later decades of the first century.<sup>198</sup> The Greek syntax highlights this accusation as standing out from the previous ones. Fourth, in a relative clause the Jewish accusation is presented against Paul: ὃς καὶ τὸ ἱερόν ἐπέπεισεν βεβηλώσαι ὃν καὶ ἐκρατήσαμεν, **who even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him**. Even though this strictly **had to do with Torah principles, it did have some legitimacy** in being presented in a Roman court process.<sup>199</sup>

ecution meant.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1097.]

<sup>196</sup>“πρωτοστάτην τε. Again, the new clause elucidates the proceedings, indicating the role in which Paul (according to the allegation) had acted as trouble-maker. πρωτοστάτης was originally a military term (a front-line man; so e.g. Thucydides 5:71:2, ὁ πρωτοστάτης τοῦ δεξιῦ κερῶς; Job 15:24, LXX), here in the derived sense of chief or leader. For αἰρεσις see on 5:17; the accusation makes Paul the head of a dissident and troublesome Jewish party. See Fitzmyer (Essays 276, n. 11). Delebecque (115), on πρωτοστάτης ‘...c’est le soldat du premier rang; il fait partie des troupes de choc (cf. Xénophon, *Cyrop.* 6:3:24). Paul est présenté comme un soldat d’élite, donc dangereux.’ Maddox (70) goes further: ‘... it is precisely as such that Luke himself wants to portray him. He is more important for what he represents than for his own sake.’ Papyri using the word are cited in ND 4:244, but add nothing relevant.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1097–1098.]

<sup>197</sup>“**Ναζωραῖος, ου, ὁ** Nazoraean, Nazarene, predominantly a designation of Jesus, in **Mt, J, Ac** and **Lk 18:37**, while Mk has **Ναζαρηνός** (q.v.). Of the two places where the latter form occurs in Lk, the one, **Lk 4:34**, apparently comes fr. **Mk (1:24)**, the other, **24:19**, perh. fr. a special source. Where the author of Lk-Ac writes without influence fr. another source he uses **Ναζωραῖος**. Mt says expressly **2:23** that Jesus was so called because he grew up in Nazareth. In addition, the other NT writers who call Jesus **Ναζωραῖος** know Nazareth as his home. But linguistically the transition fr. **Ναζαρέτ** to **Ναζωραῖος** is difficult (Dalman, *Gramm.* 2 178; Wlh. on **Mt 26:69**; MLidzbarski, *Mandäische Liturgien* 1920, xviff, *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 1, 1922, 230ff, *Ginza* 1925, ix; FBurkitt, *The Syriac Forms of NT Proper Names* 1912; AvGall, *Βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* 1926 p. 432, 4; cp. 411f; RBultmann, *ZNW* 24, 1925, 143f, *Jesus* 1926, 26 [Eng. tr. 24]; HSchaeder in *Rtzst. u. Schaefer, Studien zum antiken Synkretismus* 1926 p. 308, 2, also *TW IV* 879–84; Moore below) and it is to be borne in mind that **Ναζωραῖος** meant someth. different before it was connected w. Nazareth (cp. Orig. *Celsus* 7, 18, 9f, who calls Jesus ὁ **Ναζωραῖος ἄνθρωπος**. JSanders, *JBL* 84, ’65, 169–72 [rev. in: *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. CEvans/WStegner ’94, 116–28] interprets N. in **Mt 2:23** as meaning both ‘coming from Nazareth’ and ‘miraculously born’). The pass. where Jesus is so called are **Mt 2:23; 26:69 v.l., 71; Lk 18:37; J 18:5, 7; 19:19; Ac 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 26:9**. Acc. to **Ac 24:5** the Christians were so called; s. Kl. *Texte* 32 p. 3, ln. 32 and 83 p. 6, lines 8, 17, 27; p. 7, note on ln. 1ff; p. 8, ln. 5; p. 9, ln. 17; 23; p. 10, ln. 5; 15; p. 11, ln. 28 and note on ln. 9ff, all passages in which Jewish Christians are called Nazaraei, Nazareni, **Ναζωραῖοι**.—Laud. *Therap.* 27 the monks are called **ναζιραῖοι** (with the v.l. **Ναζαραῖοι**).—EbNestle, *ET* 19, 1908, 523f, *PM* 14, 1910, 349f; HZimmern, *ZDMG* 74, 1920, 429ff; GMoore, *Nazarene and Nazareth: Beginn.* I/1, 1920, 426–32 (s. I/5, ’33, 356f); EMeyer II 408f; 423, 2; HGressmann, *ZKG* 41=n.s. 4, 1922, 166f; WCaspari, *ZNW* 21, 1922, 122–27; HSmith, **Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται**: *JTS* 28, 1927, 60; ELohmeyer, *Joh. d. Täufer* ’32, p. 115, 2; HSchlier, *TRu* n.s. 5, ’33, 7f; WOesterley, *ET* 52, ’41, 410–12; SLYonnet, *Biblica* 25, ’44, 196–206; MBlack, *An Aramaic Approach*, ’67, 197–200; WALbright, *JBL* 65, ’46, 397–401, also JKennard, Jr., *ibid.* 66, ’47, 79–81; HShires, *ATR* 29, ’47, 19–27; TNicklin, *Gospel Gleanings*, ’50, 257–60; BGärtner, *Die rätselhafte Termini Nazoräer u. Iskariot* ’57, 5–36; ESchweizer, *Judentum, Urchrist., Kirche* ’60, 90–93; RPesch: *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* ’94, 178–211.—B-D-F §39, 4; BHHW II, 1293. M-M. EDNT. *TW*. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 664–665.]

<sup>198</sup>“It is however important to bear in mind also the patristic evidence for the existence of a Jewish sect bearing this or a similar name (see especially Epiphanius, *Panarion* 29:6), Jewish references to הנזורים, and the possible etymology of the Hebrew word. See, inter alia, Black, *Scrolls* 66–74; P. Winter, *NTS* 3 (1957), 136–42; B. Gärtner, *Die Rätselhafte Termini Nazoräer und Iskariot* (*Horae Soederblomianae* IV; 1957), 5–36; Kosmala (315). As the last named points out, there is an interesting parallel between the words of Acts 24:5 (τῆς τῶν **Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως**) and the combination of מינים and נוצרים in the additional ‘test’ Benediction formulated c. AD 85 (see St John 127; Background 210f.). נוצרים suggests the plural of the Qal participle of נצר, which means to guard or to observe; it is used with Torah in e.g. the saying of R. Meir (c. 150) in Berakoth 17a: נצר תורתך בלבך, Keep my Torah in thy heart. The suggestion thus lies ready to hand that there was a group of Observants, headed perhaps by the Chief Observant. Such a group could have existed independently of the Christian movement, which was subsequently identified with it; or the name could have been given to an early Christian, Jewish Christian, group which revered the Law. Later the name may have suggested a connection with Nazareth. Such suggestions are of interest and have the advantage that they may be used to explain Epiphanius’s belief that there was a pre-Christian Jewish sect of Nazoraeans. They have the disadvantage that Jesus does not appear to have lived in such a way as to attract to himself the title of Law-keeper in Chief. There is perhaps no better view than that the adjective (also in the form **Ναζαρηνός**) was first attached to Jesus in view of his connection with Nazareth, and was then passed on to his followers. It is however probable that in the course of time various (false) etymologies were attached to the name. See H. H. Schaefer in *TWNT* 4:879–84; BA 1077.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1098.]

<sup>199</sup>“The charge of desecrating the Temple could be brought into a Roman court because the Romans had accepted the provision

The **final expression**, *καὶ ἐκρατήσαμεν*, carries a strong tone of this matter needing to be handled in a Jewish court rather than in a Roman court.<sup>200</sup> It is this point that evidently prompted the lengthy Western text insertion (as verse seven) in order to stress the point of this needing to have been handled by the Jews rather than the Romans in so far as Tertullus was concerned. This point especially may very well have derailed Tertullus' efforts to make a persuasive case against Paul, since it signaled a Jewish matter and implied wrong action by Claudius Lysias the Roman tribune in Jerusalem.

Even dumber is Tertullus' suggestion for Felix to interrogate Paul about the charges he has just made against Paul: *παρ' οὗ δυνήσῃ αὐτὸς ἀνακρίνας περὶ πάντων τούτων ἐπιγνῶναι ὧν ἡμεῖς κατηγοροῦμεν αὐτοῦ*, *from whom you will be able, by examining him, to learn about all these things which we are accusing him of*.<sup>201</sup> This remark, made toward the close of his speech, simply opened the door for a vigorous rebuttal by the apostle of each point the lawyer made. One wonders what was in the lawyer's mind when he said this. Of course, the much longer Western text expanded reading causes the *αὐτὸς* in *αὐτὸς ἀνακρίνας*, by examining him, to refer not to Felix examining Paul but instead to an examination of the Roman tribune Claudius Lysias stationed in Jerusalem.<sup>202</sup> But beyond very limited textual evidence for this alternative reading is the reality that the verbal expression *ἀνακρίνας* uniformly referred in the ancient world to an examination of prisoners, not other people not in custody. Thus the most natural meaning of the phrase is a suggestion for Felix to examine Paul the 'defendant' at this hearing.<sup>203</sup>

**Affirmation by the delegation.** The final point of this narrative introduction is the agreement of the entire delegation with Tertullus' words in their behalf: *συνεπέθεντο δὲ καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι φάσκοντες ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν*, *The Jews also joined in the charge by asserting that all this was true*. Does this pointed reference to *καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*, *also the Jews*, imply that Tertullus was not a Jew and only representing them to the governor? Clearly the Greek text can be so taken to imply this. Commentator opinion is divided here with some understanding this more in the sense of 'the rest of the Jews' while many others understanding *καὶ* here as an adjunctive adverb with the sense of 'also' implying the rest of the delegation who were Jews. The more likely sense of *καὶ* here is to include the rest of the delegation in agreeing with what Tertullus said and the term *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*, the Jews, although at face value a reference to the Jewish people generally with negative tones, here contextually simply means the Jewish leaders present in the court room. This could very easily have included Tertullus in the groups labeled simply as *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*.

The more important point is what they did. The core verb from *συνεπιτίθημι*, although only used here in the entire NT, literally means to join in an attack on someone or some group, mostly as a military term. Thus Luke's special sense is that the rest of the Jerusalem delegation of leaders joined in the attack on Paul, verbally for maintaining its sanctity (Stählin 295). Disturbances caused by Paul as leader of the Nazoraeans and desecration of the Temple: 'Beide Punkte enthalten religiöse und politische Brisanz.'" [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1099.]

<sup>200</sup>"The use of *krateō* ('arrest') lends a specious air of legality to what Luke had described as a lynch mob (21:31; 22:22–23). It also implies that Paul's case should be within the disposition of the Sanhedrin. The Western Text makes this more explicit: 'and we wanted to judge him according to our law,' then continuing in v. 7, 'but Lysias the tribune came and took him away from us with great violence, ordering those accusing him to come before you.' The entirety of v. 7 is absent from the best mss, and is also excluded from the present text, although some scholars argue that it is original. Certainly, it has psychological plausibility in its favor, and allows Tertullus to suggest in still another way that the Jews resent this 'violent' intrusion into their right to manage the affairs of their national shrine." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 411.]

<sup>201</sup>"If v. 7 from the Western tradition were to stand, then the *par' autou* ("from him") would refer not to Paul but to Lysias the tribune. But in Luke's usage, *anakrinō* applies mainly to the examination of prisoners (see Luke 23:14; Acts 4:9, with 12:19 being a very special case!). Paul will refer back to his "examination" in 28:18." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 411.]

<sup>202</sup>"The long Western addition to the text (see on v. 7). has the effect of causing *παρ' οὗ* to refer not to Paul but to Lysias. This is defended by Clark (xlivii), who observes that 'no evidence could be so cogent as that of the Roman official who had made the arrest, while Paul would be a suspect witness when speaking about himself'. Haenchen (625), on the other hand, thinks that the Western editor thought it so foolish that the truth should be arrived at by the examination of Paul that he made the change that introduces Lysias as witness. Probably both underestimated the power of an examining magistrate to get the truth out of an unco-operative witness. *ἀνακρίνειν* in fact describes a process that would be applied to Paul rather than to the tribune." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1100.]

<sup>203</sup>Many commentators, and especially the Germans, consider this speech either the expression of an idiot lawyer utterly incompetent, or else a phoney fabrication by Luke in order to make Tertullus look like a moron. Whatever the actual historical situation when this took place that day in the late 50s of the first century, what we know about it from Luke doesn't impress us with Tertullus' skills as a lawyer pressing charges.



led in the court by their lawyer Tertullus. The essence of their ‘joining in the battle’ was φάσκοντες ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν, *by claiming that all this was so* -- just as Tertullus had said. Thus they took upon themselves the affirmation of a lie in being a false witness against Paul by definition of their own Torah. Beyond this depiction by Luke providing an echo of what happened to Jesus from the Sanhedrin (cf. Lk. 23:10, 18, 21, 23), it paints the hugely negative picture of the Jewish leaders fighting God in opposing His spokesman Paul and the Gospel being preached by him.

### 8.1.2.3.2 Paul defends himself, Acts 24:10-21

10 Ἀπεκρίθη τε ὁ Παῦλος νεύσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος λέγειν· ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ ἀπολογουμαι, 11 δυναμένου σου ἐπιγνῶναι ὅτι οὐ πλείους εἰσὶν μοι ἡμέραι δώδεκα ἀφ’ ἧς ἀνέβην προσκυνησῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. 12 καὶ οὕτε ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ εὗρόν με πρὸς τινα διαλεγόμενον ἢ ἐπίστασιν ποιοῦντα ὄχλου οὔτε ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς οὔτε κατὰ τὴν πόλιν, 13 οὐδὲ παραστήσαι δύνανταί σοι περὶ ὧν νυνὶ κατηγοροῦσίν μου. 14 ὁμολογῶ δὲ τοῦτό σοι ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἦν λέγουσιν αἴρεσιν, οὕτως λατρεύω τῷ πατρῷ θεῷ πιστεύων πᾶσιν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις, 15 ἐλπίδα ἔχων εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἦν καὶ αὐτοὶ οὗτοι προσδέχονται, ἀνάστασιν μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων. 16 ἐν τούτῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διὰ παντός. 17 δι’ ἐτῶν δὲ πλειόνων ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων εἰς τὸ ἔθνος μου παρεγενόμην καὶ προσφοράς, 18 ἐν αἷς εὗρόν με ἡγνισμένον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ οὐ μετὰ ὄχλου οὐδὲ μετὰ θορύβου, 19 τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι, οὓς ἔδει ἐπὶ σοῦ παρεῖναι καὶ κατηγορεῖν εἴ τι ἔχοιεν πρὸς ἐμέ. 20 ἢ αὐτοὶ οὗτοι εἰπάτωσαν τί εὗρον ἀδίκημα στάντος μου ἐπὶ τοῦ συνεδρίου, 21 ἢ περὶ μιᾶς ταύτης φωνῆς ἧς ἐκέκραξα ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστὼς ὅτι περὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ἐγὼ κρίνομαι σήμερον ἐφ’ ὑμῶν.

10 When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: “I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation. 11 As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. 12 They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me. 14 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. 15 I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. 16 Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people. 17 Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. 18 While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance. 19 But there were some Jews from Asia—they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me. 20 Or let these men here tell what crime they had found when I stood before the council, 21 unless it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, “It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.”

The rebuttal to Tertullus comes very quickly that very day as Paul is given opportunity to speak to Felix and before the governor’s court including this Jewish delegation who were present but not now allowed to speak. In the governor’s court they could not shout down Paul or create any kind of chaotic commotion in order to blunt Paul’s defense of himself, as they had done in Jerusalem in the temple meeting just a few days before.

Paul’s defense speech reflects some similarities with that of Tertullus in structural organization:<sup>204</sup>

#### Tertullus

- I. Vv. 2b–4\*. Proem, captatio benevolentiae
- II. Vv. 5–6\*. narratio (encompassing thesis)
  - A. V. 5\*. Character of accused (ethos)
  - B. V. 6\*. Alleged behavior of accused (narrative proper)
- III. V. 8\*. Peroratio: Examine the accused.

#### Paul

- I. V. 10b\*. Proem, captatio benevolentiae
- II. Vv. 11–13\*. narratio (encompassing thesis)
- III. Vv. 14–16\*. “Confession,” Digression on “the Movement” (ethos)
- IV. Vv. 17–18\*. narratio resumed. Actual behavior
- V. Vv. 19–21\*. Demand for relevant witnesses and testimony
  - A. Vv. 19–20\*. Demand for relevant witnesses
  - B. V. 21\*. (= Peroratio). Actual statement and “real” charge

What one notices is that after the customary *captatio benevolentiae*, the apostle picks up the points of Tertullus’ accusations and refutes them point by point essentially in the order of their initial presentation.<sup>205</sup> The general **impact is that the apostle demolishes each point made by the lawyer against him.**<sup>206</sup> This then plays a role in the

<sup>204</sup>Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia — a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 594.

<sup>205</sup>“The speeches interlock. Verses 11–13 take up Tertullus’s statements in inverse order. Verse 11 utilizes the δύναμαι and ἐπιγινώσκω (‘be able,’ ‘verify’) of v. 8, while v. 12 denies the charge of temple profanation (v. 6) and agitation (v. 5). The scene is a single narrative unit. All three ‘characters,’ prosecution, defense, and judge, focus on testimony (vv. 8’, 19–20, 22). The prosecution calls no witnesses, arguing that the defendant will incriminate himself. The other two refer to witnesses who are not present.” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 595.]

<sup>206</sup>“Paul makes his *apologia*, the defendant’s official counter statement, answering the accusations brought against him. After

unwillingness of Felix to take any action against Paul at the end of the legal hearing.

**The *captatio benevolentiae*** (v. 10). Ἀπεκρίθη τε ὁ Παῦλος νεύσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος λέγειν· ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι, *When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: "I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation."*

Luke begins with the standard narrative introduction to a speech: Ἀπεκρίθη τε ὁ Παῦλος νεύσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος λέγειν, *And Paul answered after the governor motioned to him to speak.*<sup>207</sup> Proper protocol was maintained with Felix being in absolute control over the proceedings that took place in this hearing. The Genitive absolute participle phrase νεύσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος reflects the absolute authority of Felix who did not even speak to Paul but simply nodded his head toward Paul and thus gave him permission to defend himself rather than the governor interrogate him, as Tertullus had expressed (ἀνακρίνας περὶ πάντων τούτων, v. 8b).<sup>208</sup> Thus Paul was free to present a full fledged defense of himself against the accusations brought against him. The five days prior to the arrival of this delegation from Jerusalem after Paul was delivered to Felix evidently provided the governor opportunity to delve into some of the background details, and left him with more confidence in Paul than in these Jewish leaders. The core verb Ἀπεκρίθη, *answered*, targets Paul's remarks as directed to Tertullus' comments rather than to anything the governor said.

Paul's opening remarks constitute formally the *captatio benevolentiae*: ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι, *knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, cheerfully I present my defense regarding these things regarding me.* His beginning remarks are much briefer than those of Tertullus (cf. vv. 2b-4). More importantly, Paul doesn't flat out lie to the governor with phoney compliments as did Tertullus. The lengthy participle phrase contains Paul's accurate compliment of Felix: ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος, *knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation.* The apostle through Luke's depiction recognizes that in addition to the two to three years -- some contend eight years, 52-60 AD<sup>209</sup> -- that Felix served as military governor over Judea he also had served under the previous governor Cumanus in a junior capacity for some years previously. Thus Paul's contention that Felix had been a judge over the Jewish people in Palestine for many years (ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν) was no exaggeration. Additionally at this point in time Felix's current wife Drusilla was Jewish and herself rather knowledgeable of her ethnic and religious heritage as a daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

Thus out of this context that Paul was defending himself before a judge who could understand the complex details of Jewish customs and religious belief, he expressed a cheerful willingness to present his defense: εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι, Here honesty rather than false insincere flattery prevailed in contrast to that of the lawyer Tertullus. It doesn't take a very high IQ to recognize the two very different approaches, which Felix evidently did, judging from his response at the end of Paul's speech (cf. vv. 22-23).

The adverb εὐθύμως, *cheerfully*, is used only here in the NT and denotes a positive attitude toward the action specified by the verb ἀπολογοῦμαι. Although the Greek syntax clearly signals that Paul's positive attitude about presenting his defense was due primarily to who the judge was with his expertise in Jewish affairs, one has to also conclude that after listening to the crummy charges leveled against him by Tertullus he was relieved

a brief conciliatory introduction (v 10b), his remarks treat four things: in vv 11–13, he dismisses the charge that he has created disturbances (cf. v 5); in vv 14–16, he explains his relation to "the Way," which in no way makes him disloyal to his Jewish heritage (cf. v 5); in vv 17–19, he dismisses the charge of having desecrated the Temple (cf. v 6); and in vv 20–21, he maintains that, when he appeared before the Sanhedrin, no one was able to prove any charge made against him (cf. v 8)." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 734.]

<sup>207</sup>“In place of the simple λέγειν, sy<sup>hmg</sup> has *defensionem habere pro se statum autem assumens divinum dixit* (שָׁקַל אֱלֹהִים אֶמַר כִּד קוֹמָה דִּי). There is no other witness to these words, but Clark (153, 232) takes them to represent the Western text, which he gives in Greek as ἀπολογίαν ἔχειν ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ· ὁ δὲ σχῆμα ἔνθεον ἀναλαβὼν ἔφη. If Clark is right in this, but wrong in thinking the Western text original, the view is confirmed that sees in the Western text some analogies to the development of apocryphal acts; cf. Acts of Paul and p 1101 Thecla 3 (L.-B.1:237), ποτὲ δὲ ἀγγέλου πρόσωπον εἶχεν. Cf. 26:1 (syhmg again); 6:15.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1100–1101.]

<sup>208</sup>“Rather than examine Paul (if that is what he was invited to do), the governor proceeded to let him speak for himself; the nod of the head summoning Paul to do so corresponds to the status of the governor who did not need to voice his commands.” [I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 396.]

<sup>209</sup>Barrett's contention of a two year governorship for Felix (ICC, p. 1100) is falsely based on the assumption that Judea was a senatorial Roman province, when in fact it was an imperial province with a completely different set of guidelines on appointment as governor. Felix's eight years of procuratorship over Judea (52–60 AD) was only exceeded by Pontius Pilate (10 yrs) and Valerius Gratus (11 yrs), both of whom served as Roman Prefects rather than as a Procurator.

to only have to refute such obviously false charges.

The verb ἀπολογοῦμαι from ἀπολογέομαι signals that Paul is defending himself, unlike the high priest did by using a lawyer to speak for him. The verb object, τὰ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ, *the things connected to me*, underscores that Paul is going to speak to the charges brought by Tertullus against Paul. Thus Paul proposes to demonstrate that such charges are completely false and have no validity at all, and especially in a Roman court setting against a Roman citizen. With this signaling of intentions Paul then moves to carry out his plan.

### 1) **Rebuttal of charge (v. 5) of having created a disturbance (vv. 11-13).**

**Accusation:** εὐρόντες τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν καὶ κινοῦντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην, *We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world.*

**Rebuttal:** 11 δυναμένου σου ἐπιγνῶναι ὅτι οὐ πλείους εἰσὶν μοι ἡμέραι δώδεκα ἀφ' ἧς ἀνέβην προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. 12 καὶ οὔτε ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ εὔρον με πρὸς τινα διαλεγόμενον ἢ ἐπίστασιν ποιοῦντα ὄχλου οὔτε ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς οὔτε κατὰ τὴν πόλιν, 13 οὐδὲ παραστήσαι δύνανταί σοι περὶ ὧν νυνὶ κατηγοροῦσίν μου, 11 *As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. 12 They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me.*

As Paul begins to refute each charge, he begins by affirming the skill of Felix to clearly determine the accuracy of each claim that Paul is going to make: δυναμένου σου ἐπιγνῶναι ὅτι, *as you are able to determine that*. Paul also signals his strategy to concentrate only on events over the previous two weeks since this is the time period in which these troubles have arisen: ὅτι οὐ πλείους εἰσὶν μοι ἡμέραι δώδεκα ἀφ' ἧς<sup>210</sup> ἀνέβην προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, *that not more than twelve days have passed in regard to me from the time I went up to worship in Jerusalem*. This covers the events described by Luke evidently in Acts 21:17-24:10. But some challenges exist when the various time references in this section are calculated: Day 1, arrival in Jerusalem (21:17); day 2, visit with James and the leaders (21:18); day 3, Paul enters the temple with the Jewish Christians (21:26); Days 4-10, re-entering the temple for purification ceremony toward end of this seven day period (21:27); Day 11 or less, meeting before the Sanhedrin (22:30); Day 12 or less, plot against Paul develops (23:12); Day 13 or less, Paul arrives in Antipatris (23:32); Day 14 or less, Paul arrives in Caesarea (23:32); Day 19 or less, Jewish delegation arrives in Caesarea to press charges against Paul (24:1). Clearly from this it becomes clear that Paul is talking about being in Jerusalem twelve days and does not include the time in Caesarea.<sup>211</sup> After coming into Roman custody it would be very easy for this Roman governor to validate what had happened with Paul.

Just from Luke's very summary depiction we clearly understand how chaotic and dangerous were those twelve days from the time Paul first arrived in Jerusalem until now standing before Felix in Caesarea. The Chris-

<sup>210</sup>ἀφ' ἧς stands for ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἧ ...

<sup>211</sup>“Others find difficulty in the chronology of the twelve days and their relation to the narrative up to this point. Bauernfeind (263), for example, thinks that the number may come from a source different from that of the preceding narrative. or that it may be the result of adding together the five of v. 1 and the seven of 21:27. Wettstein (2:621) is still worth noting: ‘Primus dies is est, quo Hierosolyma venit, secundo Iacobum vidit. IV sequentes circa purificationem fuit occupatus, biduo detentus captivus Hierosolymis, V. postquam Caesaream venisset die, caussam dicit i.e. decimo tertio’—which presumably Wettstein reckons a twelve-day interval. Pesch (2:257) finds the simple 5 + 7 = 12 calculation unsatisfactory and gives the following (Bruce; 2:443 is similar):

1. Arrival in Jerusalem (21:17)
2. Visit and talk with James (21:18)
- 3–9. Seven-day purification process (21:27)
9. Arrest (21:33)
10. Paul before the Sanhedrin (22:30)
11. Plot against Paul (23:12)
12. Arrival in Caesarea (23:32)

“It is questionable whether the last three items can be accommodated within three days, and the timetable takes no account of the five days in Caesarea. Further, the question must be considered whether the twelve days refer to time up to the moment of speaking or up to the point at which Paul came under Roman guard (21:33)—the Romans would know very well what crime, if any, he had committed since then. Thus Begs. 4:300, ‘In spite, therefore, of the εἰσι it is possible that the phrase means “I had not been twelve days in Jerusalem p 1103 when the trouble arose”’; there is much to be said for this, but it is not clear why Begs. continues, ‘and the number is merely a literary addition of “seven” in 21:27 and “five” in 24:1.’ Surely Luke cannot have failed to see that the five days of 24:1 are placed after ‘the trouble arose’. Bauernfeind (see above) may be right in thinking that ‘twelve’ is derived from another source, or it may be a Lucan approximation.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1102–1103.]



tian prophet Agabus had predicted to Paul while in Caesarea two weeks before the broad contour of events,<sup>212</sup> but even he and those believers who heard him had no idea of how this prediction of trouble would play itself out. The verb ἀνέβην marks out a typical Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem for worshipping in the temple, which is defined by the circumstantial participle phrase προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. Of course Luke's depiction makes it clear that this was but one of Paul's objectives for traveling to Jerusalem.<sup>213</sup> But it was a very legitimate objective as Paul had signaled months before (cf. Acts 20:16).<sup>214</sup> Thus the sequence of events in this twelve day period would be relatively easy for Felix to track down and verify whether Paul was accurate in what he was about to say.

In the sentence contained in vv. 12-13, Paul rebuts the accuracy of Tertullus' charge of Paul having created a disturbance in Jerusalem: 12 καὶ οὔτε ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ εὐρόν με πρὸς τινα διαλεγόμενον ἢ ἐπίστασιν ποιοῦντα ὄχλου οὔτε ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς οὔτε κατὰ τὴν πόλιν, 13 οὐδὲ παραστήσαι δύνανταί σοι περὶ ὧν νυνὶ κατηγοροῦσίν μου. 12 *They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me.* Paul did not come into Jerusalem as a rebel rouser causing chaos and unlawful assembly. That there was a dispute and the stirring up of a crowd is true. But Paul in no way instigated it. These were created by οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι θεασάμενοι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ συνέχεον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον καὶ ἐπέβαλον ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας, *the Jews from Asia having seen him in the temple (who) stirred up the whole crowd and seized him by hand* (21:27). The Roman tribune Claudius Lysias rescued Paul from the mob and only with his permission did Paul address the crowd in the outer court of the temple (21:32-40). Thus all Felix needed to do was to ask his Roman commander what actually happened, and he would verify that Paul was correct in what he was saying. The real culprits in the uproar in Jerusalem were these Jewish pilgrims from Asia who created it on a completely false accusation against Paul. Thus Paul politely but bluntly accuses his accusers of lying about this accusation against him.

## 2) **Rebuttal of charge (v. 5) of having been disloyal to his Jewish religious heritage (vv. 14-16).**

**Accusation:** πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως, *and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.*

**Rebuttal:** 14 ὁμολογῶ δὲ τοῦτό σοι ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἴρεσιν, οὕτως λατρεύω τῷ πατρῷω θεῷ πιστεύων πᾶσιν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις, 15 ἐλπίδα ἔχων εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἣν καὶ αὐτοὶ οὗτοι προσδέχονται, ἀνάστασιν μέλλειν ἕσσεσθαι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων. 16 ἐν τούτῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ ἀπρόσκοπον συνειδήσιν ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διὰ παντός. 14 *But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. 15 I have a hope in God — a hope that they themselves also accept — that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. 16 Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people.*

The second charge made against Paul is that he is a πρωτοστάτην, *ring leader*, of a rebel Jewish group promoting insurrection. In response Paul honestly acknowledges that he is a member of a Jewish religious group called τὴν ὁδὸν, *the Way*, -- although called by Tertullus a αἴρεσιν, *a sect*. His acknowledgement is directed to Felix: ὁμολογῶ τοῦτό σοι, *I confess this to you*. The appositional ὅτι-clause in vv. 14b-15 defines the specifics of

<sup>212</sup>Acts. 21:10-11. 10 Ἐπιμενόντων δὲ ἡμέρας πλείους κατήλθεν τις ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας προφήτης ὀνόματι Ἄγαβος, 11 καὶ ἔλθων πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ ἄρας τὴν ζώνην τοῦ Παύλου, δῆσας ἑαυτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εἶπεν· τάδε λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· τὸν ἄνδρα οὗ ἐστὶν ἡ ζώνη αὕτη, οὕτως δῆσουσιν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ παραδώσουσιν εἰς χεῖρας ἐθνῶν.

10 *While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'*"

Bible students interested in the predictive element of biblical prophecy need to take a close look here at how broad and undefined authentic biblical prophecy is in comparison to how specific and detailed the unfolding of events actually are. Claiming prediction of specific times and even specific events as biblical prophecy is sheer nonsense! Such claims are what the Bible condemns as fortune telling, and comes from the devil, not from God.

<sup>213</sup>προσκυνήσων, future participle expressing purpose; cf. 8:27. This cannot be said to be a complete statement of Paul's purpose in coming to Jerusalem; he came as the bearer of a gift from the Gentile world (cf. v. 17), and probably with a view to some form of consultation with the leaders of the Jerusalem church." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1102.]

<sup>214</sup>Acts 20:16. κερκίει γὰρ ὁ Παῦλος παραπλεῦσαι τὴν Ἔφεσον, ὅπως μὴ γένηται αὐτῷ χρονοτριβῆσαι ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· ἔσπευδεν γὰρ εἰ δυνατὸν εἶη αὐτῷ τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς γενέσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα.

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

what he acknowledges.

Two points of affirmation by Paul about his Christian commitment are made to Felix. First, κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἵρεσιν, οὕτως λατρεύω τῷ πατρῷ θεῷ πιστεύων πᾶσιν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις, according to the Way which they call a sect I thus worship the God of our ancestors, affirming commitment to everything laid down according to the Law and written in the Prophets. Here Christianity is defined within the framework of first century Judaism, which was still overwhelmingly the perspective in Palestine, although not necessarily so elsewhere. In the late 50s of the first Christian century, such a definition was entirely legitimate, although by the end of the first century it would not be. Paul's reference to the Law and the Prophets is a standard Jewish reference to the Hebrew Bible that Christians now call the Old Testament.

The core assertion is οὕτως λατρεύω τῷ πατρῷ θεῷ, thusly I serve our ancestral God. The verb λατρεύω especially emphasizes giving religious service to God along the lines of the priests in the temple. Thus Paul highlights the intensity of his religious service to the God of the Jews. Felix could understand this, even though he probably did not agree with it. The manner of this service is specified by the correlative adverb οὕτως which links up the prepositional phrase κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἵρεσιν, according to the Way they call a sect, to the core verb λατρεύω as defining the parameters of how this service was given to God. The central foundation upon which this service is rendered to God is defined by the circumstantial participle phrases πιστεύων πᾶσιν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις, 15 ἐλπίδα ἔχων εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἣν καὶ αὐτοὶ οὗτοι προσδέχονται, ἀνάστασιν μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων, believing everything written in the Law and everything written in the Prophets, possessing hope in the God which these themselves also welcome that a resurrection is going to be both of the just ones and the unjust ones. **First**, Paul affirms his commitment to the Hebrew Bible (πιστεύων) in what it specifies as the will of God for His people to live by. If pressed on this, he could have made a strong case that this Jewish delegation was not so committed. The high priest as a Sadducee would have denied any divine authority to the Prophets and his focus on the Law would have been on the ritual and liturgy sections for temple worship. Everything else was of little importance. Only the Pharisees affirmed commitment to the content of the entire Hebrew Bible as Paul does here. Thus a not so subtle allusion to the Sanhedrin meeting in Jerusalem a few days earlier is made. **Second**, this allusion become very explicit with the second circumstantial participle ἔχων... in which Paul asserts his expectation (ἐλπίδα) in a general resurrection of both the just and the unjust at the end of time by God. It was this affirmation that Paul shared with the Pharisees in the council meeting in Jerusalem (cf. 23:6-9) that led to chaos in the meeting between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Note that the earlier phrase ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, hope also of the resurrection of the dead (23:6) is now defined as ἐλπίδα... ἀνάστασιν μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων, hope...that there is going to be a resurrection of the just and the unjust.

Paul concludes this rebuttal with an affirmation of a 'clear conscience' before God: ἐν τούτῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀσκήν ἀπρόσκοπον συνειδησὶν ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διὰ παντός, by this I am committed to having a clear conscience toward God and toward men in every way. Living in integrity before both God and others was a 'big deal' for Paul as the many references in Acts and his writings suggest: Acts 23:1; 20:20, 27, 33; 1 Cor. 4:4; 10:32; Phil. 1:10 etc. Of the 30 uses of συνειδήσις, conscience, in the NT all but 7 are used in reference to Paul.

In ancient secular Greek συνειδήσις was derived from σύννοια ἐμαυτῷ ποιήσας with the sense of "I know, am aware, am clear about what I have done."<sup>215</sup> Being with Socrates συνειδήσις took on the philosophical sense of evaluative reflection on past deeds, negatively in self condemnation and positive in self affirmation. The moral aspect gradually emerges philosophically against some set of standards for actions. Among the Greeks the conscience mostly condemned in that it constantly reminded one of failure to measure up properly. But not until the century prior to the Christian era do the words συνειδήσις and συνειδός for 'conscience' begin showing up with some frequency in Greek, Roman (i.e., *conscius* and *conscientia* in Latin) and Hellenistic Jewish writings. Nearly always the sense is negative, i.e., a bad conscience. But among the Romans the *conscientia* becomes mostly the inner applauder of the individual, especially in Stoicism. No such equivalent word or concept existed in ancient Hebrew. Thus the idea is not found in the OT. To be sure, self reflection leading to guilt or self affirmation exists inside the Hebrew Bible, but not in the sense of a conscience as found in the Greco-Roman culture. Thus συνειδήσις is found only twice in the LXX at Eccles. 10:20 and Wisdom of Solomon 17:10 (apocrypha). What does emerge in the very late writings of the OT and those in the intertestamental period is the Hebrew idea of a 'clean heart' expressed in the words *יָשָׁר*, *טהור*, *תָּם*. In Hellenistic Judaism, a tendency to relabel a 'clean heart' in

---

<sup>215</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7: 900.

the Greco-Roman perspective of a ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν, *clear conscience*, can be traced. The emerging role of the συνείδησις is ἐλέγχειν, *to convict*. And this usually of sinful actions.

Paul seems to follow this Hellenist Jewish heritage in viewing the conscience not as a moral guide in making decisions for the future, but rather as an inner judge evaluating past actions either as conforming to the will of God or not. Thus before Felix he asserts his life-long determined commitment (ἀσκή) to be able to stand before both God and his fellow man with the inner sense that he has failed neither by his actions.

This claim of integrity by Paul, which is evidenced by the way he approaches his defense before Felix, stands in direct contrast to the utter lack of such by either the Jewish delegation, or -- for that matter -- Felix himself, as Luke's subsequent comment in 24:26 indicates.<sup>216</sup>

### 3) *Rebuttal of charge (v. 6) of having desecrated the temple in Jerusalem (vv. 17-19).*

**Accusation:** ὃς καὶ τὸ ἱερόν ἐπέειρασεν βεβηλώσαι ὄν, *who even tried to profane the temple*,

**Rebuttal:** 17 δι' ἐτῶν δὲ πλείονων ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων εἰς τὸ ἔθνος μου παρεγενόμεν καὶ προσφοράς, 18 ἐν αἷς εὖρόν με ἠγνισμένον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ οὐ μετὰ ὄχλου οὐδὲ μετὰ θορύβου, 19 τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι, οὓς ἔδει ἐπὶ σοῦ παρεῖναι καὶ κατηγορεῖν εἴ τι ἔχοιεν πρὸς ἐμέ. 17 *Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. 18 While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance. 19 But there were some Jews from Asia — they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me.*

This third charge of having desecrated the Jerusalem temple is through rebutted by Paul from several angles. **First**, Paul indicates a couple of objectives for his trip to Jerusalem: to bring alms to Jews in Judea and to worship God in the temple: δι' ἐτῶν δὲ πλείονων ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων εἰς τὸ ἔθνος μου παρεγενόμεν καὶ προσφοράς. He indicates that the collecting of alms (ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων) had taken quite a number of years. Indeed it had, since he is referring to the relief offering for the Jewish Christians in Judea that had extended throughout his third missionary journey (appx. 52 - 57 AD). Here Paul in the present setting of the Roman court casts them within the framework of traditional Jewish almsgiving -- something highly prized among Jews of this time as a clear signal of genuine piety to God. He didn't rob the Jewish peasants of their goods as had done the high priest Ananias on more than one occasion. Rather, he followed the clear teachings of the Torah to care for the poor and those in need. Also, he indicates his objective of presenting προσφοράς, *sacrifices*. As a participant in the Festival of Pentecost in the Jerusalem temple, certain sacrifices were required as the essence of the worship. Paul came fully prepared to do this, and indeed was doing this when the uproar broke out.

**Second**, when he was spotted in the Court of Israel in the temple, he was in the process of completing the rituals of purification for worship: ἐν αἷς εὖρόν με ἠγνισμένον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ οὐ μετὰ ὄχλου οὐδὲ μετὰ θορύβου, *during which days they found me completing my purification in the temple not with a crowd nor with a disturbance*. In other words, Paul was focused on completing the required rituals of purification for worship by himself and not attracting any attention to himself. This centered both on preparation for making a sacrifice in the temple as a part of the traditional worship during Pentecost and also as a part of Paul's sponsoring of the four Jewish Christians in Jerusalem toward the completion of their vows to God (cf. 21:22-24). The apostle was merely one Jewish worshipper in the temple among the many thousands seeking only to worship God.

Paul next makes reference to the Asian Jews who were the actual troublemakers in the temple on that earlier occasion: τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι, οὓς ἔδει ἐπὶ σοῦ παρεῖναι καὶ κατηγορεῖν εἴ τι ἔχοιεν πρὸς ἐμέ, *But there were some Jews from Asia — they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me*. This alludes to 21:27-30. These Asian Jews had earlier seen Paul in the outer court of the temple with Trophimus, a non-Jewish believer from Ephesus who was a part of the delegation that accompanied Paul to Jerusalem. Sometime afterwards when these Asian Jews spotted Paul in the inner Court of Israel worshipping where non-Jews were not allowed they falsely assumed that he had illegally brought Trophimus into this forbidden part of the temple. They then created the uproar inside this inner court of the temple by accusing Paul of having desecrated the temple by bringing a non-Jew into this inner court. Paul correctly asserted to Felix that these men were the real initial accusers of Paul. As such they were the only ones who could legitimately press

---

<sup>216</sup>Acts 24:25-26. 25 διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος, ἔμφοβος γενόμενος ὁ Φηλιξ ἀπεκρίθη· τὸ νῦν ἔχον πορεύου, καιρὸν δὲ μεταλαβὼν μετακαλέσομαί σε, 26 ἅμα καὶ ἐλπίζων ὅτι χρήματα δοθήσεται αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου· διὸ καὶ πικρότερον αὐτὸν μεταπεμπόμενος ὠμίλει αὐτῷ.

25 And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you." 26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul, and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him.



charges against Paul before Felix. But these people were no where to be found in Caesarea. Very likely they were already on their way back home to the province of Asia from Jerusalem. In their absence then the charges against Paul made by Tertullus had no validity and should be dismissed.<sup>217</sup>

#### 4) **Rebuttal of charge (v8) of having been proven guilty in appearance before the Sanhedrin (vv. 20-21).**

**Accusation:** παρ' οὗ δυνήσῃ αὐτὸς ἀνακρίνας περὶ πάντων τούτων ἐπιγνῶναι ὧν ἡμεῖς κατηγοροῦμεν αὐτοῦ, *By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him.*

**Rebuttal:** 20 ἢ αὐτοὶ οὗτοι εἰπάτωσαν τί εὔρον ἀδίκημα σάντος μου ἐπὶ τοῦ συνεδρίου, 21 ἢ περὶ μιᾶς ταύτης φωνῆς ἧς ἐκέκραξα ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστὼς ὅτι περὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ἐγὼ κρίνομαι σήμερον ἐφ' ὑμῶν. 20 *Or let these men here tell what crime they had found when I stood before the council, 21 unless it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, 'It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'*

The final charge alludes back to Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem several days earlier.<sup>218</sup> Tertullus implies that the charges brought against Paul before Felix were formulated as a result of the formal hearing before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Paul picks up on this and challenges these Jewish leaders present in the Roman court to account for any formalized charges coming out of the hearing earlier in Jerusalem. From what we know about that meeting through Luke's depiction absolutely no charges came out of that hearing (cf. 22:30-23:10). Should any one of them step forward to answer this challenge, they would have to fantasize a charge because the hearing descended into a traditional squabble between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the idea of the resurrection. This resulted in the Pharisees as a group declaring Paul innocent of any wrong doing (cf. 23: 9).

Thus the only criticism that these leaders could possibly level against Paul is his belief in the resurrection of the dead in agreement with the Pharisees on the Sanhedrin: ἢ περὶ μιᾶς ταύτης φωνῆς ἧς ἐκέκραξα ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστὼς ὅτι περὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ἐγὼ κρίνομαι σήμερον ἐφ' ὑμῶν, *unless it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, 'It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'* These leaders present in Caesarea most likely represented the Sadducee segment of the Sanhedrin and thus would be forced to admit that their accusation had nothing to do with a violation of Roman law but instead represented an 'in house' squabble between these two major segments of Judaism. Interestingly Paul rightly asserts that he wasn't the one who caused the uproar among the members of the Sanhedrin that day. They created it themselves; he only took sides with the Pharisees to which he had belonged for many years prior to becoming a Christian.

When one looks at how Paul presented his case, a very positive impression emerges. He systematically demolished each of the charges brought against him through Tertullus. He showed proper respect for Felix as the governor judge over the hearing. He was consistently truthful in every point made in rebuttal of the charges.

#### 8.1.2.3.3 **Felix's response to Paul, Acts 24:22-23**

22 Ἀνεβάλετο δὲ αὐτοὺς ὁ Φῆλιξ, ἀκριβέστερον εἰδὼς τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ εἶπας· ὅταν Λυσίας ὁ χιλιάρχος καταβῆ, διαγνώσομαι τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς· 23 διαταξάμενος τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἔχειν τε ἄνεσιν καὶ μηδένα κωλύειν τῶν ἰδίων αὐτοῦ ὑπηρετεῖν αὐτῷ.

<sup>217</sup>“The Roman law was very strong against accusers who abandoned their charges. Claudius himself had been busy with legislation aimed at preventing accusers within the system of order from abandoning their charges. He made a speech about the matter in the Senate, and his proposals were later completed by the SC Turpilianum of AD 61, under Nero. This laid down penalties for the offence which the lawyers call *destitutio* ... Once again, the author of Acts is well informed. But there is more to it than that. The disappearance of one set of accusers may mean the withdrawal of the charge with which they were particularly associated. The Asian Jews had accused Paul of two things: one, teaching everywhere, i.e. throughout the ‘world’, the *oikoumene*, against the Hebraic law, and two, of bringing Hellenes into the Temple. Charge one was taken over by the Jewish clergy. Charge two, according to Acts, could not be substantiated. ‘They had seen Trophimus with Paul in the city, and thought he had been taken into the Temple.’ Hence when the Asian Greeks [sic Sherwin-White; but surely he must mean Jews?] withdrew from the case, Paul had a sound technical objection to put forward. (Sherwin-White 52f.)” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1109.]

<sup>218</sup>“Paul proposes in this verse [v. 20] to introduce (and in the next verse introduces) a new charge that might possibly, but unjustifiably, be brought against him. For the grammatical relation of this verse to the preceding see on v. 19. If the Jews of Asia choose not to appear in order to bring the accusation which only they can bring since they are the supposed witnesses of the supposed offence, let those Jews who are present speak of what happened when I appeared before their own Council. Let them say what offences they found (in me, ἐν ἐμοί, is added by C E Ψ (945 1739 1891) *M* lat sy bo—sensible but somewhat superfluous and not easily combined with the genitive that follows) when I stood before (ἐπί, in the presence of) the Sanhedrin. See 22:30–23:10.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1110.]

22 But Felix, who was rather well informed about the Way, adjourned the hearing with the comment, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” 23 Then he ordered the centurion to keep him in custody, but to let him have some liberty and not to prevent any of his friends from taking care of his needs.

The outcome of this initial hearing was ‘no decision’ being made by Felix. How disappointing for the Jewish delegation, but how relieved Paul must have felt at that moment.

Felix’s decision is depicted by Luke in rather traditional Greco-Roman style.<sup>219</sup> The core expression is simply *Ἀνεβάλετο δὲ αὐτοὺς ὁ Φῆλιξ*. With technical meaning rather than literal meaning, Luke says that Felix adjourned the hearing dismissing the individuals from his presence. Behind this action -- in Luke’s words -- was that Felix *ἀκριβέστερον εἰδὼς τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ*, *accurately knowing the things concerning the Way*. The adverb *ἀκριβέστερον*, even though in the comparative spelling,<sup>220</sup> can be signaling either comparative (*more accurately*) or elative (*extremely accurate*) meanings. Luke’s point is to stress the above average knowledge of the Christian movement for a first century Roman military governor. Historical sources outside the NT will affirm Felix’s expertise with Judaism but make no reference to his understanding of Christianity. Although Luke was in the city during this time of Paul’s custody in the governor’s palace along with several other friends of Paul, we have no way of knowing whether he and other believers could have been present at this hearing, although the statement in v. 23c would possibly imply they were present.<sup>221</sup> If so, then Luke’s comment is based on listening to Felix make comments about this movement Paul belonged to during the hearing.

In Felix’s final comments was simply the decision to delay a decision until he heard testimony from the Roman tribune Claudius Lysias: *εἶπας· ὅταν Λυσίας ὁ χιλιάρχος καταβῆ, διαγνώσομαι τὰ καθ’ ὑμᾶς*, *after having said, “Whenever Lysias the tribune comes down, I will conclude the things regarding you all.”* The aorist participle *εἶπας* indicates these comments preceded his formal adjourning of the hearing.<sup>222</sup> The indefinite temporal clause *ὅταν Λυσίας ὁ χιλιάρχος καταβῆ*, *whenever Lysias comes down*, leaves the resolution of the case completely open.<sup>223</sup> Roman law imposed no mandate on how quickly a case had to be concluded. What is interesting in the subsequent narrative on Paul’s stay in Caesarea is that no indication is ever given that Lysias was ordered by Felix to make a trip to Caesarea from Jerusalem in order to give testimony about the details of what happened with Paul.<sup>224</sup> Was Felix serious about this, or was it just an excuse to get rid of the Jewish delegation? We don’t know for certain, but the latter looks more likely based on how the story unfolds from this point.<sup>225</sup>

<sup>219</sup>*ἀναβάλλεσθαι*, middle, to put off, to adjourn, occurs here only in the NT. Felix like other Roman officials, has no intention of being drawn into an internal Jewish dispute, or of doing injustice to a man whose only offence lay in what other Jews regarded as unorthodox theology. He makes use of standard procedure. When a case was put off for fuller hearing in the light of new evidence or prolonged consideration the judge would say ‘Amplius’. Thus Cicero, *Brutus* 22 (86), *Cum consules, re audita, amplius de consilii sententia pronunciavissent . . .*; cf. In *Verrem* 2:1:29 (74). Knowling (486): *ἀνεβάλετο αὐτούς = ampliavit eos*. Cf. Plutarch, *Themistocles* 18 (120). MM 30 quotes P<sup>T</sup>ebt 1:22:9, *ἀναβαλλόμενος εἰς τὸν φυλακίτην*, ‘referring the matter to the inspector’.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1111.]

<sup>220</sup>Adverb forms: *ἀκριβῶς*, *ἀκριβέστερον*, *ἀκριβέστατα*. with the sense of strict, precise, thorough, correct.

<sup>221</sup>Interestingly in the earlier command by Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem, he specified to the two centurions that *κτῆνη*, *mounts*, a plural form from *κτῆνος* for horses, be provided for Paul: *κτῆνη τε παραστήσαι ἵνα ἐπιβίβασαντες τὸν Παῦλον διασώσωσιν πρὸς Φῆλικά τὸν ἡγεμόνα*. Some commentators take this to mean that horses were provided for some of Paul’s friends to ride along with the apostle from Jerusalem to Caesarea. Although this idea is clearly possible grammatically, the other very likely option was that two horses were provided for Paul so that a fresh horse could be ridden from Antipatris on into Caesarea. This would have been customary for Roman calvary to have a change of horses available for trips over twenty or thirty kilometers.

<sup>222</sup>The NRSV and other English translations blur this sense with their incorrect translating of the temporal sequences between verb and participle actions.

<sup>223</sup><sup>4</sup>The evidence of Lysias would plainly be of first-rate value; he had given a brief summary of events in his letter (23:25–30), but in view of the conflicting statements made by Tertullus and Paul, it would be necessary to ascertain further details from Lysias.<sup>329</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 446.]

<sup>224</sup><sup>4</sup>Luke records the story of Paul’s imprisonment in Caesarea Maritima for ‘two years’ (24:27). Felix has recessed the court and delays further investigation and the passing of sentence on Paul, at first because he wants to await the arrival of the commander, Claudius Lysias, who has sent Paul to the governor. Moreover, since Felix knows something about Christianity, he and his wife Drusilla are eager to hear Paul speak more about it. Thus he keeps Paul in custody because he would be able to speak with him from time to time. He also hopes that he may get a bribe from Paul to release him. The custody lasts for two years (A.D. 58–60), until Felix is replaced as procurator by another Roman, Porcius Festus.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 738.]

<sup>225</sup><sup>4</sup>Luke does not say if Lysias did come down to Caesarea or if Felix resumed the hearing. Probably Lysias came and supplied further information, but no decision was reached. Felix saw, no doubt, that the case against Paul could not stand, but he did not wish to offend the Sanhedrin by discharging him. He had given enough offense during his administration of Judaea, and he did not care to give more, especially as he could no longer count on the unchallenged influence of his brother Pallas at the imperial court as he had been able

What the governor does permit by order to the centurion in charge of guarding Paul is considerable liberty inside the palace: διαταξάμενος τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἔχειν τε ἄνεσιν καὶ μηδένα κωλύειν τῶν ἰδίων αὐτοῦ ὑπηρετεῖν αὐτῷ, *Then he ordered the centurion to keep him in custody, but to let him have some liberty and not to prevent any of his friends from taking care of his needs.*<sup>226</sup> Such freedom would have been proper for a Roman citizen with unproven charges made against him. Clearly in Felix' mind Paul posed no threat or danger there in the palace with friends coming and going to see after him. The full extent of the phrase ἔχειν τε ἄνεσιν, *and to have liberty*, is not specified by Luke beyond the visits of friends. The literal meaning of ἄνεσις is 'relaxation,' or 'loosening' rather than lack of confinement as might be understood by the English term 'liberty.'<sup>227</sup> In other words, Paul's confinement was to promote him feeling relaxed and not anxious. More specific is the two command: καὶ μηδένα κωλύειν τῶν ἰδίων αὐτοῦ ὑπηρετεῖν αὐτῷ, *and no one was to prevent his own people from serving him.* The phrase τῶν ἰδίων αὐτοῦ could include family and friends. Perhaps the sister and her son made trips from Jerusalem to see after Paul. Clearly there was the substantial Christian community already existing in Caesarea with willingness to help take care of Paul. Substantial signals from elsewhere in the NT also suggest that several friends who had accompanied him from Asia to Jerusalem were now standing by in Caesarea to help in any needed way.<sup>228</sup> Very likely in the brief time Paul had been in custody there Felix had become aware that he indeed had a network of friends fully prepared to take care of Paul's needs in any way needed. This is the clear sense of ὑπηρετεῖν αὐτῷ, *to serve him.*

Although Paul did not gain his freedom from this hearing, he did receive security from being harmed by the Jewish leaders who so deeply hated him. In God's will for his life, there would be repeated opportunity to witness to this Roman governor about Christ in a one-on-one setting. Thus God would use this time very profitably.<sup>229</sup> Plus the deepening appreciation for Christian friends in Caesarea who were looking after him certainly gave a growing chance for greater friendship with these dear people.

#### 8.1.2.4 Paul languishes in prison, Acts 24:24-27

24 Μετὰ δὲ ἡμέρας τινὰς παραγενόμενος ὁ Φῆλιξ σὺν Δρουσίλλῃ τῇ ἰδίᾳ γυναικὶ οὖσα Ἰουδαία μετεπέμψατο τὸν Παῦλον καὶ ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν πίστεως. 25 διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος, ἔμφοβος γενόμενος ὁ Φῆλιξ ἀπεκρίθη· τὸ νῦν ἔχον πορεύου, καιρὸν δὲ μεταλαβὼν μετακαλέσομαι σε, 26 ἅμα καὶ ἐλπίζων ὅτι χρήματα δοθήσεται αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου· διὸ καὶ πυκνότερον αὐτὸν μεταπεμπόμενος ὠμίλει αὐτῷ. 27 Διετίας δὲ πληρωθείσης ἔλαβεν διάδοχον ὁ Φῆλιξ Πόρκιον Φῆστον, θέλων τε χάριτα καταθέσθαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὁ Φῆλιξ κατέλιπεν τὸν Παῦλον δεδεμένον.

24 Some days later when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you." 26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul, and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him. 27 After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

In something of a summarizing manner, Luke surveys key activities of Paul over the following two years

---

to do under the principate of Claudius.<sup>339</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 447.]

<sup>226</sup>“Paul’s custody at Caesarea is somewhat similar to what he will have in Rome (28:30), but there he will enjoy even greater freedom. Among Paul’s ‘needs’ would have been clothing, food, and drink. Those who might provide it are called simply *hoi idioi*, ‘his own,’ possibly also his sister and his nephew of Jerusalem.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 739.]

<sup>227</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 77]

<sup>228</sup>“οἱ ἴδιοι, his own people, would normally suggest his relatives (and these may be included here—see 23:16) and friends (ND 3:148 quotes POxy 46:3314:15, true friends); here, fellow Christians. In antiquity, and indeed until modern times, conditions in prison would be made tolerable by the access of friends who brought provisions and comfort. Cf. Lucian, *Peregrinus* 12; Josephus, *Ant.* 18:203f., 235. This corresponds to the fact that for Romans (such as Felix; not for Greeks) imprisonment was not a punishment but a means of keeping people available for trial or for actual punishment. Digest 48:19:8, 9 (Ulpian): *carcer enim ad continendos homines, non ad puniendos haberi debet.*” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1113.]

<sup>229</sup>Additionally, for those who hold to a Caesarian location for the writing of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon -- as I have argued in other places -- these next two years provided opportunity to pen three very important documents that ended up inside the New Testament. The safety, relaxed atmosphere, and availability of friends in the governor's palace there provided a wonderful opportunity to reflect and write.



after this initial hearing before Felix.<sup>230</sup> It started with a private visit of Felix with his Jewish wife Drusilla in the governor's palace, v. 24-25. This scene would be repeated several times over the following two years, v. 26. Then Felix's term of governorship ended and he returned to Rome. Porcius Festus replaced Felix and this began a new chapter in Paul's experience in Caesarea, v. 27.

In the introductory sentence in v. 24, Luke says ὁ Φῆλιξ ... μετεπέμψατο τὸν Παῦλον καὶ ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ, *Felix ... sent for Paul and listened to him*. Paul is brought from the holding cell location in the governor's palace to a meeting room where Felix is waiting for him and wanting to hear what Paul had to say about his religious beliefs. Interestingly, the Western text tradition inserts additional wording at this point indicating that the real motivation behind talking to Paul came from Felix's wife Drusilla: *quae petebat ut videret Paulum et audiret verbum; volens igitur satisfacere ei*.<sup>231</sup>

This relatively new city on the Mediterranean coast -- some 50 km N of modern Tel Aviv and 45 km S of Haifa -- was a very Gentile designed and oriented city located in the district of Samaria in the first century world. Although the origins of settlement there reach back quite some distance in time, the city Paul experienced was largely the product of construction work during Herod the Great's reign right at the beginning of the Christian era and dedicated to the first Roman emperor.<sup>232</sup> Although Josephus provides us with some fairly detailed descriptions of the town itself, he does not give us a detailed picture of the elaborate palace that Herod had built reaching out into the sea on one side of the huge artificial harbor that he constructed that is known as *Sebastos* or *Portus Augusti*. Thus the assumption has to be from general patterns of Roman jails that Paul was brought from the part of the palace where he was being held to a meeting room elsewhere in the palace for the interview with Felix and his wife.

One of the curious aspects of Luke's statement comes in the secondary participle phrase at the beginning of the sentence: Μετὰ δὲ ἡμέρας τινὰς παραγενόμενος, *and after having arrived some days afterwards, . . .* The Aorist participle from παραγίνομαι ordinarily denotes movement from point A to point B. The most natural meaning then would be that Felix and his wife were traveling out of the city, and after arriving back they decided to interview Paul about his religion.<sup>233</sup> Less natural would be the implication that they walked from the apartment section of the palace to a meeting room for the interview with Paul. That Roman governors spent a lot of time traveling to different parts of their territory is well established. Felix maintained his primary home in a luxury villa outside Rome near Mt. Vesuvius. In fact not too many years after this, Drusilla and their son would perish in the volcanic eruption on Vesuvius in 79 AD.

We don't know a lot about Drusilla beyond Luke's depiction here: σὺν Δρουσίλλῃ τῇ ἰδίᾳ γυναικὶ οὔσῃ

<sup>230c</sup>Paul, who earlier had been safely spirited away to Tarsus from Caesarea (9:29–30), was imprisoned for two years (A.D. 57–59) in Caesarea before being sent to Rome for trial (Acts 23–26). Although incarcerated, he was not isolated from the rest of the Christian community. Caesarea's central position on the major maritime routes of the Roman Empire provided him with ample opportunity to continue his epistolary activities." [Robert L. Hohlfelder, "Caesarea (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 800.]

<sup>231c</sup>The Western Text expands her narrative role by adding: 'she asked to see Paul and hear the word (logos). Desiring to please her, he sent for Paul.' The expansion helps to account for the remarkable fact that Paul was allowed to proclaim 'faith in Messiah Jesus' to them!" [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 419.]

<sup>232c</sup>The primary source for Herodian Caesarea is the ancient historian Flavius Josephus (JW 1.408–14; Ant. 15.331–41). Although not a contemporary of the king, he knew Caesarea and its history well. We are fortunate to have not only his description of Herod's city at its inception but also an account of the actual building of the Outer Basin of Sebastos as well—a literary description that is unique in ancient texts." [Robert L. Hohlfelder, "Caesarea (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 799.]

<sup>233c</sup>παραγενόμενος, Felix came—where? It is possible (though Luke does not say so) that he had been absent and returned to Caesarea. Otherwise he came to wherever Paul was. Marshall (381) thinks of the prison. Schneider (2:352) with perhaps greater probability says that παραγεν. 'bezieht sich auf den betreffenden Raum im Prätorium (23:35), in den Felix den Gefangenen rufen liess.'" [[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1113.]



Artist's reconstruction of Caesarea Maritima Herodian Period. (Courtesy of R. Hohlfelder.)

Ἰουδαία, together with Drusilla, his wife, who was Jewish.<sup>234</sup> She was Felix's second wife and the second one with the name Drusilla. Her Jewish ancestry evidently created curiosity about the new Jewish religious group that Paul was advocating. Thus in the interview she was present and participated in the discussions. What is fascinating is that Drusilla's father, Herod Agrippa I, tried to stamp out Christianity in Jerusalem in the early 40s when he executed James and tried to execute Peter (cf. Acts 12:1-5). Now less than twenty years later, his daughter is interested in this very same religious movement.

What the interview centered on is described by Luke as περὶ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν πίστεως, concerning faith in Christ Jesus. As the baseline point of explanation Paul centered his presentation in the nature of a faith surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord and as Son of God. In the Genitive absolute participle construction that introduces the next sentence (v. 25), Paul elaborates major implications of such a faith surrender to Christ Jesus: διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος, And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment. One should note the nature of this exchange of ideas. Luke portrays it as διαλεγόμενου αὐτοῦ, as he was dialoguing back and forth with them. The verb action clearly paints this as a discussion where all three individuals entered into the conversation. Felix and Drusilla asking questions and either agreeing or disagreeing with Paul's answers.

Paul centered emphasis on three major implications of true faith surrender to Christ: δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος, righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment. Most likely these topics were stressed because of the rather shady character of both Felix and Drusilla, and thus would present the greatest challenge for both of them in becoming a Christian. The first term δικαιοσύνη is translated both justice and righteousness inside the NT.<sup>235</sup> Biblically little if any difference exist between these two terms. Clearly δικαιοσύνη is doing what is right in God's eyes which is truly defined as just before God. Our limitation is that the two English words are usually defined by human standards rather than by the biblical standard of God Himself being both the standard for and the source of all proper activity by humans. Thus Paul's argument is that not what we humans consider as right makes any ultimate difference. Instead, what will determine our eternal destiny is doing and being right in God's eyes. Following this standard means genuine faith surrender and this requires profound ἐγκρατεία, self-control.<sup>236</sup> Individu-



<sup>234</sup> DRUSILLA (PERSON) [Gk Drousillē (Δρουσίλλη)]. The Jewish wife of Felix, the Roman procurator who heard Paul's defense in Caesarea (Acts 24:24). Most of what we know about Drusilla comes from the Jewish historian Josephus, who reports that she was born in A.D. 37/8, the youngest daughter of Agrippa I and Cypros (Ant 18.132; War 2.220; cf. Ant 19.354: she was six at the time of her father's death in A.D. 44). She had inherited Roman citizenship and her full name, Julia Drusilla, indicated as much. The name Drusilla was itself a Roman name and probably was bestowed by Agrippa in honor of another Drusilla, the sister of his friend Emperor Gaius (alias Caligula); she had died in A.D. 38 (Braund 1984: 111). Drusilla's father betrothed her to Epiphanes, son of Antiochus IV, the king of wealthy Commagene, which lay to the north on the Euphrates around Samosata (Ant 19.355). Epiphanes had initially agreed to convert to Judaism, but subsequently, after Agrippa's death, he demurred and thus declined the marriage. Instead, Drusilla married Azizus, king of Syrian Emesa, in A.D. 53, after he had been circumcised (Ant 20.139).

"Drusilla is said to have been very beautiful. For that reason she was the victim of the jealous behavior of her equally beautiful sister, BERNICE. Her beauty also brought her to the attention of Antonius FELIX, Roman procurator of Judea. Josephus reports how Felix sent her one of his associates, a Cyprian Jew named Atomus, who claimed magic powers in order to persuade her to leave Azizus and marry Felix instead. Felix's promises of future happiness and her weariness given the mistreatment at her sister's hands persuaded her to violate Jewish law and do as he asked. She and Felix had a son, Agrippa, who later died in the volcanic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79, and it is possible that she died with him (Ant 20.141–44). To this extent the biography of Drusilla is clear enough, however some confusion exists elsewhere in sources where another Drusilla is mentioned. This individual was also a royal personage who married Felix (Tac. Hist. 5.9; Braund 1984: 179).

[David C. Braund, "Drusilla (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 238–239.]

<sup>235</sup> δικ. is undoubtedly a major theme in the epistles, but the word seems to be used in a different sense here. See 10:35 and 17:31, which suggest the double meaning of righteous behaviour in men and righteous judgement in God, who will duly reward those who practise righteousness. The only other passage in Acts in which the word is used is 13:10." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1114.]

<sup>236</sup> ἐγκρατεία (see W. Grundmann in TWNT 2:338–40) occurs at Gal. 5:23 as part of the fruit of the Spirit, elsewhere in the NT only at 2 Pet. 1:6 (but cf. 1 Cor. 7:9; 9:25, ἐγκρατεύεσθαι; Titus 1:8, ἐγκρατής). In all these passages ethical behaviour is in mind. In itself the word means mastery over something or someone, but its sense seems to have been determined by Plato's ἐγκρατεία ἑαυτοῦ (*Republic* 390b) and similar uses. It means mastery over oneself, over one's pleasures and desires (*Republic* 430c); thus discipline, especially self-discipline." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1114–1115.]

als with wealth and power such as Felix and Drusilla largely lived lives of self-indulgence, just the opposite of ἐγκρατεία. Thus giving their lives over to Christ would require deed commitment to ἐγκρατεία. A huge motivation behind such demands lay τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος, [the coming judgment](#).<sup>237</sup> The meaning of this phrase is the absolute certainty of final judgment that is inevitable for every person, believer and unbeliever. The final judgment of Almighty God stands as an overwhelming experience that will seal permanently one's eternal destiny in either Heaven or Hell. Thus the only way to prepare for that day is a faith surrender to Christ that leads to very self-disciplined doing of what is right before God.

The heart of the sentence in v. 25 is ἔμφοβος γενόμενος ὁ Φῆλιξ ἀπεκρίθη, [having become very frightened, Felix replied](#). . . . The adjective ἔμφοβος, -ον, is more intense than the form it comes from: φόβος. Thus ἔμφοβος is closer to the English word 'terrified' than just 'fearful.' The arguments of Paul about the Gospel got very close to this pagan's heart and made him quite afraid of the future. The portrait sounds very much like the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit taking Paul's words and burning them into the awareness of Felix. But Felix did not accept what he was sensing at that moment, just like many hardened sinners do when presented with the claims of the Gospel. Thus he dismissed Paul from his presence in the meeting room: τὸ νῦν ἔχον πορεύου, καιρὸν δὲ μεταλαβὼν μετακαλέσομαί σε, ["Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you."](#) Although τὸ νῦν ἔχον is a rather strange Greek construction even in ancient Greek, the meaning is relatively clear with the sense of 'possessing the present' thus Paul needed to depart immediately from Felix who controlled the present moment in the meeting room of the palace. Then Felix asserts that at later times καιρὸν, when convenient opportunity presented itself, he would call Paul back to the room to talk some more. In a pattern all too familiar to believers who often share their faith with non-believers, when the conviction of the Holy Spirit reaches a certain level of 'uncomfortableness', the believer is dismissed from the unbeliever's presence.

Luke's next statement -- actually a participle phrase attached to the core clause ὁ Φῆλιξ ἀπεκρίθη, [Felix replied](#) (v. 25) -- is very enlightening as to why Felix felt uncomfortable about the claims of the Gospel: ἅμα καὶ ἐλπίζων ὅτι χρήματα δοθήσεται αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου, [At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul](#). The real motivation for wanting to talk with Paul was the hope of receiving a bribe<sup>238</sup> to set him free. Very likely Felix had picked up on Paul's statement of having delivered 'alms for his nation' (ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων εἰς τὸ ἔθνος μου, 24:17) on his trip to Jerusalem, and assumed that this Jew had access to substantial sums of money. According to Josephus, Roman governors were notorious for seeking bribes from defendants appearing before them in legal issues.<sup>239</sup> The consequence of this (διὸ) was that Felix left Paul in custody through the rest of his term as governor and frequently called him in for interviews hoping to receive a bribe: διὸ καὶ πυκνότερον αὐτὸν μεταπεμπόμενος ὡμίλει αὐτῷ, [and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him](#). The comparative adverb πυκνότερον from the adjective πυκνός, -ή, -ον, used here with the relative sense asserts

<sup>237</sup>It is not for man to estimate his own success in righteousness and self-discipline, hence τὸ κρίμα τὸ μέλλον, the judgement to come in which God will make his own estimate. κρίμα occurs nowhere else in Acts, κρίσις only at 8:33, which is clearly not relevant. Of 22 occurrences of the verb κρίνειν, 20 refer to human judgements of one kind or another. The only relevant parallel, but that a close one, is 17:31 (note here also the use of δικαιοσύνη). There is some kinship between these passages in Acts and 1 Thess. 1:9f., where the coming wrath from which Jesus delivers men is certainly the wrath that is the negative aspect of judgement, but neither in Athens nor before Felix does Paul get as far as the deliverance. For these themes cf. *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 5; *Acta Johannis* 84; *Actus Petri cum Simone* 33–35 (L.-B. 1:238; 2:1:192; 1:85–87); also *Aristeas* 278." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1115.]

<sup>238</sup>**χρήμα, ατος, τό** (χράομαι)

**1. wealth in gener., property, wealth, means** pl. (Hom. +; ins, LXX, TestSol, Philo, Joseph.; Ath. 1:3f) οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες (X., Mem. 1, 2, 45) **Mk 10:23; Lk 18:24.** χρήματα πολλὰ ἔχειν Hs 2:5; cp. **Mk 10:24** v.l.

**2. any kind of currency, money**

**a. mostly pl.** (Thu., X. et al.; pap; Job 27:17; TestJud 21:7; EpArist 85; Philo, Poster. Cai. 117; Jos., Bell. 1, 159; Just., A I, 14, 2; Ath. 29, 2) **Ac 8:18, 20; 24:26** (χρ. διδόναι τινί as Diod S 8, 31; Jos., Ant. 7, 393).

**b. more rarely sing.** (Alcaeus 109 + 110, 30 D.2 [117b, 30 L-P.]; Hdt. 3, 38; Diod S 13, 106, 9; 36, Fgm. a; POxy 474, 41; PHerm 23, 7; Jos., Ant. 11, 56 [property, wealth]) of a definite sum of money **Ac 4:37**.—B. 634; 769. DELG. Frisk s.v. χρή. M-M. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1089.]

<sup>239</sup>For the general willingness of a procurator to entertain such a consideration, see Josephus' report on Albinus, who was willing to make money in a variety of extra-legal ways, so that "the only ones left in prison as evildoers were those who did not pay the price" (*Jewish War* 2:272–274). The reader begins to suspect that Felix's devotion to justice is not absolute: he keeps Paul on a string in the hopes of getting a bribe, and fails to call Lysias down to confirm Paul's story." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 419.]



that Paul had many such conferences with the governor over the next two years. The use of the verb ὁμιλέω, to converse with, is rare in the NT and suggests a lot of pressure was put on Paul to ‘pay up’ the bribe for his freedom. Luke, in his depiction never even mentions any temptation by Paul to pay a bribe for his freedom. Clearly, his Christian friends in the city could have found ways to have come up with the needed amount of money to get Paul released from custody. But for the Christian Paul doing such was not even considered, in spite of it being the normative action for defendants in such situations. No “everybody’s doing it” reasoning by Paul! Not only was Paul’s integrity at stake here, but more importantly the integrity of the Gospel he preached was at risk and would have been compromised by offering Felix a bribe for his release from the charges. And this in spite of Felix having already become convinced that Paul had broken no Roman law and did not deserve to be held in custody.

Thus the apostle became a political prisoner of the Romans for the next two plus years: Διετίας δὲ πληρωθείσης ἔλαβεν διάδοχον ὁ Φῆλιξ Πόρκιον Φῆστον, θέλων τε χάριτα καταθέσθαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὁ Φῆλιξ κατέλιπεν τὸν Παῦλον δεδεμένον, *After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.* The significance of the two year reference occasions some discussion among the commentaries. The term διετία does specify two years, whether lunar or Roman based is not clear. The uncertainty is whether it refers to the length of Paul’s custody or the duration of Felix’s governorship over Palestine is debated. The Genitive Absolute construction of Διετίας πληρωθείσης, after the filling up of two years, leaves the question somewhat vague, although most likely it refers to two years of custody for Paul during the last years of Felix’s governorship.<sup>240</sup> Linking it to Felix’s governorship has occasioned a false perception of the standard two year term of office in a Senatorial Roman province. But this was an Imperial Province and followed no such guidelines.<sup>241</sup> Terms of office were dictated solely by the Roman emperor and governor’s remained in office as long as they enjoyed the favor of the emperor. Antonius Felix, according to available ancient sources, served as governor of Judea 52 to 58 AD, having succeeded Ventidius Cumanus. Legions 26 (*III Cyrenaica*) and 27 (*X Fretensis*) were stationed in Judea during this time. Together they formed the core Roman military defense of the region but could readily draw upon several other legions stationed in the eastern Mediterranean if needed.



When he was recalled to Rome by Nero in 58 AD, he was succeeded by Porcius Festus who served 59 to 62 AD: ἔλαβεν διάδοχον ὁ Φῆλιξ Πόρκιον Φῆστον. A διάδοχος is one who succeeds or comes next in a series, which Πόρκιον Φῆστον, Porcius Festus was. The terminology of ἔλαβεν διάδοχον, received a successor, alludes to formal ceremonies of turning over control to another. Any modern reader who has served in the military and has experienced a change of command at his/her military base has some sense of what Luke is alluding to here. Little is known about Festus outside the mentioning of him in Acts. Festus did clean up a dangerous situation in Palestine quickly after arriving in Caesarea by going after bands of bandits who were plundering the Judean

<sup>240</sup>“Two years’ (Acts 24:27) probably describes the length of Paul’s imprisonment rather than the duration of Felix’s reign.” [James Luther Mays, ed., *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 1113.]

<sup>241</sup>“In the so-called Augustan Settlement of 27 BC, which established the Roman Empire, the governance of the provinces was regulated. Octavian Caesar, having emerged from the Roman civil wars as the undisputed victor and master of the Roman state, officially laid down his powers, and in theory restored the authority of the Roman Senate. Octavian himself assumed the title ‘Augustus’ and was given to govern, in addition to Egypt, the strategically important provinces of Gaul, Hispania and Syria (including Cilicia and Cyprus). Under Augustus, Roman provinces were classified as either senatorial or imperial, meaning that their governors were appointed by either the Senate or by the emperor. Generally, the older provinces that existed under the Republic were senatorial. Senatorial provinces were, as before under the Republic, governed by a proconsul, who was chosen by lot among the ranks of senators who were ex-consuls or ex-praetors, depending on which province was assigned. The major imperial provinces were under a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, also a senator of consular or praetorian rank. Egypt and some smaller provinces where no legions were based were ruled by a *procurator* (*praefectus* in Egypt), whom the emperor selected from non-senators of equestrian rank. The status of a province could change from time to time. In AD 68, of a total 36 provinces, 11 were senatorial and 25 imperial. Of the latter, 15 were under *legati* and 10 under *procuratores* or *praefecti*.

“During the Principate, the number and size of provinces also changed, either through conquest or through the division of existing provinces. The larger or more heavily garrisoned provinces (for example Syria and Moesia) were subdivided into smaller provinces to prevent any single governor from holding too much power.”

[“Roman province,” wikipedia.org]

countryside.<sup>242</sup>

Felix thought he was helping his cause with the Jews in Palestine by leaving Paul in custody at Caesarea: θέλων τε χάριτα καταθέσθαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὁ Φῆλιξ κατέλιπεν τὸν Παῦλον δεδεμένον, *and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.* But it really didn't help his cause, as Josephus explains.<sup>243</sup> During these final years of governorship Felix had managed to so deeply anger the Jewish people in Palestine, and especially the leaders that they wanted him executed by the emperor -- and they almost got their wish after he was called back to Rome. His attempt to use Paul as a political 'football' to curry their favor did not work at all.

What emerges from these two plus years of Paul's confinement in custody at Caesarea is a mixture of opportunity for witness as well as a depressing realization that he had become a political toy of the Roman governor in his administration of the Jewish province. In such a situation, most would feel strongly the temptation to pay the desired bribe to Felix and gain release from the charges against him. But not the apostle Paul. In every conference with the governor he presented the Gospel to this Roman official with the prayer for his conversion. This did not happen, but it gave Paul opportunity to minister. One would assume a similar ministry to others in the governor's mansion there in Caesarea as opportunity arose. With the substantial freedom granted him to receive visitors a steady stream of fellow believers both from the church in Caesarea, and elsewhere, along with Luke and others who were traveling with him, made their way to the governor's palace on a regular basis. As we will consider in detail later in Part Three of this publication, considerable indication exists pointing to the composition of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon during this two year period.

The lesson that emerges from this period of Paul's ministry is that of patient trust in God's will and leadership. Back in Jerusalem, God had indicated to Paul in a visionary dream that he would give testimony to the Gospel in Rome (cf. Acts 23:11). Just how God was going to do that was not yet clear to Paul, but in the interim the apostle remained busy in ministry doing everything possible to advance the Gospel while in custody. We could learn a lot from Paul at this point.

#### **8.1.2.5 A New Chance before the new governor Festus, Acts 25:1-26:32**

With the coming of a new Roman governor came a new opportunity for the apostle Paul. His chances of gaining liberty were not increased, however. Festus at the beginning of his governorship needed to establish a decent report with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, who were still anxious to be rid of Paul. As these two chapters in Acts will reflect, the saga of Paul's ministry would take highly unexpected twists and turns over the coming months of Festus' governorship. Behind Josephus' highly biased account in *The Antiquities of the Jews* (2.21.8) stands a glimpse into the rapidly spreading Zealot movement that would inflame all Judea in all out warfare against the Romans in just a few years.<sup>244</sup> The exploding tensions between the Jews and the Romans created an atmosphere not overly conducive to Paul gaining favor from the Romans.

##### **8.1.2.5.1 Festus pays a courtesy visit to Jerusalem, Acts 25:1-5**

<sup>242c</sup>1. (271) Now it was that Festus succeeded Felix as procurator, and made it his business to correct those that made disturbances in the country. So he caught the greatest part of the robbers, and destroyed a great many of them." [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987). Cf. *Jewish War* 2.271-272]

<sup>243c</sup>Now when Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix by Nero, the principal of the Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea went up to Rome to accuse Felix; and he had certainly been brought to punishment, unless Nero had yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother Pallas, who was at that time had in the greatest honor by him. Two of the principal Syrians in Cesarea persuaded Burrhus, who was Nero's tutor, and secretary for his Greek epistles, by giving him a great sum of money, to disannul that equality of the Jewish privileges of citizens which they hitherto enjoyed. So Burrhus, by his solicitations, obtained leave of the emperor that an epistle should be written to that purpose. This epistle became the occasion of the following miseries that befell our nation; for when the Jews of Cesarea were informed of the contents of this epistle to the Syrians, they were more disorderly than before, till a war was kindled." [The *Antiquities of the Jews*, ccel.org, Cf. 2.20.9]

<sup>244c</sup>10. Upon Festus's coming into Judea, it happened that Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the villages were set on fire, and plundered by them. And then it was that the *sicarii*, as they were called, who were robbers, grew numerous. They made use of small swords, not much different in length from the Persian acinacae, but somewhat crooked, and like the Roman *sicae*, [or sickles,] as they were called; and from these weapons these robbers got their denomination; and with these weapons they slew a great many; for they mingled themselves among the multitude at their festivals, when they were come up in crowds from all parts to the city to worship God, as we said before, and easily slew those that they had a mind to slay. They also came frequently upon the villages belonging to their enemies, with their weapons, and plundered them, and set them on fire. So Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain impostor, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly, those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them, and those that were his followers also." [Josephus, *Antiquities*, 2:21.8," ccel.org]

25.1 Φῆστος οὖν ἐπιβὰς τῆ ἑπαρχείᾳ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀνέβη εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπὸ Καισαρείας, 2 ἐνεφάνισάν τε αὐτῷ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἰουδαίων κατὰ τοῦ Παύλου καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν 3 αἰτούμενοι χάριν κατ' αὐτοῦ ὅπως μεταπέμψῃται αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἐνέδραν ποιοῦντες ἀνελεῖν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν. 4 ὁ μὲν οὖν Φῆστος ἀπεκρίθη τηρεῖσθαι τὸν Παῦλον εἰς Καισάρειαν, ἑαυτὸν δὲ μέλλειν ἐν τάχει ἐκπορεύεσθαι· 5 οἱ οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν, φησὶν, δυνατοὶ συγκαταβάντες εἴ τί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἀποπὸν κατηγορεῖτωσαν αὐτοῦ.

25.1 Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem 2 where the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews gave him a report against Paul. They appealed to him 3 and requested, as a favor to them against Paul, to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, planning an ambush to kill him along the way. 4 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there shortly. 5 “So,” he said, “let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him.”

Luke sets up the encounter between Paul and the new Roman governor, Festus,<sup>245</sup> in a distinctive manner by first establishing a basis for continued hostility against Paul from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. The temple episode had taken place well over two years earlier but animosity against Paul by these Jewish religious leaders had not diminished at all.<sup>246</sup>

The name Φῆστος is only mentioned in Acts 24-26, and some 13 times. The primary source for determining his term of office in Palestine depends more on coinage issued than other literary sources, almost none of which agree with one another.<sup>247</sup> The coin on the right was minted by him and dates 58/59 AD when converted

<sup>245c</sup>About Felix’s successor, Porcius Festus, very little can be said, for our sources are limited to what we find in Acts 25–26 and in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.182–97 and *War* 2.271. We know that he was the member of the famous *gens Porcia*, and that his tenure in office in Judea was very brief. He seems to have died in office in A.D. 61 or 62, after only about two or three years of service. This is unfortunate, for if the impression Josephus leaves is correct, he was much more honest and able than either his predecessor or his successor as procurator.<sup>340</sup> Josephus says he acted with dispatch to get rid of the ‘daggersmen’<sup>341</sup> and bandits in the land. *Ant.* 20.8.10 says he attacked and killed yet another messianic imposter who had led a multitude into the wilderness.<sup>342</sup> This in fact is the view ‘from above’ as reported by Josephus, and it suggests that the Jewish authorities, wishing for the preservation of the status quo, would have found in Festus an ally, if not a friend. They, too, wanted to do away with the troublemakers, among whom they numbered Paul. It is, then, wholly believable that Festus might be willing to ‘do the Jewish authorities a favor’ (cf. below on v. 9) and accept a change of venue for this trial, if not also a change of jurisdiction (cf. below).” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 717–718.]

<sup>246c</sup>Porcius Festus seems to have been a person who acted with some dispatch. Acts 25:1 says that only three days after arriving in Israel he went up to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish authorities.<sup>343</sup> This was wise because, as J. R. Fears has put it, ‘crucial ... in securing continuity and stability was the network of personal alliances with the ruling classes throughout the empire. These were the practical material sinews of imperial rule.’<sup>344</sup> The interests of peace, security, and justice had to be worked for in concert with the local elite. Festus surely knew of the volatile situation in the land he was about to rule, and this made the securing of these social networks of support and power all the more crucial. What he could not have known is that this elite did not speak for a very large segment of Jewish society, as it did not have their trust, nor could he have known the extent of corruption among the elite and the lengths they would go to stay in power and rid themselves of troublemakers.<sup>345</sup>

“Josephus tells us, for example, that during the reign of Ishmael b. Phiabi as high priest, who was appointed by Herod Agrippa II near the end of Felix’s reign (*Ant.* 20.179, 194–96), some of the ‘influential’ or ‘powers,’ by which is meant the ruling class, tried to beat some of their political rivals by using gangs to hurl stones and seize the tithes due to the poorer priests (*Ant.* 20.179–81). He also tells us of the power struggle that existed between some of the elite and members of Herod’s family who continued to be influential, such as Herod Agrippa II. ‘The leading figures in the factional fray were thus certain incumbent and retired High Priests and junior members of the Herodian house.’<sup>346</sup> Ishmael, for example, fell out with Agrippa II over the building of a tower which would allow him to see into the temple (*Ant.* 20.189–96). ‘Ishmael was, then, deliberately and provocatively opposed to Agrippa.’<sup>347</sup> But Ishmael did not act alone. He acted in concert with former high priests who were still influential such as Ananias, who seems to have remained influential until about A.D. 66 (cf. *Ant.* 20.205, 209).

“The above tells us some significant things about our narrative. (1) It is not surprising that v. 2 tells us that Festus met with high priests (plural) and ‘the first of Judea’ (i.e., members of the ruling elite). He was seeking as wide a base of support as possible, and his interest was not just in those who were actually in power but also in those who wielded power whether officially or behind the scenes. (2) In view of what Josephus tells us about the way Ishmael and the elites dealt with their rivals, it is totally believable that they might be party to an ambush of Paul. (3) That Festus wanted stable alliances with all the local elite is also shown by his consulting of Agrippa and Bernice. This consultation and Paul’s appearance before them are quite believable since the Jewish elites were not all united, but rather were factionalized. The regiving of Paul’s defense speech is also believable since Agrippa had not personally had the matter presented to him.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 718–719.]

<sup>247c</sup>Both Josephus and Acts report that Festus followed Felix as procurator of the province of Judea. When this succession occurred is unclear, however, with a range of dates, from 55 C.E. to 61 C.E., finding support. More certain is the year in which Festus’ governance was terminated by his death in office, at which time he was replaced by Albinus. According to Josephus, Jesus, son of Ananias, prophesied against Jerusalem, creating such a stir that he was brought before the procurator, Albinus. Since this happened “four years before the war,” we may date the death of Festus and the appointment of Albinus to office in 62 C.E. (Joseph. JW 6.5.3 §§300–9;



from the calendar of the Romans. The change in governorship took place in the fifth year of Nero's reign as emperor. From the small amount of information supplied by Josephus, his main legacy was to encourage the hostility of the Jews against the Romans in a way that help lay the foundation for the First Jewish War (66 - 70) against the Romans. His term ended at his death, approximately during 62 AD. The one inept decision that he made and is most remembered for is taking the side of Agrippa II against the high priests in Jerusalem regarding the building of a high wall that blocked Agrippa's view of the temple from an upper story of his palace in the city.<sup>248</sup> The Jews did not want a non-Jew to be able to see what was taking place inside the Court

**Bronze prutah minted by Porcius Festus.**  
**Obverse: Greek letters NEP WNO C (Nero) in wreath tied at the bottom with an X.**  
**Reverse: Greek letters KAICAPOC (Caesar) and date LE (year 5 = 58/59 A.D.), palm branch**



cf. 2.14.1 §§272–76).

“Many who support an early date for the appointment of Festus follow Jerome’s Latin version of the Chronicle of Eusebius. According to this testimony, Festus succeeded Felix in the second year of Nero—that is, 56 C.E. (see the detailed discussion in Ogg 1968: 151–55). However, this datum is rendered improbable by the collusion of evidence gleaned from Josephus and Acts regarding a would-be Jewish savior figure from Egypt. The incident involving this fanatic occurred during the reign of Nero—i.e., sometime after October 54 C.E. (Joseph. Ant. 20.8.6 §§169–72; JW 2.8.5 §§261–63)—and prior to Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27–39). Because Paul was arrested approximately at the time of Pentecost (Acts 20:16) at least two years before Felix was recalled (Acts 24:27), the earliest Festus could have taken office would have been 57 C.E. Accordingly, Jerome’s version of the Eusebian chronology is undependable.

“Others have hoped to fix the date of Festus’ appointment with reference to the assistance Felix received upon his recall to Rome by his brother, Pallas. Josephus writes that Felix was saved from disciplinary action under Nero by the intervention of Pallas, who at that time enjoyed favor with Nero (Ant. 20.8.9. 182). Since Pallas was removed from his post as financial secretary in 55 C.E. (Tacitus Ann. 13.14.1–2), and apparently was never restored to office, some have concluded that Felix must have been succeeded by Festus no later than 55 C.E. Aside from the fact that this chronology compresses the careers of Felix and Paul overmuch, this logic depends on a faulty assumption—namely, that Pallas could not have had influence with Nero subsequent to his dismissal from office. His wealth alone, estimated as high as 400,000,000 sesterces (Dio Classius 62.14.3; cf. Tacitus Ann. 12.53), guaranteed his continued power. His extended public favor is evidenced by his receiving the praetoria insignia and by the placing of a public monument fixed with a senatorial decree honoring him (Tacitus Ann. 12.53; Pliny, Ep. 8.6). Moreover, no evidence suggests Pallas left office on bad terms with Nero; rather, the reasons appear political and strategic, not personal. In the end, Nero poisoned Pallas “because he kept his vast riches to himself by a too protracted old age” (Tacitus Ann. 14.65). Clearly, then, even after his departure from office, Pallas could have interceded successfully on his brother’s behalf.

“There is therefore no reason to choose an early date for Festus’ appointment, and several factors suggest a later one. Of the approximately ten years (i.e. 52/53–62 C.E.) that must be divided between the periods when Felix and Festus held office, most of this time must have been taken by Felix. Felix had held office ‘for many years’ before Paul was first brought to him for trial (Acts 24:10), and Josephus devotes lengthy sections to the events that happened under Felix (Ant. 20.8.5–8 §§160–81; JW 2.12.8–13.7 §§247–70). Festus, on the other hand, receives comparatively little notice in Josephus (Ant. 20.8.9–11 §§182–96; JW 2.14.1 §271). Moreover, the coin issue of the fifth year of Nero may indicate the appointment of Festus prior to October 59 C.E.; indeed, it is more likely that the minting of new coins was the work of an incoming procurator than that of an outgoing one who had already minted a large issue (Reifenberg 1963: 27–28; Smallwood 1976: 269). Finally, in the Armenian version of the Chronicle of Eusebius, the sending of Festus to succeed Felix is placed in the tenth year of Agrippa II. If Caird is right (IDB 1: 599–607), and Eusebius wrongly reckoned Festus’ accession from the year 45 C.E. rather than the year 50 C.E., when Agrippa II actually took office, then according to Eusebius’ source Festus was appointed procurator in the summer of 59 C.E. We conclude, therefore, that Festus was procurator from 59–62 C.E.” [Joel B. Green, “Festus, Porcius (Person),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 795.]

<sup>248</sup> **11. (189)** About the same time king Agrippa built himself a very large dining room in the royal place at Jerusalem, near to the portico. **(190)** Now this palace had been erected of old by the children of Asamoneus, and was situated upon an elevation, and afforded a most delightful prospect to those that had a mind to take a view of the city, which prospect was desired by the king; and there he could lie down, and eat, and thence observe what was done in the temple; **(191)** which thing, when the chief men of Jerusalem saw, they were very much displeased at it; for it was not agreeable to the institutions of our country or law that what was done in the temple should be viewed by others, especially what belonged to the sacrifices. They therefore erected a wall upon the uppermost building which belonged to the inner court of the temple towards the west; **(192)** which wall, when it was built, did not only intercept the prospect of the dining room in the palace, but also of the western cloisters that belonged to the outer court of the temple also, where it was that the Romans kept guards for the temple at the festivals. **(193)** At these doings both king Agrippa, and principally Festus the procurator, were much displeased; and Festus ordered them to pull the wall down again; but the Jews petitioned him to give them leave to send an embassy about this matter to Nero; for they said they could not endure to live if any part of the temple should be demolished; **(194)** and when Festus had given them leave so to do, they sent ten of their principal men to Nero, as also Ismael, the high priest, and Helcias, the keeper of the sacred treasure. **(195)** And when Nero had heard what they had to say, he not only forgave them what they had already done, but also gave them leave to let the wall they had built stand. This was granted them in order to gratify Poppea, Nero’s wife, who was a religious woman, and had requested these favors of Nero, and who gave order to the ten ambassadors to go their way home; but retained

of Israel in the inner part of the temple.

When Felix was recalled to Rome, Festus was appointed by Nero to take his place (οὖν). Upon arriving in Casarea to assume office (ἐπιβάς τῆ ἐπαρχείᾳ, after having entered the province), he decided very quickly (μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας, after three days) to make a standard protocol visit to Jerusalem to be formally welcomed by the Jewish leadership: ἀνέβη εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα ἀπὸ Καισαρείας, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.



The term ἐπαρχείᾳ literally means a Roman administrative region ruled by an ἐπαρχος or prefect.<sup>249</sup> Thus the phrase ἐπιβάς τῆ ἐπαρχείᾳ can specify that Festus ‘took up administrative rule’ in Caesarea, or that ‘he came into the province where he was to rule.’<sup>250</sup> Probably the latter is the intended sense here. This would have been either in 58 or 59 AD. Luke naturally centers his emphasis upon the Jerusalem leader’s charges against Paul that were made at this initial meeting: ἐνεφάνισάν τε αὐτῷ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἰουδαίων κατὰ τοῦ Παύλου..., and the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews reported to him against Paul..., The plural οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, high priests, is a little unusual rather than the singular ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, the high priest, which does show up in a few manuscript copies (H P 049 189 326 pm). But in Acts and the gospels, the reference to the leadership of the temple using the plural form is relatively common, e.g., Acts 4:23, 5:24. Josephus makes it clear that the high priest at this point was Ishmael b. Phiabe due to appointment of King Agrippa toward the end of the governorship of Felix.<sup>251</sup> This high priest was a part of the delegation that went to Rome to condemn Felix before Nero at the end of Felix’s term of governorship. The second reference to the leaders, οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἰουδαίων, the leaders of the Jews, is a clear Hebraism that recalls the use of מְשָׁרְפִים for leaders, both here and also in 28:17, cf. 13:50; 28:7.<sup>252</sup> These individuals go beyond just the members of the Sanhedrin that were involved in the issues regarding Paul at the beginning two plus years earlier.<sup>253</sup> The original complainers from Asia are now totally out of the picture.

The other activity of these leaders in their meeting with Festus -- as reported by Luke -- is a request: καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν αἰτούμενοι χάριν κατ’ αὐτοῦ ὅπως μεταπέμψῃται αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἐνέδραν ποιοῦντες

---

Helcias and Ismael as hostages with herself. (196) As soon as the king heard this news, he gave the high priesthood to Joseph, who was called Cabi, the son of Simon, formerly high priest.” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), *Antiquities* 20.8.11.189-196.]

<sup>249</sup>“The precise sense of ἐπιβάς will be determined by the meaning of ἐπαρχείᾳ and the variant ἐπαρχείῳ (both of which have orthographical variants in which εἰ is replaced by ι). ἐπαρχείᾳ (κς Β C E Ψ M) will refer to the province, so that ἐπιβάς τῆ ἐπαρχείᾳ will mean, *Having arrived in the province* (cf. Ant. 20:185, ἀφικομένου δὲ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν Φήστου ...). ἐπαρχείῳ will according to M. 2:157 be short for τῆ ἐπαρχείῳ (the adjective is of two terminations) ἐξουσία, and the clause will mean, *Having entered upon his (provincial) office*. This however may be too simple, for it may be right to supply not ἐξουσία but χώρα, so that the meaning would again be, *Having arrived in the province*. Commentators and others differ in their preference, but Begs. 4:306, after a very full note on ἐπαρχείᾳ — ἐπαρχείῳ, rightly concludes, ‘There is probably no difference in the meaning of these two phrases.’ Festus would enter upon his office as governor of the province when he entered the province. Cf. 23:34. Page (241) points out, ‘Strictly Judaea was not a ‘province’, but a department of the province of Syria, but the term is used loosely.’ ND 2:85 draws attention to a narrower meaning (district) in PMich 659:45, but this belongs to the 6th century AD. Festus may have landed at Caesarea itself, or at Seleucia, completing the journey by land. The procurator usually resided at Caesarea and went up to Jerusalem when occasion required. It would be natural to do so at the beginning of one’s term of office and Festus (according to Luke) permitted no delay (after three days) in going up to his second capital. ἀνέβη is the pilgrimage word (see 11:2), but here suggests nothing more than actual ascent.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1123.]

<sup>250</sup>“come into the province: Or, ‘took up his office’; the phrase *epibas tē eparcheia* can be read either way (see Josephus, *Jewish War* 5:520, and Acts 23:24), with the meaning much the same. In the present case, the geographical context seems to favor the translation provided here.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 420.]

<sup>251</sup>“About this time king Agrippa gave the high priesthood to Ismael, who was the son of Fabi.” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), cf. *Antiquities* 20.8.179.]

<sup>252</sup>“οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἰουδαίων occurs again at 28:17; cf. 13:50; 28:7. It recalls the use of מְשָׁרְפִים for leaders, but is intelligible in itself. It may be right to compare the δυνατοί in v. 5.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1124.]

<sup>253</sup>“Josephus tells of a strife between the ‘chief priests’ and other priests and leaders of the people, but Luke says nothing about this. The ‘leaders’ are here called *hoi prōtoi*, ‘the first (men)’ among Jerusalem Jews. Cf. 13:50; 28:17; Luke 19:47. The plaintiffs are no longer ‘Jews from Asia’ or other private citizens of Jerusalem (21:27, 30), but again the religious authorities of Jerusalem.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 743.]

ἀνελεῖν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, and they pressed him repeatedly asking a favor against Paul to send him to Jerusalem, because of planning an ambush to kill him along the way. Even after two plus years the animosity against Paul had not diminished by the leaders in Jerusalem. In normal times hatred would not remain at a high level over a long period of time. But the late 50s were not normal times in Judea. The Zealot movement was gaining momentum with its guerrilla style tactics of hitting Jews perceived to be in league with the Romans as well as the Romans themselves from Galilee down through Judea. Josephus reminds us in his highly biased manner that both Felix and Festus both took decisive action against the folks the historian labels as ‘bandits,’ that is, mostly targets the Zealots as outlaw Jewish peasants.<sup>254</sup> These leaders wanted to include Paul in this group who needed to be executed.

But they wanted to be certain of ridding themselves of Paul. The forty Jewish men earlier failed to ambush Paul while in the custody of the Romans (cf. Acts 23:14-15), so now the leaders devised a similar plan to have the apostle killed while in the hands of the Romans.<sup>255</sup> Why they thought they could succeed where the others had earlier failed is beyond comprehension. But these charged with leading the Jewish people to uphold the Torah of God now set out to violate one of the foundational principles of that divine law: the act of murder.

But what they didn’t count on is that Festus was much smarter and more committed to principles of justice than his predecessor Felix: 4 ὁ μὲν οὖν Φῆστος ἀπεκρίθη τηρεῖσθαι τὸν Παῦλον εἰς Καισάρειαν, ἑαυτὸν δὲ μέλλειν ἐν τάχει ἐκπορεύεσθαι· 5 οἱ οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν, φησί, δυνατοὶ συγκαταβάντες εἴ τί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἄτοπον κατηγορεῖτωσαν αὐτοῦ. 4 Festus then replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there shortly. 5 “So,” he said, “let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him.” Luke doesn’t directly indicate this, but evidently Festus had already been briefed to some extent on Paul’s situation.<sup>256</sup> He wasn’t about to bring him from Caesarea to Jerusalem without a formal hearing in Caesarea.<sup>257</sup> His familiarity with Paul’s case is reflected in the statement: τηρεῖσθαι τὸν Παῦλον εἰς Καισάρειαν, that Paul was being held in Caesarea.

The narrative shifts from indirect discourse in verse four to direct discourse (φησί) in verse five, giving greater emphasis to the words of Festus to the Jewish leaders. Festus indicates that if some improper behavior is true by Paul εἴ τί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἄτοπον,<sup>258</sup> then these leaders can bring charges against him, οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν

---

<sup>254c</sup>(185) Upon Festus’s coming into Judea, it happened that Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the villages were set on fire, and plundered by them. (186) And then it was that the sicarii, as they were called, who were robbers, grew numerous. They made use of small swords, not much different in length from the Persian acinacae, but somewhat crooked, and like the Roman *sicae* [or sickles] as they were called; and from these weapons these robbers got their deamination; and with these weapons they slew a great many; (187) for they mingled themselves among the multitude at their festivals, when they were come up in crowds from all parts to the city to worship God, as we said before, and easily slew those that they had a mind to slay. They also came frequently upon the villages belonging to their enemies, with their weapons, and plundered them, and set them on fire. (188) So Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain impostor, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them, and those that were his followers also.” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987). cf. *Antiquities* 20.10.185-188]

<sup>255c</sup>It is not clear whether they were asking for Paul to be retried by the Sanhedrin or in a Roman court, but in any case their intention, according to Luke, was to assassinate him as he was being transferred back to Jerusalem. Indeed, Luke implies by the tenses he uses that even as they begged Festus to do them a favor, the Jewish leaders were formulating this plan to abuse it. From the Western text comes the suggestion that the original forty conspirators were to make the attempt, but there were many others like them on whom the leaders could call. Notice there is now no question (in Luke’s mind at least) whose plan this was. To his credit, Festus did not accede at once to their request, though later he would attempt to do so (v. 9). Instead, he announced that he would conduct a new hearing in Caesarea and invited the Jewish leaders to return with him for that purpose (cf. vv. 14–16).” [David J. Williams, *Acts, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 406–407.]

<sup>256c</sup>ἑαυτὸν δὲ . . . Festus is not to be hoodwinked but behaves with a proper responsibility towards his prisoner. He is another of Luke’s good Roman officials.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1124.]

<sup>257c</sup>asking as a favor: The construction is unusual: *aitoumenoi charin kat’ autou* (‘asking a favor against him’); the phrase apparently picks up the ‘granting a favor’ of 24:27 and 25:9. If the precarious position of the governor (because of the charges being made against Felix by the Jewish leaders in Rome) is as Josephus reports it, then the Jewish leaders probably feel in a position to ask such a favor. Festus can demonstrate a stronger position against rabble-rousers and bandits than his predecessor had done.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 420.]

<sup>258</sup>The first class conditional protasis εἴ τί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἄτοπον signals Festus’ willingness to reopen the case against Paul but only if something substantively has been committed.

“The Jews are to accuse Paul εἴ τί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἄτοπον. This is straightforward; ἄτοπον is a mild word for crime used either because Festus is showing proper legal caution or because Luke wishes to show Paul in the best possible light. Cf. 28:6. In the



δυνατοί...κατηγορείωσαν αὐτοῦ. Felix calls them *those among you with authority*, rather than οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἰουδαίων, *the high priests and the leading men of the Jews*, as Luke designated them in verses two. Festus thus limits the number of these leaders to those with genuine authority, since he does not desire a large crowd of Jewish folks to show up in his palace in Caesarea for a hearing regarding Paul.<sup>259</sup> In order to further safeguard the situation, he requires these leaders to travel with him from Jerusalem to Caesarea in order to bring charges against Paul. This Roman governor was no dummy! He recognized a delicate situation had been thrust into his hands, and he intended to handle it properly according to Roman law.

#### 8.1.2.5.2 Festus hears Paul's case in Caesarea, Acts 25:6-12

6 Διατρίψας δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέρας οὐ πλείους ὀκτῶ ἢ δέκα, καταβὰς εἰς Καισάρειαν, τῇ ἑπαύριον καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐκέλευσεν τὸν Παῦλον ἀχθῆναι. 7 παραγενομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ περιέστησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβεβηκότες Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδείξει, 8 τοῦ Παύλου ἀπολογουμένου ὅτι οὔτε εἰς τὸν νόμον τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὔτε εἰς τὸ ἱερόν οὔτε εἰς Καίσαρά τι ἥμαρτον. 9 Ὁ Φῆστος δὲ θέλων τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις χάριν καταθέσθαι ἀποκριθεὶς τῷ Παύλῳ εἶπεν· θέλεις εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀναβὰς ἐκεῖ περὶ τούτων κριθῆναι ἐπ' ἐμοῦ; 10 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Παῦλος· ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρος ἐστὼς εἰμι, οὐ με δεῖ κρῖνεσθαι. Ἰουδαίους οὐδὲν ἠδίκησα ὡς καὶ σὺ κάλλιον ἐπιγινώσκεις. 11 εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀδικῶ καὶ ἄξιον θανάτου πέπραχά τι, οὐ παραιτοῦμαι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν· εἰ δὲ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ὧν οὗτοι κατηγοροῦσίν μου, οὐδεὶς με δύναται αὐτοῖς χαρίσασθαι· Καίσαρα ἐπικαλοῦμαι. 12 τότε ὁ Φῆστος συλλαλήσας μετὰ τοῦ συμβουλίου ἀπεκρίθη· Καίσαρα ἐπικέκλησαι, ἐπὶ Καίσαρα πορεύσῃ.

6 After he had stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. 7 When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. 8 Paul said in his defense, "I have in no way committed an offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor." 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, asked Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?" 10 Paul said, "I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11 Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die, I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor." 12 Then Festus, after he had conferred with his council, replied, "You have appealed to the emperor; to the emperor you will go."

The next scene in Luke's narrative is set back in Caesarea in the governor's palace.<sup>260</sup> The time frame is some eight or ten days after Festus finished his visit to Jerusalem: Διατρίψας δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέρας οὐ πλείους ὀκτῶ ἢ δέκα, *But after having spent days among them, not more than eight or ten*. Such a short initial meeting would have been normal for a Roman governor to do. Very likely within this time he had seen all of the Jews he wanted to. He was a Roman and spending more time than necessary listening to the dirty, smelly Jews would not have been at the top of his priorities. Caesarea was his turf, much more so than Jerusalem.

Thus the very next day after arriving back at headquarters in Caesarea, a preliminary hearing was called to see what these Jews would say against Paul: καταβὰς εἰς Καισάρειαν, τῇ ἑπαύριον καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐκέλευσεν τὸν Παῦλον ἀχθῆναι, *after having gone down to Caesarea, the next day upon taking his seat on the bema, he gave orders for Paul to be brought in. By taking his seat on the bema (καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος)*, Festus formally text however ἄτοπον is read by κ A B C E 33 81 945 1175 (1739 1891) 2464 al lat; in place of this τούτω is read by M; τούτω ἄτοπον by Ψ 36 453 614 2495 al sy<sup>h</sup> sa<sup>b</sup> bo. The majority of (late) MSS thus have an expression εἰ τί ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ τούτῳ, to be rendered literally, *If there is anything in this man*, and evidently meaning, *If there is anything evil, criminal, in this man*. This does not appear to be a regular Greek idiom, but cf. Jn 14:30, ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1125.]

<sup>259c</sup>δυνατοί is not uncommon with the meaning eminent men (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26). Thus Thucydides 1:89:3, οἱ δυνατοὶ τῶν Περσῶν; Plutarch, Romulus 27 (34), τοὺς ἐν Ρώμῃ δυνατούς; Philo, Moses 1:49; Josephus, War 1:242, Ἰουδαίων οἱ δυνατοί. Cf. however Bengel (479): *qui valent, ad iter faciendum*; also Blass (258), *qui possunt*. But the former meaning is more probable; so Page (242); Schille (441), 'δυνατός ist ein politischer Terminus technicus.' Festus does not intend that the courtroom shall be cluttered with a large number of Jews, and perhaps suspects a violent attempt on Paul's life. For the same reason, probably, he wishes the Jews to accompany him (συγκαταβάντες). Cf. ἀνέβη, v. 1." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1125.]

<sup>260c</sup>The next passage contains one of the most dramatic, famous, and — for the interpreter — difficult scenes in Acts. The 'trial' consumes but two verses, as there was no need to reiterate the rhetorical duel of chap. 24.22 The prosecution's case is summarized in vague indirect discourse.<sup>23</sup> Paul simply denies any offense, in sixteen not ineloquent words.<sup>24</sup> He has given to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's. 'Caesar' could be a trope for 'violation of Roman law' and need not be limited to *laesa maiestas, protean* as that category could be.<sup>25</sup> Offense against the majesty of the state was a charge generally reserved for members of the Senatorial and Equestrian orders.<sup>26</sup> A decision awaits." [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 610–611.]

convened a legal hearing according to Roman law.<sup>261</sup> The proceedings could not begin until the defendant was present in the court room, so orders were issued for Paul to be brought into the hearing room.

The next segment<sup>262</sup> is a little unnerving: παραγενομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ περιέστησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβεβηκότες Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδείξει, *And when he arrived the Jews who came down from Jerusalem stood around him leveling many and weighty accusations which were not able to be demonstrated.* Probably the NRSV with its ‘surrounded him’ translation of περιέστησαν αὐτὸν over dramatizes the portrayal of the scene by Luke. They did stand around him, but not in any position to physically threaten or menace the apostle Paul. Clearly not in the room with Roman soldiers present who would have slaughtered the whole lot of them immediately had they physically attacked Paul.



Luke depicts numerous accusations being leveled against Paul by this group. This time they have no Roman lawyer like Tertullus representing them. But they are no more successful presenting their case themselves than was Tertullus (cf. 24:5-8).

Verbal accusations without proof becomes worthless hearsay. Very likely this was running through Festus’ mind as he listened to these accusations. With the passing of time, bringing witnesses to testify who had been in the temple or even in the Sanhedrin meeting two plus years earlier would be difficult.

Paul makes his defense in verse eight, in Luke’s very summarizing depiction: τοῦ Παύλου ἀπολογουμένου ὅτι οὔτε εἰς τὸν νόμον τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὔτε εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν οὔτε εἰς Καίσαρά τι ἥμαρτον, *Paul said in his defense, “I have in no way committed an offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor.”* As Paul made his defense, he summarized his earlier speech in 24:10-21. He simply affirms what he had already claimed when he appeared before Felix two years earlier. This lengthy Genitive Absolute participle phrase that comprises verse eight stand connected to the main clause verb of the sentence in vv. 7-8 περιέστησαν αὐτὸν, *they stood around him.* It functions as the counter point to the participle phrase in v. 7 πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδείξει, *making many and weighty charges of things which they could not show (evidence).* The sequencing of the actions of the participles with the verb creates a clear picture, almost universally distorted by English translations. As these Jewish critics took their places surrounding Paul (περιέστησαν αὐτὸν), they were leveling serious charges against Paul (πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες -- present tense ptc.), and at the same time Paul was defending himself (ἀπολογουμένου -- present tense ptc.). The picture that Luke paints is something of a chaotic scene with charges and rebuffs flying back and forth between Paul and his Jewish critics. All of this was taking place before Festus while he was sitting on the bema on an elevated platform quite some height above where the others were standing.

As he listened to the chaos coming from everyone, the personal motive of advancing himself with the Jews took charge: θέλων τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις χάριν καταθέσθαι, *desiring to lay before the Jews a favor.* He felt prey to the same motivation of his predecessor, Felix, as asserted by Luke in Acts 24:27, θέλων τε χάριτα καταθέσθαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις. Felix at the close of his term as governor was attempting to leave Palestine with some goodwill

<sup>261</sup>“The βῆμα denotes the place where the judge holds his court, and is determined by the presence of the judge, not topographically (cf. 25:10, 17). ‘Dass man ab und zu auch im Freien eine Rednerbühne als βῆμα benutzte, ist nicht ausgeschlossen, aber keineswegs als üblicher Brauch nachweisbar’ (124). ‘Wir wissen nicht und können schlechterdings nicht herausfinden, wo der Bericht von Apg lokalisierbar ist’ (129).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 871–872.]

<sup>262</sup>“A number of MSS (E Ψ 33 (323 614) 945 1739 (2495) pm gig vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>(p)</sup>) contain a considerable paraphrase given in some printed copies of the NT as the end of v. 6, v. 7, and the beginning of v. 8. The whole sentence runs as follows.

καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἡμέτερον νόμον ἠωελήσαμεν κρίναι (κρίνειν, 614 2495 pc). παρελθὼν δὲ Λυσίας ὁ χιλιάρχος μετὰ πολλῆς βίας ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν ἀπήγαγεν, κελεύσας τοὺς κατηγοροὺς αὐτοῦ ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ (πρός, E 2464 pc) σε.

“See Clark (xlvii); Ropes (Begg. 3:225); Delebecque (115).

“This describes the events of 22:22–23:30 from the Jewish point of view and in very compressed form. An editor no doubt thought that some such cross-reference was necessary in order to explain what was taking place. Luke’s narrative, written from a non-Jewish, or anti-Jewish, point of view certainly suggests something other than a peaceful Jewish trial according to law — a lynching, rather; and, according to Luke’s story, the tribune was not the first to use violence. Is Luke (or his editor) deliberately setting out to represent the Jews as guilty of falsehood? Is he himself guilty of misrepresenting in his narrative Jewish intention fairly set out in Tertullus’s speech? Cf. the letter ascribed to Claudius Lysias. Probably neither; he is using traditional material which reflects two points of view. Dibelius (151, n. 32), cautiously suggests that the long text is original.

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1099.]

from the Jews by leaving Paul in custody instead of releasing him as the governor knew he should do.<sup>263</sup> Now Festus at the beginning of his term as governor seeks to establish good will with the Jewish leadership using Paul as political bait. This stance was in spite of the Jewish leaders' passionate and persistent request for a favor when he met with them in Jerusalem (cf. 25:3, αἰτούμενοι χάριν). They wanted Festus to turn Paul over to them for trial inside the Jewish law. But in reality their intention was to murder Paul in an ambush before he reached Jerusalem. Thus Festus' offer to do them a favor now in the hearing at Caesarea was only a partial concession to what they wanted.



But notice that Festus is more discerning of Roman law as it pertained to Roman citizens. He turns to Paul to see whether Paul was willing to be tried -- by Festus under Roman law -- in Jerusalem rather than in Caesarea: ὁ Φῆστος...ἀποκριθεὶς τῷ Παύλῳ εἶπεν· θέλεις εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀναβὰς ἐκεῖ περὶ τούτων κριθῆναι ἐπ' ἐμοῦ; „Festus...in reply said to Paul, “Are you willing to be judged there before me after having gone up to Jerusalem? He knew better than to turn Paul over to these Jewish leaders for them to try him according to Jewish law. He would not put himself in jeopardy with his supervisors in Rome by such mistreatment of a Roman citizen.<sup>264</sup>

Paul's response to this request from the governor is clear: 10 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Παῦλος· ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρος ἐστὼς εἰμι, οὗ με δεῖ κρῖνεσθαι. Ἰουδαίους οὐδὲν ἠδίκησα ὡς καὶ σὺ κάλλιον ἐπιγινώσκεις. 11 εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀδικῶ καὶ ἄξιον θανάτου πέπραχά τι, οὐ παραιτοῦμαι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν· εἰ δὲ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ὧν οὗτοι κατηγοροῦσίν μου, οὐδεὶς με δύναται αὐτοῖς χαρίσασθαι· **Καίσαρα ἐπικαλοῦμαι.** 10 Paul said, “I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11 Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die, I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor.” I suspect Paul had contemplated such as a possibility for quite some time during the two years of being in custody. He knew well his rights as a Roman citizen and that an appeal to the Roman emperor took precedence over every other legal process in the legal system of Rome. It would completely remove his case from the hands of the Roman governor and transfer the entire process out of Palestine -- either Jerusalem or Caesarea -- to Rome. Plus, the Roman government would then be required to transport Paul to Rome from Caesarea, thus saving Paul considerable expense in making such a trip.

The details of Paul's response are quite interesting. First, the formal demand is made to the governor: ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρος ἐστὼς εἰμι, οὗ με δεῖ κρῖνεσθαι, at the bema of the emperor I stand, where it is mandated for

<sup>263</sup>Interestingly, as Josephus describes, this gesture did not work for Felix. He had barely arrived back in Rome until a delegation of Jews led by the high priest no less arrived in Rome making serious charges of abuse and corruption against him. Had it not been for his brother in law who argued Felix's case before the emperor Nero and happened to be close friends with him as well, Felix could easily have been executed.

<sup>264</sup>“There was during the Empire a steady widening of the franchise of who might be a Roman citizen.<sup>375</sup> By the mid-50s A.D. the situation had not yet become even close to what it would be in the late Empire when everyone but slaves was considered Roman citizen of some sort (after A.D. 212 when Caracalla granted wholesale citizenship), but Claudius's reign had extended the rights and privileges considerably. This in turn affected the way justice was administered not only in Rome but also, and perhaps especially, in the provinces. Justice in the provinces was not something one could get just any time, for the proconsul had to make assize tours through various cities under his charge, and one had to appear before the procurator when he was in one's area.<sup>376</sup> As Burton says, ‘vast though the powers of the proconsul were in theory, there were severe physical restraints upon the manner in which he could exercise them; his interventions were bound to be unevenly spread geographically, and sporadic in their frequency.’<sup>377</sup> This is of relevance for our discussion because it meant that (1) there could be long delays in rendering justice in particular cases, especially if they were carried over from one administration to another; (2) circumstances would often prevent the procurator from thoroughly investigating a matter. The temptation to render summary justice and get on with the next case or to the next town would be great, as would the temptation to pass cases on to other authorities, whether inferior or superior, if one could legally do so;<sup>378</sup> (3) as the Empire developed, the rule of the emperor through his emissaries became more intrusive in local affairs, and this was often greatly resented. No doubt it galled the Jewish authorities that Caesarea was the provincial seat of power and that they had to go there to try to obtain justice about some matter. For them the temptation was great to take matters or even stones into their own hands and settle things. Notice, for example, that during the *interregnum* between the time of Festus and the coming of Albinus the Jewish authorities (e.g., Ananus), recognizing a power vacuum and thus a window of opportunity, willfully took matters into their own hands and had James, the brother of Jesus, killed (*Ant.* 20.200).

“Roman citizens cannot have been plentiful in Judea in the mid-50s, and Jewish ones even more rare. Thus, there were probably few precedents in dealing with a case like Paul's, a person apparently caught between Jewish and Roman law. The question of jurisdiction must have been very puzzling for the procurators in view of the fact that the accusers stressed political charges but really wanted to judge Paul themselves, while Paul stressed theological matters but insisted on Roman justice.”

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 724.]



me to be judged.<sup>265</sup> This appeal, labeled in the Latin a *provocatio*, was made directly to the emperor by this point in time, although in the days of the Roman Republic it was made to the citizens of Rome generally.<sup>266</sup> When a Roman citizen demanded to stand before the judgment seat of the emperor, the presiding magistrate or governor had no option but to grant the demand. When Paul qualifies the demand with οὐ με δεῖ κρίνεσθαι, he additionally signals a belief that God's providence is involved here as well, since the impersonal verb δεῖ in the NT indicates divine obligation, rather than oughtness coming out of circumstance or human compulsion which were expressed in ancient Greek in alternative ways.<sup>267</sup> Paul also knew that the emperor in power at this moment was Nero, but this was the 'early Nero' who was ruling quite well and justly, unlike the 'later Nero' after the early 60s who turned paranoid and brutally despotic.<sup>268</sup>

Clearly Paul did not trust Festus: Ἰουδαίους οὐδὲν ἠδίκησα ὡς καὶ σὺ κάλλιον ἐπιγινώσκεις, *I have harmed the Jews in no way, as you also fully understand well*. The verb ἀδικέω literally means to do injury or harm to another through unjustified means, particularly as a transitive verb which is the case here with the double accusative objects Ἰουδαίους οὐδὲν.<sup>269</sup> Paul's point is clear that he denies having taken any action that wrongly inflicts injury or harm on Jews. Then he adds a zinger of subtle accusation against Festus: ὡς καὶ σὺ κάλλιον ἐπιγινώσκεις,

---

<sup>265</sup>Grammarians are agreed that though in Hellenistic Greek the periphrastic perfect is normally a simple equivalent to the ordinary perfect, yet here the periphrastic construction (especially if those MSS are followed that separate ἐστὼς from εἶμι—see below) adds 'great emphasis' (M. 3:88). BDR § 352:3, 'Zuweilen dient die Umschreibung dem rhetorisch kräftigeren Ausdruck: Apg 25:10 ...'. Zerwick (§ 360), 'ἐστὼς ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρός εἶμι (A 25:10) *rem multo fortius et magis pictorice exprimit quam simplex ἔστηκα ἐ. τ. β. Καίσαρος.*' [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1128.]

<sup>266</sup>The sort of appeal which is called *provocatio* was originally matter of appealing to the people, but during the Empire Caesar took the people's place as the court of last resort. In the early Empire, before all the ramifications of Empire were worked out, for example before appellate jurisdictions were all made clear and became regular and systematic, emperors apparently were more willing to take appeals from provincial citizens than was the case in the second century and later.<sup>379</sup> 'The imperium of the magistrates was inhibited by the right of *provocatio*,<sup>380</sup> which in turn meant that the actual power of the emperor was increased as judicial power became more centralized. In fact, Augustus had encouraged appeal in general as he established the Empire.<sup>381</sup> In regard to the issue of whether *provocatio* functioned outside Rome as well as within its boundaries, there can be little doubt (cf. Cicero, *Verr.* 2.5.63).<sup>382</sup> The *Lex Julia* had affirmed or reaffirmed such a right of appeal in strong terms, and had made clear the penalties for a magistrate's interfering with the process: 'Anyone invested with authority who puts to death or orders to be put to death, tortures, scourges, condemns, or directs Roman citizen who first appealed to the people, and now has appealed to the Emperor, to be placed in chains, shall be condemned under the *Lex Julia* relating to public violence. The punishment of this crime is death, where the parties are of inferior station; deportation to an island where they are of superior station' (Paulus, *Sent.* 5.26.1; *Digest* 48.6–7). This law, then, protected the citizen both from coercion by a procurator and also from his exercising his right of capital punishment.<sup>383</sup> As Balsdon says, on paper the most valuable element in the citizenship package, especially if one lived in the provinces, was the right of appeal to the emperor.<sup>384</sup> There might be little need for such appeal if one was faced with a good governor, but Festus was new, and his judgments an unknown quantity. Clearly, Paul does not trust him; indeed, he accuses him of bias. Furthermore, precisely because Festus couldn't determine what the crime or issue really was between Paul and his accusers, he had to treat the matter as *extra ordinem* or assume a worst-case scenario among the *ordo* sort of crimes and treat the matter as treason.<sup>385</sup> In either case, the resolution of the matter was beyond his *imperium*.' [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 724–725.]

<sup>267</sup>While Festus appears to have had little knowledge of Jewish law and thought, Paul must have known that he had such a right of appeal, and also that he would get no justice before the Sanhedrin. His appeal is both legal and logical in view of the above discussion, and as Rapske says, it had its 'appealing' aspects: 'The advantages of appealing to the Emperor ... [included that]... it could interrupt what might otherwise be an inexorable progress to personal disaster, remove one from a biased or hostile court, and, finally, perhaps put the defendant before a more favorably inclined tribunal.'<sup>386</sup> The downside of an appeal is that it could prove costly, but this would surely have seemed the lesser of the two evils to Paul. There is, finally, one other reason why Paul appealed, a theological one. He had been promised by Christ that he would testify before the emperor. He may have felt led to take part in the process of making this opportunity possible.<sup>387</sup> In fact in v. 10 Paul specifies that it is a must (δεῖ) that he be judged before the tribunal of Caesar.<sup>388</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 725–726.]

<sup>268</sup>Finally, it may be asked why Paul would appeal to Caesar, when this Caesar was none other than Nero. This question overlooks the fact that the early years of Nero's reign, especially the period from A.D. 54 to about 61 or 62,<sup>389</sup> bore few adumbrations of Nero's later injustices (Suetonius, *Nero* 9ff.). Nero during this period was under the tutelage of one of the great Roman philosophers, the Stoic Seneca, and he was also greatly helped along in this period by the prefect of the Praetorian Guard, Afranius Burrus. Some even saw this period as something of a golden age for Rome, though that is stretching things a bit.<sup>390</sup> The point is that Paul in A.D. 59 might well hope for better things in Rome than he could get at the hands of a Felix or a Festus. As the above discussion suggests, and Johnson says about 24:24–25:12 in general, 'the better our knowledge of the social and historical context, the more plausible Luke's account becomes.'<sup>391</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 726.]

<sup>269</sup>In Greek grammar this is the Accusative of Personal Object (Ἰουδαίους) along with the Accusative of Predicate Object (οὐδὲν).

as you also fully understand quite well. Festus, although supposedly trying to understand the charges against Paul, had heard enough from conversations with these Jews, and perhaps even with Felix before his departure from Caesarea, to have been able to conclude that Paul had broken absolutely no Roman laws and thus ought to be released from custody.

That Paul is speaking from the vantage point of Roman law, much more so than from Jewish law, becomes clear in his elaboration in verse eleven. This single Greek sentence sets up two first class conditional protases (if clauses using εἰ) with appropriate conclusions drawn in each main clause (the apodosis). In polemical usage such as here, the point is to set these 'what if' scenarios as real alternatives, rather than irrelevant hypotheses. The two if clause statements are:

εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀδικῶ καὶ ἄξιον θανάτου πέπραχά τι, *If then I am indeed inflicting unjust harm and have done something worthy of death.*<sup>270</sup> Paul sets up a scenario that imagines him to have committed several unjust actions against the Jewish people with the consequence of their cumulative impact justifying his execution. This scenario assumes the stance of his Jewish accusers, although what they believe Paul has done is fiction and with no historical basis at all. The problem with the scenario is that the assumed unjust actions are based on Jewish law and not on Roman law. Even if Paul had been 'guilty' by Jewish law standards, he would have not been so under Roman law. And Roman law is the standard being applied in this Roman legal hearing. But as Luke has made very clear, Paul violated no Jewish law regarding temple purity not to mention any Roman law applicable to a Roman citizen.

The apodosis or conclusion is then clear: οὐ παραιτοῦμαι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν, *I am not trying to avoid being put to death.* Instead of demanding to be released from custody, Paul rather affirms that he is not afraid of dying by official execution.<sup>271</sup> Should a proper trial under Roman law be carried out and he be found guilty of actions meriting execution, he would not try to avoid it. The apostle was not afraid of a properly conducted legal process under Roman law. But in the situation of this moment, it was becoming clear that his best chance to gaining this would lie with the emperor rather than with Festus. Clearly it would not happen in Jerusalem with the influence of these Jewish leaders.

εἰ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔστιν ὧν οὔτοι κατηγοροῦσίν μου, *but if there is nothing in regard to their making charges against me.* This second protasis also assumes a real scenario, that of the defense which Paul has consistently made before Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem, and both Felix and Festus in Caesarea. The essence of this scenario was summarized in verse 8: οὔτε εἰς τὸν νόμον τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὔτε εἰς τὸ ἱερόν οὔτε εἰς Καίσαρά τι ἤμαρτον, *"I have in no way committed an offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor."* The consistent inability and failure of the Jewish leaders to provide any evidence of guilt (πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδείξει, v. 7b), as well as the virtually incoherent manner in which they have presented their charges before both Roman governors, should be sufficient evidence within itself to establish Paul's innocence. To both governors it should be clear that these leaders have a personal grudge against Paul and want him executed without legitimate legal procedure being followed. Paul asserts that Festus understood this quite clearly (ὡς καὶ σὺ κάλλιον ἐπιγινώσκεις, v. 10b).

The apodosis or conclusion here is simply: οὐδεὶς με δύναται αὐτοῖς χαρίσασθαι, *no one can make me a present to them.* Here Paul states clearly Roman legal principle.<sup>272</sup> The οὐδεὶς included Festus as Roman gover-

<sup>270</sup> ἀδικῶ is to be compared with ἡδίκησα (or ἡδίκηκα, v. 10) and with πέπραχα (Wettstein 2:626 quotes Moeris: πεπραγῶς, Ἀττικῶς: πεπραχῶς, Ἑλληνικῶς); the present tense has the effect of summing up the perfects which refer to particular acts of wrongdoing (BDR § 322:1, n. 1). It is in fact a perfective present and can be rendered, I am a wrongdoer, or, I am in the wrong. ἀδικεῖν is used here as in Xenophon, Memorabilia 1:1:1, ἀδικεῖ Σωκράτης ... οὐ νομίζων ... εισφέρων ... διαφθείρων, Socrates is guilty ... of not believing ... of bringing in ... of corrupting ... The use in Plato's version of the charge against Socrates is somewhat different (Apology 19b), Σωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται ... ζητῶν ... ποιῶν ... διδάσκων ... Socrates does wrong and goes about ... seeking ... making ... teaching ... The latter use is more common; cf. Aristotle, Rhetoric 1:10:3, Ἔστω δὴ τὸ ἀδικεῖν, τὸ βλέπτεν ἔκοντα παρὰ τὸν νόμον." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1130.]

<sup>271</sup> παραιτοῦμαι has two meanings, to entreat for something, but also to refuse, to decline, to avert by entreaty (LS 1310f.). It clearly has the latter meaning here. Cf. Plutarch, *Coriolanus* 20 (223), ... κολάσεως παραιτεῖσθαι; Euripides, *Heraclidae* 1026, κτεῖν', οὐ παραιτοῦμαι σε, and especially Josephus, *Life* 141, θανεῖν μὲν εἰ δίκαιόν ἐστιν, οὐ παραιτοῦμαι. If Paul can be found guilty he will not attempt to buy off the appropriate penalty—τὸ ἀποθανεῖν; the article is anaphoric (BDR § 399:1, n. 2) referring back to θάνατος immediately above." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1130.]

<sup>272</sup> "Paul does not lightly or cavalierly exercise his right of appealing to Caesar. Similar to the earlier two instances in which he claimed his rights of citizenship, Luke again depicts Paul asserting his right to appeal before a small, predominantly Roman, group and only at the point in the proceedings when he could no longer tolerate a course of action being proposed by a Roman official.... Paul

nor.<sup>273</sup> The unique sense of χάρισθαι is much more than ‘hand me over to them.’ Rather it carries the further nuance of ‘make me a gift to them.’ In other words, no Roman citizen could ever be treated by the presiding officer as a concession to the demands of his enemies. To do such would mean the death penalty for the presiding Roman officer. Festus knew this well and respected Roman regulations, especially when publicly called upon to follow them by Paul. Thus the apostle put Festus on public notice to follow Roman law and not give in to the demands of these Jewish leaders.

The final clause merely affirms the initial *provocatio* expression of appeal to the emperor (v. 10a): Καίσαρα ἐπικαλοῦμαι, I appeal to the emperor.<sup>274</sup> One important point to remember here: Paul is not appealing to a higher court for reversal of a sentence in a lower court, which is the normal implication of the English verb ‘appeal’ in a legal setting. Paul made a *provocatio*, rather than an *appellatio*, here. No trial had thus far been conducted that reached a verdict. Paul demanded that his case be tried before the emperor rather than before the governor. This repetition of his initial stating of his *provocatio*, ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρος ἐστὼς εἰμι (v. 10a) in more formal legal expression, simply re-enforces his point of demanding to be tried by the Roman emperor rather than the Roman governor Festus.

Festus’ response is succinctly stated by Luke in verse 12: τότε ὁ Φῆστος συλλαλήσας μετὰ τοῦ συμβουλίου ἀπεκρίθη· Καίσαρα ἐπικέκλησαι, ἐπὶ Καίσαρα πορεύσῃ. Then Festus, after he had conferred with his council, replied, “You have appealed to the emperor; to the emperor you will go.” This demand by Paul brought the legal hearing in Caesarea to an immediate halt. The Jewish leaders went back to Jerusalem empty handed and completely thwarted in their intentions of ridding themselves of Paul.

What remained for the governor was to consult with his council of advisors on the proper procedure from this point forward: συλλαλήσας μετὰ τοῦ συμβουλίου.<sup>275</sup> Normally such advisory councils were composed of Roman citizens who lived in the area, along with military personnel and officials who attended the governor.<sup>276</sup> Very

exercised his right of appeal only under considerable pressure.<sup>367</sup> Indeed, in view of Acts 28:19, one must say he felt compelled to do so, and did not bring up the matter before he felt so compelled.<sup>368</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 722–723.]

<sup>273</sup>“The *Lex Julia* had affirmed or reaffirmed such a right of appeal in strong terms, and had made clear the penalties for a magistrate’s interfering with the process: ‘Anyone invested with authority who puts to death or orders to be put to death, tortures, scourges, condemns, or directs Roman citizen who first appealed to the people, and now has appealed to the Emperor, to be placed in chains, shall be condemned under the *Lex Julia* relating to public violence. The punishment of this crime is death, where the parties are of inferior station; deportation to an island where they are of superior station’ (Paulus, *Sent.* 5.26.1; *Digest* 48.6–7).” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 725.]

<sup>274</sup>“LS 635f. and BA 595f. give no other example of ἐπικαλεῖσθαι Καίσαρα. They quote Plutarch, Marcellus 2 (299), τοὺς δημάρχους ἐπικαλοῦμενος, appealing to the tribunes of the people, and Tiberius p 1131 Gracchus 16 (832), ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸν δῆμον ἀπὸ τῶν δικαστῶν, to appeal from the judges to the people. For Roman law on appealing to the Emperor see Sherwin-White (68–70) (with his reference on 59 to A. H. M. Jones); also Tajra (144–7). At this point in the development of Roman practice the institution was not the later *appellatio*, by which (as in modern English law) a condemned and sentenced person might apply to a higher court to have verdict, or sentence, or both, changed, but *provocatio*, which was an appeal before trial to a higher court which would then take the whole case, trial, verdict, and sentence out of the lower court. It is clearly this procedure that is described in Acts. Attempts of one kind and another have been made to try Paul, but in none has a verdict been reached. Paul knows, or believes, that trial before Jews would be fatal, perhaps thinks that Festus is weakening, and therefore plays his trump card. Cf. Schneider (2:356f.) (against Haenchen): ‘Für Lukas ist das genannte Motiv für die Appellation des Paulus mit der Befürchtung verbunden, der Stadthalter könne den Juden weiter entgegenkommen und ihn schliesslich ausliefern.’ Henceforward he will appear before the Governor, but only in fact-finding inquiries, designed to provide Festus with material for the report he would be obliged to send.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1130–1131.]

<sup>275</sup>“The *symbolion* functioned as a group of advisors for a magistrate (see 4 Macc 17:17; compare Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 254; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 16:163). Since the authority of a procurator in matters *extra ordinem* (outside the code of law) was broad, and Festus could probably have ignored Paul’s appeal with no one the wiser, his consultation apparently led him to believe that allowing Paul’s appeal would help remove him from an awkward situation.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 422.]

<sup>276</sup>“This sudden appeal to Caesar stopped the judicial hearing<sup>369</sup> and caused Festus to consult with his own judicial council normally made up of Roman citizens who lived in that area, military personnel and officials who attended the governor, among whom would likely be at least one expert in Roman (and Jewish?) law. This council was only an advisory body.<sup>370</sup> The discussion may have been about whether the appeal should be granted, if one agrees with Garnsey that Festus was not obligated to grant such an appeal.<sup>371</sup> Sherwin-White and A. H. M. Jones, however, argue that the procurator was obliged to honor such an appeal in an *extra ordinem* case.<sup>372</sup> If this is so, then the council will have been consulted to determine whether this was in fact an *extra ordinem* sort of case.<sup>373</sup>

“Even if Paul’s case could have been subsumed under the ordinary sort of crimes, it would apparently have fallen into the category of treason (acting against the emperor), and this matter was beyond the authority of the provincial matter since it involved the *dignitas* and final ‘authority’ of the emperor directly.<sup>374</sup> Whatever the nature of this consultation, we are told the result was that Festus



likely this council concluded that Paul's appeal gave Festus a good 'out' from the dilemma of the demands of these Jewish leaders and the requirements of the *Lex Julia* for Roman citizens. Legally the appeal took Paul's case out of Festus' hands, thus giving him a face saving option for not granting the demands of the Jews. In light of their advice Festus' verdict was very simple: τότε ὁ Φῆστος...ἀπεκρίθη· Καίσαρα ἐπικέκλησαι, ἐπὶ Καίσαρα πορεύσῃ, Then Festus replied, "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go." In one sense, this got Festus 'off the hook' regarding the Jewish demands.<sup>277</sup> But in another, it created another problem for him. He would now have to detail charges within Roman law against Paul that he could send to emperor Nero along with Paul.

### 8.1.2.5.3 Festus consults with King Agrippa, Acts 25:13-22

13 Ἡμερῶν δὲ διαγενομένων τινῶν Ἀγρίππας ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ Βερνίκη κατήντησαν εἰς Καισάρειαν ἀσπασάμενοι τὸν Φῆστον. 14 ὡς δὲ πλείους ἡμέρας διέτριβον ἐκεῖ, ὁ Φῆστος τῷ βασιλεῖ ἀνέθετο τὰ κατὰ τὸν Παῦλον λέγων· ἄνθρωπος τίς ἐστιν καταλειμμένος ὑπὸ Φήλικος δέσμιος, 15 περὶ οὗ γενομένου μου εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐνεφάνισαν οἱ ἄρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν Ἰουδαίων αἰτούμενοι κατ' αὐτοῦ καταδίκην. 16 πρὸς οὓς ἀπεκρίθη ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἔθος Ῥωμαίοις χαρίζεσθαι τινα ἄνθρωπον πρὶν ἢ ὁ κατηγορούμενος κατὰ πρόσωπον ἔχει τοὺς κατηγοροὺς τόπον τε ἀπολογίας λάβει περὶ τοῦ ἐγκλήματος. 17 συνελθόντων οὖν [αὐτῶν] ἐνθάδε ἀναβολὴν μηδεμίαν ποιησάμενος τῇ ἐξῆς καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐκέλευσα ἀχθῆναι τὸν ἄνδρα· 18 περὶ οὗ σταθέντες οἱ κατήγοροι οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν ἔφερον ὧν ἐγὼ ὑπενόουν πονηρῶν, 19 ζητήματα δὲ τίνα περὶ τῆς ἰδίας δεισιδαιμονίας εἶχον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ περὶ

came forth and proclaimed that, having appealed to Caesar, to Caesar he would go."

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 723.]

<sup>277</sup>"The political maneuvering reveals more about each of the characters. Concerning the Jewish leadership we learn only that their hostility to Paul has not waned in the least despite a two-year period of imprisonment. At the first opportunity, they seek from the new governor a reversal of venue, to get Paul back in their own control. More than that, they have abandoned any pretense of legal process: they actively seek to kill Paul by way of ambush (25:3). Yet, when they are brought to Caesarea and 'surround' Paul, their 'many and weighty charges' come to nothing, for they bring no proof for any of them (25:7).

"The Roman authorities fare little better. Festus we can blame but little, for he came into a very ticklish situation (how ticklish, we shall see below). He observes the proper procedures, but it is obvious that if there is any way he can bend them to 'do a favor to the Jews,' he will do so. The character who emerges least favorably from the sequence is the governor Felix. Despite his promise to bring the case to a close, he fails to summon Lysias to testify; he keeps Paul in prison for two years; he invites Paul to give a lecture on the Messiah, but when the message strikes too close to his own tangled life, he grows alarmed and refuses to listen further (24:25). But he keeps seeking conversations with the prisoner in the hope that Paul will give him a bribe (24:26). Finally, in an arbitrary attempt at winning Jewish favor, he leaves Paul in prison for his successor to deal with (24:27); an altogether shameless performance. Against this backdrop of hostility, corruption, and time-serving, Paul's character emerges as truly philosophical. Paul knows his legal rights, and makes use of them. He fearlessly proclaims before the governor and his wife the demands of righteousness and self-control. He is not afraid to die.

"All these things we learn simply from Luke's narrative, and assuming nothing beyond the narrative world he has constructed. But if we expand our horizon to take in what we know of the characters from other sources, Luke's account not only gains in plausibility but also in richness. Paul is now moving in the realm of official Roman society. Governors and kings, and their tangled family relations, are the very stuff of ancient histories. From authors such as Josephus, Suetonius, and Tacitus, we are able to construct a fuller context for Luke's narrative. Knowing, for example, that the marriage of Felix and Drusilla was, in fact, rooted in adultery and betrayal (see notes) gives a special force to Paul's discourse on self-control and God's judgment.

"But even more important for understanding the motivation for the political maneuvering of the two Roman governors is the knowledge that Felix's term of office was notorious not only for its corruption, but also for its failure to deal with the social unrest caused by the brigands and revolutionaries (see notes). Now in this setting, if we are to believe Josephus, the Jewish priesthood and Sanhedrin wanted a strong Roman hand, since they themselves were against the brigands. In fact, so angry were the Jewish leaders at Felix's failure in this respect, that after his removal, they went to Rome with formal complaints against him (see notes). In contrast, Festus is given generally good marks for his handling of the brigandage issue.

"Now, if Paul could be regarded as a revolutionary — Lysias at first saw him that way, and the Jewish charges concerning 'the entire empire' also point in that direction — then Felix's desire to keep him in jail 'as a favor to the Jews' makes perfectly good sense. Having failed to control the serious revolutionaries, he could at least demonstrate with Paul a certain attention to the matter. In the same way, the new governor Festus would also want immediately to do everything possible to assuage the anger of the Jewish leadership on this question of brigandage. So he was at least open to the possibility of "doing the Jews a favor" as well, by holding hearings in Jerusalem.

"Once more, the better our knowledge of the social and historical context, the more plausible Luke's account becomes. Knowing these things is not essential for grasping Luke's portrayal of Paul, but it does enrich our appreciation for the historical character of Luke's narrative at this point. For Luke, Paul is the center of the story, and its most important character. But Luke shows his readers that this view is not shared by the other characters, for whom Paul is a convenient pawn for the advancement of their own projects. But at another level entirely — even when Paul seems most passive and his message most powerless — Luke's narrative suggests that God is at work to bring his historical purposes to completion."

[Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 422–424.]

τινος Ἰησοῦ τεθηγκότος ὃν ἔφασκεν ὁ Παῦλος ζῆν. 20 ἀπορούμενος δὲ ἐγὼ τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν ἔλεγον εἰ βούλοιο πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα κάκει κρίνεσθαι περὶ τούτων. 21 τοῦ δὲ Παύλου ἐπικαλεσαμένου τηρηθῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διάγνωσιν, ἐκέλευσα τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἕως οὗ ἀναπέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς Καίσαρα. 22 Ἀγρίππας δὲ πρὸς τὸν Φῆστον· ἐβουλόμην καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀκοῦσαι. αὔριον, φησίν, ἀκοῦση αὐτοῦ.

13 After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. 14 Since they were staying there several days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man here who was left in prison by Felix. 15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me about him and asked for a sentence against him. 16 I told them that it was not the custom of the Romans to hand over anyone before the accused had met the accusers face to face and had been given an opportunity to make a defense against the charge. 17 So when they met here, I lost no time, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. 18 When the accusers stood up, they did not charge him with any of the crimes that I was expecting. 19 Instead they had certain points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. 20 Since I was at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wished to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of his Imperial Majesty, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to the emperor." 22 Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you will hear him."

Some help with figuring out what to charge Paul with came through a formal protocol visit of Herod Agrippa II, and his sister Bernice. This visit took place ἡμερῶν δὲ διαγενομένων τινῶν, and after some days had passed. This rather unusual specification of an interval of time stresses a shorter period than years or even months.<sup>278</sup> The starting point is Festus verdict accepting Paul's appeal to the emperor (v. 12) and the stopping point is the arrival of Agrippa and Bernice for a state visit to welcome the new governor Festus. The location is Caesarea.<sup>279</sup>

Herod Agrippa, or Ἀγρίππας ὁ βασιλεὺς, Agrippa the king -- as Luke puts it, but officially his name was Marcus Julius Agrippa -- was the son of Herod Agrippa I who executed James in Jerusalem and whose death is described in Acts 12:23. He was the last of the line of Herods to have rulership in the middle east in the ancient world and the great grandson of Herod the Great. Born appx. in 27/28 AD, he was educated as a boy in the court of Roman emperor Claudius. Out of this background, he remained loyal to the Romans all through his life until his death in 100 AD at the unusually old age of about 70 years. He never married and had no children, although unfounded rumors circulated for a long time of a incestuous relationship with his sister Bernice. In 48 AD he received from Claudius the small principality of Chalcis in Syria, and also included was the legal rights of superintending the temple in Jerusalem and the appointing of the high priest. Gradually over time, despite some setbacks here and there, he managed to extend the territory of his reign from first Claudius and then Nero whom he knew well personally. His capricious manner of ruthless domination made him quite unpopular among most Jews, as well as greatly feared. For Festus, here was both a close friend of the emperor in Rome as well as a ruler whom the high priest in Jerusalem despised intensely.



<sup>278</sup>“ἡμερῶν ... τινῶν. All one can say of the period is that it seemed more natural to measure it in days than in years (Luke and other biblical writers do not often use weeks and months to express intervals). The story gives the impression that Festus has not made up his mind what to do with the prisoner whom he has just consigned to Rome.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1134.]

<sup>279</sup>“The visit was a courtesy call. The tense of the participle has been much discussed. The future participle (ἀσπασόμενοι) might be expected as a normal manner of expressing purpose, and this is read by Ψ 36 81 323 1739 1891 2495 pm lat sy sa. In the versions this may well be a matter of correct interpretation (e.g. Vulgate, *ad salutandum Festum*), but in Greek texts it must be a ‘correction’. C. D. Chambers (JTS 24 (1923), 183–7) and W. F. Howard (JTS 24 (1923), 403–6) argued that here the aorist participle was used to express purpose; so also Williams (260). It is probably correct to speak of coincident action; so M. 1:132f., observing that some classical precedent can be found for this in Pindar, Pythians 4:189 (λέξαιτο πάντας ἐπαινῆσαις), which Bruce (1:435) renders ‘mustered and praised them’, adding that the phrase in Acts is equivalent to κατήντησαν καὶ ἠσπᾶσαντο. Cf. Metzger (492), who gives a full bibliography on the grammatical question. Haenchen (643) comments, ‘Begrüssung und Besuch fallen zusammen’. Preuschen (143) somewhat differently: ‘Die von den meisten Hss gebotene Lesart ἀσπασόμενοι setzt voraus, dass die Begrüssung in Jerusalem stattfand.’ See also M. 3:80. Zerwick (§ 264) notes the view that understands ‘adventum et salutationem quasi ut actionem unam quae esset “visitatio (adventus) salutaria” (actio coincidens),’ p 1136 but adds (§ 265) that the action may be subsequent. See also Moule (IB 100, 202); BDR § 339:1, n. 4 (‘wobei sie begrüßten’); § 351:1, n. 2.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1135–1136.]

Since Agrippa controlled the temple precincts in Jerusalem, and ultimately the high priest had to answer directly to him, Agrippa was an important power figure for Festus to get along with. His deep connections to Rome made him more trustworthy to this Roman governor. And Agrippa's network of powerful friends in Palestine<sup>280</sup> gave him influence and insights that could help the governor decide how to move forward with Paul's appeal to the emperor.

Agrippa's sister, Bernice, Βερνίκη, is an interesting study in survival by aristocratic women in the ancient world.<sup>281</sup> She managed to snare several powerful men over her lifetime, and scandal was never far behind.<sup>282</sup> During the 50s and 60s she lived as a widow with her bachelor brother Agrippa II who took care of her and her two sons (Berenicianus and Hyrcanus, Jos. JW 2.221; cf. Ant 19.276ff.; 20.104). Thus she was accompanying him on one of his many protocol visits when they came to Caesarea to welcome Festus to Palestine: Ἀγρίππας ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ Βερνίκη κατήντησαν εἰς Καισάρειαν ἀσπασάμενοι τὸν Φῆστον.

Unlike the visit of the Jewish leaders to Caesarea (vv. 6) that lasted only a couple of days, and even Festus' week long trip to Jerusalem before that (v. 6), this royal visit lasted a number of days: Ἡμερῶν δὲ διαγενομένων τινῶν. This provided greater opportunity for interaction between Festus and Agrippa over a wider range of topics. Luke hints that these two men trusted one another and Josephus confirms this with his depiction of the relationship between the two.

One of the topics of conversation that came up concerned the apostle Paul: ὁ Φῆστος τῷ βασιλεῖ ἀνέθετο τὰ κατὰ τὸν Παῦλον λέγων, *Festus put before the king the things concerning Paul, saying...*<sup>283</sup> The formal language used here signals serious conversations taking place about the best options for dealing with Paul's situation. Literarily, vv. 13-27 form an *ethopoeia* unit reflecting interest in the character of Festus by Luke through recording a speech of Festus.<sup>284</sup> In verses 14b-21, Luke summarizes Festus' relating the details of Paul's situation to

---

<sup>280</sup>The party of the Herodians that was very active and influential functioned as a main base of support for Agrippa in Judea. These were hugely wealthy aristocrats, most of whom despised the high priest and the upper leadership of the priesthood in the temple. Any Jew being opposed by the priestly leadership would tend to gain a sympathetic response from these Jewish aristocrats. And particularly if he happened to possess Roman citizenship.

<sup>281</sup>Berenice of Cilicia, also known as Julia Berenice and sometimes spelled Bernice (28 AD – ?), was a Jewish client queen of the Roman Empire during the second half of the 1st century. Berenice was a member of the Herodian Dynasty that ruled the Roman province of Judaea between 39 BC and 92 AD. She was the daughter of King Herod Agrippa I and a sister of King Herod Agrippa II.

“What little is known about the life and background of Berenice has been handed down to us through the New Testament book of Acts, the 25th chapter. Also the early historian Flavius Josephus, who detailed a history of the Jewish people and wrote an account of the Jewish Rebellion of 67. However, it is for her tumultuous love life that Berenice is primarily known today. After a number of failed marriages throughout the 40s, she spent much of the remainder of her life at the court of her brother Herod Agrippa II, amidst rumors the two were carrying on an incestuous relationship. During the First Jewish-Roman War, Berenice began a love affair with the future emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus. However, her unpopularity among the Romans compelled Titus to dismiss Berenice upon his accession as emperor in 79. When he died two years later, so did Berenice disappear from the historical record.”

[“Berenice (daughter of Herod Agrippa),” wikipedia.org]

<sup>282</sup>“Berenice's biography is beset by rumors and gossip of a more or less scurrilous nature. She is even said to have had another lover among Vespasian's followers, who is said to have lost his life on that account (Epit. de caes. 10.4). The Romans expected such behavior from queens and would even have created it where it did not exist (Braund 1984b). Bernice is regularly given the title of queen.” [David C. Braund, “Berenice (Person),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 678.]

<sup>283</sup>“ἀνέθετο is most naturally taken in the technical legal sense of refer, remit. Surprisingly LS 123 and MM 38 both prefer impart, communicate; the accompanying expression τὰ κατὰ τὸν Παῦλον (see M. 3:15), Paul's case, has a definitely legal sound and carries ἀνέθετο with it. Of course the reference here is an informal one. Agrippa and Bernice do not constitute a higher court. The only court to which Paul's case could after his appeal be formally remitted was the Emperor's. But Festus felt himself in need of consultation beyond that which he had had with his συμβούλιον (25:12), and took the opportunity afforded by the neighbourly visit. Festus begins to sum up the case so far as it had gone. With this summing up Ehrhardt (Acts 119f.), compares Pliny, Epistles 10:74 (the case of Callidromus).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1136.]

<sup>284</sup>Acts 25:13–27 could be taken as the introduction to the next episode, Paul's defense before Agrippa (so Johnson 1992, 427; Talbert 2005, 205; Tannehill 1990, 309). Certainly Paul remains the focus of the narrative, and 25:13–27 allows Agrippa to hear a summary of Paul's case before hearing from Paul himself. This section, however, also focuses on the character of Festus. For more than half of the unit (25:13–23a) Paul steps offstage, a rarity in the second half of Acts. Furthermore, 223 of the 307 words (more than 70 percent) in this section are direct discourse attributed to Festus. Given the ancients' interest in *ethopoeia*, speech in character, it is necessary to attend to Festus's speech not only in terms of what it contributes to the plot of Paul's trial but also to the authorial audience's understanding of the characterization (and character) of Festus.” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 332–333.]



Agrippa.<sup>285</sup>

This direct discourse as a unit of expression stands as the object of the participle λέγων. The discourse itself is broken down into five sentences: 1) vv. 14b-15; 2) v. 16; 3) vv. 17-19; 4) v. 20; 5) v. 21.<sup>286</sup>

**1) vv. 14b-15:** ἀνὴρ τίς ἐστὶν καταλειμμένος ὑπὸ Φήλικος δέσμιος, περὶ οὗ γενομένου μου εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐνεφάνισαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν Ἰουδαίων αἰτούμενοι κατ' αὐτοῦ καταδικῆν, *A certain man has been left a prisoner by Felix, about whom, when I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews made charges requesting condemnation against him.* The Genitive Absolute temporal expression γενομένου μου εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα has often been viewed as a Semitism but the blurring of distinction between the prepositions ἐν and εἰς in the Hellenistic Greek of the first century is well established.<sup>287</sup> What Festus reports to Agrippa is that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem wanted Paul executed. They could not legally do it and thus were pressing Festus to execute Paul. What they did not reveal to Festus was their secret plan to ambush Paul while in Roman custody and kill him.

**2) v. 16:** πρὸς οὓς ἀπεκρίθη ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἔθος Ῥωμαίοις χαρίζεσθαι τινα ἄνθρωπον πρὶν ἢ ὁ κατηγορούμενος κατὰ πρόσωπον ἔχει τοὺς κατηγοροὺς τόπον τε ἀπολογίας λάβει περὶ τοῦ ἐγκλήματος, *To whom I answered that it is not the Roman custom to hand over some individual before the accused may have opportunity to meet his accusers face to face, and may receive opportunity for a defense against the charge.* Festus claims to have informed the Jewish leaders about the Roman legal process<sup>288</sup> of giving the accused opportunity to face his accusers and defend himself against their charges against him.<sup>289</sup> In Luke's earlier narratives of events in both Jerusalem

<sup>285c</sup>In what follows in vv. 14–22 we find a rehearsal of material that, for the most part, we have already heard about earlier in this chapter. It may be, since it seems unlikely that Luke would have access to the private discussions of Festus and Agrippa and Bernice, that here Luke followed the historical convention of making the persons say what they were likely to have said on the occasion.<sup>397</sup> What is of interest for our purposes is noting the differences from what we have already learned in 25:1–12 as a revelation of Festus's attempt to put himself in the best possible light before this Jewish ruler.

“First, he implicitly blames Felix for not resolving the matter—Paul is left in prison by Felix (v. 14). Secondly, he portrays himself as the great upholder of Roman law against the importuning of the Jewish authorities that Paul be sentenced (vv. 15–16). Thirdly, he portrays himself as a person who acts with dispatch, who will dispense justice in good time and order (v. 17). Fourthly, he cites the incompetence of the accusers. They did not accuse Paul of any of the crimes he was expecting them to charge him with (v. 18); rather, it appeared to be a purely internal Jewish matter about certain points of religion (v. 19). Next, he suggests that this matter left him at a loss as to how to investigate or examine such charges (since they were not Roman charges),<sup>398</sup> and so quite naturally he asked Paul if he wished to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there on such (religious) charges (v. 20). Nothing whatsoever is said here about Festus's desire to do the Jewish authorities a favor. Festus is too busy portraying himself as an able governor doing what seemed right and fair in a difficult situation. Then, says Festus, Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, an action Festus will later suggest is illogical (v. 27) since there were no substantive charges against him. In fact, as Cassidy says, Paul had not appealed to stay in custody; he had simply appealed to the emperor.<sup>399</sup>

“As Tannehill has warned us, too many commentators have been beguiled into taking Festus's report at face value, rather than as a self-serving report. But the voice of Festus is not the voice of Luke, and his words should be evaluated critically.<sup>400</sup> The overall net effect of this portrayal of Festus is that he is revealed to be not only self-serving but also a novice. Indeed, to judge from the way he refers to “a certain Jesus” (25:19), he seems not even to have heard of Jesus.”

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 728–729.]

<sup>286c</sup>Festus uses this opportunity to involve Agrippa in the proceedings against Paul and, of equal importance, to offer a public defense of his own actions. In these two speeches by Festus (25:14–22, 24–27), Luke subtly discloses Festus's hypocrisy without explicitly labeling it as such (for what follows, see Tannehill 1990, 310–15). Festus's report adds details to the case, providing, from his perspective, a fuller account of the proceedings, but in the process he also attempts to put himself in the best possible light before Agrippa.” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 333–334.]

<sup>287</sup>For those without training in Greek the temporal / locational meaning of ἐν used with the dative case noun is static location, comparable to ‘being in something.’ But with εἰς and the accusative case, the meaning is dynamic denoting movement ‘into’ something. This was the dominant pattern in classical Attic Greek, but that line of distinction became blurred with Hellenistic or Koine Greek usage. This is somewhat similar to patterns in most of the non-English modern western languages, whereas in English, with just the ‘objective’ case and no inflectional spelling differences, the static ‘in’ stands over against the dynamic ‘into.’

Thus γενομένου μου εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα can be correctly translated either as ‘when I went to Jerusalem,’ or as ‘when I was in Jerusalem.’ Both patterns will surface in different English translations.

<sup>288c</sup>Pride in the Roman order by one of its administrators is evident in the statement. For Luke's characteristic use of ethos (“custom”), see Luke 1:9; 2:42; 23:39; Acts 6:14; 15:1; 16:22; 21:21. The principle cited here is clearly stated in Appian, *The Civil Wars* 3, 8, 54, and Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 16:258. Christian apologists would later make appeal to this process (see Justin, *Apology* 1:3). The phrase ‘given a chance to make a defense’ is literally ‘receive a place (topos) for an apology (apologia).’ [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 426.]

<sup>289c</sup>ἀπολογία and ἐγκλημα are both technical forensic terms; see 22:1; 23:29. Properly an ἐγκλημα is a written accusation, but there is no need to suppose that Luke had this in mind. MM 139f. quote only papyri; ND 3:66 (cf. 4:86) adds Dittenberger, OGIS 1:229:41.

and Caesarea no mention of the governor having said this to the Jewish leaders. The closest expression is his words to these leaders at Jerusalem in 25:5, οἱ οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν, φησὶν, δυνατοὶ συγκαταβάντες εἴ τί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἄτοπον κατηγορεῖτωσαν αὐτοῦ, “So,” he said, “let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him.” Of course Luke only summarizes the conversations, and thus Festus may have told them the details then, that he here claims to Agrippa that he did. One of two dynamics emerge here. Festus, in his claim made to Agrippa, ‘expands’ the truth for self serving purposes. Or, else Luke intentionally portrays him in a self-serving light as he narrates the two conversations. Given what we know about Festus from Josephus, it is no stretch to see Festus as self-serving in an extreme way.

**3) vv. 17-19:** 17 συνελθόντων οὖν [αὐτῶν] ἐνθάδε ἀναβολὴν μηδεμίαν ποιησάμενος τῇ ἐξῆς καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐκέλευσα ἀχθῆναι τὸν ἄνδρα· 18 περὶ οὗ σταθέντες οἱ κατήγοροι οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν ἔφερον ὧν ἐγὼ ὑπενόουν πονηρῶν, 19 ζητήματα δὲ τινα περὶ τῆς ἰδίας δεισιδαιμονίας εἶχον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ περὶ τινος Ἰησοῦ τεθνηκότος ὃν ἔφασκεν ὁ Παῦλος ζῆν. 17 So when they met here, I lost no time, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. 18 When the accusers stood up, they did not charge him with any of the crimes that I was expecting. 19 Instead they had certain points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. One point of truthfulness is the first statement that Paul was brought before the convened hearing the next day after the Jewish leaders arrived in Caesarea as 25:6 describes. Perhaps Festus was anticipating a charge of sedition against Rome for having led a band of insurrectionists as Claudius Lysias had first assumed when Paul was taken into custody in the temple outer court (cf. Acts 21:38<sup>290</sup>). But whatever his expectation was, the actual charges brought against Paul by the Jewish leaders did not go the direction Festus anticipated. Instead, their accusations grew out of perceived violations of Jewish law and centered on beliefs about Jesus Christ, mainly His resurrection. Here is a new perspective in the depiction of the Jewish charges against Paul. Up to this point, nothing has been said specifically about Christ and His resurrection in any of the preceding depictions.

Interestingly, from the tidbits of information about specific charges brought against Paul during this entire process a pattern of shifting the nature and details of the charges against him surface.

**a) Jews from Asia in the Court of Israel in the Jerusalem temple:** 21:28, κράζοντες· ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται, βοηθεῖτε· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ τόπου τούτου πάντας πανταχῆ διδάσκων, ἔτι τε καὶ Ἕλληνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καὶ κεκοίνωκεν τὸν ἅγιον τόπον τοῦτον, shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”

**b) The Jewish mob in the outer court of the temple: 21:33b-34,** καὶ ἐπυνθάνετο τίς εἶη καὶ τί ἐστιν πεποιηκώς. 34 ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλο τι ἐπεφώνουν ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ. μὴ δυναμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλές διὰ τὸν θόρυβον ἐκέλευσεν ἄγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν. he inquired who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

**c) The Jewish mob listening to Paul speak from the steps of the barracks: 22:22-23, 22** Ἦκουον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄχρι τούτου τοῦ λόγου καὶ ἐπῆραν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν λέγοντες· αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν. 23 κραυγαζόντων τε αὐτῶν καὶ ῥιπτούντων τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ κονιορτὸν βαλλόντων εἰς τὸν ἀέρα, 22 Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” 23 And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and tossing dust into the air,

**d) Paul before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem: 23:9,** ἐγένετο δὲ κραυγὴ μεγάλη, καὶ ἀναστάντες τινὲς τῶν γραμματέων τοῦ μέρους τῶν Φαρισαίων διεμάχοντο λέγοντες· οὐδὲν κακὸν εὐρίσκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ· εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἢ ἄγγελος; Then a great clamor arose, and certain scribes of the Pharisees’ group stood up and contended, “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?”

**e) Claudius Lysias’, the Roman tribune, letter to Felix: 23:29,** ὃν εὔρον ἐγκαλούμενον περὶ ζητημάτων τοῦ νόμου αὐτῶν, μηδὲν δὲ ἄξιον θανάτου ἢ δεσμῶν ἔχοντα ἐγκλημα. I found that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but was charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.

“For the Roman principle appealed to see Digest 48:17:1: et hoc iure utimur, ne absentes damnantur neque enim inaudita causa quemquam damnari aequitatis ratio patitur. Cf. Justin, I Apology 3; Tertullian, Apology 1:3; 2:2; Appian, Bellum Civile 3:54: ὁ μὲν νόμος, ὃ βουλή, δικαιοὶ τὸν εὐθυνόμενον αὐτὸν ἀκοῦσαι τε τῆς κατηγορίας καὶ ἀπολογησάμενον ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ κρίνεσθαι; Tacitus, Histories 1:6.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1137.]

<sup>290</sup>Acts 21:38. οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ὁ πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναστατώσας καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοὺς τετρακισχίλιους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων;

Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?

f) *Tertullus' accusations at Caesarea before Felix in behalf of the Jewish leadership: 24:2-8*, 2 κληθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἤρξατο κατηγορεῖν ὁ Τέρτυλλος λέγων· πολλῆς εἰρήνης τυγχάνοντες διὰ σοῦ καὶ διορθωμάτων γινομένων τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ διὰ τῆς σῆς προνοίας, 3 πάντη τε καὶ πανταχοῦ ἀποδεχόμεθα, κράτιστε Φῆλιξ, μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας. 4 ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπτω, παρακαλῶ ἀκοῦσαι σε ἡμῶν συντόμως τῆ σῆ ἐπιεικείᾳ. 5 εὐρόντες γὰρ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν καὶ κινοῦντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως, 6 ὃς καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐπέειπασεν βεβηλῶσαι ὃν καὶ ἐκρατήσαμεν, 8 παρ' οὗ δυνήσῃ αὐτὸς ἀνακρίνας περὶ πάντων τούτων ἐπιγνῶναι ὧν ἡμεῖς κατηγοροῦμεν αὐτοῦ. 2 *When Paula had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: "Your Excellency, because of you we have long enjoyed peace, and reforms have been made for this people because of your foresight. 3 We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. 5 We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him."*

g) *Jewish leaders' accusations before Festus at Caesarea: 25:6-7*, 6 Διατρίψας δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέρας οὐ πλείους ὀκτῶ ἢ δέκα, καταβὰς εἰς Καισάρειαν, τῆ ἐπαύριον καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐκέλευσεν τὸν Παῦλον ἀχθῆναι. 7 παραγενομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ περιέστησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβεβηκότες Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδεῖξαι, 6 *After he had stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. 7 When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.*

What emerges from these texts is that the closest to mentioning Christ in the Jewish charges comes with Tertullus' accusation that Paul was "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως) in 24:5. The issue of the resurrection only came up in Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, but it was focused generally on the concept of resurrection, not on Christ's resurrection: *When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead."* (23:6, Γνοῦς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων, περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι.). When then did the topic of Christ's resurrection surface as a point of accusation against Paul? The clear answer from the available data is that we don't know at which point this topic arose. In Luke's previous narratives no clear signal is given. And this is a good reminder of the highly summary nature of Luke's narratives. He only mentions those elements relevant to his writing purposes; no effort is made at all to provide a detailed accounting of each episode of Paul's appearances before the various authorities. Then why does Luke mention it here as Festus reflects back? Very likely this is to anticipate Paul's discussion with Agrippa that will include such topics (cf. 26:12-18).

4) *v. 20*: ἀπορούμενος δὲ ἐγὼ τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν ἔλεγον εἰ βούλοιο πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα κάκεῖ κρίνεσθαι περὶ τούτων. *Since I was at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wished to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges.* Again, Festus is less than truthful here. He gives as a reason for his request to Paul about being tried in Jerusalem his inability to understand the nature of the charges against Paul. But in 25:9 Luke explicitly states the motivation behind Festus' request to Paul was θέλων τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις χάριν καταθέσθαι, *wishing to grant the Jews a favor*. The precise meaning, also, of his reason can be stated one of two ways: a) "I was at a loss in a dispute (zētēsis) on these things; b) I was at a loss how to investigate (zētēsis) such matters."<sup>291</sup> This is derived from two sources: ἀπορούμενος from ἀπορέω can express either mental confusion about a situation or uncertainty about what to decide in a situation; also ζήτησιν from ζήτησις can refer either to a dispute or an investigation. Given the contextual setting Festus most likely was given as his excuse to send Paul to Jerusalem his uncertainty about how to investigate the charges since they did not pertain to Roman law and were coming out of an unfamiliar Jewish legal source.<sup>292</sup>

5) *v. 21*: τοῦ δὲ Παύλου ἐπικαλεσαμένου τηρηθῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διάγνωσιν, ἐκέλευσα τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἕως οὗ ἀναπέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς Καίσαρα. *But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of his Imperial Majesty, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to the emperor.* This is perhaps the most

<sup>291</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 426.

<sup>292</sup>"Because of the offer immediately made to Paul, the latter translation is preferable. It is obvious that for a Roman administrator to confess incompetence to judge is itself a declaration that matters internal to religious disputes rather than criminal law are involved." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 426.]



honest thing that Festus reported to Agrippa. Quite interesting is the play on τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, [his Imperial Majesty](#), and Καίσαρα, [the emperor](#). Both terms were referring to Nero who was the Roman Caesar at that time. The first term, τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, actually is the adjective σεβαστός, -ή, -όν used as a noun here and with the root meaning of ‘worthy of reverence,’ ‘revered,’ ‘august.’<sup>293</sup> It is a translation of the Latin *Augustus* that was initially a title of honor and evolved into the most remembered name of the first Roman emperor. For Festus, using the title here reflects an appropriate referencing of his boss in Rome, who was also Καίσαρ, as he indicates as the end of his statement.<sup>294</sup> Paul’s being held in custody is reference twice with τηρηθῆναι αὐτὸν and τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν, both infinitives from τηρέω with the sense of being ‘held in custody’ but without implying the level of detention implemented. The primary thrust is that he was not free to leave the governor’s palace in Caesarea. Thus Paul was being retained there for the purpose of εἰς τὴν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διάγνωσιν, [for the decision of his Imperial Majesty](#). This was Paul’s demand as a Roman citizen and Festus was compelled to follow it as he indicates: ἐκέλευσα τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἕως οὗ ἀναπέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς Καίσαρα, [I ordered him to be held until I could send him to the emperor](#).

Agrippa’s response to Festus’ report is contained in verse 22: Ἀγρίππας δὲ πρὸς τὸν Φῆστον· ἐβουλόμην καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀκοῦσαι. αὔριον, φησὶν, ἀκούσῃ αὐτοῦ. [Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.”](#) “Tomorrow,” he said, “you will hear him.” What Festus described to Agrippa caught his attention and curiosity so that he also wanted to know more about this man called Paul. Festus is fully prepared to fulfill Agrippa’s wish. Interestingly the use of the imperfect tense form ἐβουλόμην, rather than the Aorist tense, conveys the sense of “I myself have been wanting to hear this man.”<sup>295</sup> Additionally the use of βούλομαι rather than θέλω intensifies the nature of the desire to something akin to “I have been intending to.” As well, the addition of the intensive pronoun αὐτὸς with the first person singular verb stresses heightened desire. This interest in Paul by Agrippa parallels that of his grand uncle Herod Antipas who was similarly curious about Jesus as Luke recorded in Luke 23:8.<sup>296</sup> One should note a couple of differences, however, between the two accounts: Jesus refused to defend himself while Paul will present a full defense of his actions.<sup>297</sup> The hearing before Antipas didn’t spare Jesus’ life,

<sup>293c</sup> **σεβαστός, ἡ, ὄν** (σεβάζομαι; Dionys. Hal. 2, 75; SIG 820, 6; pap, Philo, Joseph.; loanw. in rabb.) *worthy of reverence, revered, august*, as a transl. of Lat. Augustus and designation of the Roman emperor (Paus. 3, 11, 4 τὸ δὲ ὄνομα εἶναι τούτῳ Αὐγουστος, ὃ κατὰ γλῶσσαν δύναται τὴν Ἑλλήνων σεβαστός=his name is Augustus, which in Gk. is rendered by σεβαστός; Strabo 3, 3, 8; 12, 13, 14; Lucian, Herodian, Philo; Jos., Ant. 16, 173 al.; CIA III 63 [27 B.C.] ἱερεὺς θεᾶς Ῥώμης καὶ Σεβαστοῦ σωτήρος; IG XII/3, 174 [6 B.C.]; pap. As epithet of Antonius Pius, Ar. ins; Just., A I, ins—EBréhier, ByzZ 15, 1906, 161f; 164f; Hahn 116f; Dssm., LO 306 [LAE 358ff]; HDieckmann, Kaisernamen u. Kaiserbez. bei Lukas: ZKT 43, 1919, 213–34; Goodsp., Probs. 136f) ὁ Σεβαστός *His Majesty the Emperor Ac 25:21, 25* (of Nero).—In σπειρα Σεβαστή **27:1** (cp. OGI 421), Σεβαστή is likew. an exact transl. of Lat. Augusta, an honorary title freq. given to auxiliary troops (Ptolem. renders it Σεβαστή in connection w. three legions that bore it: 2, 3, 30; 2, 9, 18; 4, 3, 30) imperial cohort, but σπειρα Σεβαστή cannot be regarded as equivalent to σπειρα Σεβαστηνῶν.—For lit. s. on ἑκατοντάρχης.—DELG s.v. σέβομαι. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 917.]

<sup>294c</sup> **Καῖσαρ, ἀρος, ὁ** (=Lat. Caesar; on the distribution of this word, freq. found in lit., ins, pap s. Hahn [sources and lit. 123, 3] and Magie.—Philo, Joseph., Ar. [ins], Just., SibOr, loanw. in rabb.—In our lit. w. the art. only **Mt 22:21 v.l.**; **Lk 20:25 v.l.**; **J 19:12** [s. B-D-F §254, 1]; Just., A I, 17, 1) *emperor, Caesar* (orig. a proper name, then used as a title) **Mt 22:17, 21a**; **Mk 12:14, 16**; **Lk 20:22, 24**; **23:2** (s. φόρος); **J 19:12b** (cp. Philo, In Flacc. 40), **15**; **Ac 17:7**; **25:8, 10–12, 21**; **26:32**; **27:24**; **28:19**; κύριος K. MPol 8:2. ὁμῶναι τὴν Καίσαρος τύχην (s. τύχη) 9:2; 10:1. τὰ Καίσαρος what belongs to the emperor **Mt 22:21b**; **Mk 12:17**; **Lk 20:25** (HWindisch, Imperium u. Evangelium im NT ’31; KPieper ThGl 25, ’33, 661–69; EStauffer, Gott u. Kaiser im NT ’35; GKittel, Christus u. Imperator ’39; JBennum, Gud och Kejsaren ’40; HLoewe, ‘Render Unto Caesar’ ’40; NHommes, God en Keizer in het NT ’41; OEck, Urgem. u. Imperium ’41; MDibelius, Rom u. die Christen im 1. Jahrh. ’42; JDerrett, Law in the NT, ’70). φίλος τ. Καίσαρος friend of the emperor (as official title CIG 3499, 4; 3500, 4; Epict. 3, 4, 2; 4, 1, 8; 45–48; 95; 4, 4, 5; Jos., Ant. 14, 131) **J 19:12a** (EBamel, TLZ 77, ’52, 205–10); AcPl Ha 11, 4. οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας those (slaves) who belong to the emperor’s household **Phil 4:22** (s. Lgthf., Phil 171ff; Dssm., LO 127, 1; 202, 3; 380 [LAE 382]; New Docs 3, 7–9; and s. οἰκία 3).—W. proper names Τιβέριος K. Emperor Tiberius **Lk 3:1** (Just., A I, 13, 3). ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου K. **Ac 11:28** v.l. (cp. Just., A I, 26, 2; 56, 2). K. Νέρων **2 Ti** subscr.; without name AcPl Ha 9, 4; 14; 26. But Καῖσαρ Αὐγουστος Caesar Augustus **Lk 2:1**, since here K. is not a title, but a part of the name (BI-D. §5, 3a).—Pauly-W. Suppl. IV 806–53; IX 1139–54; Kl. Pauly II 1110–122; IV 1135–40. B. 1324. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 498–499.]

<sup>295c</sup> “The impf. verb eboulomēn might mean that Agrippa had already heard about Paul’s case and has been curious about him: ‘I have been wishing’.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 751.]

<sup>296</sup> **Luke 23:8**. “Ο δὲ Ἡρώδης ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐχάρη λίαν, ἦν γὰρ ἐξ ἱκανῶν χρόνων θέλων ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ ἀκοῦειν περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἠλπίζεν τι σημεῖον ἰδεῖν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ γινόμενον.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign.

<sup>297</sup> The exact opposite responses between Jesus and Paul provide caution against too quickly and easily drawing ‘eternal truths’

while the hearing before Agrippa is intended to help Festus prepare a better charge against Paul to take to the emperor.

Also interesting is the use of the genitive case object τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with the Aorist infinitive ἀκοῦσαι clearly implies hearing with comprehension in contrast to Festus' hearing words but without understanding what they meant. Is there some sarcasm by Luke toward Festus here? Perhaps.

Festus' reply is couched in somewhat formal terms with the use of φησὶν rather than εἶπεν from λέγω. His answer is short and curt: αὐριον ἀκούσῃ αὐτοῦ, [tomorrow you shall hear him](#).<sup>298</sup>

#### 8.1.2.5.4 Paul defends himself before King Agrippa, Acts 25:23-26:32

Luke's narration of Paul's defense speech before Agrippa is the focus point here. He sets it up with a long narrative introduction in 25:23-27, although some commentators would also include vv. 13-27 as introduction. The former view is reflected in the paragraphing of the NRSV of vv. 13-27 as two separate paragraphs (vv. 13-22; 23-27) listed in separate headings. Either approach has merit and does not alter the interpretative understanding. The formal narrative introduction to the speech is presented actually in 26:1. Thus the literary function of 25:13-27, and particularly vv. 23-27, is to provide the background necessary for understanding how Paul came to present his defense to this royal ruler who was one of the descendents of Herod the Great. Thus the Herodian dynasty that continued on in Palestine long after Herod's death came to impact the Gospel negatively just as the great grandfather (cf. Mt. 2:16-18), Herod the Great; the father Herod Agrippa I (cf. Acts 12:1-5, 20-23); and now the great grandson, Herod Agrippa II, illustrate.

The speech proper is presented in 26:2-23 and is one of the longer defense speeches in Acts, surpassed only by that of Stephan in Acts 7:2b-53. The narrative conclusion defining the response to the speech is presented in 26:24-32.

##### 8.1.2.5.4.1 The Rationale for the appearance, Acts 25:23-27

23 Τῇ οὖν ἑπαύριον ἐλθόντος τοῦ Ἀγρίππα καὶ τῆς Βερνίκης μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας καὶ εἰσελθόντων εἰς τὸ ἀκροατήριον σὺν τε χιλιάρχοις καὶ ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ' ἐξοχὴν τῆς πόλεως καὶ κελεύσαντος τοῦ Φήστου ἦχθη ὁ Παῦλος. 24 καὶ φησιν ὁ Φήστος· Ἀγρίππα βασιλεῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ συμπαρόντες ἡμῖν ἄνδρες, θεωρεῖτε τοῦτον περὶ οὗ ἅπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐνέτυχόν μοι ἐν τε Ἱεροσολύμοις καὶ ἐνθάδε βοῶντες μὴ δεῖν αὐτὸν ζῆν μηκέτι. 25 ἐγὼ δὲ κατελαβόμεν μηδὲν ἄξιον αὐτὸν θανάτου πεπραχέναι, αὐτοῦ δὲ τούτου ἐπικαλεσαμένου τὸν Σεβαστὸν ἔκρινα πέμπειν. 26 περὶ οὗ ἀσφαλές τι γράψαι τῷ κυρίῳ οὐκ ἔχω, διὸ προήγαγον αὐτὸν ἐφ' ὑμῶν καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ σοῦ, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, ὅπως τῆς ἀνακρίσεως γενομένης σχῶ τί γράψω· 27 ἄλογον γάρ μοι δοκεῖ πέμποντα δέσμιον μὴ καὶ τὰς κατ' αὐτοῦ αἰτίας σημεῖναι.

23 So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then Festus gave the order and Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish community petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But I found that he had done nothing deserving death; and when he appealed to his Imperial Majesty, I decided to send him. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to our sovereign about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write — 27 for it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him."

The occasion of the hearing comes with political showmanship as much or more than anything else. In setting up the scene Luke emphasizes the pomp and ceremony of this occasion. Was this a show put on with Paul as the entertainment? Or, was the apostle just a circus sideshow with the main objective the glorification of Festus and Agrippa in the eyes of the assembled locals? Although Luke's depiction seems to point to the former, more likely the latter was the intention behind such an elaborate assemblage. In neither perspective were these leaders genuinely interested in what this Jewish Christian had to say. Their hope was to make a spectacle out of Paul for the benefit of the mostly non-Jewish and Roman Gentile audience.

The depiction by Luke is set up with the topic sentence in v. 23: Τῇ οὖν ἑπαύριον ἐλθόντος τοῦ Ἀγρίππα καὶ τῆς Βερνίκης μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας καὶ εἰσελθόντων εἰς τὸ ἀκροατήριον σὺν τε χιλιάρχοις καὶ ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ' ἐξοχὴν τῆς πόλεως καὶ κελεύσαντος τοῦ Φήστου ἦχθη ὁ Παῦλος. [Then on the following day after Agrippa](#)

---

from the examples of biblical characters for modern day application. Each circumstance was different between Jesus and Paul, and both responded appropriately to their individual circumstance. Any present day application of how to respond must give full consideration to this dynamic, or else a false tension between Jesus and Paul on how to handle such legal processes will be created.

<sup>298</sup>“αὐριον: emphatic (and emphasised by φησὶν), indicating the immediate compliance with Agrippa's wish.” [W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: Commentary*, vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 498.]

and Bernice came with much pomp, and after their having entered into the audience hall together with both the tribunes and men with substance in the city, and after Festus had given the order, Paul was brought in. This very literalistic rendering of the Greek text highlights the main clause, ἤχθη ὁ Παῦλος, coming at the very end of the sentence. Three participle phrases expressing secondary ideas precede this main clause.



**First, ἐλθόντος τοῦ Ἀγρίππα καὶ τῆς Βερνίκης μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας,** Prior to this first genitive absolute participle phrase comes the introductory connectors attached to the main clause which is at the end of the sentence: Τῇ οὖν ἑπταύριον. The inferential coordinate conjunction οὖν, then, attaches this statement as an explicit expression that was implied in the preceding statements, particularly in v. 22, and especially to αὔριον, *tomorrow*, in the second sentence of v. 22. The conjunction οὖν highlights that Festus indeed kept his promise to Agrippa. And thus the following day brought the opportunity for Agrippa to interview Paul.

What is not spelled out are the details of arranging for this gathering that included a large number of military officers, presumably already in Caesarea, along with a contingent of local dignitaries. Evidently the prior conference between Festus and Agrippa (vv. 13-22) took place during the morning hours and thus the afternoon and evening provided opportunity for requests to go out to the various individuals who were expected to be present the next day when these two leaders would meet together in a public gathering. Of course, another possible scenario is that this public meeting had already been planned as the *official welcoming* of King Agrippa to Caesarea and to the governor's palace (that Agrippa's great grandfather had built years before) so that he in turn could welcome Festus to his new position as military governor over Judea. Including an interview with Paul provided a handy opportunity for both of them to 'strut' publicly before their assembled audience.

Agrippa II represented a sympathetic ear to Festus not just because of his ancestry as a great grandson of Herod the Great, but due to having been raised during his youth in the imperial palace in Rome as a boyhood friend of Nero. The profile of him available to us comes mainly from Josephus, but this must be evaluated closely since Josephus and Agrippa were close friends and Agrippa was a major source of information for Josephus who preserved two letters from Agrippa in his writings. With his connections to the Jews due to ancestry, he would have a curiosity about Paul and his Christian connections. Such was the case with his father and great grandfather. Further, given the political volatility taking place in Palestine during the fifties, the interest level would be even greater. But it would be wrong to imply in any of this interest a spiritual hunger of any kind by Agrippa.

Accompanying Agrippa was his sister Bernice. She was born one year after Agrippa II in 28 AD. Married three times, she lived with her brother for a period between the second and third marriages. She was often the subject of rumors that she was in an incestuous relationship with her brother during this period, and these rumors prompted her brief third marriage to Polemon which didn't last and led to her return to Agrippa's court. Both Josephus and the Roman historian Juvenal in his *Satire* (bk 2, 6th poem) reported these rumors, but there is no way to know how accurate they may have been. From the available accounts, she was a very strong willed woman and accompanied her brother to most social and official functions joining in the discussions virtually as his equal.

Their arrival is described by Luke as μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, *with great pomp*. Quite interestingly the Greek word φαντασία is the source of the English word *phantasy*. In this single use of the word in the NT, the meaning is centered on elaborate display of power and wealth in a public gathering.<sup>299</sup> This pair put on a real show with their gaudy entrance into the audience hall of the governor's palace.<sup>300</sup> For them, appearance meant everything.

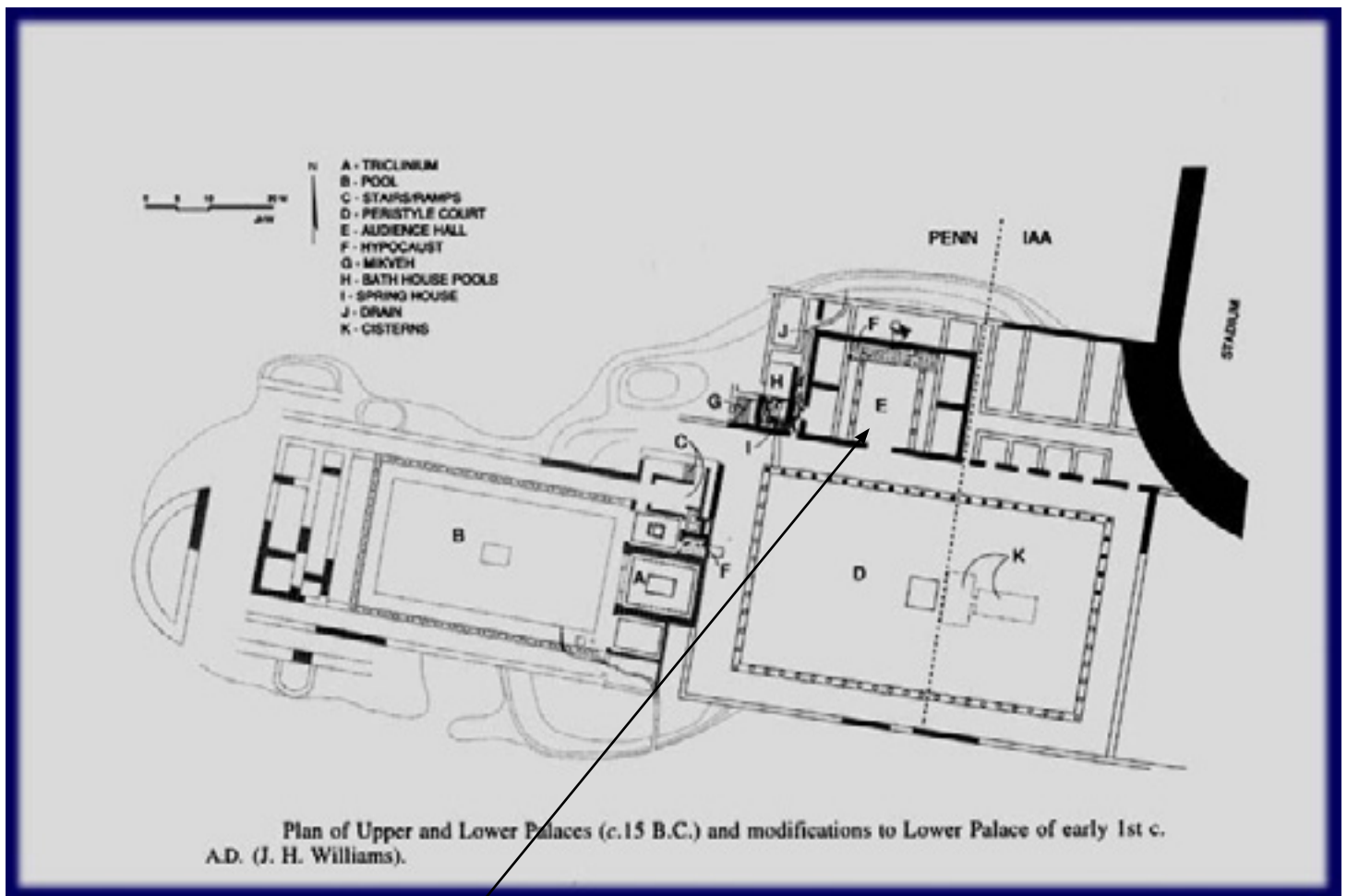
**Second, καὶ εἰσελθόντων εἰς τὸ ἀκροατήριον σὺν τε χιλιάρχοις καὶ ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ' ἐξοχὴν τῆς**

**Second, καὶ εἰσελθόντων εἰς τὸ ἀκροατήριον σὺν τε χιλιάρχοις καὶ ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ' ἐξοχὴν τῆς**

<sup>299c</sup> φαντασία, ας, ἡ strictly making visible; in a negative sense, as an appearance made for effect, for showing off cheap display, pomp, pageantry (AC 25.23)" [Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 397.]

<sup>300c</sup> As the term suggests, phantasia can mean 'appearance' in a variety of contexts, ranging from 'imaginings' to 'pomp/pageantry,' as here in the case of a royal retinue. One can hardly avoid the impression that Paul is intended to supply the entertainment for this splendid assemblage, as they enter the 'audience hall' (*akroatērion*)." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 426-427.]





Layout of the governor's palace in Caesarea from available information

πόλεως, But Agrippa and Bernice led in a processional of VIPs for the city of Caesarea.<sup>301</sup> They made their grand entrance εἰς τὸ ἀκροατήριον.<sup>302</sup> Although this noun could be used to refer to what we would call a 'court room,' what took place here was no Roman legal process. Several factors require this understanding. Most importantly, after a formal appeal to the emperor was made by a Roman citizen, no lower 'court' was permitted to exercise any jurisdiction over the case. Additionally, Festus' stated reason for the gathering was to secure help from Agrippa regarding the formation of legitimate charges within Roman law that could be sent along with Paul to Rome (25:13-21). Also, Paul could serve as the 'entertainment' for the grand display of these two rulers before the city dignitaries. Particularly is this likely if the gathering had been planned in advance as the chance for Agrippa to be properly welcomed to the city and then to lavish his praise on Festus as the new governor.

Two groups of dignitaries accompanied Agrippa and Bernice into the audience hall: σύν τε χιλιάρχους καὶ ἀνδράσιιν τοῖς κατ' ἔξοχὴν τῆς πόλεως. The first came from the ranks of the Roman military, and the plural form χιλιάρχους implies the presence of multiple military cohorts in the area.<sup>303</sup> As is indicated on the map below, two

<sup>301</sup>“For φαντασία, “pomp,” compare Vettius Valens 38.25–26: “But wealthy and rich and supporting themselves with very great pomp” (εὐπόρους δὲ καὶ πλουσίους καὶ μετὰ πλείστης φαντασίας διεξάγοντας).” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 207.]

<sup>302</sup>“ἀκροατήριον is a place designed, or used, for the purpose of hearing; often a lecture room, here perhaps audience chamber? For the ending—τήριον see M. 2:342 and BDR § 109:8, n. 10. It is by no means necessarily a law court, and the use of the word suggests, or at least is consistent with, an informal hearing; this indeed it must have been. Once the appeal to the Emperor's court had been made and allowed no lower court had any right to try Paul. The main impression is that of a show put on to gratify Agrippa, though it is doubtless true that Festus would be glad to gain additional information that would help him to write a more adequate account of the case he was sending to Rome. Begs. 4:312: ‘Festus was merely showing off an interesting prisoner to entertain Agrippa, the chief local dignitaries, and the officers of the Mess.’ Begs. 4:313: ‘... to obtain material for a report on a case which puzzled him.’” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1145–1146.]

<sup>303</sup>“A military tribune (Latin *tribunus militum*, ‘tribune of the soldiers’, Greek *chiliarchos*, χιλιάρχος) was an officer of the Roman army who ranked below the legate and above the centurion. Young men of Equestrian rank often served as military tribune as



Roman legions<sup>304</sup> were stationed nearby: *Legio III Cyrenaica* at Bostra and *Legio X Fretensis* at Hierosolyma. *Legio X Fretensis* would play a central role in surprising the Jews during the first Jewish war (66-73) and would afterwards be headquartered in Jerusalem. *Legio III Cyrenaica* was also heavily involved in the first Jewish war. Additionally numerous other legions were located reasonably close by in both Syria and Egypt. Thus quite a large number of tribunes would have been stationed close to Caesarea and available as an entourage for public occasions. At least one tribune was assigned to each cohort among the ten cohorts that comprised a legion. When



dressed in their parade uniforms, they created a spectacularly impressive sight. Each uniform bore the distinctive marks of the particular legio and cohort that the tribune was assigned to.

The second group of dignitaries was ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ' ἐξοχὴν τῆς πόλεως, *men those with prominence in the city*. Generally this terminology is regarded as designating mostly if not exclusively non-Jewish leaders in the city of Caesarea. The terminology here is somewhat similar to that in Acts 13:50, τοὺς πρώτους τῆς πόλεως, *the leading men of the city*. Probably the group was dominantly Gentile but not necessarily completely. These wealthy individuals, without realizing it, were being given the greatest opportunity of their entire lives: to hear the Gospel from one of God's choicest servants.<sup>305</sup> The sight of their entrance must have been something to see. All these individuals dressed in their finest clothes came parading into the audience room in a procession. Their outward appearance was designed to signal power and status in the social circles of Caesarea. But in reality all this was more sham than reality. History would remember them only for their superficiality and spiritual blindness in failing to heed the Gospel witness given to them by Paul.

**Third, καὶ κελεύσαντος τοῦ Φήστου.** Once the entourages of King Agrippa and the locals dignitaries

---

a stepping stone to the Senate.<sup>[1]</sup> The *tribunus militum* should not be confused with the elected political office of tribune of the people (*tribunus plebis*) nor with that of *tribunus militum consulari potestate*.” [“Military tribune,” wikipedia.org]

<sup>304c</sup>A legion consisted of several cohorts of heavy infantry known as legionaries. It was almost always accompanied by one or more attached units of auxiliaries, who were not Roman citizens and provided cavalry, ranged troops and skirmishers to complement the legion's heavy infantry. The recruitment of non-citizens was rare but appears to have occurred in times of great need; For example Caesar appears to have recruited the *Legio V Alaudae* mostly from non-citizen Gauls.

“The size of a typical legion varied throughout the history of ancient Rome, with complements of 4,200 legionaries and 300 equates (drawn from the wealthier classes - in early Rome all troops provided their own equipment) in the republican period of Rome, (the infantry were split into 10 cohorts each of 4 maniples of 120 legionaries), to 5,200 men plus 120 auxiliaries in the imperial period (split into 10 cohorts, 9 of 480 men each, plus the first cohort holding 800 men).”

[“Roman legions,” wikipedia.org]

<sup>305c</sup>It was attended not only by Agrippa and his sister, but by members of the procurator's staff<sup>33</sup> and leading citizens of Caesarea (who would be mainly, if not altogether, Gentiles). Festus himself, as was proper, was in charge of the proceedings. There is quiet humor in Luke's account of the ‘great ceremony’<sup>34</sup> with which they assembled: Luke had a true sense of values, and knew that in Paul there was a native greatness which had no need to be decked with the trappings of grandeur that surrounded his distinguished hearers. History has vindicated Luke's perspective. It has been suggested that, by bringing Paul into contact with so many notabilities, Luke aimed at enhancing his status in the eyes of readers;<sup>35</sup> but even then some people who read this account would reckon that it was a privilege for those notabilities to have this brief contact with Paul. And most people nowadays who know anything about Agrippa and Bernice and Festus know of them as persons who for a brief period of time crossed Paul's path and heard him speak words which might have brought much blessing to them had they been disposed to pay serious heed to what he said. All these very important people would have been greatly surprised, and not a little scandalized, could they have foreseen the relative estimates that later generations would form of them and of the prisoner who now stood before them to state his case.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 459.]



were properly seated, then the governor Festus gave the order to his soldiers to bring in the apostle Paul. The Aorist participle *κελεύσαντος* from *κελεύω* specifies the giving of official orders by someone in authority in the 25 NT uses with 15 of those in Acts alone. Festus was the one issuing the orders, *τοῦ Φήστου*, since he was presiding over the events of the moment as the military governor of the region.

The **main clause** of this sentence in v. 23 is the final three words of the sentence: *ἦχθη ὁ Παῦλος*, *Paul was brought in*. Nothing is mentioned here as to whether he was in chains or not. In speaking to the crowd on the steps of the barracks in Jerusalem, Paul was bound in chains: *δεθῆναι ἀλύσειν δυσίν*, *to be bound with two chains* (21:33). But when he spoke to the Sanhedrin the next day the chains had been removed: *ἔλυσεν αὐτόν*, *he released him* (22:30). No depiction is given at this point when Paul made his first appearance before Felix (24:10), although afterwards Luke indicates (24:23) that Paul was given considerable liberty in the governor's palace while in custody. Again nothing is said about the second appearance before Felix and Drusilla in 24:24. Also no depiction is given regarding Paul's situation in his initial appearance before Festus (25:6-7). In light of the liberty granted Paul



from the outset of his custody in Caesarea, it would seem more likely that Paul was not in chains when he was brought in before Agrippa and the guests here. But at the end in 26:29, Paul seems to imply that he was in chains during his appearance before this crowd:

ὁ δὲ Παῦλος· εὐχάϊμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντάς μου σήμερον γενέσθαι τοιοῦτους ὅποῖος καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι παρεκτός τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων.

Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am — except for these chains.”

If he meant by the statement *παρεκτός τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων*, except for these chains, only that he was in custody by the Romans, then perhaps he was not in chains during his appearance. But if he meant this literally, rather than figuratively as such an expression sometimes meant then, he was further humiliated in his appearance before these dignitaries.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2 Paul's defense, Acts 26:1-32

This chapter contains Paul's defense of both the Gospel and his ministry in preaching it largely to the Gentile world. Given that his audience is overwhelmingly Gentile, it was a wise strategy to stress the universal scope of God's calling upon his life.

*Defense speeches* constitute a distinctive genre<sup>306</sup> inside the book of Acts and also reflect their counterpart elsewhere in the ancient Greco-Roman literary world.<sup>307</sup> The heart of this type of discourse is a defending of one's actions and character against attack, usually in some kind of judicial setting. This category of ancient speeches stands in contrast to the so-called 'missionary speech,' where the speaker is advocating some par-

<sup>306</sup>“The persistent elements in the structure of the speeches are as follows. The speech may begin with an appeal for a hearing. This motif has parallels in the appeal of the Old Testament prophets as well as in Hellenistic trial (defense) speeches.<sup>114</sup> The connection between the situation and the speech follows, at times employing the technique of a misunderstanding. The situation can also be reflected in the course of the speech itself; it does not, however, determine the content of the speech. The actual body of the speech frequently begins with a scriptural quotation. The christological kerygma follows, then the scriptural proof. The offer of salvation comes at the end, with repentance as the condition for salvation. Occasionally Luke allows the speaker to be interrupted. This is, of course, a literary device. The interruption takes place after everything essential has been said.” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juell, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), xlv.]

<sup>307</sup>“The speech that Paul delivers before King Agrippa II, Bernice, and their entourage is a finely crafted discourse, one of the finest in Acts. It is substantially a defense (apologia), but toward the end it becomes a missionary speech (vv 23, 28), as Paul preaches Jesus as the one promised by Moses and the prophets of old. In effect, it is a Lucan composition, a repetition of the story of Paul's conversion (9:1–30), once again in the form of a discourse, as in 22:3–21. It is the fifth and last defense that Paul makes in Acts, and this is done before a Herodian king and a Roman procurator.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 754–755.]



tical philosophical or religious viewpoint to an audience in order to persuade them to adopt his viewpoint.<sup>308</sup> A third, less frequent type of ancient speech, is the 'farewell speech' where a highly esteemed leader gives a final speech to an audience of followers and supporters.

The structure of this text is very simple:<sup>309</sup>

Narrative Introduction, v. 1

Speech, vv. 2-23

Point one, vv. 4-11

Point two, vv. 12-18

Point three, vv. 19-23

Narrative conclusion, vv. 24-32.

This speech amounts to the third account of Paul's conversion found in the book of Acts.<sup>310</sup> Such provides the reader with repeated reminders of how the apostle came to know Christ in his Damascus road experience.<sup>311</sup> What must be remembered is that the details of Paul's experience are recounted in each of the three texts in ways that are appropriate to the literary and historical setting being narrated. Consequently each text contains unique details and re-interpreted details that give distinctiveness to each text.

This speech in many ways stands as a climax to chapters 21 through 26.<sup>312</sup> Paul's troubles began in the

<sup>308</sup>For a more detailed listing of these see my "Literary Forms in the Acts of the Apostles," cranfordville.com. The missionary speeches are found in Acts 2:1-47; 3:11-26; 10:23b-48; 13:13-52; 17:16-34, while the defense speeches are in Acts 4:1-22; 6:8-8:1a; 21:27-22:29; 22:30-23:10; 24:1-23; 25:13-26:32. The single Farewell Speech of Paul in Acts is given to the Ephesian leaders in Acts 20:13-38. Interestingly Luke does not parallel this speech with a similar one by Peter, as is the case with the two most basic kinds of speech forms in Acts, the missionary and defense speeches.

<sup>309</sup>A variety of efforts to analyze the speech from critical literary structures will be found in differing commentaries of a more serious nature. For an assessment of several of these see Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge. Hermeneia — a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 625-627 for a survey. The value of several of these efforts is to bring forward central themes and emphases in the speech. For example, the assessment of Beverly Roberts Gaventa that Pervo adopts. Here the central point is Paul's divine call to witness and his obedience to it:

**A. Paul's faith in resurrection follows tradition (vv. 6–8\*).**

**B. Paul persecuted followers of Jesus (vv. 9–11\*).**

**C. Paul received a prophetic call (vv. 12–18\*).**

**C' Paul was obedient to his vocation (vv. 19–20\*).**

**B'. Paul has been persecuted as a follower of Jesus (v. 21\*).**

**A'. Paul upholds the prophetic belief in the resurrection (vv. 22–23\*).**

[Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 626.]

<sup>310</sup>The picture begins with the third account of Paul's conversion (cf. 9:1–19; 22:4–21). The second and third accounts differ from the first partly through Luke's liking for variation but partly also through adaptation to the settings in which they are delivered. The second was addressed to a Jewish crowd in the Temple (see p. 1031). The third is spoken to Gentiles. Thus (for details see the notes below) Paul says that the voice from heaven addressed him as Saul, and adds the explanation that the voice spoke in Hebrew (Aramaic). The voice asks as in the other accounts, 'Why are you persecuting me?' But immediately the Greek proverb is added, 'It is hard for you to kick against the goad.' There will be no need after this for dispute, and the story goes on immediately to Paul's commission to go to the Gentiles, which is not deferred (as in ch. 22) to a later occasion in the Temple. Paul the Jew is to evangelize the Gentiles, and is assured of God's protection as he fulfils his mission. To this vocation Paul had not been untrue; this was why the Jews hated him so bitterly and had tried to kill him, though, as he goes on to point out, his Gospel simply asserts the fulfilment of what had already been written by Moses and the prophets, and was addressed to all (τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, v. 23). Festus's interjection gives him the opportunity of asserting his sober truthfulness and dependence on the prophets, and of uttering as his last word the declaration that makes him, beyond any other, the model of a Christian preacher (v. 29)." [[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1144–1145.]

<sup>311</sup>For a detailed analysis of all three of these texts in Acts and in comparison with Paul's references inside his letters, see chapter "Conversion," in this study guide.

<sup>312</sup>Paul's speech before Agrippa is the culmination and climax of Paul's defense in chaps. 21–26. It brings together and presents in final form all the themes of the previous five chapters. The charges against Paul that began with the temple mob in 21:28 were given their final verdict by the Jewish king himself: Paul was innocent on all counts — he could have been set free (26:31f.). Paul's own account of his conversion and commission from Christ, which constituted the main subject of his speech before the crowd in the temple square (22:3–21), was repeated in the speech before Agrippa and indeed in its fullest form, as Paul shared his fulfillment of the commission—his witness for Christ (26:19–23). The theme of the resurrection, which began with the divided Sanhedrin (23:6–10) and continued to remain a major issue in Paul's defense (24:15, 21; 25:19) was now given its most complete exposition (26:6–8, 23). Paul wanted all to know that his commitment to the risen Christ was the real reason for his bonds. The parallels to the passion of Christ which began with Paul's journey to Jerusalem in chap. 21 likewise reach their high point in chap. 26. Like Jesus, Paul appeared before not only the Roman procurator but the Jewish king as well (cf. Luke 23:6–12), and as in Jesus' trial both procurator and king found him in-

Jerusalem temple with false charges from fellow Jews from Asia. He has successfully defended his innocence before a Jewish mob, the Jewish Sandhedrin, the Roman governors Felix and Festus. Now he has the opportunity to present his case before Agrippa. The difference this time is that his life is not in danger. No possible verdict of execution or being turned over to the Jewish authorities is present this time. The audience is overwhelmingly non-Jewish if not completely so. No one in this group has a vested interest in killing Paul.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2.1 Narrative Introduction, Acts 26:1

26 Ἀγρίππας δὲ πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον ἔφη· ἐπιτρέπεται σοι περὶ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν. τότε ὁ Παῦλος ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἀπελογεῖτο·

26 Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and began to defend himself:

In a manner appropriate to the situation Paul waits on permission before beginning his defense. Interestingly, Agrippa seems to assume moderating privileges from Festus at this point in the gathering. Very likely Festus willingly turned over the gathering to Agrippa so he could question Paul in any manner the king desired.

What Agrippa said has important nuanced tones difficult to bring out in translation: ἐπιτρέπεται σοι περὶ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν. The present tense passive imperative verb ἐπιτρέπεται is impossible to translate literally into English. The idea is along the lines of “to you is being granted permission to...”. There is an official tone of formality built into this expression. This conveys subtle tones of respect for Paul as one capable to presenting a coherent defense of his actions. Additionally, permission is given περὶ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν, to speak about yourself. Very likely a subtle difference here was deliberate from Agrippa telling Paul, ὑπὲρ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν which manuscripts B (Ψ) M substitute περὶ with ὑπὲρ.<sup>313</sup> This would be the sense of to speak in behalf of yourself. Although this is exactly what Paul proceeds to do, Agrippa’s instructions were for Paul to simply narrate the events that led up to his present situation.

Paul’s took Agrippa’s permission and went his own direction with it, as Luke defines in introducing his speech: ὅτε ὁ Παῦλος ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἀπελογεῖτο, Then Paul stretched out his hand and began to defend himself: The motion of ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, having stretched out his hand, before beginning to speak may seem odd at first glance. And inside the NT, the use of ἐκτείνω to indicate the gesture of an orator is found only here. Before this fundamentally non-Jewish audience, Paul assumes the posture of a philosophical orator to his audience.<sup>314</sup> Again the apostle reflects deep skills in communication and adapting to the situation of his audience. But it conveyed a posture of confidence in what the speaker was about to say. He was not intimidated in the least by standing before all these powerful dignitaries dressed in their luxurious finest. By the time he finishes his speech, Agrippa will be the one intimidated, not Paul.

The verbal action of Paul is specified not by ἔλεγε, he began speaking, but instead by ἀπελογεῖτο, he began defending himself. In the ten uses of ἀπολογεῖσθαι, only one instance is found outside of Luke and Acts, making this verb a highly Lukan expression inside the NT.<sup>315</sup> A subtle play on words by Luke surfaces here. Agrippa gave him permission to περὶ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν, speak about himself, but Paul seizes the opportunity to ἐπὶ σοῦ μέλλων σήμερον ἀπολογεῖσθαι / ἀπελογεῖτο, to be about to defense myself to you today / began to defend himself. Paul signals his intention to put forward a full fledged defense of his actions to Agrippa. The adoption of the posture of the orator with the outstretched hands adds to this picture being painted by Luke.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2.2 Speech Introduction, Acts 26:2-3

2 Περὶ πάντων ὧν ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, ἤγημαι ἑμαυτὸν μακάριον ἐπὶ σοῦ μέλλων σήμερον ἀπολογεῖσθαι 3 μάλιστα γνώστην ὄντα σε πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἐθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων, διὸ δέομαι μακροθύμως ἀκοῦσαί μου.

2 I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the noent (Acts 26:31f.; Luke 23:14f.)” [John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 498.]

<sup>313</sup>These copyists evidently interpreted what Paul did in giving a defense, and ὑπὲρ would be more appropriate for that approach than would περὶ. Thus they missed the subtle nuance of meaning injected by Luke in the framing of Agrippa’s instructions to Paul.

<sup>314</sup>ἐκτείνας. Cf. the use of κατασεῖν at 12:17; 13:16; 21:40. ἐκτείνειν is often used for the stretching out of the hand for other purposes (e.g. for healing) but it is not used in the sense of an orator’s gesture elsewhere in the NT. LS 521 cites no example, nor does BA 495. BA mentions *Quintilian* 9:3:84ff. (an error for 11:3:84ff.—*Narratio magis prolatam manum, amictum recidentem, gestum distinctum ... postulabit*) and Apuleius 2:21: porrigit dexteram, et ad instar oratorum conformat articulum; duobusque infinis conclusis digitis, caeteros eminentes porrigens ...” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1148–1149.]

<sup>315</sup>Out of the eight NT uses of the noun ἀπολογία, just two uses are Lukan in Acts 22:1 and 25:16.

accusations of the Jews, 3 because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg of you to listen to me patiently.

The apostle begins with the standard formal introduction, the *captatio benevolentiae*, in this first sentence (cf. 24:2-4, 10).<sup>316</sup> The core expression, ἡγημαι ἑμαυτὸν μακάριον ἐπὶ σοῦ μέλλων σήμερον ἀπολογεῖσθαι, I consider myself blessed to be going to make my defense before you. Paul will repeat the vocative address βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, King Agrippa, three more times: βασιλεῦ (vv. 7, 13); βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα (v. 27). This signals the respect that Paul had for the position of authority occupied by Agrippa. Agrippa was far from being a highly ethical and morally upstanding person, but he did occupy a position of governmental authority that Paul respected. Hopefully Festus had come to sense this about Paul's character, even though he may have wished for less integrity and a bribe as did his predecessor Felix (cf. 24:26). By the time Paul finished his speech, Agrippa would be sensing the high character in Paul. The use of the perfect tense Greek verb ἡγημαι from ἡγέομαι rather than the present tense form adds a level of genuineness to Paul's words that is not preserved in translation. Additionally the use of μακάριον (blessed) here reflects the secular meaning of the adjective μακάριος, fortunate, rather than the religious meaning.<sup>317</sup> Note that what Paul does as his ἀπολογεῖσθαι (defense speech) is to trace the history of God's dealings with him up to this point of confinement. This is not an 'apology' in the modern philosophical meaning of the term. More importantly, Agrippa had given Paul permission περὶ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν, to speak about yourself (v. 1). But Paul seizes the opportunity to ἀπολογεῖσθαι, i.e., to defend himself. The phraseology ἐπὶ σοῦ μέλλων σήμερον ἀπολογεῖσθαι, before you going today to defend myself, is some awkward even for ancient Greek. But it still communicates Paul's idea of beginning his speech.

By beginning his speech with Περὶ πάντων ὧν ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, concerning all the things which I have been accused of by the Jews, the apostle sets the tone for what he will proceed to say. In Caesarea, the closest to a summation of these charges comes with the speech that the Roman lawyer Tertullus gave before Felix over two years prior (cf. Acts 24:5-8):

5 εὐρόντες γὰρ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν καὶ κινουῦντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως, 6 ὃς καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐπέειρασεν βεβηλῶσαι ὃν καὶ ἐκρατήσαμεν, 8 παρ' οὗ δυνήσῃ αὐτὸς ἀνακρίνας περὶ πάντων τούτων ἐπιγνῶναι ὧν ἡμεῖς κατηγοροῦμεν αὐτοῦ.

5 We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him.

When the later Jewish delegation appeared before Festus some time shortly prior to Agrippa's arrival in Caesarea (Ἡμερῶν δὲ διαγενομένων τινῶν, and after several days had passed, Acts 25:13), Luke does not provide any further details beyond the statement "When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove." παραγενομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ περιέστησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβεβηκότες Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὰ καὶ βαρέα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδεῖξαι (Acts 25:7). Presumably this second Jewish delegation had restated the charges made earlier before Felix. Paul does not here bother to rehash those charges, but merely alludes to them as the reason for him being in this present situation and for making this speech. In part, this is most likely due to the appearance before Agrippa not being a formal Roman judicial hearing, but merely an audience with a Roman political leader.

The stated reason for Paul's positive attitude about making his defense before Agrippa is μάλιστα γνώστην

---

<sup>316</sup>A comparison of this *captatio benevolentiae* between Tertullus before Felix (24:2-4) and Paul before Felix (24:10) and here before Festus reveals a lot about the character of these two individuals. Tertullus uses insincere, phoney flattery, while Paul truthfully expresses gratitude for the leadership of Felix.

**Tertullus before Felix (24:2-4):** Your Excellency, because of you we have long enjoyed peace, and reforms have been made for this people because of your foresight. 3 We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness.

πολλῆς εἰρήνης τυγχάνοντες διὰ σοῦ καὶ διορθωμάτων γινομένων τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ διὰ τῆς σῆς προνοίας, 3 πάντα τε καὶ πανταχοῦ ἀποδεχόμεθα, κράτιστε Φῆλιξ, μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας. 4 ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπω, παρακαλῶ ἀκοῦσαί σε ἡμῶν συντόμως τῇ σῇ ἐπιεικείᾳ.

**Paul before Felix (24:10):** I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation. ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἑμαντοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι,

<sup>317</sup>Although Luke ordinarily uses the word *makarios* in the 'biblical' sense of 'blessed' (Luke 1:45; 6:20, 21, 22; 7:23; 10:23; 11:27-28; 12:37, 38, 43; 14:14-15; 23:29; Acts 20:35), it here has the strictly secular sense of 'fortunate.' The entire discourse, in fact, has an elegance of phrasing appropriate to this high company, another fine example of Luke's use of *prosōpopoia*. [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 431.]



ὄντα σε πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἔθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων, especially since you are knowledgeable of all the Jewish customs and controversies. Once more we are facing some really strange Greek grammar expression here with a semi-independent participle phrase set up in the accusative case rather than the required genitive case.<sup>318</sup> The tone of this introduction is somewhat similar to Paul's introduction when appearing before Felix some years earlier (Acts 24:10b):

ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι,

I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation.

Before Felix, Paul correctly acknowledges Felix as a κριτὴν, judge, over the Jewish people. This he indeed was in his role as the Roman military governor of Judea. Now later in appearance before Agrippa who did not possess any judicial authority over Paul -- this belonged to Festus -- the apostle acknowledges appreciation for the level of awareness of Jewish traditions and history which Agrippa possessed as a part of the Herodian dynasty.

The concept of γνώστην . . . πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἔθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων possibly suggests a level of Jewish understanding more likely true of Bernice than of Agrippa. But since both were present and would confer back and forth with each other during the presentation, the expertise of one supplemented that of the other. The adverb μάλιστα (superlative form of the adverb μάλα) can be seen attached either to the adjective γνώστην (=especially knowledgeable) or to the participle ὄντα (= especially being). Most attach it to the adjective.

What Paul indicates that Agrippa was particularly aware of is τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἔθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων, the according to the Jewish customs and also controversies. First is τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἔθῶν where ἔθος defines established ways of doing things. Every ethnic group of people possesses such patterns of behavior that are just different enough from other groups of people so as to establish an individual identity for each group. Such patterns of behavior often include religious practices in connection to activities such as praying etc. But religious practice is but one area of behavioral patterns that provide individual identity. Action Greek used the word ἔθος at two levels of activity which are reflected in the English words 'habit' and 'custom.'<sup>319</sup> How much of this Agrippa actually knew about the Jewish people cannot be determined precisely. Clearly being 'partly Jewish' as a member of Herod the Great's family gave him a clear advantage over that of Festus who was Roman with no prior

<sup>318</sup>“The participial phrase *gnōstēn se onta* is in the accusative case and does not fit within the syntax of the sentence; it functions, however, much like a genitive absolute construction. The noun *gnōstēs* designates someone with particular knowledge: in LXX 1 Sam 18:3, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6 and Isa 19:3, for example, it refers to wizards. Josephus tells us more about Bernice's involvement in Jewish practice than about Agrippa's (Jewish War 2:310–314), but in any case, the king would be more “expert” than the Roman governor. Note the similar flattery paid to Felix in 24:10.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 432.]

“The attempt at literary style (if such it was) in v. 2 now breaks down completely. The accusative and participle (γνώστην ὄντα σε) has no verb to depend on. (P<sup>74</sup>) καὶ Α C 33 (36) 614 945 1891 al sy<sup>p</sup> save the situation by adding ἐπιστάμενος after ζητημάτων, but this can hardly (notwithstanding Dibelius 92) be Luke's text. The accusative γνώστην after σου (v. 2) is hard (Bauernfeind 269; Moule, IB 37). BDR § 137:3, n. 3 suggest that the accusatives may be dependent on ἡγήμαι (v. 2); better is Page (245): ‘The acc. is governed by the sense of “thinking” or “considering”, which is the main idea of the sentence.’ This does not justify the grammar of the defective sentence but explains how the sentence came to be defective in the way it is.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1150.]

<sup>319</sup> a. “Habit,” “use”: Soph. Phil., 894; Thuc., II, 64, 2 (ταῦτα . . . ἐν ἔθει τῆδε τῆ πόλει πρότερον τε ἦν); Plat. Phaed., 82b; Isoc., 8, 91; Epict. Diss., I, 27, 3; III, 12, 6; P. Oxy., I, 155, 7; P. Fay., 125, 5 (ὡς ἔθος ἐστὶ σοι); 1 Macc. 10:89 (ὡς ἔθος ἐστὶ διδοσθαι τοῖς συγγενέσι τῶν βασιλέων); 2 Macc. 13:4; Philo Ebr., 195 and 198; V 2, p 373 Jos., 83 (Wis. 14:16: ἀσεβὲς ἔθος of the cult of idols). 1 b. “Custom,” “cultic ordinance,” “law”: Ditt. Syll.3 1073, 20 (κατὰ τὸ πάτριον ἔθος); used for Jewish laws in the LXX: 2 Macc. 11:25 (κατὰ τὰ ἐπὶ τῶν προγόνων αὐτῶν ἔθη); 4 Macc. 18:5 (τῶν πατρίων ἔθῶν); Philo Leg. All., III, 30; Virt., 65; Spec. Leg., II, 149 (πάτριον ἔθος); IV, 149 etc. Jos. Ant., 9, 262 (ταῖς ἐξ ἔθους θυσίαις); 9, 263; 20, 100 (τοῖς γὰρ πατρίοις . . . ἔθεισιν); 15, 288 (ὕπερ τῶν κοινῶν ἔθῶν) with reference to the Jewish sacrifices.

The NT, too, uses ἔθος in these two senses. Lk. alone of the Evangelists records in 22:39 that it was the custom of Jesus to stay on the Mount of Olives. This obviously does not mean that He slept there while staying in Jerusalem, but rather that this was the mountain top on which He followed His custom of prayer when in Jerusalem. ἔθος is thus used for a religious habit which He did not take over from the cultic community but adopted for Himself. In Ac. 25:16 ἔθος denotes the custom of Roman justice that the accused should be confronted by his accusers and have the chance to defend himself. In Hb. 10:25 there is censure of a bad custom of non-attendance at gatherings which was establishing itself in the community. In Jn. 19:40 ἔθος is used for the burial law of the Jews. This leads on to the use of the term for the cultic laws of the Jews. In this sense it is found only in the Lucan writings. The Jewish cultus is designed to express the faithfulness and constancy of God, to display a dignity and solemnity commensurate with the divine majesty. Hence it has a fixed order and law like every cultus. This is expressed on the one side in the regulation of the priestly office (cf. κατὰ τὸ ἔθος τῆς ἱερατείας, Lk. 1:9) and on the other in an inflexible order, so that the life of the pious is ruled κατὰ τὸ ἔθος τῆς εορτῆς (Lk. 2:42). Finally, therefore, ἔθος is used for the whole of the cultic law attributed to Moses (Ac. 6:14; 15:1; 16:21; 21:21; 26:3; 28:17).

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:372–373.]

connections to the Jewish people. Josephus provides insight into the skills of Agrippa to navigate through the maze of Jewish behavior and temperament in the *Jewish Wars*, book two, sections 333-404 (chapter 16), when the extreme brutality of the Roman governor Florus (two governors after Festus) came close to inciting a Jewish war against the Romans. With the help of Bernice, his sister, he was able to convince them not to engage in such a futile rebellion. In this Agrippa reflects rather substantial knowledge of the ways of the Jews. But again Bernice is present and plays an important role in assisting her brother.

But Paul acknowledges not only Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish ways, but also of their τε και ζητημάτων, and also of their controversies. The noun ζήτημα normally specifies controversial questions or arguments.<sup>320</sup> Anyone just about who had any contact with Jewish people in that world understood their intensely quarrelsome nature and tendencies. From the third century BCE onward harsh anti-Jewish statements dominate the Greco-Roman comments.<sup>321</sup> Much of this was driven by the quarrelsome tendencies of the Jews. Paul asserts that Agrippa is quite familiar with these tendencies, as indeed the narratives of Josephus in the *Wars of the Jews* reflects through several chapters of this document.

The diversity of Jewish religious thinking in the Palestine of the first century world was substantial. In addition to the more influential groups of the Sadducees and Pharisees, there were the Essenes, the huge range of Jewish mystics, along with numerous other small groups, all over the religious spectrum. And when the additional diversity found in diaspora Judaism is added to the mixture there was an enormous range of religious viewpoint among the Jewish people. But this is only the religious aspect. The political perspectives were almost as diverse as the religious one. Most of them polarized around a positive or negative view of the presence of the Romans ruling over the Promised Land. With intense debating of virtual every issue in life as a fundamental part of the culture, that ζητήματα typified Jewish life is no surprise. Agrippa had lived in Palestine long enough to have become very much aware of many of these. In fact, according to Josephus, Agrippa had been caught up in some of them personally. Thus Paul's acknowledgement of Agrippa's awareness of the ζητήματα is quite accurate.

Thus in the light of Agrippa's acknowledged awareness of these matters Paul does the standard and appropriate thing with διὸ δέομαι μακροθύμως ἀκοῦσαί μου, therefore I politely ask that you<sup>322</sup> patiently hear me. The single use of the adverb μακροθύμως underscores the politeness of Paul's request of Agrippa.<sup>323</sup> Such a request for the listeners to patiently hear what the speaker wanted to say was customary for a *captatio benevolentiae* at the beginning of a formal speech. Compare the similar request of Tertullus to Felix in the earlier speech in 24:4, ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπτω, παρακαλῶ ἀκοῦσαί σε ἡμῶν συντόμως τῇ σῆ ἐπιεικείᾳ, But, to detain you no further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. This custom underscored the importance of the person being addressed by the speaker in a polite manner, as the verb δέομαι clearly stresses. Paul's request ἀκοῦσαί μου, to hear me, emphasizes listening to the apostle with understanding of what he was saying. Paul's desire is for Agrippa to comprehend his words to the ruler. The adverb of manner μακροθύμως stresses an attentive listening to the apostle's words with an openness to them.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2.3 Speech Point One: Paul's Pharisee Life, Acts 26:4-11

4 Τὴν μὲν οὖν βίωσίν μου [τὴν] ἐκ νεότητος τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενομένην ἐν τῷ ἔθνεϊ μου ἐν τε Ἱεροσολύμοις ἴσασι πάντες [οἱ] Ἰουδαῖοι 5 προγινώσκοντές με ἄνωθεν, ἐὰν θέλωσιν μαρτυρεῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος. 6 καὶ νῦν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς εἰς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐπαγγελίας γενομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἕστηκα κρινόμενος, 7 εἰς ἣν τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν ἐκτενεῖα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῦον ἐλπίζει καταντῆσαι, περὶ ἧς ἐλπίδος ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, βασιλεῦ. 8 τί ἄπιστον κρίνεται παρ' ὑμῖν εἰ ὁ θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει; 9 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἑμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πράξαι, 10 ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν

<sup>320</sup>ζήτημα, ατος, τό (s. prec. entry; Soph., Hippocr.+; ins, pap; Ezk 36:37 v.1.; Just., D. 123, 7; loanw. in rabb.) in our lit. only in Ac, w. the mng. it still has in Mod. Gk. (*controversial*) question, issue, argument (Epict. 2, 11, 8) **Ac 15:2; 26:3**. ζ. περί τινος questions about someth. (Pla., Leg. 10, 891c) **18:15; 25:19**.—In **23:29**, since περί had already been used, the subj. of the discussion is added in the gen., ζ. τοῦ νόμου αὐτῶν.—DELG s.v. ζητέω. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 428.]

<sup>321</sup>For a helpful background see “History of antisemitism,” wikipedia.org. The section on the classical period is most relevant to our study.

<sup>322</sup>The second singular reference is clearly implicit in the grammar construction. But a few copyists, C M sy<sup>p</sup> co?, add σου for clarities sake.

<sup>323</sup>“The adverb *makrothymōs* is used only here in the NT, but the cognate terms describe attitudes appropriate to a judge, especially that of ‘long-suffering/tolerance’ (see Matt 18:26; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:9, 15; Rom 2:4; 9:22; 1 Tim 1:16; and especially Luke 18:7).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 432.]

λαβών ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον. 11 καὶ κατὰ πάσας τὰς συναγωγὰς πολλάκις τιμωρῶν αὐτοὺς ἠνάγκαζον βλασφημεῖν περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς ἐδίωκον ἕως καὶ εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις.

4 All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, 7 a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? 9 "Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. 11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

With the opening formalities expressed, Paul now moves to make his first major point recounting his life as a Pharisee. Earlier before the Jewish mob in the Jerusalem temple, Paul had spoken of his way of life as a Pharisee (cf. Acts 22:3-5). He mentioned it in his speech before the Sanhedrin (cf. Acts 23:6-8). He somewhat alludes to it in his speech before Felix (cf. Acts 24:16-18). In his own writings more direct references are found in Gal. 1:13-14 and Phil. 3:4b-6). The chart listing below highlights the various aspects of Paul's experience as a Pharisee prior to his conversion. As is obvious from the chart, the most detailed accounting of this life is given here in the speech before Agrippa. As would be expected, the two references in Galatians and Philippians provide a more 'theological' depiction. This is the usual focus of Paul in the writing of his letters. He provides very little 'historical' detail about how he lived as a Pharisee.

Acts 26:4-11 (Agrippa)		Acts 22:3-5 (Temple Mob)	
<p>4 Τὴν μὲν οὖν βίωσίν μου [τὴν] ἐκ νεότητος τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενομένην ἐν τῷ ἔθνει μου ἔν τε Ἱεροσολύμοις ἴσασι πάντες [οἱ] Ἰουδαῖοι 5 προγινώσκοντές με ἄνωθεν, ἐὰν θέλωσι μαρτυρεῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἴρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος. 6 καὶ νῦν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς εἰς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐπαγγελίας γενομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστηκα κρινόμενος, 7 εἰς ἣν τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκτενεῖα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῖον ἐλπίζει καταντῆσαι, περὶ ἧς ἐλπίδος ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, βασιλεῦ. 8 τί ἄπιστον κρίνεται παρ' ὑμῖν εἰ ὁ θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει;</p> <p>9 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἐμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πράξει, 10 ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβών ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον. 11 καὶ κατὰ πάσας τὰς συναγωγὰς πολλάκις τιμωρῶν αὐτοὺς ἠνάγκαζον βλασφημεῖν περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς ἐδίωκον ἕως καὶ εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις.</p>	<p>4 All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, 7 a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?</p> <p>9 Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. 11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.</p>	<p>3 ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιὴλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκριβειαν τοῦ πατρῴου νόμου, ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον· 4 ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου δεσμεύων καὶ παραδίδους εἰς φυλακὰς ἀνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, 5 ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, παρ' ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολὰς δεξάμενος πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς Δαμασκὸν ἐπορευόμην, ἄξων καὶ τοὺς ἐκέῖσε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν.</p>	<p>3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. 4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.</p>
Acts 23:6-8 (Sanhedrin)		Gal 1:13-14	



<p>6 Γνούς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων, περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι. 7 τοῦτο δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἐγένετο στάσις τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων καὶ ἐσχίσθη τὸ πλῆθος. 8 Σαδδουκαῖοι μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασις μήτε ἄγγελος μήτε πνεῦμα, Φαρισαῖοι δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν τὰ ἀμφότερα.</p>	<p>6 When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead.” 7 When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.)</p>	<p>13 Ἦκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν, 14 καὶ πρόκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ ὑπὲρ πολλοὺς συνηλικιώτας ἐν τῷ γένει μου, περισσotέρως ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων.</p>	<p>13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. 14 I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors.</p>
<p><b>Phil. 3:4b-6</b></p>			
<p>4b Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί, ἐγὼ μᾶλλον· 5 περιτομῆ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος, 6 κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος.</p>	<p>4b If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.</p>		

From the above list several items surface about him as a Pharisee:

- Born and raised in commitment to Judaism (A 26:4; G 1:13; P 45)
- Trained as a Pharisee by Gamaliel (A 26:5; 22:3; 23:6; G 1:14; P 3:5)
- Persecuted Christians as heretics (A 26:9-11; 22:4-5; G 1:13; P 3:6)

Clearly different aspects of each of these three topics are presented by the apostle in ways appropriate to each setting behind the texts. The apostle’s heritage as a Jew were beyond dispute and question. No one could raise doubts about the sincerity of his commitment to his Jewish heritage. As a defense strategy, this was an excellent move on Paul’s part. He put on the table first evidence that no one could honestly dispute.

Now for a closer examination of his defense before Agrippa. This first point is composed with five sentences in the Greek: 1) vv. 4-5; 2) vv. 6-7; 3) v. 8; 4) vv. 9-10; 5) v. 11. These need scrutiny one by one.

1) **τὴν μὲν οὖν βίωσίν μου** [τὴν] ἐκ νεότητος τὴν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς γενομένην ἐν τῷ ἔθνει μου ἔν τε ἱεροσολύμοις ἴσασιν πάντες [οἱ] Ἰουδαῖοι προγινώσκοντές με ἄνωθεν, ἐὰν θέλωσιν μαρτυρεῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἴρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος, vv. 4-5. The core part of the main clause is τὴν βίωσίν μου... ἴσασιν πάντες [οἱ] Ἰουδαῖοι, **my manner of living...all the Jews know**. Everything else in the sentence represents an expansion of either the verb ἴσασιν or the direct object τὴν...βίωσίν.

The verb ἴσασιν expresses a present awareness that extends into the past and was triggered by some event that happened. Coming from οἶδα, this third person plural verb form would normally be spelled οἶδασι rather than ἴσασι which is a much older and more classical Greek expression. The sense of the verb remains the same with the perfect tense spellings but containing a present tense meaning.<sup>324</sup> The meaning of the verb conveys the idea of a long time awareness of who Paul is and what he has been doing both before and after becoming a Christian. And this awareness is not by just a few isolated individuals. Rather Paul believes it to be among πάντες [οἱ] Ἰουδαῖοι, **all the Jews**.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>324</sup>οἶσασι. This seems to be in the NT the only absolutely certain (i.e. unaffected by textual variants) example of the older forms of the perfect (M. 2:221; see also BDR § 99:2, n. 2)—another example of the literary Greek Luke puts into this speech. The third person plural of οἶδα does not occur in the (13) Pauline letters; οἶδατε is common (ἴστε imperative occurs at Eph. 5:5).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1151.]

<sup>325</sup>Compare this statement of the Jews prior knowledge of him to one of his earlier statements in Acts 22:5 before the Jewish mob in the temple courtyard.

**Acts 22:4-5.** 4 ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου δεσμεύων καὶ παραδιδούς εἰς φυλακὰς ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, 5 ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, παρ’ ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολὰς δεξάμενος πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς Δαμασκὸν ἐπορευόμην, ἄξων καὶ τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν.

4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, **5 as the high priest**

What these Jews know is defined as Τὴν...βίωσίν. The single use of βίωσις here in Acts 26:4 specifies a manner of living primarily from a physical perspective. It is connected to βίος that defines physical life, and βιώω that specifies to live one's life from a physical perspective. This noun is further connected to the adjective βιωτικός, -ή, -όν that specifies life taking place on a daily basis from the outward, physical angle. Thus the third declension feminine noun βίωσις specifies physical life as outwardly expression in an ongoing manner. The noun stresses the behavioral and ethical aspects of daily living.<sup>326</sup> By using this term Paul asserts that these Jewish folk could and did observe how he conducted his life, especially as a Jewish Pharisee.

From this core expression comes numerous expansions. First those expanding the direct object Τὴν...βίωσίν which form three elaborations. It was βίωσίν μου, *my life*, that they observed. There was both enough personal contact as well as circulated discussion about this young, ambitious Pharisee so that most of the people in Jerusalem had some understanding of who Paul was. Also it was [τὴν] ἐκ νεότητος, his life *from his youth*. The term implies that Paul came to Jerusalem in order to train as a Pharisee under Gamaliel either in his late teens or early twenty's. Prior to that he lived in his home town of Tarsus, in Diaspora Judaism. Thirdly, this life τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενομένην ἐν τῷ ἔθνει μου ἐν τε Ἱεροσολύμοις, which from the beginning took place among his own people and among the "Jerusalemmites." The prepositional phrase ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, from the beginning, can refer either to the time of his childhood in Tarsus among the Diaspora Jews in this Roman city, or else to Paul's arrival in Jerusalem to begin his training with Gamaliel. Probably the latter is intended but the former that extends through the latter time period may well be in mind by Paul here. The point of this temporal qualifier is to stress that the folks in Jerusalem had sufficient time over many years to learn about him.

The expansion of the core verb ἴσασιν adverbial participle phrase introduced by προγινώσκοντές. The participle phrase itself is expanded substantially. The present participle προγινώσκοντές alludes back to the pre-Christian era of Paul as a Pharisee as the prefix προ, *beforehand*, signals. Interestingly, the participle points to an interactive based acquaintance with Paul as the nature of their awareness of him. It clearly precludes a hearsay or rumor based knowledge. The temporal adverb ἄνωθεν further heightens the previous acquaintance with him as a Pharisee by asserting that "from the start" they knew about him.

Paul adds a parenthetical insertion at this point: ἐὰν θέλωσιν μαρτυρεῖν, *if they are willing to testify*. By casting the if-clause in a third class conditional protasis, he signals that he is not certain whether these Jewish folks would be willing to give testimony to what he has just asserted or not. They might but they might not, just as easily. What he does know, that if they were willing to be truthful they would validate his statements. But his past repeated experiences with the Jewish leaders from his appearance before the Sanhedrin some three plus years down to this present moment are that they are unwilling to be truthful about anything they say regarding him.

The exegetical ὅτι-clause defines what they have known experientially about Paul from the beginning: ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος, *that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee*. Literally he says that he lived as a Pharisee which is the most devout Torah obeying group among the Jews. Paul alludes back to his days as a Pharisee, and also reflects the traditional pride of the Pharisee as belonging to the most religious group of the Jewish people. In several places Paul affirmed the high level of Torah obedience maintained by the Pharisees, along with his commitment as one:

**Acts 22:3.** ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, *παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιὴλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου, ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ* καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον.

3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but *brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God*, just as all of you are today.

**Acts 23:6.** Γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ἀνδρες ἀδελφοί, *ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων*, περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν [ἐγὼ] κρίνομαι.

When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, "Brothers, *I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees*. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead."

**Gal. 1:13-14.** 13 Ἦκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν, 14 *καὶ προέκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ ὑπὲρ πολλοὺς συνηλικιώτας ἐν τῷ γένει μου, περισσοτέρως ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων*.

*and the whole council of elders can testify about me.* From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

<sup>326</sup>t is part of a large number of ancient Koine Greek words touching upon behavior and conduct in the living of daily life. For a full listing see topics 41.1 - 41.24 in Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.

13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. 14 *I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors.*

**Phil. 3:5-6.** 5 περιτομή ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, *κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος, 6 κατὰ ζήλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος.*

5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; *as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.*

This profile of the Pharisees painted by Paul (and Luke) conforms to that pictured by Josephus<sup>327</sup> and other Jewish sources who describe the Pharisees during the time of their existence from the Maccabean period to the era shortly after the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 AD.

2) 6 καὶ νῦν ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τῆς εἰς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐπαγγελίας γενομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστηκα κρινόμενος, 7 εἰς ἣν τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκτενεῖα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῦον ἐλπίζει καταντῆσαι, περὶ ἧς ἐλπίδος ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, βασιλεῦ, vv. 6-7. After mentioning his connection to the Pharisees, Paul focuses in on one of their main teachings, the resurrection of the dead. In a pattern somewhat like his appearance before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem some years earlier (cf. Acts 23:6-10), Paul couches the opposition to him in terms of the central Pharisee teaching of the resurrection. He states it in broad terms of ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τῆς εἰς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐπαγγελίας γενομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, *in the hope of the promise given to our fathers by God.*<sup>328</sup> In this characterization of his opposition (ἔστηκα κρινόμενος), the apostle positions it as fundamentally a disagreement over interpretation of the sacred scriptures of the Jews. God made a promise to the forefathers of the Jews, namely Abraham, and Paul is convinced that this promised is being realized in the work of Christ in death and resurrection. He depicts the Jewish people as a whole with τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν, *our twelve tribes*, a term only used here in the entire New Testament.<sup>329</sup> The entire Jewish nation seeks to achieve the resurrection, and Paul identifies himself with them in that spiritual quest (cf. ἡμῶν). This would stand at odds, however, with the Sadducean element of the Jewish leaders who did not believe in any life after death. But such thinking would have impacted less than five percent of the Jewish people. The vast majority went along with the teaching of the Pharisees concerning life after death, and a final judgment determining eternity in either heaven or hell.

The resurrection of the dead was the transition point signaling having to face God in final judgment. Thus Paul asserts: ἐν ἐκτενεῖα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῦον ἐλπίζει καταντῆσαι, with seriousness night and day rendering religious service, they hope to obtain (it). This quest is profound among the Jewish people.<sup>330</sup> Not only

<sup>327</sup>**Antiquities of the Jews, 13.171-172.** 171 Κατὰ δὲ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον τρεῖς αἰρέσεις τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἦσαν, αἱ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων διαφόρως ὑπελάμβανον, ὧν ἡ μὲν Φαρισαίων ἐλέγετο, ἡ δὲ Σαδδουκαίων, ἡ τρίτη δὲ Ἑσσηνῶν. 172 οἱ μὲν οὖν Φαρισαῖοι τινὰ καὶ οὐ πάντα τῆς εἰμαρμένης ἔργον εἶναι λέγουσιν, τινὰ δ’ ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ὑπάρχειν συμβαίνειν τε καὶ μὴ γίνεσθαι.

[Joseph Sievers, *Synopsis of the Greek Sources for the Hasmonean Period: 1–2 Maccabees and Josephus, War 1 and Antiquities 12–14*, vol. 20, Subsidia Biblica (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2001), 200.]

“(191) This Simon was of the city of Jerusalem, and of a very noble family, of the sect of the Pharisees, which are supposed to excel others in the accurate knowledge of the laws of their country.”

[Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), S.V., Life., 191].

<sup>328</sup>“Paul once more claims to be on trial for ‘the hope that is the resurrection’ (23:6; 24:15; 25:19). But now he makes explicit what was implied by his statement that he believed nothing else than ‘all that was written’ (24:14): the resurrection of Jesus with the sending of the Spirit is the fulfillment of ‘the promise (epangelia) that was made by God to our fathers.’ Here is the clear statement of the theme of prophecy/fulfillment, but also the most express connection between belief in Jesus’ resurrection and the claim to represent the authentic realization of the people Israel as the children of the promise made to Abraham (see the notes on Luke 1:55, 73; 3:8; 13:28, and above all on Acts 3:24–26; 7:1–8; 13:32–33).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 432–433.]

<sup>329</sup>“*Our twelve tribes hope to attain it*: Both the substantive and the personal pronoun are significant here. The adjective *dōdekaphylos* is used absolutely as a noun, and obviously evokes the image of Israel as a whole people (compare Sybilline Oracles 3:248; Jas 1:1). In Luke-Acts, as we have seen, the symbolism of the Twelve is directly related to the restoration of the people Israel (Luke 6:13; 8:1, 42–43; 9:1, 12, 17; 22:30; Acts 1:15–26; 7:8). The possessive ‘our’ (*hēmōn*) is also significant, for it expresses Paul the Messianist’s solidarity with the hopes of the people.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 433.]

<sup>330</sup>**ἐκτενεῖα, ας, ἡ** (late word [Phryn. p. 311 Lob.]; Molpis: 590 Fgm. 2b Jac. [in Athen. 4, 141e]; oft. in ins [s. Thieme 27; Rouffiac 40]; PPetr III, 144 IV, 17 [=Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 1 IV, 17 III B.C.]; UPZ 110, 12; LXX; Jos., Ant. 7, 231) **a state of persistence in an undertaking or enterprise, with implication of exceptional interest or devotion, perseverance, earnestness** ἐν ἐ. earnestly (=ἐκτενωῶς) **Ac 12:5 D; 26:7** (cp. Jdth 4:9). Also μετὰ ἐκτενεῖας 1 Cl 33:1; μετὰ πάσης ἐκτενεῖας 37:1 (IGR IV, 984, 6 μετὰ πάσης ἐ. καὶ



is this indicated by ἐν ἑκτενεΐᾳ, but also the idiom of νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν, *night and day*, highlights their level of commitment. This commitment is defined by the participle λατρεύον, which coming from λατρεύω stresses religious service being done.<sup>331</sup> The core statement of this relative clause is ἐλπίζει καταντῆσαι, *they expect to achieve*. Both the verb ἐλπίζω and the noun ἐλπίς often translated with the English word 'hope' do not contain the implicit uncertainty that the English word 'hope' naturally conveys. Closer to the Greek concept is 'expect' and 'expectation' for the verb and noun.

The Aorist infinitive καταντῆσαι coming from καταντάω, connotes the idea of reaching a goal through exerting considerable effort. Here is where Paul's Christian expectation would differ from the expectation of the Pharisees. For the Pharisee the resurrection that sets up a favorable final judgment by God is conditioned solely by the level of Torah obedience achieved by the properly circumcised Jew during his earthly life. Thus one's entire life must be built around obeying the Law of Moses in order to get through final judgment successfully. The futility of this approach is what Paul realized and opened the door for his conversion to Christianity on the Damascus road some twenty plus years earlier in his spiritual journey. He came to realize that the individual's getting through the final judgment of God successfully depends upon being in spiritual union with Christ, the resurrected Son of God.

The final relative clause sums up Paul's essential point here in his presentation: περὶ ἧς ἐλπίδος ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, βασιλεῦ. *concerning which hope I am being accused by Jews, your Excellency*. Note his careful distinction between the negative reference Ἰουδαίων, *Jews*, here and the positive term τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν, *our Twelve Tribes*. Just the Jewish leaders are making accusations<sup>332</sup> against him, not the entire Jewish people. Here Paul alludes to the two previous occasions before first Felix and then Festus that two different groups of Jewish leaders brought formal charges against the apostle during an official Roman judicial process. Of course, they were not present on this occasion of his appearance before Agrippa, which did not have the status of a legal hearing anyway. Quite interestingly, the later copyists of this text vary over how to record Paul's direct reference to Agrippa. Did he say Ἀγρίππα? βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα? Just βασιλεῦ? Or, nothing? Different manuscripts have differing wording here. But the weight of evidence (κ B C E 096. 33. 81. 1175. 2464 pc vg co) favors just βασιλεῦ. The vocative case form signals proper respect for Agrippa as a royal king.

**3)** τί ἄπιστον κρίνεται παρ' ὑμῖν εἰ ὁ θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει; v. 8. As a follow up Paul presses Agrippa and the assembled guests with a question: *why is it unbelievable by you all that God raises the dead?* Of course, the Greco-Roman mind could not accept the concept of a resurrection at all, due to its commitment to Platonic dualism that saw the body as utterly corrupt and beyond any redemption. The soul's shedding of the body at death -- which was the idealized goal -- would be reversed in a resurrection, and thus a defeat rather than a victory. By his use of the third person singular verb rather than a second person singular or plural, Paul throws out the question to Agrippa and the assembled guests in a non-condemning manner. He was confident that many, if not most, of this largely non-Jewish audience would deny the idea of a resurrection. Whether this would have been true of Agrippa or not is unclear. His sister, Bernice, also present that day, clearly affirmed the idea out of her Jewish religious devotion described by Josephus. Agrippa was quite knowledgeable of Jewish beliefs, but not nearly as committed to them as his sister. Plus he reflects from Josephus' description a strong Roman orientation.

Notice how Paul frames the issue: εἰ ὁ θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει, *whether God is raising the dead*. The issue is framed within the traditional beliefs of the Pharisees, rather than from the more precise concept of resurrection

---

λαμπρότης; 2 Macc 14:38).—IMg 14 cj. Lghtf.—DELG s.v. τανυ- etc. E p. 1092. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 310.]

<sup>331</sup>The example of what Paul is alluding to here is provided by Luke in the pattern of devotion expressed by the prophetess Anna in Luke 2:37.

**Luke 2:36-37.** 36 Καὶ ἦν Ἄννα προφῆτις, θυγάτηρ Φανουήλ, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἀσήρ· αὕτη προβεβηκυῖα ἐν ἡμέραις πολλαῖς, ζήσασα μετὰ ἀνδρὸς ἕτη ἑπτὰ ἀπὸ τῆς παρθενίας αὐτῆς 37 καὶ αὕτη χήρα ἕως ἐτῶν ὀγδοήκοντα τεσσάρων, ἢ οὐκ ἀφίστατο τοῦ ἱεροῦ *νηστείαις καὶ δεήσεσιν λατρεύουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν*.

36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but *worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day*.

<sup>332</sup>The range of terminology which carried many differing nuances of legal implication in ancient Greek is substantial. For more details see topics 33.426 to 33.434 in Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996. Here ἐγκαλέω carries similar meaning to the more common κατηγορέω, which implied formal court charges of a serious nature being publicly presented (cf. topic 33:427).

from the Christian perspective. This helps re-enforce the impression to Agrippa that the issues being treated have nothing to do with Roman law, and everything to do with insider Jewish religious thinking.

4) 9 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἑμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πρᾶξαι, 10 ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβῶν ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον, vv. 9-10. Now Paul does not avoid the Christian perspective, which provided more basis for the Jewish accusations. But he carefully leads up to the Christian aspect by couching it inside the Jewish issues. Here he begins with the clearest indication of his earlier Jewish orientation as a Pharisee: persecution Christians as heretics.

Paul's persecution of Christians has previously been presented by Luke in Acts, but this account provides new details not mentioned before.

Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2 (NRSV)	Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2 (GNT)	Acts 22:3-5 (NRSV)	Acts 22:3-5 (SBL-GNT)
<p>8.1 And Saul approved of their killing him.</p> <p>That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>9.1 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.</p>	<p>8.1 Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ.</p> <p>Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διωγμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τὴν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων. 2 συνεκόμισαν δὲ τὸν Στέφανον ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς καὶ ἐποίησαν κοπετὸν μέγαν ἐπ' αὐτῷ. 3 Σαῦλος δὲ ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους εἰσπορευόμενος, σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας παρεδίδου εἰς φυλακὴν.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>9.1 Ὁ δὲ Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου, προσελθὼν τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ 2 ἠτήσατο παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιστολάς εἰς Δαμασκὸν πρὸς τὰς συναγωγάς, ὅπως ἐάν τινες εὔρη τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντας, ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, δεδεμένους ἀγάγῃ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ.</p>	<p><b>3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. 4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.</b></p>	<p><b>3 Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ, πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκριβείαν τοῦ πατρώου νόμου, ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον, 4 ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου, δεσμεύων καὶ παραδίδους εἰς φυλακὰς ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, 5 ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον· παρ' ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολάς δεξάμενος πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς Δαμασκὸν ἐπορευόμην ἄξων καὶ τοὺς ἐκέῖσε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν.</b></p>

**Acts 26:9-10.** 9 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἑμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πρᾶξαι, 10 ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβῶν ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον,

9 “Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death.

As a comparison of these four texts indicates, Paul as a Pharisee was involved in persecution of Christians, first in Jerusalem and then intended to do the same in Damascus. Acts 26:9-10 more directly intersect Acts 8:1-3; 9:1; and 22:4-5. These are supplemented by Paul statements in two of his letters:

Gal. 1:13. τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν, *my manner of life formerly in Judaism, that with great zeal I was persecuting the church of God and was laying it waste.*

Phil. 3:6a. κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, *as to zeal persecuting the church.*

Here he concentrates on his activity in Jerusalem. He will get to the Damascus part in v. 12. In Luke's initial depiction in chapters eight, Paul is persecuting the church: ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (8:3), whom Luke references in 9:1 as τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου, *the disciples of the Lord*. In Paul's speech in 22:4, he characterizes his actions

as ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου, *this way I was persecuting to death*. Paul both in his speeches in Acts and in his letters prefers the verb action ἐδίωξα / ἐδίωκον (I persecuted / was persecuting). But Luke uses more graphic language:

**Acts 8:3.** Σαῦλος δὲ ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους εἰσπορευόμενος, σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας παρεδίδου εἰς φυλακὴν. *But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.*

**Acts 9:1a.** Ὁ δὲ Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου, *Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,*

Here in 26:9 he introduces his description with Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἑμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πρᾶξαι, *Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth*. The church is now τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου, the name of Jesus of Nazareth. His Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ who completely identified himself with the church that Paul was persecuting altered his perspective on the nature of his negative actions. Note also that here he casts his persecuting activity in terms of δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πρᾶξαι, *to do many opposing things is necessary*. The use of δεῖν casts this as a conviction that Paul at that time felt had come from God. Later he realized that it hadn't, but not until after Damascus.

The πολλὰ ἐναντία, many opposing things, is now defined in greater detail by the relative clause in verse ten, which is then amplified further by the sentence in verse eleven. Here the ὁ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβὼν ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον declaration is fleshed out first by ὁ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, *which I also did in Jerusalem*. He developed his persecuting skills initially on the saints in Jerusalem. That centered on two actions carried out under the authorization of the chief priests (τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβὼν). He locked up in jail many of the saints in Jerusalem: καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς. This corresponds to 8:3b, σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας παρεδίδου εἰς φυλακὴν, *dragging off both men and women he was carrying them to jail*. Second, Paul -- here is a new angle -- was ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον, *casting his vote against them as they were being condemned to death*. This relates to 8:1 where Paul approved of the killing of Stephen: Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ. What did Paul mean here? Does κατήνεγκα ψῆφον mean that he had an actual vote in the judicial process against the Christians?<sup>333</sup> Probably not! But acting as an agent of the Sanhedrin, his arresting and bringing to jail these Christians was his vote cast against them. The gravity of these actions was that Paul became involved in the murdering of Christians. Even though forgiven by God of this horrible action, it still haunted Paul the rest of his life as his statement in 1 Tim. 1:12-15 reflects.<sup>334</sup>

**5)** καὶ κατὰ πάσας τὰς συναγωγὰς πολλάκις τιμωρῶν αὐτοὺς ἠνάγκαζον βλασφημεῖν περισσῶς τε ἔμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς ἐδίωκον ἕως καὶ εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις, v. 11. In this final sentence, Paul amplifies his persecuting actions referenced in the relative clause in v. 10. Here a Christian characterization shines through as he describes his actions as a Pharisee: *By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme;*

<sup>333</sup>“The most obviously new thing here is the impression that more than one Messianist was killed (*anairō*, see Luke 22:2; 23:2; Acts 2:23; 5:33; 9:23), even though the narrative recounted only the death of Stephen (7:60). The phrase Paul uses here is literally, ‘I cast my pebble against.’ The idiom derives from the use of a pebble (*psēphos*) in voting; see Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God* 75; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 2:163; 10:60). The most obvious translation therefore would be ‘I cast my vote against them.’ But there are problems: a) the present participle of *anairō* seems to suggest simultaneous action rather than a prior judicial proceeding; b) even though Luke struggles to make the Sanhedrin responsible for Stephen’s death (Acts 6:15–7:1), his account bears none of the marks of a judicial process with votes taken on the fate of the defendant; c) Paul’s own role is nowhere else described in terms of membership in the Sanhedrin or as voting, but rather he is pictured as colluding and approving of the death (perhaps with the implication that he was an *agent provocateur* (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:20). On the other hand, a literal translation would serve Paul’s purpose of having the Sanhedrin formally responsible for all these deaths, abetting his picture of Paul not as a maverick but as an agent authorized by the council. For the reader today, there is an excellent pun to be found in the idiom if Paul describes his participation in the stoning of Stephen as ‘I also cast my pebble.’” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 434.]

<sup>334</sup>**1 Tim. 1:12-15.** 12 Χάριν ἔχω τῷ ἐνδυναμώσαντί με Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, ὅτι πιστόν με ἠγήσατο θέμενος εἰς διακονίαν 13 τὸ πρότερον ὄντα βλάσφημον *καὶ διώκτην καὶ ὑβριστήν*, ἀλλ’ ἠλεήθη, ὅτι ἀγνοῶν ἐποίησα ἐν ἀπιστίᾳ· 14 ὑπερεπλέονασεν δὲ ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 15 πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος, ὅτι Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι, ὧν πρῶτός εἰμι ἐγώ.

12 I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer, *a persecutor, and a man of violence*. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost.



and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities. By showing up during the Friday evening gatherings of synagogues all across the city of Jerusalem, he would confront these Christian Jews during the meeting with threats if they did not renounce Jesus Christ. Then as a Pharisee he saw this a purging sin from these heretics, but as a Christian he sees it as trying to get them to blaspheme God (βλασφημεῖν), a death penalty itself. From his Christian view now, denying Christ in these synagogue meetings would have constituted blasphemy against God!

The last statement of Paul in this sentence, περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς ἐδίωκον ἕως καὶ εἰς τὰς ἕξω πόλεις, since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities, raises a new question. Does this mean that Paul had traveled to other cities outside Judea prior to going to Damascus? It could be so taken, although Damascus is the only one noted in the book of Acts and in Paul's writings. What is perhaps more significant is the highly graphic manner of Paul describing his rage at Christians: περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς.<sup>335</sup> When Agrippa begins feeling the heat of conviction from Paul's words he will accuse Paul of still be insane, by making a play off this same root stem.<sup>336</sup>

What emerges here is an honest appraisal by Paul of his past actions as a Pharisee, and against the very people he now is a vital part of. The dramatic turn around described in vv. 12-18 in his conversion stand against this dark background of be a persecutor of the true people of God in the Christian community. The language of the depiction here picks up bits and pieces of previous depiction of the pre-Christian period in Paul's life. But also contained are some fresh, new perspectives presented by the apostle.<sup>337</sup> Hopefully every time we share our spiritual journey with others, fresh new insights are a part of each presentation. The core testimony, of course, remains essentially the same, but new perspectives taught us with the passing of time should be a part also of what we share. In this way, we signal the continual work of God through the Holy Spirit in our life. Conversion is only the beginning of the journey, not the sum total of it.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2.4 Speech Point Two: Paul's conversion, Acts 26:12-18

12 Ἐν οἷς πορευόμενος εἰς τὴν Δαμασκὸν μετ' ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπιτροπῆς τῆς τῶν ἀρχιερέων 13 ἡμέρας μέσης κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εἶδον, βασιλεῦ, οὐρανόθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου περιλάμπων με φῶς καὶ τοὺς σὺν ἐμοὶ πορευομένους. 14 πάντων τε καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἤκουσα φωνὴν λέγουσαν πρὸς με τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζεις. 15 ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 16 ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ στηθὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, προχειρίσασθαί σε ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδες [με] ὧν τε ὀφθῆσομαί σοι, 17 ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε 18 ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτόους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

12 "With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. 14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads." 15 I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn 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."

By beginning with the pre-Christian era of his life the apostle has put on the table his Jewish heritage and orientation quite clearly to this non-Jewish audience. He brought that part of his life story to the central issue of the resurrection of the dead as the heart of the Jewish opposition against him by the leaders of the Jews who

<sup>335</sup>“The description of rage is exceptionally vivid (compare Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 17:174–175), and picks up the description of him ‘breathing threat and murder’ in 9:1. The word-choice here is particularly interesting. Paul’s ‘raging’ (*emmainomai*) against the Christians is after his conversion changed to ‘truth and sanity’ (26:25), but that is now regarded by the outsider Festus as ‘raving’ (*mainomai*) and ‘madness’ (*mania*; 26:24).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 434.]

<sup>336</sup>Acts 26:24-25. 24 Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ φησιν· **μαίνῃ**, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς **μανίαν περιτρέπει**. 25 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος· **οὐ μαίνομαι**, φησίν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλ' ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι.

24 While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, “You are **out of your mind**, Paul! Too much learning is **driving you insane!**” 25 But Paul said, “I am not **out of my mind**, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth.

<sup>337</sup>One strong implication of this comparison of the various accounts is that any use of a ‘canned’ testimony that is simply repeated over and over stands in contradiction to Paul’s example between the two speeches in chapters twenty-two and twenty-six.

denied the idea of a resurrection. But that was not the complete story for Paul. His encounter with the resurrected Christ outside the city of Damascus stands as the pivotal turning point of his life that brought him on to a new path that stood in deep conflict with the Jewish leaders of his day.

Again what we encounter here is a story that has already been told in Acts on two previous occasions. Comparisons with these earlier narratives will provide deeper insight into how Paul narrates his conversion experience before this non-Jewish audience in contrast to how he did it earlier in the outer court of the temple to the Jewish mob. Additionally, Luke's initial narrative in chapter nine is important here, along with those places in Paul's letters where mention is made of his conversion.

Scene:	Acts 9:3-8	Acts 22:6-11	Acts 26:12-18
<b>2. Damascus Road</b>	3 <i>Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.</i> 4 <i>He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"</i> 5 <i>He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."</i> 6 <i>But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.</i> 7 <i>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one.</i> 8 <i>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.</i>	6 <i>While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me.</i> 7 <i>I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"</i> 8 <i>I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" Then he said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting."</i> 9 <i>Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me.</i> 10 <i>I asked, "What am I to do, Lord?" The Lord said to me, "Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do."</i> 11 <i>Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.</i>	12 <i>With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,</i> 13 <i>when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions.</i> 14 <i>When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads."</i> 15 <i>I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."</i> 16 <i>But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.</i> 17 <i>I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you</i> 18 <i>to open their eyes so that they may turn 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."</i>
<b>N-A 28th GNT</b>	3 Ἐν δὲ τῷ πορευέσθαι ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐγγίζειν τῇ Δαμασκῷ, ἐξαίφνης τε αὐτὸν περιήστραψεν φῶς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ 4 καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἤκουσεν φωνὴν λέγουσαν αὐτῷ· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; 5 εἶπεν δέ· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις· 6 ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ λαληθήσεται σοι ὃ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν. 7 οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες οἱ συνοδεύοντες αὐτῷ εἰστήκεισαν ἔνεοί, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες. 8 ἠγέρθη δὲ Σαῦλος ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, ἀνεωγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν· χειραγωγοῦντες δὲ αὐτὸν εἰσήγαγον εἰς Δαμασκόν.	6 Ἐγένετο δὲ μοι πορευομένῳ καὶ ἐγγίζοντι τῇ Δαμασκῷ περὶ μεσημβρίαν ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περιεστράψαι φῶς ἰκανὸν περὶ ἐμέ, 7 ἔπεσά τε εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; 8 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπεκρίθην· τίς εἶ, κύριε; εἶπέν τε πρὸς με· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος, ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 9 οἱ δὲ σὺν ἐμοὶ ὄντες τὸ μὲν φῶς ἐθεάσαντο τὴν δὲ φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν τοῦ λαλοῦντός μοι. 10 εἶπον δέ· τί ποιήσω, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν πρὸς με· ἀναστὰς πορεύου εἰς Δαμασκόν· κάκει σοι λαληθήσεται περὶ πάντων ὧν τέτακται σοι ποιῆσαι. 11 ὡς δὲ οὐκ ἐνέβλεπον ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτός ἐκείνου, χειραγωγούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν συνόντων μοι ἦλθον εἰς Δαμασκόν.	12 Ἐν οἷς πορευόμενος εἰς τὴν Δαμασκὸν μετ' ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπιτροπῆς τῆς τῶν ἀρχιερέων 13 ἡμέρας μέσης κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εἶδον, βασιλεῦ, οὐρανόθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου περιλάμπαν με φῶς καὶ τοὺς σὺν ἐμοὶ πορευομένους. 14 πάντων τε καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἤκουσα φωνὴν λέγουσαν πρὸς με τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν. 15 ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 16 ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ στήθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, προχειρίσασθαι σε ὑπηρετήν καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδές [με] ὧν τε ὀφθῆσομαί σοι, 17 ἔξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε 18 ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτῶν εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πιστεῖ τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

Just a casual reading of the three accounts reveals core commonality but important diversity on several of the details. This diversity in large part is reflecting the different settings in which the three accounts were given. Both Luke and then Paul (in the second and third accounts that were his speeches) are relating the apostle's

conversion to different individuals in very different circumstances. Luke in chapter nine is moving to introduce Paul as the emerging leader of the Christian movement as he steps out of the shadows of Peter's dominating influence of the Christian movement in Jerusalem and the surrounding regions of Palestine. In chapter twenty-two Paul is presenting his conversion to the Jewish mob that had sought to beat him to death in the outer court of the Jerusalem temple. But in the speech of Paul in chapter twenty six Paul is addressing a gathering of dignitaries in Caesarea upon the occasion of Agrippa II and his sister Bernice visiting the new governor Festus. Different 'audiences' dictate different emphases, as is reflected in these three accounts of Paul's conversion outside Damascus. On some other occasions Paul had defended himself -- e.g., before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and before Felix at Caesarea -- but no speech with any substantial details is preserved by Luke from those occasions. This reality also enters into the interpretive process as a reflection of the editorial work of Luke as the writer of this history.

First, we should note the common core elements of the three accounts.

- Paul was travelling to Damascus
- A bright light suddenly appears causing the traveling group to fall to the ground
- Paul hears a voice asking him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"
- Not recognizing the person speaking, Paul asks, "Who are you, Lord?"
- The reply from the voice is "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." [slight variation here]

From this it becomes clear what the essential heart of Paul's depiction of this encounter was. While on his way to Damascus Paul experiences a personal encounter with the risen Christ. It is an overwhelming experience for Paul and will forever change his life and career. Christ's haunting question pushes the issue of Paul's persecution of Christians in a puzzling manner to Paul. By seeking to destroy believers in Christ, Paul was seeking to harm the risen Christ, who is so identified with His people that harming them means harming Him. For the first time, Paul came face to face with the reality that these people were linked to this heavenly figure who was none other than Jesus of Nazareth in resurrected form as God. This confrontation proved to be the life changer for Paul. He could not persecute God to whom his entire life was devoted, but this was exactly what he was doing by persecuting Christians. Later in his letter to the Galatians Paul will characterize this moment as ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, *to disclose His Son in me* (Gal. 1:16). This was not anticipated by Paul and he could never have imagined how drastically it would change his life. But it did in very profound ways.

Then, the differences of this second speech depiction in Acts 26 to the previous two accounts. Here I will repeat what was presented earlier in chapter two (pages 64-65); I seriously doubt that by this point you remember what was said earlier:

**First, the authorization of Paul's trip to Damascus.** In 9:2, Luke depicted it as: "went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus (ἐπιστολάς εἰς Δαμασκὸν πρὸς τὰς συναγωγὰς), so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." In 22:5, it is characterized as "From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus (ἐπιστολάς δεξαμένους πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς εἰς Δαμασκὸν)." In 26:12, this authorization is described as "with the authority and commission of the chief priests" (μετ' ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπιτροπῆς τῆς τῶν ἀρχιερέων). The abstract aspect is emphasized in Acts 26; it was both authority (ἐξουσία<sup>338</sup>) and a commission (ἐπιτροπῆς<sup>339</sup>). This au-

<sup>338</sup>**3. the right to control or command, authority, absolute power, warrant** (Sextus 36: the πιστός has ἐ. fr. God) ἐ. καὶ ἐπιτροπή (cp. Ps.-Pla., Defn. p. 415c ἐξουσία, ἐπιτροπή νόμου) *authority and commission* **Ac 26:12**. ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; *by whose authority are you doing this?* **Mt 21:23, 24, 27; Mk 11:28, 29, 33; Lk 20:2, 8**. ἐ. διδόναι τινί *put someone in charge* (Diod S 13, 36, 2; 14, 81, 6; cp. Vi. Aesopi G 11 p. 39, 6 P.; En 9:7; TestJob 3:6; Jos., Ant. 2, 90; 20, 193) **Mk 13:34; PtK 2 p. 14, 13**. οἷς ἔδωκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τὴν ἐ. *to whom he gave rights over the Gospel* (for its proclamation) B 8:3. ὅτι τὸ ἄρχεν ἐξουσίας ἐστὶν that ruling depends on authority 6:18. Of apostolic authority **2 Cor 10:8; 13:10**; ISm 4:1. Of Jesus' total authority **Mt 28:18** (cp. Herm. Wr. 1, 32; Da 7:14; DStanley, CBQ 29, '67, 555-73); Hs 5, 6, 1. W. gen. of the one who has authority ἐ. τοῦ Χριστοῦ **Rv 12:10** (Just., A I, 40, 7). W. gen. of that over which the authority is exercised (Diod S 2, 27, 3; IDefixWünsch 4, 21; Ps 135:8, 9; Wsd 10:14; Sir 17:2; Jos., Vi. 190) ἐ. πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων *over the unclean spirits* **Mt 10:1; Mk 6:7**; cp. **J 17:2**; Hm 4, 3, 5; PtK 2 p. 14, 13; 1 Cl 61:2; ISm 4:1; τούτου τοῦ λαοῦ Hs 8, 3, 3. Also ἐπί w. acc. (cp. Sir 33:20) **Lk 9:1**; cp. **Rv 6:8; 13:7**. Likew. ἐπί w. gen. (cp. Da 3:97) **Rv 2:26; 11:6b; 14:18**. παρά τινος (also ἀπό τινος Orig., C. Cels. 2, 13, 56) indicates the source of the authority (s. παρά A3b) **Ac 9:14; 26:10**; Hs 5, 6, 4 (restored from the Lat.; ἐ. λαμβάνειν as Diod S 11, 42, 6; TestJob 8:2f; 16:4; Vi. Aesopi G 11 p. 39, 4 P.) and κατά τινος the one against whom it is directed (TestJob 16:2 κατ' ἐμοῦ; 8:2 κατὰ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων μου 'over my possessions'; Sb 8316, 6f κύριε Σάραπι δὸς αὐτῷ κατεξουσίαν κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῦ; Orig., C. Cels. 7, 43, 25) **J 19:11** (HvCampenhausen, TLZ 73, '48, 387-92); B 4:13. W. pres. inf. foll. (cp. X., Mem. 2, 6, 24 and 35; Diod S 12, 75, 4; 1 Macc 10:35; 11:58; Jos., Ant. 4, 247) **Mt 9:6; Mk 2:10; Lk 5:24; J 5:27**. W. aor. inf. foll. (Jdth 8:15; 1 Esdr 8:22; 1 Macc 1:13) **19:10**. Foll. by gen. of the pres. inf. (4 Macc 5:15) Hm 12, 4, 2.—RDillon, 'As One Having Authority' (Mark 1:22): CBQ 57, '95, 92-113." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 353.]

<sup>339</sup>**ἐπιτροπή, ἦς, ἡ** (s. prec. entry; Thu. et al.; ins, pap, 2 Macc 13:14) **authorization to carry out an assignment, permission,**



thority is the same as that given to Paul by the chief priests to persecute believers in Jerusalem (cf. 26:10): τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβὼν, “with authority received from the chief priests.” But Paul had to secure this second authorization to go outside Jerusalem for his work. In the first narrative this is described as letters specifically addressed to the synagogues in Damascus (cf. 9:2), while in the second narrative (22:5), it is letters to the ‘brothers’ in Damascus: ἐπιστολάς...πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς Δαμασκόν. Something of the *content of this authorization* is stressed first as “he might bring them bound to Jerusalem” (9:2, δεδεμένους ἀγάγη εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ); then as “to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment” (22:5, τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὄντας δεδεμένους εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν); but nothing is specified in Acts 26. One is tempted to wonder if this young fanatical Pharisee might have stepped over the boundaries of his authorization in light of everything he describes as having done to Christians in Jerusalem (cf. 26:10-11) had he carried out his intentions in Damascus.

The *source of authorization* is first depicted in 9:2 as coming from the high priest (τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ), then in 22:5 as from “the high priest and the whole council of elders” (ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς...καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον· παρ’ ὧν καὶ...), and finally in 26:12 as from “the chief priests” (τῆς τῶν ἀρχιερέων). Although different language is employed by Luke in all three narratives, no real contradiction exists among them. The authorization request would have been processed by the Sanhedrin and the high priest would have endorsed it with his signature.

**Another distinctive** (26:14) in the third narrative is the mentioning that *the risen Christ spoke to Paul in Hebrew* on the Damascus road: τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ, “in the Hebrew language.” The mentioning of either Greek or Hebrew being spoken by Paul was significant in the first speech: in Greek to the Roman tribune (21:37) but in Hebrew to the Jewish crowd (21:40, 22:2). But here it is Christ who speaks in Hebrew to Paul on the Damascus road. The use of “Saul, Saul” in 9:4 and 22:7 most likely implies the same thing, but it is directly stated in 26:14. Whether Luke was specifically meaning Hebrew, which was used in the temple and synagogue, or Aramaic, which was the language at home and on the streets, is not clear since the same Greek word can cover both languages.<sup>340</sup> That Paul would stress this to Agrippa with Festus present is not hard to understand.

**A fourth distinctive** in Acts 26:14 is the additional statement of Jesus to Paul: σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν, “It hurts you to kick against the goads.” The beginning question, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις;), is common to all three narratives. What was implied by the statement following Jesus’ question?<sup>341</sup> With a Greek proverb, not found in ancient Jewish literature, Christ then declares that resisting the calling of God through Christ is futile. To include this in a speech before Greek speaking Romans was entirely fitting. Whether Jesus stated the idea of the futility of resisting a divine calling in the form of a Greek proverb or whether Paul and / or Luke rephrase Jesus’ words in the Greek proverb for communication to a non-Jewish audience is not clear. But the point is the same **a commission, full power** (Polyb. 3, 15, 7; Diod S 17, 47, 4; Dionys. Hal. 2, 45; POxy 743, 32 [2 B.C.] περι πάντων αὐτῷ τ. ἐπιτροπὴν δέδωκα; Philo, Poster. Cai. 181; Jos., Ant. 8, 162; Just., A I, 29, 2) μετ’ ἐπιτροπῆς (w. ἐξουσία) **Ac 26:12.**—M-M. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 385.]

<sup>340</sup>“**Aramaic** (air-uh-may’ik), a Semitic language closely related to Hebrew. It has been spoken in the Levant from the ninth century B.C. until the present in a variety of dialects. It originated among the Arameans of northern Syria, said to be among the ancestors of Abraham (Gen. 28:2-5; Deut. 26:5). When the Assyrians conquered the Arameans, Aramean scribes within the bureaucracy of the empire made Aramaic into a universal language of the Near East, which endured from the eighth to fourth centuries B.C. Aramaic then continued in widespread use in a number of dialects through the NT period until the Arab conquest (seventh century A.D.). Several passages in the OT are written in Official Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan. 2:4-7:28; Jer. 10:10-11; Gen. 31:47). Jesus probably spoke a dialect of Western Aramaic and some words in the NT come from Aramaic, e.g., ‘Talitha Cumi,’ ‘Maranatha,’ and ‘Golgotha.’ The Dead Sea Scrolls, inscriptions, and many documents show that Aramaic was in common use during the first century A.D.” [Paul J. Achtemeier, Publishers Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 43.]

<sup>341</sup>“*It is hard for you to kick against the goad.*’ I.e., it is useless for you to try to resist this heavenly call. Though the risen Christ addresses Paul in Aramaic, he quotes a common Greek proverb, which is otherwise not found in Jewish literature. In variant forms it occurs in Euripides, *Bacchae* 794–95 (“than kick against the goads”); Aeschylus, *Prometheus* 324–25; *Agamemnon* 1624; Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 2.94–95; cf. TDNT, 3.666–67. In Greek literature the proverb expresses as idle or useless any resistance to divine influence in future conduct. So from that moment on Paul is being pressed into the service of the risen Christ. It does not express a reflection on Paul’s past life or conduct, or indicate a crisis of conscience.

“Note too Paul’s own recollections of the experience on the road to Damascus: he was “seized by Christ” (Phil 3:12); a “compulsion, necessity” (*anankē*) was laid upon him to preach the gospel (1 Cor 9:15–18).

“Cf. W. Nestle, “Anklänge an Euripides in der Apostelgeschichte,” *Philologus* 59 (1900): 46–57; R. C. Horn, “Classical Quotations and Allusions of St. Paul,” *LCQ* 11 (1938) 281–88, esp. 287–88; A. Vögeli, “Lukas und Euripides,” *TZ* 9 (1953): 415–38, esp. 416–18; J. Hackett, “Echoes of the Bacchae of Euripides in Acts of the Apostles?” *ITQ* 23 (1956): 219–27, 350–66; S. Reyer, “‘Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare’: Hechos de los Apóstoles, 26, 14,” *Studium* 10 (1970): 367–78.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 758-59.

whatever the way it was communicated. And Paul had come to realize this, especially by the time of his speech to Agrippa nearly thirty years after Jesus had spoken to him.

**Fifth**, in the subsequent dialogue between Paul and Christ (26:15-18), Jesus' initial answer to Paul's question, "Who are you, sir?" (τίς εἶ, κύριε;) is the same in all three narratives: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις). But Acts 26:16-18 adds considerable detail to Jesus' response. Here the three texts show individual distinctives. The Acts 9:6 instruction from the Lord, "But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do," becomes instruction given to Ananias by the Lord (9:15-16): "for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." We are left to assume that Ananias shared with Paul these details, because the Acts 9 account does not state directly that he did. The first speech account in Acts 22:10 follows Acts 9:6 closely: "I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.'" Here Ananias shares the message from Christ with Paul (22:14-15): "Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard.'"

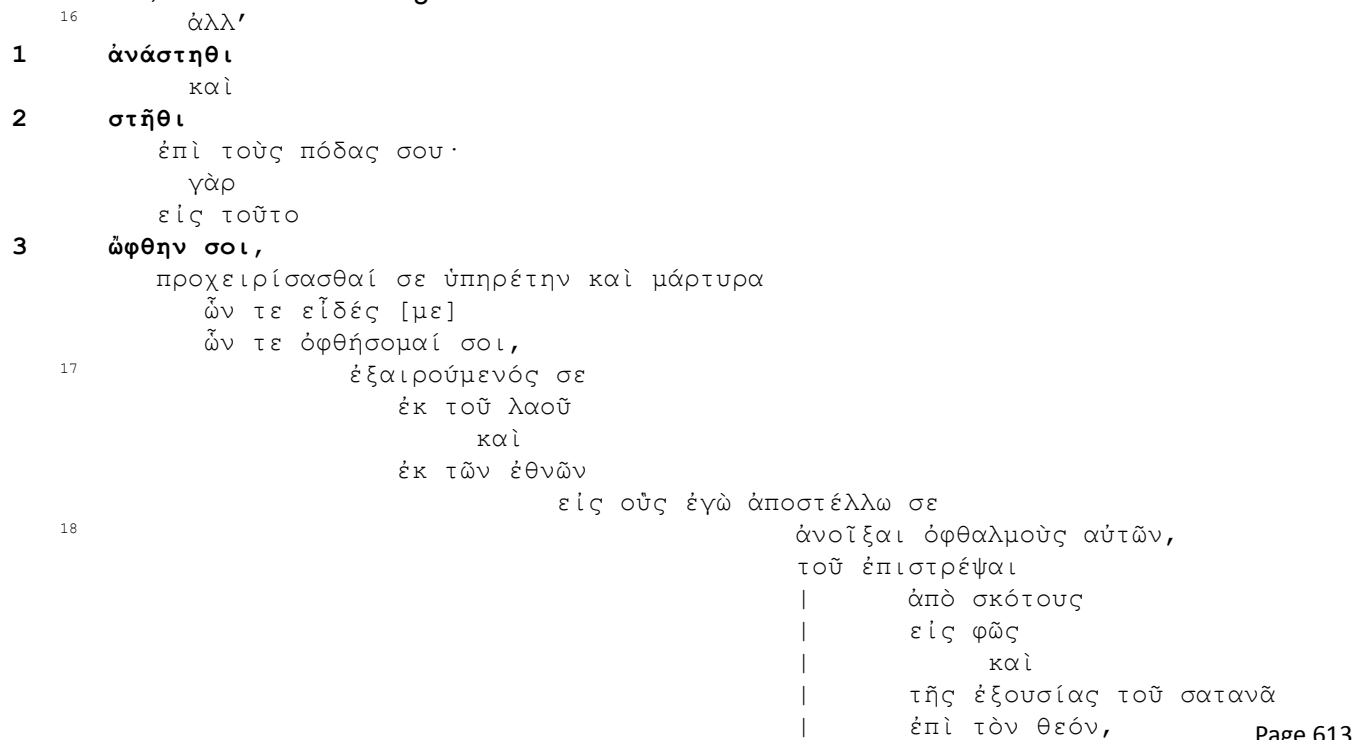
But 26:16-18 contains significantly greater detail and is presented as words directly from Christ, rather than mediated through Ananias:

16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles — to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn 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.

In this text nothing is mentioned about Paul being baptized, as was in the first two texts. The instructions focus on Christ's calling of Paul to ministry, rather than on salvation commitment. It is in the preaching of the Gospel by Paul that the message of salvation becomes central (v. 18). Paul is to be a faithful witness to Christ (v. 16) and Christ promises to protect Paul (v. 17).

In this final speech, Paul is freer to describe more details about his experience. The majority of the assembled guests would not have understood most of the details beyond concluding that this Jewish had some kind of mythical encounter with someone he considered to be a god. But Agrippa and Bernice with their heritage in the family of Herod the Great had a background for grasping the details that Paul provides.

By collapsing the subsequent instructions coming through Ananias in Damascus from Christ into direct communication the same essential message is presented regarding Paul's calling to ministry (compare 9:15; 22:14-15; 26:16-18). The best summation of this is given by Paul in Gal. 1:16, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles. The more detailed account is given here in 26:16-18, in one rather complex sentence, which the block diagram below illustrates.



τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν  
 καὶ  
 κληῖρον  
 /-----|  
 ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις  
 πίστει  
 τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

The first core affirmation is ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ στήθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου, **but get up and stand on your feet**. Paul had been struck down by the bright light connected to Christ's appearance. Now that Paul had been properly overwhelmed into humbling himself before Christ, he was ready to receive the Lord's instructions.

These are based upon (γὰρ) the stated purpose of the appearance: εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, **for with this purpose I appeared to you**. This compares to the Galatians statement ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν but with greater detail. Through a series of purpose infinitives, the assignment given to Paul is put forward: προχειρίσασθαί σε (**to assign you**); ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν (**to open their eyes**); τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι (**to turn them around**); τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς (**so that they may receive...**). Note the conceptual progression implicit in this series of objectives.

The first stated objective of Christ is προχειρίσασθαί σε ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδές [με] ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαί σοι, **to assign you the role of servant and witness concerning the things you have seen in me and concerning the things I will put before you**. Christ gave Paul a job that could be best characterized in terms of servant hood and witness: ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα. Christ defines His actions toward Paul as προχειρίσασθαί σε, **to appoint you for Myself**. See Acts 3:20 and 22:14 for the two other instances in which the Messiah is appointed (3:20) and Paul is appointed (22:14). This rather rare Greek verb in this context underscores the idea of being appointed or handed a task that the individual needs to carry out.<sup>342</sup> Two complementary functions are given to Paul in the divine appointment: ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα, **minister and witness**. The ὑπηρέτης is literally the helper, normally functioning in a subordinate role of some kind. Often it is translated as either helper or assistant. Here the sense is similar to 1 Cor. 4:1 where Paul serves as an assistant of Christ. The emphasis in the term is upon subordination to Christ and also upon service rendered and for Him. The μάρτυς is literally the individual who provides affirmation about someone and/or something. Giving faithful testimony to Christ was an important assignment that Paul received from Christ, and one he sought to fulfill even as he spoke these words to Agrippa and the assembled guests that day.

What follows has puzzled interpreters for a long time, simply because most later languages could not express what Paul said here.<sup>343</sup> The compound ὧν τε ... ὧν τε relative clauses are not found anywhere else in the New Testament, and represents an eloquent classical Greek expression. Using two verbs connected with seeing εἶδές and ὀφθήσομαί adds to the complexity of the two relative clauses. Both clauses are linked back to both previous terms ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα. In carrying out these two functions there will be certain things ὧν (neuter plural genitive of reference usage) that will come from Christ to Paul for these tasks.

First, ὧν τε εἶδές με is the Aorist past time reference: **you have seen me in regard to certain things**. Probably here is an allusion to Paul's conversion experience in which leading up to that point Christ had attempted in several ways to reveal himself to Saul the Pharisee but that he had not chosen to either accept these things or to acknowledge them. Thus when Christ appeared to Paul outside Damascus this was not the first time the Lord had sought to communicate with Paul. His earlier experience of persecuting Christians in Jerusalem provided numerous opportunities to encounter Christ through the lives of these followers of Christ. If Paul had been willing he could have easily 'seen' Christ in these people.

Second, ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαί σοι is the future tense passive verb: **in regard to certain things i will appear to you in**

<sup>342</sup>The use of προχειρίζεσθαι for appointment to a military function in the examples from 2 Macc. (→ 862, 24 ff.) and the pap. (→ n. 3) is not so different from the ordinary use as to affect the employment of the term in Ac. 22:14; 26:16, esp. as the words μάρτυς (→ IV, 493, 24 ff.) and → ὑπηρέτης show clearly enough what is the point of the ordination and for their part bear no affinity to the concept of the *militia Christi*. The idea that once a decision has been made it is binding may be very much to the fore in military appointments but it is also present in other fields. Hence the desire to express the binding nature of the decision made about Paul may have influenced the choice of προχειρίζεσθαι." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:863.]

<sup>343</sup>Even some copyists of this text were puzzled and thus reworked the statement to make it simpler: "Paul's testimony will not be confined to a resurrection appearance (this seems to be the primary sense of ὧν τε εἶδές με—με is omitted by P<sup>74</sup> & A C<sup>2</sup> E Ψ 096 M latt bo, perhaps rightly); it extends to ὧν ὀφθήσομαι σοι. This may refer to visions such as 18:9; 23:11." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1159.



visions. The literal sense of this passive voice verb ὀφθήσομαι from ὀράω is “I will be made ‘seeable’ to you.” The passive voice here underscores that God is the One who makes this happen. The Damascus road experience was the beginning of such revelations of Christ to Paul (Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθεὶς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἣ ἦρχου, Acts 9:17), but would not be the last time at all. The Acts narrative provides a few instances of Christ coming to Paul in visions and dreams: in Jerusalem in the temple after returning from Damascus (Acts 22:17, προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐν ἑκστάσει, while praying in the temple I fell into a trance); in his sermon to the Ephesian leaders at Miletus (Acts 20:23, πλὴν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατὰ πόλιν διαμαρτύρεται μοι λέγον ὅτι δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις με μένουσιν, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city repeated that chains and afflictions await me)<sup>344</sup>; while in Antonia’s Barracks in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11, Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν, That night the Lord said to him standing next to him....).

What Paul shares with Agrippa is that in his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road, Christ commissioned him to service and witness with the promise that He would stand with the apostle and supply him the understanding he needed in order to carry out this assignment.

The second objective is set up in another relative clause εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε, unto whom I am sending you. It is attached to ὡφθην σοι, I have appeared to you, via the modal participle clause ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν, rescuing you from the people and from the Gentiles. Accompanying this revelation of Christ to Paul on the Damascus road will be the need of repeated rescues of Paul from both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. The accounts of Paul’s missionary travels in Acts 13 through 25 validate these need on numerous occasions where others passionately sought to kill the apostle simply because of the message and ministry he was doing at the instruction of the Lord. One should not imply from the term ἐξαιρούμενός that Paul would be exempt from abuse, suffering, torture, and almost execution. The lengthy list provided by Paul to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 11:23- 29 outlining just those things that had happened to him up to a couple or so years before this appearance in front of Agrippa dramatically affirm that in no way was he exempted from suffering. But what this list does also affirm is Paul’s statement here of the repeated rescuing of him from the clutches of both Jews and Gentiles trying to kill him.

This appearance of Christ to Paul on the Damascus road is then defined as εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε, unto whom I am sending you. Conversion and commissioning<sup>345</sup> happened at the same time for Paul. Christ authorized Paul to go to these very people that Christ would have to rescue Paul from repeatedly over the coming decades.<sup>346</sup> This was no easy job assignment! I’m not sure how many of us today would willingly take on such a task as did Paul.

This sending is subsequently defined from a purpose standpoint by three infinitives: ἀνοῖξαι, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι, and τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς. These are closely connected to one another in a progression of objectives. Also Isaiah 42:7 most likely stands in the background as well providing a conceptual backdrop to Paul’s words:

6 ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκάλεσά σε ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ κρατήσω τῆς χειρὸς σου καὶ ἐνισχύσω σε καὶ ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους, εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν† 7 ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλῶν, ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ δεσμῶν δεδεμένους καὶ ἐξ οἴκου φυλακῆς καθημένους ἐν σκότει.†

6 I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

These words in 42:1-7 were addressed to the Servant of the Lord (v. 1) and thus took on deep messianic tones both in Judaism and early Christianity.<sup>347</sup>

<sup>344</sup>Related to this are other references:

**Acts 21:4**, οἵτινες τῷ Παύλῳ ἔλεγον διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. who through the Spirit were saying to Paul to not go to Jerusalem.

**Acts 21:10-17** describes the experience of Agabus discouraging Paul from going on to Jerusalem from Caesarea. He begins his words to Paul with τάδε λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, these things says the Holy Spirit.

<sup>345</sup>Note the emphatic expression ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω with the stated pronoun subject ἐγὼ. The expression ἀποστέλλω is the language of divine commissioning. The governmental and military non-religious background of ἀποστέλλω for a commander giving orders to a soldier of lesser rank would have resonated clearly to Paul’s Gentile audience, and especially to the many Roman tribunes in the audience that day.

<sup>346</sup>Remember that Paul’s encounter with Christ on the Damascus road happened approximately 33 AD and he is addressing Agrippa in late 59 or 60 AD.

<sup>347</sup>“The commission itself echoes the commission of the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 42:1–7, and very properly so, for the commission of Paul and of all Christian witnesses is the perpetuation of the Servant’s commission, as has been made very plain already in Acts (cf. 13:47). As the Servant was to open the eyes of the blind and turn their darkness into light, so Paul was summoned to continue

**First**, Christ is sending Paul in the world of Jews and Gentiles ἀνοίξει ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν, to open their eyes. Implicit here is the assumption of spiritual blindness by both Jew and Gentile. Humanity’s spiritual depravity has left all in a state of not being able to see the things of God and the way to God. Paul’s task as a ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα was to open their eyes. Although the preaching of the Gospel was central, the living it out before them played an important role as well.

**Second**, this ἀνοίξει ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν moves toward the deeper objective of τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, to turn them from darkness into light and from the power of Satan to God.<sup>348</sup> The infinitive action in ἐπιστρέψαι is the center of the conversion emphasis in these statements. Coming from ἐπιστρέφω and expressed here in Aorist form, the point is to lead both Jews and Gentiles to repent and turn their lives around. The reversal of directions is defined clearly by the two pairs of prepositional phrases standing in synonymous parallelism with one another:

ἀπὸ σκότους	εἰς φῶς	from darkness	to light
καὶ		and	
τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ	ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν,	from the power of Satan	to God

Both Jews and Gentiles were living in darkness which is in the power of Satan. Paul’s assignment was to help them reverse the direction of their lives to move into light which is to move to God in their commitment. A huge stack of theological truth is packed into this infinitive phrase.<sup>349</sup>

The two metaphors of darkness and light are then defined as the power of Satan and God. Quite common in the ancient world were the images of darkness and light as symbols of good and evil. First Peter 2:9 affirms these light/darkness symbols with clarity in the relative clause ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς, so that you might proclaim the great actions of the One who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light. The non-Jewish and non-Christian orientation of Paul’s audience that day would have understood clearly the darkness / light symbols, although probably in a different way than Paul meant. In their Greek and Roman philosophical heritage darkness signified ignorance and light intelligence. Morality would not usually play a major role in the meaning of these two symbols except in some isolated instances of ancient moral philosophy.<sup>350</sup> The key to transition from darkness to light in this framework was through education of the kind advocated by the Greeks and Romans.

Thus Paul communicates clearly to this pagan audience that darkness and light are religious terms with huge moral implications when he adds the parallel explanatory phrase τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, from the power of Satan to God. The reference to σατανᾶς, Satan, by Paul would have been puzzling to his pagan audience. The idea of Satan as referencing -- by name -- some celestial power of evil did not exist in the ancient Greco-Roman culture. The Greek words σατάν and σατανᾶς are loan words with numerous variations of spelling even inside the New Testament.<sup>351</sup> Agrippa and Bernice with their connections to the Jews would likely have been the only ones present that day who knew what Paul was talking about. And their knowledge likely was limited simply because Satan as a cosmic power in opposition to God was not a major theme in first century Judaism. The

this healing ministry.<sup>29</sup> The terms of his commission remained in his mind ever after; they are echoed in the words in which he reminds the Christians of Colossae how God the Father ‘has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, ... has delivered us from the domination of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins’ (Col. 1:12–14). For these words sum up the blessing which, in the heavenly vision, he was charged to communicate to all who placed their faith in Christ, not only Jews, but Gentiles as well.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 467.]

<sup>348</sup>“The words repeat in a different formulation the idea of 9:15, about Paul as ‘a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.’ Now the formulation casts them in a prophetic mode.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 760.]

<sup>349</sup>“The language of transference from darkness to light fits the context of religious conversion (see Poimandres 28; Joseph and Aseneth 8:10; 15:12; 1 Thess 5:4–7; Col 1:12–13; Eph 5:8; and above all 1 Pet 2:9).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 437.]

<sup>350</sup>This linkage of intelligence / ignorance to these metaphors is still preserved in western culture. For example, the Dark Ages (Middle ages) versus the Age of Enlightenment (modern era).

<sup>351</sup>“σατάν, ὁ indecl. and σατανᾶς, ᾧ, ὁ (the former=Hebr. שָׂטָן 3 Km 11:14; Just., D. 103, 5; the latter Sir 21:27, also TestSol 1:1 D al.; TestJob; Test12Patr; ApcMos 17; Just.=Aram. ܫܬܪܬܐ; for σατανος Lk 11:18 P<sup>75</sup> read σατανας) literally ‘adversary’, in our lit. only as title or name: (the) Satan, in a very special sense, the enemy of God and all of those who belong to God, simply Satan, the Enemy (on the concept of Satan s. the lit. s.v. διάβολος 2), almost always w. the art. (B-D-F §254, 1), without it only in Mk 3:23; Lk 22:3; 2 Cor 12:7 and in personal address.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 916.]

concept actually originates in Judaism mainly in the intertestamental era, perhaps out of contact with the Persian religious traditions in which well developed conceptualizations exist.<sup>352</sup> Interestingly in Jewish interpretive history, the serpent in the Garden of Eden is not identified as Satan until Rabbinical Judaism develops starting in the second century AD.<sup>353</sup> The NT writers use a variety of terms in referencing a supernatural power in conflict with God.<sup>354</sup> The two primary spellings of σατάν, ὁ, and σατανᾶς, ἄ, ὁ, (or σατανοῦς as in Lk. 11:18) reflect origins from the Hebrew שָׂטָן and the Aramaic ܫܬܢܐ. The Hebrew and Aramaic words mean ‘adversary’ and are used with a wide variety of meanings mainly to specify human adversaries,<sup>355</sup> but also to mean a celestial adversary of dif-

<sup>352</sup>“To summarize, it is clear that references to śātān, either by that name or by a surrogate, are much more extensive in apocryphal/pseudepigraphical literature than in the OT. More than likely, exposure to Persian religion and its Zoroastrian-based dualism provided some of the stimulus for the more pervasive demonology in these Jewish writings. Rather than viewing the world as the canvas on which one God sketched his unique will for his world, the world was now viewed as a battleground fought over by both benevolent and malevolent deities. It is difficult, of course, to trace exactly how this borrowing or influencing worked, or even why such a concept would have appealed to exiled Jews in Mesopotamia. Are there, for example, other Persian religious emphases to which the exiles were attracted besides Iranian dualism, and if so, what were they? The evidence is slim to nonexistent. Books of the OT that would be expected to show most awareness of Persian religion — Nehemiah, for example — are conspicuously silent about it. It is also debatable whether or not the proliferation of demons and the demonizing of the world represents post-biblical Judaism’s attempt to come to grips with a world so grim and hostile that not all phenomena could no longer be placed under the umbrella of divine sovereignty. Rather, it may be that the demonizing of the cosmos, as reflected in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, represents the emergence of Israel’s quasi-mythology that was widely embraced throughout the OT period. Such ideas, inimical as they were to orthodox monotheism, would have been repressed by the prophets.” [Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 988.]

<sup>353</sup>“Although śātān does not appear in Genesis 3, later rabbinic sources identified satan with the serpent in Eden (Soṭa. 9b; Sanh. 29a). He is identified in a more impersonal way with the evil inclination which infects humanity (B. Bat. 16a). In a more personal way, he is the source behind God’s testing of Abraham (Sanh. 89b). Additionally, śātān is responsible for many of the sins mentioned in the OT. For example, it is śātān who was responsible for the Israelites worshipping the golden calf because of his lie that Moses would not return from Mount Sinai (Šabb. 89a). He is the driving force behind David’s sin with Bathsheba (Sanh. 107a), and it is he who provokes the gentiles to ridicule Jewish laws, thus weakening the religious loyalties of the Jews (Yoma 67b). The sounding of the horn on the New Year is to confuse śātān (Roš. Haš. 16b). Only on the Day of Atonement is śātān without power. This is suggested by the numeral value of śātān, 364; i.e., there is one day in the year he is powerless (Yoma 20a).” [Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 988.]

<sup>354</sup>“The NT also makes frequent references to Satan. He is mentioned by name 35 times. The breakdown of these references is: (a) the Synoptics, 14 times; (b) gospel of John, once; (c) Acts, twice; (d) Epistles (all Pauline and half of which are in the correspondence with Corinth), 10 times; and Revelation, 8 times (5 of which [2:9; 2:13; 2:13; 2:24; 3:9] are in the letters to the churches and not in prophetic portions [chaps. 4–22]). As popular as the designation Satan is, the name ho diabolos appears 32 times.

“There are additionally a number of titles given to him. For example, while John uses Satan only once (13:27), the preferred Johannine term for Satan is the “prince of this world” (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). This phrase parallels Matthew’s “the prince of the demons” and Paul’s “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4), “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), and “rulers of the darkness of this age” (Eph 6:12) (but not “rulers of this age” in 1 Cor 2:6–8, which refers to human rulers [Carr 1976]). A Johannine parallel appears in 1 John 5:19 where the claim is made that the whole world is in the power of the Evil One. These references teach at least a modified dualism which is close to the Qumran picture of a titanic struggle between the Angel of Darkness and the Prince of Light.”

[Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 988.]

<sup>355</sup>“There is little doubt that the noun śātān is related to the verb śāṭan [in the OT]. The verb occurs only six times (Ps 38:21—Eng 38:20; 71:13; 109:4, 20, 29; Zech 3:1). The problem arises when one attempts to select the best English equivalent for Heb śāṭan, especially since śāṭan lacks a cognate in any of the Semitic languages. The choice appears to be between ‘accuse,’ ‘slander,’ and ‘be an adversary.’ Thus Ps 38:21—Eng v 20 may be rendered “those who repay me good with evil accuse/slander me when I seek what is good.” (LXX’s rendering of śāṭan by *endieballon* would suggest slander.) Ps 71:13 reads ‘may my accusers/adversaries/slanderers perish.’ Similarly, in Ps 109:3, 20, 29 the writer speaks to God about his accusers/slanderers and the duress they have brought into his life. And last of all, and the only occurrence of the verb outside of a lament Psalm, is Zech 3:1, in which the prophet sees śātān standing at the right hand of Joshua the high priest to ‘slander/accuse’ him.

“There is a good deal of overlap in meaning between ‘accuse’ and ‘slander,’ but they are not synonyms. To accuse means to find fault and bring charges, falsely or accurately, against another. Thus, an accusation may be valid or inaccurate. By contrast, slander is always false, a statement of claim that is both inaccurate and damaging to the character and reputation of another.

“It is clear from the six passages cited above, and from especially the five from the Psalms, that the enemies of the writer are defaming his character and thus are slanderers. What they are saying about the writer is palpably false, and therefore their mouths must be shut, one way or another. But does the fact that śāṭan = ‘to slander’ suggest that the noun śātān should always be translated as ‘slanderer’? Not necessarily so. There are some instances where a śāṭan engages in activities that are patently slanderous (for example, Job 1 and 2). However, there are other places where a śātān engages, or is urged to engage himself, in activities that are clearly non-slanderous (e.g., 2 Sam 19:23 = Eng 19:22 [Abishai’s charge of blasphemy against Shimei is legitimate]; Ps 109:6). On the basis of the actual uses of śātān (see A.2 and A.3), we would suggest that śātān means ‘accuser,’ with the added nuance of either ‘adversary’ or ‘slanderer,’



ferent types.<sup>356</sup> The Greek adjective διάβολος, -ov is more commonly employed for the Hebrew שָׂטָן. Here the depending on context.

[Victor P. Hamilton, "Satan," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 985–986.]

<sup>356</sup>“There are four passages in the OT that talk of a celestial šāṭān. These are Num 22:22, 32; Job 1 and 2; Zech 3:1–2; and 1 Chr 21:1. The noun šāṭān occurs 26 times in the OT. Seven of these (discussed above) refer to terrestrial satans, thus leaving 19 references to celestial satans. Three of these 19 use šāṭān without the definite article (Num 22:22, 32; 1 Chr 21:1). The remaining occurrences in Job 1 and 2 (14 times) and Zech 3:1, 2 employ the noun with the article (haššāṭān), literally ‘the satan.’ Leaving aside Num 22:22, 32, because there the Angel of Yahweh is a šāṭān, we note that 16 of 17 references to the celestial šāṭān use the expression ‘the’ šāṭān. The lone exception is 1 Chr 21:1. This would seem to indicate that only in 1 Chr 21:1 is šāṭān possibly a proper name. In the remaining passages, with the definite article, it is a common noun, to be translated something like ‘the Accuser.’ GKC, §126e and Joüon 1923, §137m–o cite this as an instance of the definite article prefixed to a noun when a term normally applying to whole classes is restricted to particular individuals. As such, the definite article could be translated ‘a certain one of.’ It is not without significance that consistently the LXX does not transliterate šāṭān in Job (or elsewhere) as ho Satanas (a term used six times in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs as a synonym for the diabolical Beliar), but translates with ho diabolos, a term used in the LXX for both a celestial being (Zech 3:1–2) and a human adversary (Esth 7:4; 8:1). Even as late as 1 Macc 1:36, around 100–50 B.C., Antiochus IV is referred to as a diabolon ponēron, ‘an evil foe.’ This shows that diabolos needed the adjective ponēros to make it clear that the diabolos was wicked. Gammie states (1985:18–19), ‘Instead of having a clear demonic overtone, the choice of translation ho diabolos on the contrary probably represents the translator’s desire to utilize a term still relatively neutral and not yet associated in the public mind with a leader of forces in opposition to the divine intentions.’

“The one instance where šāṭān describes a celestial figure who is not in any way hostile to God is Num 22:22, 32. The Angel of Yahweh is sent to be a satan to sinning Balaam. The angel performs his task first by blocking the path so that Balaam’s ass may not proceed, then by rebuking Balaam. Only when Balaam’s eyes are opened does the angel šāṭān become visible to Balaam. The angel is both adversary to and accuser of Balaam, and is dispatched on his mission by Yahweh.

“It is in the first two chapters of Job that ‘the satan’ (haššāṭān) is most prominent (but that name is not mentioned again after 2:7). The sons of God, i.e., the divine council, present themselves before Yahweh, and the satan is among them. The question arises whether he is with the assembly as a legitimate member or whether he is an intruder. In favor of the latter interpretation is the fact that the satan alone is asked ‘from where have you come?’ But possibly he is a heavenly agent whose responsibilities have taken him to earth, and the question comes not from surprise in the deity at an outsider’s presence, but rather from the deity’s questioning of the agent’s faithful expediting of his chore.

“Job 1 and 2 provide the only instance in the OT where God and the šāṭān converse with each other, and twice God initiates the dialogue by asking the šāṭān a question about his whereabouts (1:7; 2:2). The question answered, God proceeds to bring Job and his impeccable spiritual credentials to the satan’s attention (1:8; 2:3). The satan is not impressed. On the contrary, he suggests that Job’s motives for serving God are selfish ones; i.e., Job serves God to get what he really wants, which is prosperity. Thus the satan directly impugns Job’s motives for service to God and indirectly accuses God of divine patronage (Day 1988:76). The satan’s question to God is a thoughtful, legitimate, and profound one: ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ To disprove or substantiate that question, God grants to the satan carefully circumscribed destructive powers (1:12; 2:6). The satan may not act independently, but only with divine permission.

“The second reference to an antagonistic celestial šāṭān is found in Zech 3:1–2. In the fourth of eight visions the prophet observes Joshua, the high priest, in front of the Angel of Yahweh, and the šāṭān standing by his right side to accuse him. It is not clear exactly what the nature of the accusation against Joshua is. Unlike Job’s šāṭān, Zechariah’s šāṭān does not talk. But he is rebuked, not by the Angel of Yahweh, but by Yahweh himself. In his rebuke, Yahweh reminds the satan that he has chosen Jerusalem. That Yahweh draws attention to his choice of Jerusalem, and not of Joshua, would seem to indicate that Joshua not only represents himself, but in some way also represents the restored postexilic community. Neither the iniquity of Joshua nor the sins of the Judeans are such that they bar the way to the investiture of the high priest or the forgiveness of the community, much to the dismay of the prosecuting satan.

“The third and final appearance of a malevolent celestial šāṭān is in the Chronicler’s account of David’s census of Israel. That version informs the reader that it was šāṭān who rose up against Israel and incited David to number his people (1 Chr 21:1). Two items are of special import here. First, this is the only place in the OT where the Hebrew word šāṭān, when referring to a celestial diabolical being, is used without the definite article. This has suggested to most commentators that šāṭān is here a personal name. GKC §125f. refers to this instance of šāṭān (as opposed to haššāṭān) as an illustration of an original appellative that has assumed the character of a real proper name and is therefore used without the article. The passage, however, might as justifiably be translated ‘and a šāṭān stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel’.

“The second issue focuses on the question of why the account in 2 Samuel 24 attributes the stimulus for David’s census to Yahweh (2 Sam 24:1), while the Chronicler attaches blame to a šāṭān/Satan. There are three possible explanations for this shift. The first is that the Chronicler was bothered by the attribution of morally questionable activities to Yahweh; i.e., he incited David to take a census, then punished David for doing so. To that end the Chronicler deleted Yahweh’s part in the story as a stimulating factor and replaced him with šāṭān (Kluger 1967:159). But if the Chronicler was concerned with saving Yahweh’s image from tarnish, why did he leave unmolested other stories in which Yahweh was responsible for Rehoboam turning his back on the wise counsel of his advisers (2 Chr 10:15), or in which Yahweh sends a deceiving spirit into the mouths of Ahab’s prophets? Closely related to this explanation is the suggestion that the Chronicler downplayed Yahweh’s complicity in this event with his substitution of šāṭān, primarily because he was concerned to paint as beautiful a picture as possible of the relationship between Yahweh and David, Yahweh’s chosen servant (Day 1988:136–37). Accordingly, the Chronicler omitted any reference to Yahweh’s arbitrary anger with his people during David’s reign and

idea of slanderer and deceiver stand at the core of meaning of the adjective that is occasionally used as a noun and thus translated as Devil. Coming out of the root verb διαβάλλω, the ideas of hate and enmity are especially prominent based on the root idea of to separate in the secular use of the Greek term and accurately reflect the concepts of the Hebrew term מִשְׁנֵה.<sup>357</sup>

All of this background illustrates Paul's challenge in communicating his idea of conversion to a pagan audience. Although his use of the term τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ, *from the authority of Satan*, would not have triggered any image of a celestial power, what would have been planted in their minds is a power in opposition to God that can be represented by the image of darkness. Understanding this to be Satan as a celestial power as an adversary to God would have come much later with extensive Christian instruction in the details of the Gospel. Ignorance represented as darkness and as an adversary to enlightenment and God was likely their what they envisioned by these words. But that was a start, that Paul would build on with the third infinitive phrase.

**Third**, this turning to light and God enables the 'turner' to receive some enormously important: τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, *so that they would receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in me*. Here the purpose infinitive shades off into what modern grammarians label as 'intended purpose.' The signal of this shift comes with the standard specification of the 'subject' of the infinitive in the accusative case, αὐτοὺς, *they*. No such construction exists in any of the modern western languages, thus forcing an entirely different approach to translation. Two direct objects are received from God here: ἄφεσιν, *forgiveness*, and κληρον, *inheritance*. Now the wheels began to turn in the minds of Paul's pagan audience. Their standard idea of ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, *forgiveness of sins*, would have been forgiveness of being ignorant about many things, since in Greek philosophy ἁμαρτία equaled at its core 'ignorance,' or ἀγνοία, which was to 'miss the mark' of enlightenment, the key to the virtuous life.<sup>358</sup> Again, Paul's working out of his Jewish background for defining these terms pushed his audience into puzzlement over what in the world he was talking about. Especially troubling was Paul's declaration that this risen Christ who spoke to Paul on the Damascus road promised to give ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν to those accepting it. Overcoming ἀγνοία, *ignorance*, came only through disciplined education that led to virtuous living. The idea of divine forgiveness of sins as Paul presented it was indeed a strange thought.

---

told the story simply as a temptation episode. A third possible explanation is that the contrast between 2 Sam 24:1 and 1 Chr 21:1 (Yahweh/šātān illustrates a development in how OT thought explains evil. Most of the earlier literature of the OT explained evil in terms of a primary cause (Yahweh). Later OT literature, such as Chronicles, expanded on this by introducing the concept of a secondary cause in its explanation of evil (šātān).

"To summarize, so far we have seen that (the) šātān is a maligner of character (Job 1 and 2), an accuser of God's servant (Zech 3:1), and a seducer of Israel's royal leader (1 Chr 21:1). Clearly in the OT šātān (and other demons) is not connected with some primordial realm, but with sin. As Kaufmann (KRI, p. 65) has stated, "Biblical religion was unable to reconcile itself with the idea that there was a power in the universe that defied the authority of God and that could serve as an antigod, the symbol and source of evil. Hence, it strove to transfer evil from the metaphysical realm to the moral realm, to the realm of sin."

[Victor P. Hamilton, "Satan," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 986-987.]

<sup>357c</sup> The LXX used διαβολή mostly in the sense of 'calumniation,'<sup>7</sup> though it could denote 'enmity' in Sir. 28:9.<sup>8</sup> In Nu. 22:32 (the angel to Balaam): ἐξήλθον εἰς διαβολήν σου, 'in order to resist thee.' Διαβάλλειν is once used for 'to calumniate,'<sup>9</sup> and once for 'to accuse.'<sup>10</sup> The compos. ἐνδιαβάλλειν means 'to attack.'<sup>11</sup> In 108:6 διάβολος is the 'accuser': διάβολος στήτω ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ. In Est. 7:4; 8:1, Haman is called διάβολος in the sense of 'opponent' or 'enemy' (Mas. פֶּרֶץ פֶּרֶץ). In 1 Macc. 1:36 the acra is called a διάβολος (par. παγίς and ἔνεδρον) in the sense of 'obstacle.'

"The LXX also used διάβολος for ἡψ 'devil,' in the sense of 'the one who separates,' 'the enemy,' 'the calumniator,' 'the seducer.'<sup>12</sup> Since this is an innovation in the LXX, we can only deduce the meaning from the rendering and from the context. The latter seldom suggests 'calumniator,' but rather 'accuser' or 'adversary.' This is so in 1 Ch. 21:1 and Job 1 and 2, unless we prefer 'seducer.' Even in Zech. 3:1 ff., where he is in fact the accuser, the verb ἔστη is rendered ἀντικεῖσθαι: καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἔστηκε ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀντικεῖσθαι αὐτῷ = וַיִּשְׁתָּהּ לְיָמֵי לְעַד מִן הַיְּשָׁרִים. This seems to force us to the conclusion that 'accuser' is not the primary meaning. Since the rendering 'seducer' does not fit all the contexts, 'adversary' is the required translation. The work of the adversary implies always an attempt on the part of the διάβολος to separate God and man. It is an open question whether the verb διαβάλλειν influenced the usage."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:72-73.]

<sup>358c</sup> Aristotle also defines ἁμαρτία (→ ἀμάρτημα) as a 'missing of virtue, the desired goal, whether out of weakness, accident or defective knowledge' (→ ἀγνοία), *Eth. Nic.*, II, 5, p. 1106b, 25 ff. This means 'wrong without κακία' (III, 13, p. 1118b, 16ff. etc.). It is thus intellectual deficiency working itself out morally according to the intellectual character of Greek ethics (III, 1, p. 1110b, 18 ff.). On the other hand, at a later period the thought of guilt, which is excluded by Aristotle,<sup>83</sup> is sometimes linked with ἁμαρτία, as in P. Lips., 1119, 3; Ditt. Syll.3, 1042, 15: ὀφείλω ἁμαρτίαν." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 1:294.]

But easier to grasp for his audience was the second promised gift from this risen Christ: καὶ κληρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῆ εἰς ἐμέ, *and an inheritance among those made holy by faith in me*. The term κληρος had multiple meanings in the ancient world,<sup>359</sup> but common to many of these meanings was the idea of a portion or share of something given to an individual for various reasons. The idea of a family estate being passed down from the father to his oldest son, in which other family members would have had a κληρος, would have been readily understandable by these Greeks and Romans. But for Paul, it is his Jewish heritage that defines the term far more profoundly. The giving of a piece of land (κληρος) by God as a part of the Promised Land provided the rich background for the apostle. In intertestamental Judaism with emerging ideas of heaven coming into the picture, a κληρος could then be a portion of heaven given in eternity by God, something even more valuable than real estate in Israel. This then becomes a significant focus of the NT emphasis on κληρος and κληρονομία, as illustrated by Col. 1:12, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί, *giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light*. This Jewish background would have most likely come through to Agrippa and Bernice, much easier than to the rest of the audience.

What Paul affirmed as exceedingly positive news to this pagan audience was that this risen Christ promised a share in heaven to non-Jewish as well as Jews. The key to obtaining this share is being one of τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῆ εἰς ἐμέ, *those made holy by faith in me*. Important to remember is that this share is not earned; rather, it is received as a gift from God. The people of God are described as those who have been set apart by God in dedication to Him, as the perfect passive participle ἡγιασμένοις from ἀγιάζω makes clear. Only when God changes the sinner -- be he or she Jewish or Gentile -- can one become acceptable to stand in God's holy presence. The necessary prerequisite from the individual for this transformation to take place is πίστει τῆ εἰς ἐμέ, *by faith in me*. Here was perhaps the most challenging part. Biblical faith, πίστις, at its core was and remains complete surrender of one's life to Christ. It is not trust in oneself, nor in some set of teachings considered truth. First and foremost, it is the surrendering of oneself over to the complete control of Christ. The inherent action orientation of surrender is why most of the similar constructions in the NT use εἰς ἐμέ, literally 'into me.'<sup>360</sup> Thus being made holy depends upon the individual's willingness to surrender self to Christ; it is not an automatic thing.

Here again, Paul's pagan audience would have had difficulty following exactly the meaning Paul put before them. The concept of ἀγιάζω was unknown in the Greco-Roman culture; instead, this is a LXX coined idea picked up from the Hebrew Bible in its translation of the Hebrew root שָׁרָה.<sup>361</sup> Only the adjective ἅγιος, holy, was common in first century Greek and referenced a sense of awe mostly connected with parts of pagan temples closed off to everyone but the priests and priestesses. Moral or spiritual purity -- as asserted by these terms in Christian usage growing out of the LXX -- was not connected to these words. The most likely image that the term ἡγιασμένοις created in their minds was that this God of Paul's would qualify people to see the hidden parts of the temple available only to the priests. Yet, that would not be very clear in their minds.

What the apostle then did that day in presenting his conversion to Christ to this group of pagans was to tease them with terms they knew but tended to define differently than he did. This dissonance created in their minds -- by hearing familiar words but with different meanings -- pushed curiosity to higher levels. It challenged them hard to follow along as Paul presented his testimony to them. This most likely was especially the case with Agrippa and Bernice whose presence was largely intended to gain detailed knowledge about both Paul and the religious teaching he was advocating. Their Jewish connections gave them some advantage over the others, but their lack of serious commitment to God left them also with substantial gaps in their understanding, and clearly virtually no Christian understanding.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2.5 Speech Point Three: Paul's Preaching Ministry, Acts 26:19-23

19 Ὅθεν, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, οὐκ ἐγενόμην ἀπειθῆς τῆ οὐρανίῳ ὀπτασίᾳ 20 ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐν Δαμασκῶ πρώτον τε

<sup>359</sup>Related words in the Greek NT are “κληρος, κληρώ, προσκληρώ, ἀλόκληρος, ὀλοκληρία, κληρονόμος, συγκληρονόμος, κληρονομέω, κατακληρονομέω, κληρονομία.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:758.

<sup>360</sup>The much less frequent πίστει either with or without the preposition ἐν reflects the more Hebrew oriented expression with the same essential meaning. This is true for both the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω. Both are action concepts rather than static ideas of acceptance.

<sup>361</sup>“The verb ἀγιάζω belongs almost exclusively to biblical Greek or Greek influenced by the Bible (Phil. Leg. All., I, 18; Spec. Leg., I, 167), the form -άζειν occurring after ι instead of -ίζειν. We probably have here a denominative of שָׁרָה, שָׁרָה = ἅγιος.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 111.]



καὶ Ἱεροσολύμοις, πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπήγγελλον μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας. 21 Ἔνεκα τούτων με Ἰουδαῖοι συλλαβόμενοι [ὄντα] ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐπειρώωντο διαχειρίσασθαι. 22 ἐπικουρίας οὖν τυχῶν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἕστηκα μαρτυρούμενος μικρῶ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς λέγων ὧν τε οἱ προφῆται ἐλάλησαν μελλόντων γίνεσθαι καὶ Μωϋσῆς, 23 εἰ παθητὸς ὁ χριστός, εἰ πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

19 After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: 23 that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

Paul signals a shift of topic with the introductory statement in vv. 19-20.<sup>362</sup> Here he labels this encounter with the risen Christ that he has just described as τῆ οὐρανίῳ ὄπτασίᾳ, *this heavenly vision*. The word ὄπτασία is used only four times in the NT: Lk. 1:22; 24:23; Acts 26:19; 2 Cor. 12:1. In Paul’s discussion of such things, he expresses great caution about them.<sup>363</sup> But this one visionary experience of Paul on the Damascus road he could not and did not ignore. It became the life turning point for him. Note that here he addresses Agrippa slightly more personally with βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, King Agrippa, than with just βασιλεῦ as in v. 13. Both have formal tones of respect, but the βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα has a slightly greater person touch.

What Paul asserts to Agrippa is his obedience to the commissioning contained in this vision: “Ὅθεν...οὐκ ἐγενόμην ἀπειθῆς τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὄπτασίᾳ, *out of this I did not become disobedient to the heavenly vision*.”<sup>364</sup> By framing it in the double negatives οὐκ and ἀπειθῆς (=litotes<sup>365</sup>), Paul asserted even more strongly his obedience to

<sup>362</sup>Many commentators will speak of verse 20 as “either a grammatical or a textual disaster, possibly both.” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 634.] The heart of the problem is the accusative case πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας stacked between two dative case forms Ἱεροσολύμοις, and τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. A few late manuscripts insert the preposition εἰς before πᾶσάν to smooth out the construction. But the arrogance of many modern commentators comes through more clearly than the text with assertions that the phrase is a gloss inserted later for some unknown reason. Of course, absolutely no manuscript evidence exists in support of such an assertion. But these kinds of assertions are often given when the modern interpreter comes across an ancient grammar construction that is no easily to explain. This tells the reader more about the commentator than it does the biblical text. Completely overlooked here is the regional specification in πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας over against the two cities specified in τοῖς ἐν Δαμασκῷ πρῶτόν τε καὶ Ἱεροσολύμοις, and then the very broad reference to καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

<sup>363</sup>2 Cor. 12:1-7. 12.1 Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου. 2 οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ. 3 καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, 4 ὅτι ἠρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλήσαι. 5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσθαι ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει [τι] ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

12.1 It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to *visions and revelations of the Lord*. 2 I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3 And I know that such a person — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows — 4 was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 5 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.

<sup>364</sup>Paul’s behavior is described in terms a Roman would understand. When one receives a heavenly vision, it is imperative that the person obey. Two examples suffice. First, Livy 2.36 and Plutarch, *Caius Marcius Coriolanus* 24, tell of one Titus Latinus, quiet and modest, free from superstitious fears and vain pretensions, who had a vision of Jupiter appearing to him, bidding him to tell the Senate a certain message. After having the vision, Titus gave it no thought at first. After he had seen it a second and third time and still neglected it, he suffered the loss of an excellent son by death and became suddenly palsied himself. He was then brought to the Senate on a litter. No sooner had he told his message than he felt the strength return to his body. He rose up and walked away without aid. Second, in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, “Hadrian” 25, a woman was warned in a dream to convey a message to Hadrian. When she did not, she became blind. A second time she was told what to do and say. When she did it, she recovered her sight. In Mediterranean antiquity, it is proper piety to obey a heavenly vision. This Paul did.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 208.]

<sup>365</sup>“An example of Lucan litotes; BDR § 495:2, n. 9 lists as examples 12:18; 15:2; 19:11, 23, 24; 20:12; 21:39; 26:19, 26; 27:20; 28:2. The impression given here is of modesty on Paul’s part, but in fact Luke seems use this mode of speech as a form of emphasis. Paul was wholeheartedly obedient.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical

Christ.<sup>366</sup> There was no possible way that he would disobey this risen Christ who appeared to him that day, and particular the ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε, *I personally am sending you* (v. 17c). For a Jewish Pharisee such rejection of a vision might be expected. For a pagan Greek or Roman to reject such visions would be considered the intelligent response to such stuff. But for Paul whose deep desire all along had been to honor God by his life, such a vision must be obeyed. It was too overpowering and real for him to ignore or reject.<sup>367</sup>

Such a commitment<sup>368</sup> then launched a series of ministry actions that so angered the Jewish authorities that he ended up here in Caesarea in custody. In summarizing fashion he references ministry in terms of ἀπήγγελλον, *I was proclaiming*, to Jews in Damascus, Judea, and elsewhere. In these short references he covers what Luke has described in Acts chapters 9-26. The mentioning of ministry to Jews centers on Damascus, Judea, and Jerusalem. One question that arises from his statement centers on πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας, *and all the region of Judea*, in comparison to Paul's statement in Gal. 1:22, ἤμην δὲ ἀγνωοῦμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, *but I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea that are in Christ*. We have no specific record of Paul traveling through the small towns of Judea preaching with the possible exception of Acts 15:3-4. To be sure, the statement in Galatians was made in reference to his return to Jerusalem from Damascus soon after his conversion. This lack of personal contact could have changed with some of his subsequent visits to Jerusalem, and thus be what the apostle is alluding to here. Paul's reference here is to preaching activities for which we have no specific record either in Acts or in any of Paul's letters -- something not unusual for Luke to do given his objectives for writing Acts.

Then he pointedly adds καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, *also to the Gentiles*, in order to stress the inclusiveness of his commissioning by Christ, which indeed included his audience that day. The three missionary journeys of Paul recorded in Acts highlight this aspect of Paul's ministry in Acts. Jews were not excluded in this ministry, but as Luke records the much greater response to Paul's preaching of the Gospel in the northeastern region of the Mediterranean world came from non-Jews. It was this aspect of his ministry that generated the Jewish uproar against Paul.

The core of his preaching is stated as μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας, *to repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance*. Compare this statement of Paul with one that he made about three or four years earlier to the Christians at Rome (Rom. 15:18-19):

18 οὐ γὰρ τολμήσω τι λαλεῖν ὧν οὐ κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἐθνῶν, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ, 19 ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος [θεοῦ]· ὥστε με ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ **πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ**,

18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum **I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ**.

We are not looking at two separate messages being preached by Paul, but rather at two characterizations



of the one message the apostle was commissioned to preach. Each characterization fits the targeted audience quite well. The pagan audience in the governor's palace at Caesarea would have not understood what Paul meant by τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the Gospel*

Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1162.]

<sup>366</sup>Unlike English grammar where two negatives stacked together become a positive, in ancient Greek they become a heightened negative.

<sup>367</sup>See 1 Cor. 15:10 and 2 Cor. 11:23-28 for a similar emphasis in Paul's own letters.

<sup>368</sup>The opposite of the adjective ἀπειθής, -ές which is πειθός, ή, ὄν meaning *persuasive* (1 NT use). Both come from the root πείθω with the sense of *I convince, persuade*. The specialized 2 perfect and pluperfect forms stress commitment to someone growing out of being persuaded by them.

of Christ, even both nouns εὐαγγέλιον and Χριστοῦ existed in Greek. Thus the three ‘imperatives’ expressed here by two infinities and a participle came through very clearly as the essence of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Not accidentally both key words for biblical repentance in the New Testament are set side by side here: μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν (cf. also Acts 3:19 in Peter’s preaching). The first infinitive μετανοεῖν (34x) denotes a turning around internally in one’s thinking, while the second infinitive ἐπιστρέφειν (38x) stresses outward lifestyle turning around in how one lives. To this Greek speaking audience this message would have come through loud and clear. One did not need prior religious exposure to Christianity in order to understand these terms. The idea of turning and change stands at the heart of both terms. What Paul expresses here as the commissioning of Christ is the ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, in order that I might ‘gospelize’ him among the Gentiles in Gal. 1:16. And in turn this stands as an extension of Christ’s mission as stated in Mark 1:15, πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand: be repenting and believing in the Gospel. Also one should note the present tense forms of the infinities; this sets up -- as in Mark -- an ongoing responsibility to continually be turning toward God and away from what displeases Him. What should be clearly noted is the demand to μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν is accompanied by the circumstantial participle phrase ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας, doing deeds worthy of repentance. The participle defines the resulting circumstance coming out of this turning to God. Put simply, one cannot genuinely turn to God without producing deeds consistent with this reorientation of life. One without the other nullifies any claim to either. This has specific echoes of John the Baptist’s preaching in Luke 3:8, ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας, therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance. This emphasis upon one’s actions reflecting whether or not he has turned to God is spelled out by John to his audiences in Lk. 3:8-14 with specific actions defining fruits worthy of repentance.

It was because of Paul’s preaching this message of repentance that his Jewish enemies tried to kill him in the Jerusalem temple: ἔνεκα τούτων με Ἰουδαῖοι συλλαβόμενοι [ῥόντα] ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐπειρῶντο διαχειρίσασθαι, because of these things the Jews upon seizing me while I was in the temple began making repeated attempts to kill me (v. 21).<sup>369</sup> The reason for such intense hatred goes back to his commissioning from Christ (vv. 19-20) as defined by ἔνεκα τούτων. To Agrippa Paul does not explain why he was in the temple, nor the specific provocation of supposedly having brought a Gentile into the inner court of the temple (cf. Acts 21:27-36). Instead, he frames against the broader contours of his ministry to the Gentiles, which by this point in time some three years afterward had become the more important charge against Paul (cf. Acts 24:5-6, 11-12, 18).<sup>370</sup> He accuses them of numerous attempts on his life with very graphic language: ἐπειρῶντο διαχειρίσασθαι, repeatedly they were attempting to get their hands on me to kill me. One implication of this language is that these Jewish would be killers were operating outside the law -- both Jewish and Roman.

It is interesting to probe what kind of a legal charge within Roman law that Festus could have gleaned from this depiction. Agrippa who understood Jewish practices better would have also had difficulty coming up with something substantive for Agrippa to include in his letter to the emperor. The closest possible charge would have been some akin to ‘disturbing the peace’ in the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. But no evidence for such had ever been presented to either of the Roman governors, Felix or Festus.

Paul moves from the past to the present with the assertion ἐπικουρίας οὖν τυχῶν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἔστηκα μαρτυρούμενος μικρῶ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς λέγων ὧν τε οἱ προφῆται ἐλάλησαν μελλόντων γίνεσθαι καὶ Μωϋσῆς, therefore with the supporting help from God to this very day I stand giving witness to both the small and the great saying nothing more was going to happen than that which both the prophets and Moses said. Here Paul frames his preaching of the Gospel inside the Old Testament scriptures. When preaching inside the Jewish synagogues in his travels, his basic strategy was to use his Pharisee training under Gamaliel to demonstrate that Christ stands as the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures (e.g., Acts 13:16- 41). Very likely a

<sup>369</sup>The inceptive function of the imperfect tense verb ἐπειρῶντο followed by the constative functioning Aorist infinitive διαχειρίσασθαι. come together to paint the picture of the beginning of numerous attempts to kill Paul.

<sup>370</sup>“Was it indeed ‘because of this,’ because of his unceasing missionary activity, that he was attacked in the temple? It was: the charge that he had profaned the temple by bringing a Gentile within forbidden bounds was only a pretext. The hostility of the Jews of proconsular Asia, who raised the hue and cry against him on that occasion, went back to the years of his ministry in Ephesus. What they objected to was not his announcing the fulfilment of what Moses and the prophets foretold; but the terms in which he announced it—his preaching a law-free gospel which in effect obliterated the religious barrier between Jews and Gentiles—were quite unacceptable. This unacceptable feature in his preaching is not mentioned in the present speech (although it may be implied): the reader of Acts is familiar with it (even more so the reader of Paul’s letters), but it is unlikely that Agrippa would learn anything of it from what is said here.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 468.]



large series of OT texts were compiled and given Messianic interpretation.<sup>371</sup> These were used in both preaching to those needing Christ and also as a teaching tool for new converts to help them understand their Christian commitment.

The apostle makes it very clear that such a labor was not done out of his own strength: ἐπικουρίας οὐ τυχῶν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, *therefore experiencing nourishment from God*.<sup>372</sup> Paul's use of the verb τυγχάνω highlights his sense of the surprising presence of God in his ministry. It completely disavows any merit on Paul's part for God to help him carrying out this assignment. The duration of this divine assistance to Paul is specified as ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης, *down to this very day*. From his conversion in 33 AD to this appearance before Agrippa in late 59 AD, God had stood with Paul and never failed to provide the needed ἐπικουρία.

Thus Paul claimed ἕστηκα μαρτυρόμενος μικρῶ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ, *I stand giving witness to the small and to the great*. Paul's vision of ministry included the full scope of people across any social spectrum that might be set up. He preached Christ to slaves and kings alike. It didn't matter whether they were rich or poor, educated or ignorant. His ministry was enriched by slaves such as Onesimus who became a significant servant of Christ (cf. Philemon). The defining limits of his preaching were set by the Jewish scriptures: οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς λέγων ὧν τε οἱ προφῆται ἐλάλησαν μελλόντων γίνεσθαι καὶ Μωϋσῆς, *nothing outside of saying the things spoken both by the prophets and Moses*. Thus Christ stands as the fulfillment of the Hebrew scriptures, which provided the foundation for Paul's preaching of the Gospel.<sup>373</sup> This is brought to a dramatic climax with εἰ παθητὸς ὁ χριστὸς, εἰ πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, *that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles*. By a very sophisticated Greek construction, Paul proposes a topic for discussion and debate with Agrippa here.<sup>374</sup> This climatic point is intended deliberately by Paul to evoke some kind of response from Agrippa. Thus the Jewish Messiah will suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. And out of that comes the message of saving enlightenment to both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>375</sup>

The apostle effectively summarizes his life experience and the subsequent divine commissioning by Christ almost three decades earlier in his life. Indeed it stands as his ἀπολογεῖσθαι, *defense*, (v. 2; ἀπελογεῖτο, v.

---

<sup>371</sup>“Here we are probably to understand that he adduced one text after another from the Old Testament scriptures which found their fulfilment in the life, death, and triumph of Jesus. At an early stage in the course of Christian preaching these texts appear to have been grouped together under appropriate headings, which sometimes took the form of questions. Here Luke does not reproduce Paul's citations of such messianic ‘testimonies’ in extenso, but indicates them briefly by quoting the interrogative captions under which they were grouped: ‘Must the Messiah suffer? Must he rise from the dead? Must he bring the light of salvation to the people of Israel and to the Gentile nations?’<sup>376</sup> (The ‘must’ of these questions is the ‘must’ of God's predetermined plan, made known before its fulfilment through his servants the prophets.)<sup>377</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 469.]

<sup>372</sup>“ἐπικουρία occurs here only in the NT; the unusual word may have been chosen on account of the distinction ascribed by Bengel (482) to Ammonius [107]: βοηθεῖ μὲν ὁ συνὼν· ἐπικουρεῖ δὲ ὁ ἐξῶθεν εἰς βοήθειαν ἤκων. Paul's help comes not from within himself but ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. ἐπικουρία is used by medical writers but also in military contexts; ND 3:67f. quotes an inscription from Cyrene (AD 154), re-edited by J. M. Reynolds (JRS 68 (1978), 111–21) containing the words κα]θεστῶτες τὴν ἐπικουρίαν παρὰ τῶν Ἑλλή[νων?..., rallying help from the Greeks. τυγχάνειν occurs once in Lk., 5 times in Acts, 8 times in the rest of the NT; on the whole a Lucan characteristic.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1164–1165.]

<sup>373</sup>“*The prophets as well as Moses*: The discourse now moves back to the central argument of Luke-Acts as a whole: that ‘everything brought to fulfillment’ is in fact also a fulfillment of God's promises in Torah (see Luke 16:29–31; 24:25, 27, 44; Acts 2:16; 3:18, 24; 10:43; 13:15, 27, 40; 15:15; 24:14). It is this part of Paul's argument that will form the basis of the exchange between Paul and Agrippa in vv. 27–28.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 438.]

<sup>374</sup>“*Whether the Messiah would suffer*: The Greek here is more subtle and resistant to reader expectations than the translation can adequately convey. This is not simply another repetition of the conviction ‘the Messiah had (dei) to suffer’ (Luke 24:26; Acts 17:3). First, the verbal adjective *pathētos* actually means ‘to be capable of suffering’ (in opposition to *apathos*). Second, the form of the clause (introduced by *ei*) resists being reduced simply to a ‘content’ clause. These features suggest that Paul is proposing a topic or proposition that can be debated on the basis of Moses and the Prophets concerning the future Messiah. A strikingly similar point is made by Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*.<sup>897</sup> [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 438.]

<sup>375</sup>“The term ‘people’ (*ho laos*) refers here as most often in Luke-Acts to the Jews considered as ‘the people of God.’ We can recognize in Paul's statement an echo of Simeon's ‘programmatically prophecy’ in Luke 2:32, as well as the application of Isaiah 49:6 to the preaching of Paul in Acts 13:47. For Paul's own sense of the good news moving ‘first to Jews then to Gentiles,’ see Rom 1:16.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 438.]

1; ἀπολογουμένου, v. 24), yet at this point in vv. 22-23, it moves to an appeal to Agrippa in the style of an evangelistic message. These are the words of one who has no fear of death and a profound sense of divine calling. Agrippa could hold life saving power over Paul's life, but this is not important for Paul. Rather, here is an audience of "movers and shakers" in mid first century Caesarea that would never be assembled again and they needed to hear the Gospel of Christ in a compelling manner. Though Paul targeted Agrippa with his comments, the entire group was included in what Paul had to say.

#### 8.1.2.5.4.2.6 Narrative Conclusion: Festus' & Agrippa's Response, Acts 26:24-32

24 Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῆ φωνῆ φησιν· μαίην, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλά σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει. 25 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος· οὐ μαίνομαι, φησίν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλ' ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι. 26 ἐπίσταται γὰρ περὶ τούτων ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς ὃν καὶ παρρησιαζόμενος λαλῶ, λανθάνειν γὰρ αὐτόν [τι] τούτων οὐ πείθομαι οὐθέν· οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐν γωνίᾳ πεπραγμένον τοῦτο. 27 πιστεύεις, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, τοῖς προφήταις; οἶδα ὅτι πιστεύεις. 28 ὁ δὲ Ἀγρίππας πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον· ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι. 29 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος· εὐξάμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντάς μου σήμερον γενέσθαι τοιούτους ὅποιος καὶ ἐγὼ εἶμι παρεκτός τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων. 30 Ἀνέστη τε ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ ἡγεμῶν ἢ τε Βερνίκη καὶ οἱ συγκαθήμενοι αὐτοῖς, 31 καὶ ἀναχωρήσαντες ἐλάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους λέγοντες ὅτι οὐδὲν θανάτου ἢ δεσμῶν ἄξιόν [τι] πράσσει ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος. 32 Ἀγρίππας δὲ τῷ Φῆστῳ ἔφη· ἀπολελύσθαι ἐδύνατο ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος εἰ μὴ ἐπεκέκλητο Καίσαρα.

24 While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!" 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. 26 Indeed the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." 28 Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?" 29 Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains." 30 Then the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those who had been seated with them; 31 and as they were leaving, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." 32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor."

Luke indicates that Paul did not get to finish his defense speech: Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου, and while Paul was defending himself with these things. At what point Paul was in his defense when he was interrupted we don't know. The preceding paragraph, vv. 19-23, seems to signal movement toward a conclusion. It's more personal emphasis to Agrippa directly was designed to provoke a response from him, and it clearly did just that, although not the one that Paul would have preferred.

Instead of Agrippa responding, Festus interrupts Paul with rather harsh words: ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῆ φωνῆ φησιν· μαίην, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλά σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει, Festus said in a loud voice, "You are crazy, Paul, so much knowledge is driving you insane!"<sup>376</sup> The use of τὰ πολλά γράμματα, literally 'so many writings,' perhaps implies that in the original speech -- rather than the summation of it that Luke has provided us -- Paul had quoted from many documents in support of his arguments.<sup>377</sup> Clearly then in Festus' mind Paul was no ignorant Jew without education and knowledge.<sup>378</sup> If Paul had used the Hebrew scriptures extensively in making his point about

<sup>376</sup> Festus interrupts at the point at which earlier the Jews had interrupted, but for a different reason. μεγάλη is predicative: Festus — loud was his voice — said ... μαίην: the story of a crucified and risen Messiah is nonsense, (a) because a king would not proceed by the way of suffering and death, and (b) because dead men do not rise up (see on 17:32)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1167.]

<sup>377</sup> Knox (Hell. El. 29) writes, 'Festus suggests, whether seriously or not, that St Paul's studies have driven him mad, implying that he has been quoting from a number of 'writings' ... But Luke has omitted the testimonies which alone would explain Festus' interruption.' Knox is presumably referring to the word γράμματα; for this however the rendering learning is quite possible; BA 330 cite Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1:2:6; Plato, *Apology* 26d; PLond 43:2.γ; Dan. 1:4; Epistle of Aristeeus 121; Testament of Reuben 4:1; of Levi 13:2. A adds (after γράμματα) ἐπίστασθαι—to know many writings." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1167.]

<sup>378</sup> The charge of madness in antiquity was sometimes leveled at philosophers: for example, Cynics (Ps-Socratic, Epistles 6.1; 9.3; Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 8.36; 9.8) and Dio Chrysostom (*Oration* 12.8–9; 34). When so charged, Dio Chrysostom responded that he was not mad but rather spoke the truth (*Oration* 77/78.41–42). Paul shares the stock charge against philosophers. The proconsul accuses him of being mad. The cause of his madness is his great learning. This fits into the Lukan concern overall to portray Messianists as people with relatively high social standing (6:7; 8:26–39; 10:1–48; 13:6–12; 16:14–15; 18:8). Festus is a witness to the fact not only that Paul is innocent but that he is not ignorant as some of the church's opponents claimed Jesus' followers were (e.g., Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 5.4; 8.4; Origen, *Celsus* 6.13). Paul's response is essentially that of Dio Chrysostom. 'I am not mad, most excellent Festus; I am speaking words of truth and reason' (v. 25)" [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts*

Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, he could have quoted either the Hebrew or the Greek texts to Agrippa, who would have understood both. Such would have been utterly mind boggling to the Roman governor with no background understanding of Jewish Messianism. What Festus declares about Paul is captured in both the verb *μαίνομαι* (5X) and the noun *μανία* (1x). The idea in the root meaning of both is that behavior does not match sensible understanding. In this context, Festus concluded that Paul's enthusiasm for Christ had moved beyond reasonable knowledge that Greeks and Romans would consider to be valid.<sup>379</sup> Thus Paul's knowledge had turned him away from sensible thinking, as *περιτρέπω* highlights.

This perspective on Festus' words helps make clear the response of Paul to him: *οὐ μαίνομαι, φησίν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλ' ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι*, I am not crazy, he declared, "most excellent Festus, rather I am speaking words of truth and good sense. Paul rebuts Festus' claim and asserts that what he is saying is exactly on target. One important point here is the link between *μανία*, *crazy*, and *σωφροσύνη* (3x), *sound thinking*. These were exact opposites in ancient Greek. Thus Paul claims that his words represent just the opposite of *μανία* and are reflecting very good common sense *σωφροσύνη* instead. In no way was he speaking about some esoteric phantasy beyond sensible reasoning. His additional comment links his words to *ἀληθείας*, which for him as a Jew meant that what he was saying (*ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι*) was exactly in line with God and His revelation in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>380</sup> Thus, he was correctly interpreting the scripture when talking about Jesus as the promised Messiah. Beyond this, however, Paul stresses his oral communication to the group that day was a proper enthusiasm, as *ἀποφθέγγομαι* clearly highlights.<sup>381</sup> Here is where Paul's Diaspora Jewish heritage and Festus' Roman heritage clashed full force. The assumptions that both worked off of stood diametrically opposed to each other.

In refuting Festus' claim about Paul, the apostle appealed to Agrippa for validation: *ἐπίσταται γὰρ περὶ τούτων ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς ὃν καὶ παρρησιαζόμενος λαλῶ, λανθάνειν γὰρ αὐτόν [τι] τούτων οὐ πείθομαι οὐθέν· οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν γωνίᾳ πεπραγμένον τοῦτο*, for the king understands about these things, to whom I am speaking, talking quite honestly and straightforwardly. For none of these things has escaped his notice, since this was not done in a corner. Here Paul 'stair cases' three reasons (*γὰρ... γὰρ... γὰρ*) for his passionate presentation of Christ to the group and they are built on top of each other. **First**, *ἐπίσταται γὰρ περὶ τούτων ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς ὃν καὶ παρρησιαζόμενος λαλῶ*. Paul asserts the 'advanced knowledge' (*τὰ πολλά γράμματα*) of Agrippa (*ἐπίσταται*) regarding what Paul had been describing very straightforwardly to him in the defense. The prepositional phrase *περὶ τούτων*, *about these things*, most likely refers back to vv. 22-23 including both the Hebrew Bible prophecies of the Messiah and also Jesus as the fulfillment of them. Clearly the first part is intended, and probably the second part as well.<sup>382</sup>

*of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 208–209.]

<sup>379c</sup>It is possible to take *πολλά γραμματα* to mean 'much advanced learning' (cf. John 7:5; Letter of Aristeas 121; Plato, *Apology* 26D), in which case what we have here is a portrait of a down-to-earth Roman not willing to believe anything esoteric that goes beyond his view of common sense. Paul is in a sense complimented for his great learning, but, on the other hand, too much learning has driven Paul beyond the realm of 'common sense.'<sup>521</sup> What is not meant is that Paul is incoherent or has taken total leave of his senses, but rather that he is given to outlandish ideas because of his 'much learning.' It is also just possible to take *πολλά γραμματα* to refer to the many sacred writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, in which case what would be meant is that Paul had been studying God's word too much and it had led him to conclusions that go beyond common sense.<sup>522</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 749.]

<sup>380</sup>Virtually all modern definitions of truth work off of the Greek philosopher Aristotle's definition of *ἀλήθεια* as logical consistency. This was introduced into western culture during the middle ages by Thomas Aquinas. The ancient Jewish definition was based entirely on its understanding of God. God is *ἀλήθεια*, and thus any claim that is in line with Him -- His nature, words, actions -- is *ἀλήθεια*. That early Christianity adopted this Jewish perspective rather than the Greek one is made clear by John 14:6 in Jesus' words, *ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me*. Truth is then active, dynamical, rather than abstract and static as in Aristotle. .

<sup>381</sup>**ἀποφθέγγομαι** (s. φθόγγος; fut. 3 pl. ἀποφθέγγονται Ps 58:8; 1 aor. 3 sg. ἀπεφθέγγατο TestJob 48:3) **to express oneself orally, w. focus on sound rather than content, speak out, declare boldly or loudly** (of the speech of a wise man Diog. L. 1, 63; 73; 79; but also of an oracle-giver, diviner, prophet, exorcist, and other inspired persons Diod S 16, 27, 1; Plut., *Mor.* 405e; Vett. Val. 73, 24; 112, 15; 113, 1; Philostrat., *Vi. Apollon.* 1, 19 p. 20, 7; Diogenes 21, 8 p. 114 Malherbe; Mi 5:11; Zech 10:2; Ezk 13:9, 19; TestJob; Philo, *Mos.* 2, 33) τι: σωφροσύνης ῥήματα **Ac 26:25**; ἀ. τιτι declare to someone w. urgency **2:14**, also abs. vs. **4**.—DELG s.v. φθέγγομαι. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 125.]

<sup>382c</sup>It might at first seem that these things were the matters which (according to Paul) were written in the prophets and Moses, that is, that the purpose of Israel was to be fulfilled in the death and resurrection of the Messiah and the extension through him of the light of God's truth and blessing beyond Israel to the Gentile world. The reference however at the end of the verse to something done suggests rather the claim that the king was aware of the Christian event, that is, the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Agrippa II (see on 25:13) was born in AD 27/28, and therefore certainly was not aware of the story of Jesus at first hand; moreover, he lived at



Although what Paul said about Christ and his experience of the risen Christ went beyond Festus' ability to comprehend, Paul was convinced that Agrippa understood it quite clearly.

**Second**, λανθάνειν γὰρ αὐτόν [τι] τούτων οὐ πείθομαι οὐθέν, *for nothing connected to these things, I am persuaded, is escaping his attention.*<sup>383</sup> That Agrippa could have understood these things is based upon Paul's assertion of Agrippa's careful attention to events taking place in Palestine.<sup>384</sup> Note that this is a follow-up on Paul's beginning complement of Agrippa (cf. v. 3): μάλιστα γνώστην ὄντα σε πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἐθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων, *especially since you are knowledgeable both of the customs and controversies of the Jews.* Clearly the events connected with Christ in His earthly life would have come under ζητημάτων, *controversies.* Such a claim about Agrippa is certainly in line with the portrait that Josephus paints of him, that he paid close attention to events taking place in Judea and Jerusalem in particular. He worked hard to 'cool things down' in the growing tension between the Jews and the Romans in the 60s.

**Third**, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν γωνίᾳ πεπραγμένον τοῦτο, *for this did not happen in a corner.*<sup>385</sup> The idiom ἐν γωνίᾳ, *in a corner*, is a Greek philosophical phrase that is not found in Jewish writings.<sup>386</sup> What Paul is claiming is a public character for the events connected to Christ's life and ministry. He is not assuming that the entire world of that time knew about Christ -- a claim that would be false based on the complete ignoring of Christ in ancient literature until Christianity became a significant force in the Roman empire several centuries later. The public nature of these events connected to Christ -- as Paul claims here -- underscores that Christianity is not some secretive religious group plotting against the Romans nor seeking to create an explosion of Jewish opposition to them. With the rapidly growing tensions between Romans and Jews in Palestine by this point in the late 50s to early 60s, it was important to distinguish Christianity from secretive Jewish groups plotting to throw the Romans out of Palestine. Thus this public nature of the Christ event stands as the basis for Agrippa not overlooking it.

At this point Paul affirms Agrippa's belief in the Hebrew scriptures: πιστεύεις, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, τοῖς προφήταις; οἶδα ὅτι πιστεύεις. *Do you, King Agrippa, believe the prophets? I know that you do.*<sup>387</sup> In a rather pointed manner Paul asserts Agrippa's acceptance of the Hebrew prophets as revealing the will of God to the Jewish Claudius' court till 50 or later, when he was appointed king of Chalcis. He did, however, show considerable concern over Jewish affairs, doing his best to prevent rupture and war with Rome (see e.g. his long speech dissuading the Jews from war, Josephus, War 2:344–407); there is no reason why he should not have heard of the origins of Christianity, especially if Christians were felt to be a disturbing factor in Jewish life. So, more or less, Chrysostom, *Homily 52:4*; Ἐνταῦθα περὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ λέγει τοῦτο, περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως, καὶ ὅτι πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης γέγονε τὸ δόγμα. [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1168–1169.]

<sup>383</sup> The transitive use of λανθάνειν (object, αὐτόν) is classical: BDR § 149:1, n. 2. Begg, 4:322 notes the present tense: none of these things is escaping him. For the litotes cf. v. 19. The form οὐθέν is much less common in the NT than that with δ; see on 15:9. Moule (IB 167f.): 'οὐ belongs not with πείθομαι but, as a double negative, with λανθάνειν.' [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1169.]

<sup>384</sup> The sentence is an elaborate exercise in litotes, literally, 'I am not persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him (lanthanein auton)'. [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 439.]

<sup>385</sup> Luke makes Paul use a Greek proverb, known from Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.12.17; cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 485D; Plutarch, *Moralia* 777B. What has happened to Jesus of Nazareth and what has followed upon his death and resurrection are matters of common knowledge, indeed of human history. One need only sit up and take notice. This key affirmation in Luke's historical perspective (see Luke, 171–79) underscores his attempt to locate the Christ-event in time, in human history, and in world history. It becomes an important verse in Luke's transposition of the Christian kerygma into a historical key (see Luke, 13–14). The Lucan Paul's arguments are treated as incontestable, because they are based on what is known to everyone, even if he presents these facts as the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures of old. [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 764.]

<sup>386</sup> In a corner is a good Greek expression, and not a Semitism. In many languages one cannot refer to an event by an expression such as this thing. Therefore, one may say 'what has happened did not take place in a corner.' However, the phrase in a corner may be relatively meaningless in some languages. The closest equivalent would therefore be 'in some dark place' or 'In some unknown place'— for example, 'what happened did not take place in an unknown location'. [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1972), 479.]

<sup>387</sup> Agrippa, like some other members of his family, though in fact a Gentile, could on occasion represent himself as a Jew in spirit, and had certain rights in the Temple and in the appointment of the high priest. Paul appeals to his knowledge of and belief in the OT — knowledge and belief which in some contexts he might have claimed, whether he had them or not. Reference to his belief in the prophets points back to τούτων in v. 26, and, contrary to the suggestion made on v. 26, might suggest that these things are the prophetic notions of vv. 22f. — or rather, that there is no great difference between the two interpretations of τούτων. What the prophets foretold is what has happened in the story of Jesus. Belief in the prophets is (for Paul—and Luke) not an end in itself but a step on the way to belief in Christ. [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1169.]

people. Paul presses Agrippa at this common starting point and assumes that getting from the OT prophets to Christ as the fulfillment of them is but a short distance. If Agrippa agrees with the prophets then he could agree about Christ's claims as the Messiah, as he had assumed in his comments in vv. 22-23.

Agrippa does not respond as I suspect Paul hoped he would (v. 28): ὁ δὲ Ἀγρίππας πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον· ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι, *And Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you with little effort trying to persuade me to become a Christian?"* This response by Agrippa stands as a hugely debated statement both in terms of textual variations of wording<sup>388</sup> as well as in its precise meaning.<sup>389</sup> Two key expressions stand as the basis for understanding Agrippa's response: ἐν ὀλίγῳ and ποιῆσαι.

**First, ἐν ὀλίγῳ.** Normally the idiom specifies a short space of time and thus is translated as 'quickly,' 'in a short while' etc. But in Paul's picking up on this phrase in his answer to Agrippa (v. 29), καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ, the apostle doesn't understand Agrippa's ἐν ὀλίγῳ as 'so quickly.' The parallel phrase ἐν μεγάλῳ is not used for time references.<sup>390</sup> This favors the understanding of 'with little effort.' Thus Agrippa pushes back with the retort that just this short effort in the speech is not going to persuade positively him about Christianity.<sup>391</sup>

**Second, Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι.**<sup>392</sup> This Aorist infinitive ποιῆσαι from the verb ποιέω with a 'double accusa-

<sup>388</sup> This verse is well-known for its difficulties, as a comparison of translations will show. For example, ἐν ὀλίγῳ often means 'in a short while/time' or 'soon,' but here it seems to mean 'with little effort.' The reading γενέσθαι (to become) of the Byzantine text, followed by the Textus Receptus, appears to have come from the following verse. The reading in the text seems to account best for the other readings, which appear to be attempts at smoothing the meaning. The infinitive γενέσθαι seems to fit better than ποιῆσαι. Some interpreters however, argue that ποιῆσαι here has the meaning 'to play the role.' This is the alternative translation in NRSV: 'Quickly you will persuade me to play the Christian.'

"What does it mean to say 'you are persuading me to make/do a Christian'? Possibly the verb πείθεις should be translated 'you are trying to persuade.' It is not clear whether Agrippa is simply making a statement of fact or is being sarcastic in his response (which is the intended force of the question in TEV and the exclamation in TOB)."

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 286.]

<sup>389</sup> Agrippa's words to Paul are perhaps the most disputed, as regards their construction and meaning, in Acts. The text most widely accepted (and printed in NA26) is: ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι. For πείθεις, A reads πείθη. This is often ascribed to accidental error: HI is not unlike EIC. But the two syllables are not really alike, and πείθη would take up πείθομαι in v. 26; *You are persuaded that I know all about Christianity; perhaps you are persuaded that I believe it too.* Blass (270): 'tutissimum est A sequi'. But the connection with v. 26 could cut both ways; πείθεις might have been changed into πείθη in order to make it closer. And it is perhaps not very safe to follow A alone. For Χριστιανόν, κ\* has χρηστιανόν; this is a purely orthographic variant. For ποιῆσαι, E Ψ M latt sy, with Cyril of Jerusalem, have γενέσθαι; *You are persuading (seeking to persuade) me to become a Christian.* This makes good sense; it evades a difficulty however and the evidence is on the whole late, so that it would be unwise to adopt this reading. Two interrelated questions remain: the meaning of ἐν ὀλίγῳ and of ποιῆσαι." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1169–1170.]

<sup>390</sup> With ὀλίγῳ may be understood χρόνῳ or λόγῳ. Calvin (2:283) says that the phrase may refer to time or degree, but degree is not easy to support. M. 3:262 similarly: either in a short time or by a short argument. It does not seem possible to take the phrase in the sense all but a little, that is, almost, though ἐς (εἰς) ὀλ. and παρ' ὀλ. have this meaning, or something like it (e.g. Thucydides 4:129:5, ἐς ὀλίγον ἀφίκετο πᾶν τὸ στράτευμα . . . νικηθῆναι. There is no great difference between time and argument: a brief argument would occupy a short time, a short time would not permit a long argument. Probably the decisive consideration — or the consideration that comes nearest to being decisive — is the recurrence of ἐν ὀλίγῳ together with ἐν μεγάλῳ (for a variant see on v. 29) in the next verse. μεγάλῳ would hardly be used of time. 'It seems best to understand πόνῳ with ὀλίγῳ, as this noun could fitly stand with both μεγάλῳ and ὀλίγῳ = with little trouble, with little cost' (Knowling 513). The same opinion is held by Page (251): ἐν ὀλίγῳ is clearly = 'with little (trouble, effort)', ἐν being instrumental, its sense being determined by the use of the phrase in Paul's reply ἐν ὀλ. καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ = 'with little or with great (trouble)'. It cannot = ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ 'quickly' for ἐν μεγάλῳ . . . could not mean 'in much time'. Similarly Delebecque (128). Cf. Thucydides 2:84:2: αἱ νῆες ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἤδη οὐσαί. . . See however on v. 29." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1170.]

<sup>391</sup> The King James Version handles this as "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." This is based on the *Textus Receptus* (1550 ed) text: ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις χριστιανὸν γενέσθαι, and the meaning, "with a little more effort you could persuade me to become a Christian." It wrongly assumes the sense of 'degree' for ἐν ὀλίγῳ that is still remaining in order to convince Agrippa. The KJV simply follows the Latin Vulgate *Agrippa autem ad Paulum in modico suades me Christianum fieri* (Lit.: Then Agrippa said unto Paul, "Almost you persuade me to become a Christian.")

<sup>392</sup> The second question is the meaning of Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι. There are two main possibilities. (a) A. Fridrichsen (*Coniectanea Neotestamentica* 3 (1939), 14f.) drew attention to the parallel in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1:2:49: πείθων μὲν τοὺς συνόντας ἑαυτῷ σοφωτέρους ποιεῖν τῶν πατέρων, persuading his companions that he was making them wiser than their fathers. From this is deduced and illustrated the rule 'nec subiectum nec obiectum infinitivi exprimi debet si coincidit cum subiecto obiectove verbi principalis' (Zerwick § 395). Zerwick and Turner (M. 3:147; at greater length in *Insights* 97–100) take this as justifying the rendering mihi vis persuadere (te) brevi tempore (me) fecisse Christianum (Zerwick), *You seek to convince me that you have made me in a moment a Christian* (Turner). This has the great advantage of providing a better connection with v. 29, where Paul seeks that Agrippa and his other hearers should

tive case' object -- με (direct object) and Χριστιανὸν (predicate object) -- normally means to turn someone into something. This renders the sense of 'make me into a Christian.' Such an understanding fits Paul's subsequent response in v. 29. The alternative understanding is based on the use of ποιέω in 1 Kings 20:7 (LXX) and would create the sense of 'you would persuade me to play the role of a Christian?' in an ironic and sarcastic manner.<sup>393</sup> Clearly either understanding is possible, but both views assume that Agrippa is not seriously considering becoming a Christian. A major signal of this negative attitude is his use of the term Χριστιανὸν, which in the first century was a negative reference with derogatory tones.<sup>394</sup> Agrippa refuses to be 'baited' by Paul's challenge on believing the prophets. For whatever reason, he does not buy into Paul's reasoning that believing the prophets leads naturally to believing in Christ.<sup>395</sup>

Paul's response in v. 29 is classic and in the form of a prayer wish: ὁ δὲ Παῦλος· εὐζαίμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντάς μου σήμερον γενέσθαι τοιοῦτους ὅποῖός καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι παρεκτὸς τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων. Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains." The heart of Paul's desire is simply γενέσθαι τοιοῦτους ὅποῖός καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι, to become the same kind of individuals like I also am. That is, he prays that everyone hearing him that day would become a committed believer in Jesus Christ just as he is. The only difference would be παρεκτὸς τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων, except for these chains. Whether Paul meant 'chains' literally or as a symbol of being in custody -- both meanings are possible<sup>396</sup>-- the meaning is clear: he does not wish upon any of them what he has undergone since being arrested in the Jerusalem temple courtyard almost three years earlier.<sup>397</sup> The target of his prayer wish centers on Agrippa, but also includes everyone in that room where Paul

---

become (γενέσθαι) Christians, that is, he desires to make them Christians. On the other hand, *You want to persuade me that you have made me a Christian*, hardly makes sense, even if we allow for a good deal of irony. One who has been made a Christian does not need to be persuaded that he has been made a Christian. (b) The main alternative is based on the use of ποιεῖν in 3 Kdms 20:7 (LXX) where σὺ νῦν οὕτως ποιεῖς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ἰσραὴλ renders the Hebrew (1 Kings 21:7) אתה תעשה מלכה על־ישראל אתה, and appears to mean 'play the king' (cf. Latin (Christianum) agere; BDR § 5:4, n. 23), so that the meaning of the present passage would be, *You are persuading me to play the Christian* — that is, to act a part for your convenience (by getting me to confess belief in the prophets). This is an attractive suggestion, but one over-literal rendering of a Hebrew verb is not sufficient to establish a Greek idiom. It is 'insufficiently documented' (BEGs. 4:323). Haenchen adds references to Johannes Climacus and Johannes Malalas; these are too late to give much support, but the Latin parallel, *Christianum agere* (noted already by P. W. Schmiedel in EBib 754) may be worth more than he allows.

"Opinions differ. Ropes (BEGs. 3:239): 'The reading ... of B ..., although difficult, yields an intelligible sense ('play the Christian') and must be accepted'. But Clark lii: 'That ποιῶ Χριστιανὸν can mean 'play the Christian' is to me incredible. The reading of A πείθῃ = 'thou thinkest (cf. οὐ πείθομαι in v. 26) gives a fair sense. The variant γενέσθαι... for ποιῆσαι looks like a conjecture.' Bauernfeind (270) thinks that what we have in the text is a combination of two thoughts, In Wenigem überredest du mich, and In Wenigem machst du mich zum Christen. Schneider (2:378), mentioning both possibilities, makes the important additional point, 'Auf jeden Fall nimmt Paulus selbst die Aussage des Königs ernst, wie der folgende Vers deutlich macht.' It has usually been assumed that the answer is one of irony on the official side ('"Christian" in the mouth of Agrippa can only be interpreted as a sneer'—BEGs. 4:322), serious on Paul's, but this may not be true, and we have to ask what impression Luke wished to convey rather than, in the first instance, what actually happened. Weiser (655) speaks of Agrippa's 'zwischen Ernst und Ironie schwebende Antwort'. He is not speaking of 'playing the Christian' but of being made a Christian; this is confirmed by Paul's answer. It may well be that Bengel (483) rightly caught the impression that Luke wished to suggest: 'Occurrit ergo hic, Festus, sine Christo: Paulus, Christianissimus: Agrippas, in bivio, cum optimo impulsu.'"

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1170–1171.]

<sup>393</sup>The grammar structure με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι would be understood differently with με as the direct object of πείθεις and Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι as the infinitive predicate object of πείθεις. This grammar construction is clearly possible, just as the alternative one described above. Thus the interpretive meaning cannot be decisively settled solely on the basis of grammar. Context plays a significant role here.

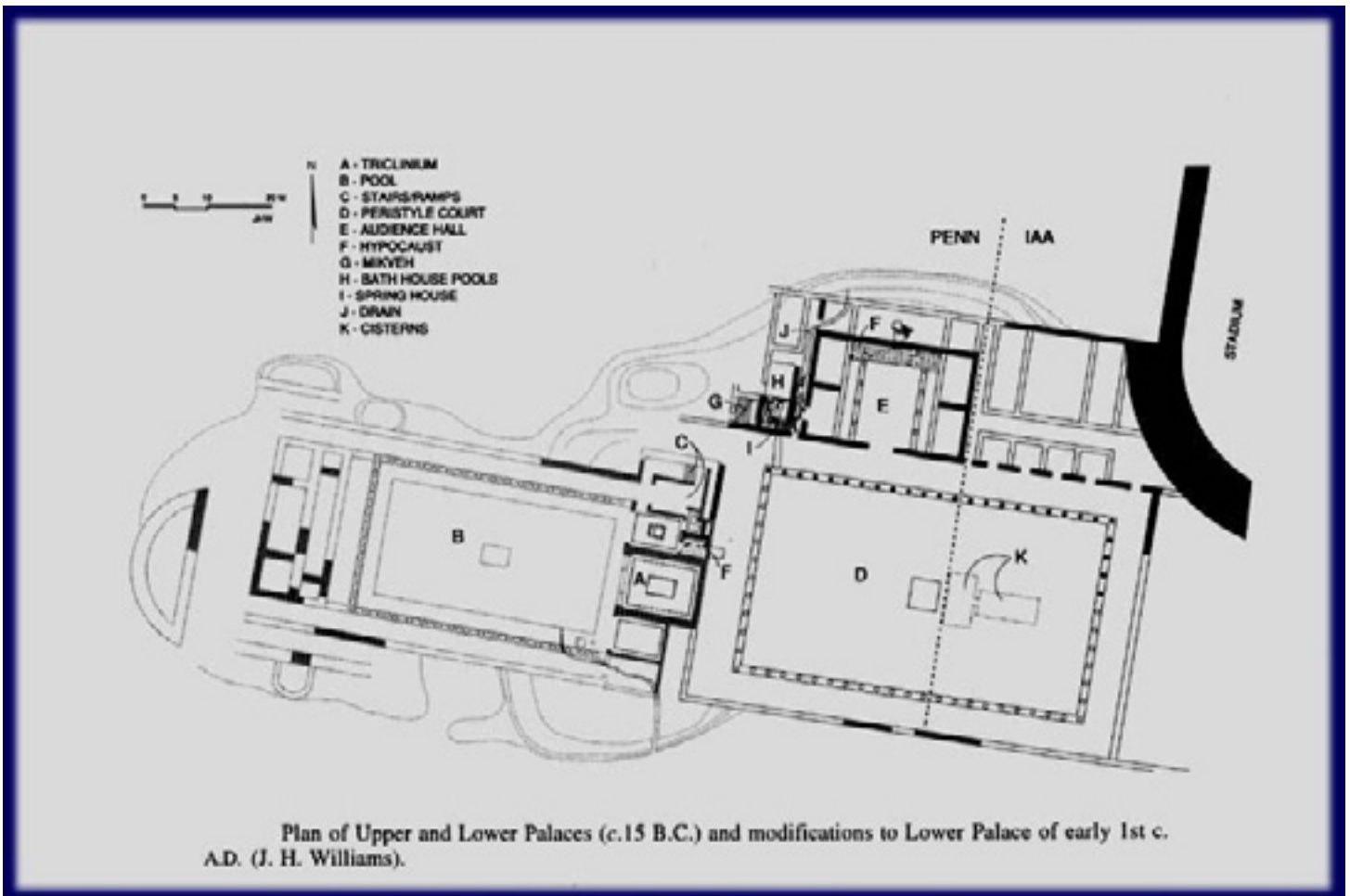
<sup>394</sup>"The title 'Messianist' (Greek: Christianoi) occurs only three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). It was used by outsiders and always in a denigrating sense. Jesus group members never identified themselves as Messianists, but rather preferred 'followers of the Way' (see Acts 9:2)." [Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 170.]

<sup>395</sup>What would be absolutely fascinating to know is the reaction by Festus and the rest of the audience that day to this exchange between Agrippa and Paul. What Paul had already said flew over Festus' head and made no sense to him at all. This more complex exchange probably made even less sense to him, beyond having to do with some Jewish prophets and the Jesus that Paul was talking about.

<sup>396</sup>"The final expression except, of course, for these chains may be rendered as 'of course, I do not pray that you should be in chains,' 'of course, I do not want you to be chained,' or 'but of course, I do not want you to be a prisoner.'" [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1972), 480.]

<sup>397</sup>"In regard to a Roman citizen being in chains during the investigation, compare again Augustus's Second Edict from Cyrene;<sup>29</sup> Roman citizens were brought to Rome in chains."<sup>307</sup> [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*,





was speaking: οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντάς μου σήμερον, *not only you but also everyone hearing me today*. The introductory καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ underscores either manner or time, as discussed above. Both meanings come out pretty close to one another: “no matter how easily or how hard” or “no matter how quickly or how long.”<sup>398</sup>

This response was couched in the form of a prayer, which gave it a softer and more appealing tone: ὁ δὲ Παῦλος· εὐξάιμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ, *And Paul, “I pray to God...”*. The Aorist form εὐξάιμην ἂν from εὐχομαι is stated in the deliberative function of the optative mood form and combined with ἂν. This very unusual but eloquent construction in the NT underscores a polite prayer wish to God.<sup>399</sup> Thus it comes across to his audience in polite tones of sincerity and concern for them.

The reaction from Agrippa to Paul’s appeal was most likely not what he expected (vv. 30-32). It is stated in two core verbs in the first sentence in vv. 30-31: Ἀνέστη, *they got up*, and ἐλάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, *they were speaking to one another*. The first verb Ἀνέστη signals the adjourning of the meeting.<sup>400</sup> Luke carefully describes the protocol order of the recessional of the dignitaries from the room (cf. 25:23, the ἀκροατήριον): τε ὁ βασιλεὺς ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 212.’

<sup>398</sup>καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ: Instrumental of manner, *both with little trouble and with great trouble*. Locative of time, *both with little time and with a lot of time*. Paul’s use of καὶ... καὶ here emphasizes inclusiveness by stating either end of the spectrum and including everything between the two opposites. Thus the sense is ‘no matter how hard to how easy’ or ‘no matter how quickly or long.’

<sup>399</sup>“V. 29 indicates Paul’s sincere desire to convert Agrippa, and indeed all his listeners. The speech closes in very polite and elegant style with an optative form of the verb ‘to pray’: ‘I could pray ...,’ or as in old English, ‘I would (or wish) to God that...’ It also ends with the sort of pathos that one would expect in the peroratio of such a speech. His wish prayer is that all listening might become as he is, ‘except of course for these chains.’ At this juncture it would appear that he held up his chains, evoking perhaps some sympathy from the crowd.<sup>536</sup>” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 751.]

<sup>400</sup>“Just as there was a formal procession following a certain order in terms of social and political rank, so the recession. The king rises, indicating the hearing is over, and the governor, and Bernice. After this, those who had been seated with them (the advisors and centurions) are mentioned.<sup>538</sup>” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 752.]

καὶ ὁ ἡγεμῶν ἢ τε Βερνίκη καὶ οἱ συγκαθήμενοι αὐτοῖς, *both the king and the governor, and both Bernice and those seated with them*. The pomp and circumstance of this meeting highlighted by Luke at the beginning<sup>401</sup> is continued at the closing of the meeting here.

The second verb ἐλάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, *they were speaking with one another*, is expanded by two participle phrases: ἀναχωρήσαντες and λέγοντες. The ‘they’ is not clearly defined beyond referring to the group mentioned in the recessional in v. 30. Probably it focuses on ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ ἡγεμῶν, *the king and the governor*. But it could also include ἢ τε Βερνίκη καὶ οἱ συγκαθήμενοι αὐτοῖς, *and Bernice and those seated with them*. Luke’s point here is to stress that the opinion spoken came from more than just Agrippa. It represented a consensus of the group’s thinking. The first participle, ἀναχωρήσαντες, *after having departed*, in the Aorist tense underscores that the conversation about Paul did not begin until the recessional had cleared out of the meeting room into the large open area outside the “Audience Room” (this would be code E in the above map). Most of the English translations incorrectly translate the participle as a present tense rather than an Aorist tense participle. That they did not begin discussing the issue about Paul until after clearing the room is very understandable. The very formal ritual recessional followed in exiting the room would not have permitted conversation among them.

The second participle is the more significant point made by Luke: λέγοντες ὅτι οὐδὲν θανάτου ἢ δεσμῶν ἄξιόν [τι] πράσσει ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος, *saying, “This man is doing nothing worthy of death or chains.”* Thus the group of leaders along with their aides and advisors were agreed that Paul should not be kept in custody any longer.<sup>402</sup> This conclusion stood in agreement with what the Roman tribune Lysias had concluded in Jerusalem (Acts 23:29) and also with that of the Roman governor Felix (25:25). Interestingly just as the Roman Pontius Pilate had three times declared Jesus innocent of the charges against him (Lk. 23:4, 14, 22), so also other Romans made three declarations of Paul’s innocence, with the agreement of this representative of the Herodian family, Agrippa II. For Luke this declaration was important in that it demonstrated to his targeted audience that Christianity presented no danger to the Roman empire and their leaders. What we don’t know is whether or not Festus included this conclusion in his letter to Nero that accompanied Paul to Rome.

Luke then adds a ‘footnote’ to this narrative conclusion in v. 32: Ἀγρίππας δὲ τῷ Φήστῳ ἔφη· ἀπολεῦσθαι ἐδύνατο ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος εἰ μὴ ἐπέκκλητο Καίσαρα, *Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor.”* In a later private conversation between Festus and Agrippa, the king provides his recommendation to Festus as a ‘consultant.’ Agrippa affirms Paul’s innocence to Festus, but acknowledges Festus’ problem in writing out a charge against Paul in the letter to the caesar. One is included to wonder why a decision of acquittal could not have been rendered by Festus and then Paul set free. But Agrippa’s remark points to the answer: once a formal appeal had been made to the emperor it had to be carried out.<sup>403</sup> The governor most likely would have ‘lost face’ with Nero if he had set Paul free, if not received a severe repercussion from the emperor.<sup>404</sup> This was of much greater importance to Festus than rendering justice to this Jewish preacher.

---

<sup>401</sup>Acts 25:23. Τῇ οὖν ἐπαύριον ἐλθόντος τοῦ Ἀγρίππα καὶ τῆς Βερνίκης μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας καὶ εἰσελθόντων εἰς τὸ ἀκροατήριον σὺν τε χιλιάρχοις καὶ ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ’ ἐξοχὴν τῆς πόλεως καὶ κελεύσαντος τοῦ Φήστου ἦχθη ὁ Παῦλος.

So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then Festus gave the order and Paul was brought in.

<sup>402</sup>How Luke learned this is not explained. One may assume that this summarizing statement of the leaders conversation became common knowledge around the palace and Luke in his visits with Paul there would have learned of this, probably from Paul himself. The same thing would have been true for the private conversation between Festus and Agrippa in v. 32. Thus Luke does not go into details about either conversation since he was not present at either. Instead, he provides his readers with the essence of both conversations that would have circulated among the staff of Festus there in the governor’s palace. Some of that staff, at least, were present and included in the fourth group that marched out in the recessional: οἱ συγκαθήμενοι αὐτοῖς (v. 30).

<sup>403</sup>Then the question rises about why, with this opinion from the Jewish king, Paul was not now set free. The answer seems to be, just as Agrippa’s remark indicates, that it would be no easy matter to stop the appeal process. For Festus to do so would have been an affront to the emperor and an implicit admission of his own ineptitude in allowing the process to be set in motion.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, Festus now had what he had been seeking from Agrippa, an opinion to write up in his formal report to the emperor. Evidently in this instance it was the opinion that Paul was innocent of any breach of Roman law. The reminder of Jesus’ own experience is stark. Governor and king together declared his innocence (Luke 23:14f.), and still he went to the cross. Governor and king declared Paul innocent likewise, and still he was on his way to Rome in chains.<sup>184</sup> [John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 510.]

<sup>404</sup>In fact v. 32 tells us that Agrippa alone said to Festus, ‘This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor.’<sup>539</sup> Attempts have been made to explain this in light of Roman law. Sherwin-White, for instance, says that while the procurator could not scourge or rule negatively against Roman citizens once they had appealed to the emperor, legally they could still acquit them, dismissing the case. Thus Paul’s being sent to Rome ‘is not a question of law, but of the relations between the emperor and his subordinates, and of that element of non-constitutional power which the Romans call *auctoritas*, ‘prestige’, on which the supremacy of

Although the appeal created something of a dilemma for Festus, it ultimately ‘bailed him out’ of greater problems. It let him off the hook with the Jewish authorities who passionately wanted Paul executed. It avoided a potential problem with Nero by not overstepping his authority in a way that Nero could take as intrusion into his authority as emperor. By bringing Agrippa into the picture this helped solidify his decision to send Paul to Rome on the appeal.<sup>405</sup>

This defense speech of Paul in 26:1-32 stands as the final recorded speech of Paul in the book of Acts. It comes as the climax of three presentations of his conversion and calling to ministry in Acts chapters 9, 22, 26. It both includes details from the two previous accounts and provides new details not previously given. The blending of theological perspective and historical perspective is greater here than in the previous two accounts. As a part of a larger section, 23:11-26:32, the main point centers on Paul being declared innocent by a series of Roman authorities.<sup>406</sup> The charges brought against Paul by the Jewish authorities represented absolutely no violation of Roman law, and had to do with internal squabbles among different groups of Jews. Luke has made this point very clear in narrating the events from Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem to this meeting in Caesarea. Undergirding these events is the providential hand of God that has opened doors of witness opportunities before kings and rulers of both Jews and Romans. God has worked through these events to keep His promise to Paul of giving witness in Rome as well. From these events we catch a glimpse of how God works in the lives of His servants.

### 8.1.3 The Voyage to Rome (AD 60), Acts 27:1-28:13

Chapter twenty-seven begins the final segment of Luke’s story tracing Christianity’s beginnings in Jerusalem to the imperial capital of Rome. Most of it centers on the lengthy sea voyage from Caesarea to Rome that occupies some six percent of the total content of the book of Acts.<sup>407</sup> Some modern scholars see this extra length given here as a signal that Acts should not be taken as ancient history, but rather as an ancient novel or fictional writing. But this provides no signalling of Acts being none history because sea voyages were also a common element in ancient histories as well as in fictional novels. Connected to this question of length for this account is the textual issue of the Western text of this part of Acts being some 26.6 percent shorter than the standard Greek text.<sup>408</sup> According to Acts (cf. 9:30-28:10), Paul spent considerable time on a ship traveling from one place

---

the *Princeps* so largely depended. No sensible man with hopes of promotion would dream of short-circuiting the appeal to Caesar.<sup>540</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 752.]

<sup>405c</sup>What placed this case out of Festus’s jurisdiction was probably a variety of factors: (1) Festus’s desire to be rid of a troublesome case; (2) his desire not to alienate the Jewish authorities he would have to continue to deal with, especially in light of what had just recently happened to Felix; (3) his desire not to appear to usurp any of the emperor’s auctoritas in a complex case that he had had great trouble figuring out and to form a list of chargeable offenses. In the slight chance that Paul had offended against the emperor, since the charges were so murky, it would be better not to dismiss the case than to make a mistake and make Jews and the emperor angry. Finally, bear in mind that it is Agrippa’s stated judgment only that Paul could have been set free. This is not said to be the legal conclusion of Festus himself, based on his knowledge of Roman law, though he may have agreed with Agrippa.<sup>543</sup> Perhaps ‘Agrippa’s opinion of the case ... [was]... noted in the report to Rome and may in some part account for the treatment accorded Paul on his arrival (28:16).’<sup>544</sup> So it was that Festus undertook to make arrangements to send Paul to Rome.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 753.]

<sup>406c</sup>The main point of 23:11–26:32 is found in the official verdicts. Paul is declared innocent by human authority of any crime for which the state is responsible: the tribune (23:29), the governor Felix by implication (24:23, 26, 27), the governor Festus (25:25; 26:31), and the king, Agrippa (26:32). The matter at issue concerns intra-Jewish debates (23:29; 25:18), in particular, the claim that Jesus, who was dead, is now alive (25:19b; 26:23). Paul is faithful to Judaism’s hope of the resurrection and is innocent of any criminal acts against Rome. The Messianist movement is a branch of Judaism that believes in the resurrection and that is politically responsible.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 209–210.]

<sup>407c</sup>The keystone to the arch of issues through which all interpreters of Acts 27<sup>1</sup> must pass is its length.<sup>2</sup> Why did the author devote sixty verses (c. 6 percent of the text) to the story of Paul’s transfer to Rome?<sup>3</sup> This is central to the question of meaning, and all discussions of text, source, and form must address it or risk the charge of irrelevance.” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 644.]

<sup>408c</sup>One perennial solution to the problem of length is abridgment. This is the path apparently followed by the D-Text, as reconstructed by Boismard,<sup>5</sup> for the conventional text is, according to an electronic count, 26.6 percent longer than the D-Text (762 words versus 602). Difficulties abound. Boismard’s text is largely a retroversion here. The D-Text has been shedding, like the veils of Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*, one witness after another, until, with the loss of Latin h in 27:13\*, it is largely reduced to the evidence of the Ethiopic version. This is more like a slender thread than a thin veil, but it is not utterly without value, despite the late date of the MSS.<sup>6</sup> Agree-



to another.<sup>409</sup> In 2 Cor. 11:25, Paul mentions having been shipwrecked on the sea three times prior to his arrival in Corinth for the last time in the middle 50s, although Acts only records the one time in chapter twenty-seven that is not included in Paul's number in 2 Corinthians.<sup>410</sup> Sea voyages were a common source of description in ancient Greek literature, in large part because they typically involved high adventure for the traveler -- something that Luke would have been interested in doing for the enjoyment of his readers. This literary form existed both in ancient histories and in ancient novels.<sup>411</sup> Such ancient sea stories served a variety of literary purposes.<sup>412</sup> Very likely, the larger amount of space devoted to this one segment of Paul's experience was prompted by the ancient pattern of history writers giving as much 'eye-witness' account as possible.<sup>413</sup> This sea voyage account is the longest 'we-section' in Acts, reflecting the eye-witness vantage point.<sup>414</sup>

ments among Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic witnesses intimate a Greek basis.<sup>7</sup> James A. Montgomery, who made the first scholarly examination of the Ethiopic text of Acts, issued a harshly negative judgment, concluding that the brevity of the text was due to the sloth or incompetence of the editor.<sup>8</sup> Arnaud Lamouille and Marie-Émile Boismard took issue with his judgments, for they found support in other witnesses, notably h, in Acts 27.<sup>9</sup> Abbreviation is most pronounced in the discussion of sea-travel (vv. 8, 13–19, 39–41). This appears to be abridgment by plan rather than abbreviation due to inadequacy, so that one may tentatively posit the elimination of less relevant material as one ancient editorial means of dealing with Acts 27. That this took place within the D-Text tradition is noteworthy, since scholarship generally views the D-Text as an expansion of the conventional text.<sup>107</sup> [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 644.]

<sup>409c</sup> According to Haenchen's reckoning, there are some eleven or twelve accounts in Acts of Paul traveling to some destination by sea, beginning with the account in 9:30 and finishing with the account we find in 27:1–28:10, some involving 'we' passages and some not. Taken together, these accounts suggest that Paul covered some three thousand miles on the sea during the nearly three decades of his ministry recorded in Acts 9–28.1 Though Luke does not record an occasion prior to that depicted in Acts 27 when Paul had misadventures on the water, we can well believe, with all the traveling by both sea and land, the report from the middle to late 50s A.D. in 2 Cor. 11:25 that 'three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea.' By the time we get to Paul's journey to Rome, he is a well-seasoned sea traveler and knows the dangers of sailing during the middle to late part of the fall. He even knows how to cope with a crisis at sea." [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 754.]

<sup>410</sup> **2 Cor. 11:25.** τρις ἔρραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, *τρις ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποιήκα.*

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. *Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea;*

<sup>411c</sup> That Luke's account of the journey to Rome is a lively one, no one would dispute. That such accounts, having been influenced by the *Odyssey* (5.291–332; 9.62–81; 12.201–303) and the later ones by the *Aeneid* (1.44–153), were staple items in ancient Hellenistic novels or romances is also beyond question (cf., e.g., the novels of Chariton, Achilles Tatius, Petronius, Heliodorus, and Xenophon, among others). But as Johnson rightly points out, such tales were also not uncommon in historical works in Greek (cf., e.g., Thucydides, *Pelop.* 2.6.26; 6.20.104; 8.24.31; 8.24.34; Herodotus, *Pers. Wars* 3.138; 7.188).<sup>4</sup> The presence of such material in Acts then gives us no sure clue to the genre of this work and to whether it is largely history or fiction.<sup>57</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 755.]

<sup>412c</sup> Some of these sea stories functioned merely as a record of historical events (e.g., Tacitus, *Annals* 2.23–24); others served primarily as entertainment (e.g., Petronius, *Satyricon* 114). Certain of the narratives, however, served to teach either theological or moral lessons. Examples of moral lessons taught by sea narratives include (a) reckless pride leads to destruction (e.g., Polybius, *Histories* 1.37; cf. Acts 27:9–12); (b) wealth is a burden and is a transient possession (e.g., Phaedrus, *Fables* 4.23; cf. Acts 27:18, 38); (c) a true friend is willing to risk his life for the other (e.g., Lucian, *Toxaris* 19–21; cf. Acts 27:31–32); (d) only the true philosopher is calm in a crisis (e.g., Lucian, *Peregrinus* 43–44; Diogenes Laertius 9.68; cf. Acts 27:33–36); (e) when in crisis pray (e.g., T. Naphtali 6:1–10; cf. Acts 27:23–26). Most of these moral points function in subsidiary roles in Acts 27." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 212.]

<sup>413c</sup> First and foremost, if, as we have argued throughout, Luke was following the conventions of Greek historiography, *autopsia* was a crucial element of such works. As we discussed in the introduction to this work, the Greek historical tradition emphasized the importance of travel, investigation, and eyewitness participation and testimony. For the sake of the credibility of his work as a piece of Greek history writing, at some point Luke needed to be able not merely to claim but demonstrate that he had participated in at least some of the events he chronicled." [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 755.]

414 Another important issue emerging here is Luke's sources. Some modern scholars inclined to see this sea voyage as fiction seek to argue that Luke has used a pre-existing sea voyage account and merely inserted some statements here and there. Ben Witherington offers an effective rebuttal to this perspective:

Here, however, we must address the claim that the references to Paul in this material (vv. 9–11, 21–26, 31, 33–36, 43) are detachable and therefore were inserted to a preexisting narrative.<sup>12</sup> This claim is doubtful on several counts. First, these are not the only verses in this context which mention Paul (see also vv. 1, 3). Secondly, the mention of Paul's companions must also be taken into account (v. 2). Thirdly, some of the verses in question are part of sentences involving other verses as well, and these other verses will not stand on their own (cf., e.g., vv. 43–44). Fourthly, passengers on a ship, and especially those like Paul who are prisoners, are not the major actors when a boat is being sailed. It is hardly surprising that the action goes forward without extensive reference to Paul or his companions. This is no clear evidence

Luke's depiction of this voyage divides itself into the following segments: 1) Caesarea to Fair Havens (vv. 1-8); 2) Fair Havens to Crete (vv. 9-12); 3) Storm at sea (vv. 13-38); 4) Experience at Malta (27:39-28:10); 5) Malta to Rome (28:11-15). We will take a look at each segment in the following. Particular attention will be given to the storm at sea and shipwreck on Malta (vv. 27:13-28:10), since this segment of ancient sea stories was typically the central part of such stories. What we will see Luke doing here is drawing upon existing literary forms current in his time and using those patterns to give shape to his eye-witness account of this rather exciting trip that he took with Paul from Caesarea to Rome. For his Gentile oriented reading audience, this was perhaps one of the most interesting parts of his history of Christianity.



### 8.1.3.1 First Phase of the Trip: Caesarea to Myra, Acts 27:1-6

27.1 Ὡς δὲ ἐκρίθη τοῦ ἀποπλεῖν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν, παρεδίδουν τὸν τε Παῦλον καὶ τινὰς ἑτέρους δεσμώτας ἑκατοντάρχη ὀνόματι Ἰουλίῳ σπειρῆς Σεβαστῆς. 2 ἐπιβάντες δὲ πλοίῳ Ἀδραμυττηνῶ μέλλοντι πλεῖν εἰς τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν τόπους ἀνήχθημεν ὄντος σὺν ἡμῖν Ἀριστάρχου Μακεδόνα Θεσσαλονικέως. 3 τῇ τε ἑτέρᾳ κατήχθημεν εἰς Σιδῶνα, φιλανθρώπως τε ὁ Ἰούλιος τῷ Παύλῳ χρησάμενος ἐπέτρεπεν πρὸς τοὺς φίλους πορευθέντι ἐπιμελείας τυχεῖν. 4 κάκειθεν ἀναχθέντες ὑπεπλεύσαμεν τὴν Κύπρον διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἀνέμους εἶναι ἐναντίους, 5 τὸ τε πέλαγος τὸ κατὰ τὴν Κιλικίαν καὶ Παμφυλίαν διαπλεύσαντες κατήλθομεν εἰς Μύρα τῆς Λυκίας. 6 Κάκει εὐρῶν ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης πλοῖον Ἀλεξανδρινὸν πλέον εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἐνεβίβασεν ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτό.

27.1 When it was decided that we were to sail for Italy, they transferred Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort, named Julius. 2 Embarking on a ship of Adramyttium that was about to set sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. 3 The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and allowed him to go to his friends to be cared for. 4 Putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. 5 After we had sailed across the sea that is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and put us on board.

Luke introduces us to this phase of Paul's experience with the rather vague introductory temporal clause Ὡς δὲ ἐκρίθη τοῦ ἀποπλεῖν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν, and when it was determined that we should sail to Italy.<sup>415</sup> We have no indication of how much time passed from this meeting with Agrippa and the point of departure to Italy. Logistically it would not have been within a week or so, simply because of everything required to make arrangements for such a trip. Additionally, we have only an indirect allusion to the time of year when this trip began. In vv. 9-12, it becomes clear that this was the late summer to early fall of the year, probably in the year 60 AD. Sailing on the Mediterranean became very dangerous after the beginning of September and did not become safe until the

that the verses about Paul are later insertions. Fifthly, if one accepts Haenchen's theory that the account is based on a real sea voyage, one must ask which is easier to believe — that by remarkable coincidence Luke found a true account of a journey from Sidon to Rome that so suited his purposes and so paralleled the little he knew about Paul's journey to Rome, that all he basically had to do was add a few verses here and there about Paul; or that the narrative which in all of its verses reflects Lukan style was written up in the first place by Luke?<sup>13</sup> Sixthly, the account of this voyage is not a foreign body in Acts but admirably suits the purposes and aims of Luke to chronicle how the gospel reached Rome, to relate how the message was conveyed to pagans, to recount how God's plan and providence were such that even severe obstacles were overcome in getting Paul to Rome and his appearance before the emperor.<sup>14</sup>

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 757–758.]

<sup>415</sup>That Paul should sail to Rome was already implied in the acceptance of his appeal to the emperor (25:12, ἐπὶ Καίσαρα πορεύσει). ὥς (the temporal use of ὥς is characteristic of Acts; see 16:4) δὲ ἐκρίθη will refer therefore to a decision with regard to the practical arrangements for the journey. For the (unnecessary) τοῦ before the infinitive see BDR § 400:7, n. 9, where its frequency in Lk. and Acts is said to be due to the influence of the LXX, in which it represents the Hebrew ל. ἡμᾶς means, *prima facie*, that the writer accompanied Paul on the journey; for the origin and significance of the 'We-passages' see Introduction, pp. xxvi–xxx. The first person plural disappears in the reading of P 6 326 2495 pc, which instead of ἡμᾶς have τοὺς περὶ τὸν Παῦλον, Paul and his party. These MSS p 1181 do not consistently remove the first person plural from the narrative, so that there is no attempt to suggest that the author of Acts was not present, and it is not easy to see how the reading originated; perhaps ἡμᾶς was thought to lack clarity and directness. ἀποπλεῖν is (for obvious reasons) used several times in the accounts of Paul's travels; see 13:4; 14:26; 20:15." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1180–1181.]

early spring time. For a variety of reasons, Roman merchant ships avoided sailing during the winter months, mostly because of the danger of shipwreck at sea and the loss of both ship and cargo to the owner.

One should note that Luke resumes the ‘we’ perspective here after shifting away from it with the visit of Paul with James and the Jerusalem church leadership in 21:18.<sup>416</sup> Does this mean that Luke was not with Paul during the time of his arrest and custody in Jerusalem and Caesarea over the two plus years? Most likely he, along with the others who had accompanied Paul from the northeastern Mediterranean region to Jerusalem on this trip, were present through the period of time but managed to escape the anger of the Jewish leadership targeting Paul in Jerusalem. Quite likely most all of these individuals were non-Jews and also unknown by name or reputation to the Jewish authorities. Once Paul was



transferred to Caesarea, the situation became easier for these assistants of Paul. There was a strong Christian community of believers in a town dominated by non-Jews, since it was technically located in the Samaritan region of Palestine. Also, the dominance of the ‘we’ section in chapters twenty-seven and eight suggests that Luke will accompany Paul all the way to Rome and remain with him during the time of his stay in the imperial capital.

The clause Ὡς δὲ ἐκρίθη τοῦ ἀποπλεῖν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν indicates that after a period of time following the meeting with Agrippa and the local leadership in the governor’s palace in Caesarea, all of the necessary arrangements were completed in order to send Paul on his way to Rome. It is not certain as to all of the details that were required, but for sure Festus had to compose his letter to the emperor outlining the charges brought against Paul. Since Paul would be transported by private cargo ship agreements for the Roman government to pay for his fare for the trip had to be secured. Whether that money was paid from Caesarea or would be received at the end of the trip is not clear. Seemingly, it would have been paid up front, since there will be a change of ships at Myra with a different owner.

The main clause of the sentence in v. 1 is παρεδίδουν<sup>417</sup> τὸν τε Παῦλον καὶ τινὰς ἑτέρουσ δεσμώτας ἑκατοντάρχη ὀνόματι Ἰουλίῳ σπειρῆς Σεβαστῆς, *they made the transfer of both Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion whose name was Julius of the Augustan Cohort*. In typical Greek writing fashion the subject of the plural verb παρεδίδουν is unstated but contextually implies the Roman authorities under the command of Festus at Caesarea.<sup>418</sup> Paul was not the only prisoner being shipped out. Other prisoners, τινὰς ἑτέρουσ δεσμώτας, who are unnamed are a part of the group being passed to the responsibility of the centurion Julius. We don’t hear about prisoners again until just before the shipwreck at Malta in v. 42. One would assume they are the same group as mentioned here, but it is not certain. They could well have been another group of prisoners already on the other ship from Alexandria that Paul was transferred to at Myra (v. 6). The original group could very well have been transported just up the coast from Caesarea to Sidon. Nothing is said about them in chapter twenty-eight, so it is not clear as to whether they were bound to Rome along with Paul or not.

<sup>416</sup>“The ‘we-narrative’ that had left off in 21:18 is now resumed—although with some fluctuations (notice the shift to the third person narrative in 27:13, 17, 19, 28, 29, 38, 39–44)—and continues up to 28:16.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 445.]

<sup>417</sup>“The imperfect παρεδίδουν is brought to a point in the aorists ἐπιβάντες ... ἀνήχθημεν. The process of handing over the prisoners concluded with the actual embarkation, at which point, presumably, Julius assumed full responsibility. ἐπιβ. ἀνήχ. is used at 21:2, with reference to a ship sailing to Phoenicia. For the verb with a dative cf. Thucydides 7:70:5, ἐπειρῶντο ταῖς ἀλλήλων ναυσὶν ἐπιβαίνειν. Here P<sup>74</sup> places τῷ before πλοίῳ, pointlessly, because we know nothing of this ship until we read the following words; 614 2495 pc supply ἐν, needlessly—see e.g. the above quotation from Thucydides.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1181–1182.]

<sup>418</sup>“παρεδίδουν (for the classical —εδίδουσαν) is Hellenistic; for the tense see on v. 2. The subject is not expressed; in the background lies the authority of the governor Festus, who acts through his officials (hence the plural verb). They handed over both Paul and some other prisoners.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1181.]



We also do not know much about this centurion. Nothing beyond what is mentioned here is said about him apart from his friendly attitude toward Paul. His name was Ἰουλίῳ from Ἰούλιος, Julius. It was a common Greek name. Also he belonged to the Roman regiment (σπειρῆς) with the name Σεβαστῆς. Coming from the adjective σεβαστός, ῆ, ὄν with the meaning ‘worthy of reverence,’ most likely it refers to one of the cohorts that were a part of either the *Legio III Cyrenaica* at Bostra or the *Legio X Fretensis* at Hierosolyma. Several legions (2, 3, 30; 2, 9, 18; 4, 3, 30) had the recognition as an imperial cohort, an honorary title implying special status in the army, i.e., σπειρῆς Σεβαστῆς. But inscriptional evidence points to an Augustan Cohort stationed in Syria in the first century, and very possibly this is a reference to this one which was made up of Samaritans from the city of Sebaste according to Josephus (*Antiquities*, 19:365-366, and *Jewish War*, 2:52).<sup>419</sup> Luke’s mentioning of this would seem to point more this direction than toward the alternatives. More important, however, is the attitude of Julius toward Paul as his prisoner, as mentioned in v. 3: he treated Paul φιλανθρώπως, kindly. The specific action of kindness is allowing Paul to go be with Christian friends in Sidon while the ship was being serviced.<sup>420</sup>

The first leg of the trip to Rome was aboard a ship based in Adramyttium (Ἄδραμυττηνῶ), a town on the coast of northwestern Asia in the region of Mysia. This ship made stops along the eastern coastal region of the Mediterranean, but did not travel on to Rome where Julius needed to take his prisoners. It was headed to its home base with stops on the southern coast of the province of Asia: μέλλοντι πλεῖν εἰς τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν τόπους. This would enable the group to make it to the southern region of Asia where they could find a ship that was headed on to Rome.<sup>421</sup> As a merchant ship, it would take aboard passengers although carrying cargo was the primary function. Strictly passenger ships did not function across the Mediterranean, outside of a very limited region around the Italian peninsula. Roman military ships were extensive but did not carry passengers beyond the military needed for conducting combat on land. Thus the situation with Paul meant that traveling by sea from the eastern Mediterranean to Rome necessitated contracting with private ship owners to travel as passengers aboard cargo ships. They found this smaller ship headed north where they could expect to find a much larger grain ship that would sail the open seas across to Rome.



Once the Roman authorities had made the proper arrangements with the ship owner, the prisoners were transferred over to Julius’ custody and the group boarded the ship to begin the journey: ἀνήχθημεν ὄντος σὺν ἡμῖν Ἀριστάρχου Μακεδόνοϛ Θεσσαλονικέωϛ.<sup>422</sup> Interestingly, Luke mentions that Paul was accompanied by Aristarchus who is here identified as coming from Thessalonica in Macedonia. He is also identified as from Macedonia in 19:29 and from Thessalonica in 20:4. Under the influence of a reference to both Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica in 20:4, a few manuscripts (614. 1505. (2147) pc sy<sup>h</sup>) add Secundus here as well. Some

<sup>419</sup>“There is inscriptional evidence for an Augustan Cohort stationed in Syria during the first century, although the title could also be given as an honorific to auxiliary troops. Another possibility is that the *sebastē* refers to the cohorts called by Josephus the *sebastēnoi*, which were under Agrippa I’s command (*Josephus, Antiquities* 19:365–366; *Jewish War* 2:52) and whose name derived from the city Sebaste in Samaria. The identification of the cohort is of interest for historical reconstruction but of little significance for the meaning of the narrative.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 445.]

<sup>420</sup>“The centurion is called only by his first name, Julius, a name which may suggest that one of his forebears acquired his freedom (and citizenship) during the reign of either Julius Caesar or Augustus.<sup>21</sup> In the Julio-Claudian period the use of the simple nomen would be really appropriate only for an older man, and in particular one who already possessed Roman citizenship, for Claudius had prohibited the use of the nomen gentile if one was not a Roman citizen.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps we see here a clue as to why Julius treats Paul kindly (cf. below). It was the sort of courtesy one Roman citizen would extend to another, especially since Paul was not yet a condemned man, which may have distinguished him from the other prisoners on this trip.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 759.]

<sup>421</sup>“The planned itinerary gives the picture of a ship that moved in daily legs from one coastal port to another (compare Acts 20:13–16; 21:1–3). There is a certain catch-as-catch-can quality to the travel connections!” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 445.]

<sup>422</sup>“The emphasis on the sea voyage is underscored by Luke’s use of synonymy (*interpretatio*; Rhet. Her. 4.28.38; see Acts 10:2). Within the first twelve verses of Acts 27, Luke uses four different nautical terms eleven times to express the act of ‘sailing.’ In addition, one of the terms, *pleō*, also appears in three different compound forms (*apopleō*, *hypopleō*, and *diapleō*). The use of this figure of speech has the advantage of avoiding the monotony of repeating the same word over and over while, at the same time, drawing attention to the voyage theme.” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 353.]

uncertainty over how far Aristarchus traveled with the group exists.<sup>423</sup> The references to Aristarchus in Col. 4:10 and Philm. 24 indicate that he was with Paul at the time of the writing of these two letters headed to Colossae. But in the assumption that these had already been written by Paul while at Caesarea (an assumption I hold to), they would not indicate anything about the travel plans of Aristarchus. If, on the other hand, these two documents were written by Paul after arriving at Rome, then Aristarchus made the trip with Paul all the way to Rome. What Luke stresses here is a level of friendship that would risk personal danger in order to help a friend.<sup>424</sup> This was sufficiently uncommon in that world so that such loyal friendship would clearly catch the attention of any reader of Acts.

The ship made an overnight trip and stopped the next day at Sidon: τῆ τε ἑτέρα κατήχθημεν εἰς Σιδῶνα, [And the next day we put in at Sidon](#). The ancient city of Sidon, known today as Saïda, is located about 40 kilometers north of Tyre with which it is often linked in ancient literature.<sup>425</sup> Interestingly a Christian community existed there and the Roman centurion allowed Paul to go spend the day with them while the ship was being serviced at the port: φιλανθρώπως τε ὁ Ἰούλιος τῷ Παύλῳ χρησάμενος ἐπέτρεψεν πρὸς τοὺς φίλους πορευθέντι ἐπιμελείας τυχεῖν, [Julius treated Paul kindly, and allowed him to go to his friends to be cared for](#).<sup>426</sup> From a modern perspective this seems very unusual that a military officer would trust a prisoner in his custody to spend time with friends. But in the ancient world such was not all that unusual, particularly if both the officer and the prisoner were Roman citizens as was the case here. Plus Paul was not under conviction for any crime at this point, and was going to Rome to face a trial before the emperor. Thus he enjoyed greater liberties than usual.

We do not know the details of the founding of a Christian community in this city. Perhaps it came into existence as a consequence of the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem in the early 30s that Luke mentions in 11:19, since Sidon would be included in the regional term Φοινίκη, [Phoenicia](#).<sup>427</sup> But the community took care of Paul's needs during the short visit, which probably included providing food and supplies for the continued journey: ἐπιμελείας τυχεῖν, [to experience care](#).<sup>428</sup> Clearly they would have encouraged him with their words and prayers.

Whether the ship was in port over night, or left late in the afternoon, Luke does not say (v. 4): κάκειθεν ἀναχθέντες, [Putting out to sea from there](#). From Sidon the ship sailed north and around Cyprus: ὑπεπλεύσαμεν τὴν Κύπρον, [we sailed under the lee of Cyprus](#). Probably this meant that the ship sailed north of Cyprus between the island and the mainland of Asia. But this is not absolutely certain because of the ambiguity of the verb ὑποπλέω.<sup>429</sup>

<sup>423</sup>Lightfoot (Philippians 35) thought that he left the party at Myra (v. 5), continuing (when the others changed) in the same ship as far as Adramyttium on his way home to Thessalonica. Chrysostom (Homily 53:1) thought that he was carrying news of Paul to the churches of Macedonia. He is not heard of again in Acts and we do not know what happened. It is impossible to build on Col. 4:10, but the closely parallel reference in Philemon 24 shows him with Paul at a time of imprisonment; where and when however are matters of dispute. Conzelmann (141) takes him as a pointer to the way in which Luke's information reached him." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1182.]

<sup>424</sup>For Paul's associates to endanger themselves by accompanying him is a sign of true friendship. Lucian, *Toxaris* 18, in speaking of friendship says of Agathocles that he 'alone of all [Deinias's] friends kept with him, sailed with him to Italy, went to the trial with him, and failed him in nothing.' This was in contrast to Apollonius's disciples who, fearing imprisonment and death themselves if they followed their teacher to Rome, are reduced from thirty-four to eight (Philostratus, *Life* 4.37). Paul, by contrast, has true friends who will stand with him no matter what." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 211.]

<sup>425</sup>The city is mentioned nine times in the NT with eight of them in the synoptic gospels. Jesus visited the area in His public ministry (Mt. 15:21 // Mk. 7:31). Mostly He compared the reputation of Tyre and Sidon for sinfulness to Chorazin and Bethsaida, cities in Galilee that had heard Him preach a message of repentance (Mt. 11:21-22 // Lk. 10:13-14). People from Sidon traveled all the way to Galilee to hear Jesus preach (Mk. 3:8; Lk. 6:17).

<sup>426</sup>This verse reports that a centurion has a favorable relationship with Paul. This has its matching scene in Luke 23:47, where a centurion has a favorable opinion of Jesus." [Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 173.]

<sup>427</sup>**Acts 11:19.** Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς γενομένης ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ διήλθον ἕως Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Ἀντιοχείας μηδὲν λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰουδαίους.

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews.

<sup>428</sup>ἐπιμέλεια is care of all kinds: see Prov. 3:8; 1 Macc. 16:14; 2 Macc. 11:23; 3 Macc. 5:1; Josephus, *Ant.* 2:236, the young Moses was in his upbringing in Egypt πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας τυγχάνων. In the present passage Luke no doubt thinks of what Ignatius (Polycarp 1:2) describes as ἐπιμέλεια σαρκική τε καὶ πνευματική. Paul's Christian friends would give him both." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1183.]

<sup>429</sup>ὕποπλέω 1 aor. ὑπέπλευσα (Dio Chrys., *Cass. Dio et al.*) [sail under the lee of an island](#), i.e. in such a way that the island protects the ship fr. the wind **Ac 27:4, 7.**—M-M" [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of*

Luke gives as the reason διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἀνέμους εἶναι ἐναντίους, because the winds were contrary.<sup>430</sup> This would imply that the normal route had winds blowing from west to east, the opposite direction they were traveling. This becomes important since sailing techniques did not master how to sail against winds until many centuries later.<sup>431</sup>

The second port the ship put in to was Myra in the region of Lycia (v. 5): τό τε πέλαγος τὸ κατὰ τὴν Κιλικίαν καὶ Παμφυλίαν διαπλεύσαντες κατήλθομεν εἰς Μύρα τῆς Λυκίας, After we had sailed across the sea that is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. Here Luke uses the correct term πέλαγος meaning an ‘open sea’ as opposed to θάλασσα which typically is used in reference to the Sea of Galilee, a land-locked large body of water.<sup>432</sup> This was the most dangerous part of the journey with this particular ship since it was smaller and less capable of handling the open sea, especially should it encounter a storm of some kind. And since it was the time of the year when such storms were becoming common in the Mediterranean world, the owner did take some risk in taking a ‘short cut’ across the more open sea further away from land than previously.

The port of Myra<sup>433</sup> is identified as being located in the region of Lycia on the southern coast of Asia. On Paul’s trip from Corinth to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey, he had been on a ship that sailed through this general region going the opposite direction, as Acts 21:1-3 indicates but it stopped at Patara rather than Myra although not too far west of Myra. In the middle of the first century it was an important commercial and port city in the region of Lycia. The reason for Luke’s mentioning of it is the need for Julius to change ships since the first one was not going to Rome.<sup>434</sup> At this port, he found one that was and so made arrangements to

*the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1040.

<sup>430</sup>“ὕπεπλευσαμεν τὴν Κύπρον, sailed under (the lee of) Cyprus. Cf. ὑποδραμεῖν (vv. 7, 16). This is clear, except that it does not tell us which was the lee side of Cyprus. This depends on the direction of the prevailing wind. There is a long note with many nautical and meteorological details in Begs. 4:326, but the only consideration that comes near to being decisive is the statement in v. 5 that they sailed through the Cilician and Pamphylian seas to Myra. This can hardly be otherwise interpreted than to mean that they kept to the north of Cyprus. This, unless the ship had trading connections with Salamis and Paphos, would in any case be the more probable course in an age in which shipping hugged the coastline as far as possible. The winds were contrary (for the expression cf. Mk 6:48 = Mt. 14:24). If they had sailed across in a north-westerly direction they would have had the Etesian winds in their teeth. Nearer the coast of Asia Minor they would have been helped by land winds and a westward-flowing current (Page (252) referring to Smith 67 (better would be 67–9)). See also Hemer (133). In 21:3 Paul sailed on the other side of Cyprus.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1183–1184.]

<sup>431</sup>“Some mss of the Western Text add the words ‘for fifteen days’ to describe the length of this leg of the voyage; compare the ‘fourteen days’ in 27:27.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 446.]

<sup>432</sup>“πέλαγος (in the NT elsewhere only at Mt. 18:6) is the *high sea*, the *open sea*, in contrast with landward water. Luke means (and this is consistent with his remark about the wind — see v. 4) that instead of keeping to the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia they sailed straight across the Pamphylian Bight to arrive at Myra (see the Western text of 21:1), here correctly described as belonging to Lycia, the use of the partitive genitive τῆς Λυκίας being also correct (BDR § 164:3, n. 7; M. 3:171). For διαπλεύσαντες cf. Thucydides 4:25:1, ἠναγκάσθησαν ὄψε τῆς ἡμέρας ναυμαχῆσαι περὶ πλοίου διαπλέοντος; Lucian, Hermotimus 28, ... τὸν Αἰγαῖον ἢ τὸν Ἴόνιον διαπλεῦσαι θέλοντας.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1184.]

<sup>433</sup>Μύρα (Strabo et al. The spelling w. one ρ is correct, made certain by CIG III 4288, 3–6; OGI 441, 214. Also, it is to be taken as a neut. pl. Μύρα, ὄν: CIG III 4288 3–6; Pliny, H. Nat. 32, 17; Athen. 2, 53, 59a; SibOr 4, 109; AcPITH 40 [Aa I 266, 2 and 4]; Basilus, Ep. 218. Μύραν Ac 27:5 is found in very few mss.; also AcPITH 40 p. 266, 4 v.l.—W-S. p. 58; Mlt-H. 101) Myra, a city on the south coast of Lycia in Asia Minor. Visited by Paul on his journey to Rome Ac 27:5 (v.l. incorrectly Lystra); acc. to 21:1 D also on his last journey to Jerusalem.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 661.]

434 “Egypt had for a long time been the granary of the empire, and the securing of regular shipments from Alexandria to the city was a constant concern for the emperors faced with a large and often restive urban population and periodic shortages of food. Claudius, for example, guaranteed insurance coverage for the loss of ships and a special bounty for shipments that came across in the dangerous winter months (see e.g., Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 18:2). For the distinctiveness of the “Alexandrian ships,” see Seneca, *Moral Epistles* 77:1–2. And for an account of the voyage of one such grain-ship from Sidon onward that provides a remarkable parallel to the one here recounted by Luke, see Lucian of Samosata, *The Ship* 1–9.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel





transfer his prisoners over to this ship: Κάκει εὐρών ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης πλοῖον Ἀλεξανδρῖνον πλέον εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἐνεβίβασεν ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτό, *There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and put us on board.* This was a cargo ship carrying grain from Egypt to Rome, and consequently was much larger than the first ship.<sup>435</sup> The capacity of such ships in the first century ranged from about 70 metric tons on the low end to around 150 metric tons on the high end, with a few ‘super sized’ cargo ships such as the *Madrague de Giens* ship with a capacity of 400 metric tons. Such ships, known as the *muriophorio*, had the capacity of reaching up to 500 metric tons and came into use at the end of the Republic era in the century before Christ.<sup>436</sup> Thus the centurion found a ship with plenty of room to accommodate not only his prisoners, but those who were accompanying Paul as friends on this journey (Note the ‘we’ in “put *us* on board.”)

### 8.1.3.2 Second Phase of the Trip: Plans for Fair Havens to Phoenix, Acts 27:7-12



Illustration of four historic ships: Roman merchant ship, ancient Greek *trireme* battleship, the *Mayflower* (1620), and the frigate *HMS Pandora* (1780s)



7 ἐν ἰκαναῖς δὲ ἡμέραις βραδυπλοῦντες καὶ μόλις γενόμενοι κατὰ τὴν Κνίδον, μὴ προσεῶντος ἡμᾶς τοῦ ἀνέμου ὑπεπλεύσαμεν τὴν Κρήτην κατὰ Σαλμώνην, 8 μόλις τε παραλεγόμενοι αὐτὴν ἤλθομεν εἰς τόπον τινὰ καλούμενον Καλοὺς λιμένας ὧ ἐγγὺς πόλις ἦν Λασαία. 9 Ἰκανοῦ δὲ χρόνου διαγενομένου καὶ ὄντος ἤδη ἐπισφαλοῦς τοῦ πλοῦς διὰ τὸ καὶ τὴν νηστείαν ἤδη παρεληλυθέναι παρήγει ὁ Παῦλος 10 λέγων αὐτοῖς· ἄνδρες, θεωρῶ ὅτι μετὰ ὕβρεως καὶ πολλῆς ζημίας οὐ μόνον τοῦ φορτίου καὶ τοῦ πλοίου ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι τὸν πλοῦν. 11

J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 446.]

<sup>435</sup>“Grain was the basic source of food for the population. According to an anonymous source of the fourth century A.D., under Augustus Egypt sent 20,000,000 modii of grain each year to Rome -- that is, about 140,000 tonnes. According to Flavius Josephus, during Nero’s reign Egyptian grain fed Rome for four months. Each year 60,000,000 modii of grain had to reach Rome by sea -- in other words, 420,000 tonnes or 525,000,000 litres.

“In Nero’s time, the arrival of the grain fleet from Alexandria during the month of June was welcomed as an event of great importance. The merchant ships were escorted by warships and preceded by *tabellariae* ships, which announced the arrival of the fleet which would release the populace from hunger. Seneca has left us a dramatic description of the excitement that would overcome the crowds in the port of Pozzuoli, in the Campania region.

“In addition to grain, wine constituted another widely consumed product, as did oil, which was not only used for food but also for lighting and for massage in the public baths. Furthermore, a type of fish sauce, *garum*, was much used in the Roman kitchen. In addition to these food products, metal products were transported by sea, including iron bars and ingots of copper or lead. The latter, for example, were transported by the Augustan ship of *Comacchio*. Finally, all sorts of luxury products flowed to the capital: rare animals for the circus games; polychrome marbles from Africa and Asia Minor, and granites from Egypt; spices and silk from the Far East.”

[“Merchant vessels and maritime commerce in Roman times,” wikipedia.org]

<sup>436</sup>“And yet there were even larger ships! During the Hellenistic period Hiero II of Syracuse had the ‘Syracusia’ constructed for the transport of grain [110 meters from stem to stern]. Due to its enormous dimensions, it could not be admitted at any port except Alexandria (in Egypt), where it was sent as a gift to Ptolemy III. Not to mention Caligula’s obelisk-carrier (1,300 tonnes), which was utilised, after having been sunk, to construct the lighthouse at the port of Claudius, or even the ‘Isis’, which Lucian writes about, which must have reached 1,200 tonnes. In this last case, the ‘Isis’ was not a vessel intended for any particular purpose, like the two colossal ships found in Nemi Lake designed as floating palaces and measuring over 70 metres in length; it was merely one of the numerous granary ships of Alexandria’s regular fleet.” [“Merchant vessels and maritime commerce in Roman times,” wikipedia.org]



Torlonia relief featuring the representation of Por-tus - 3rd century AD.

ὁ δὲ ἑκατοντάρχης τῷ κυβερνήτῃ καὶ τῷ ναυκλήρῳ μᾶλλον ἐπιθετο ἢ τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λεγομένοις. 12 ἀνευθέτου δὲ τοῦ λιμένος ὑπάρχοντος πρὸς παραχειμασίαν οἱ πλείονες ἔθεντο βουλήν ἀναχθῆναι ἐκεῖθεν, εἴ πως δύναιντο καταντήσαντες εἰς Φοῖνικα παραχειμάσαι λιμένα τῆς Κρήτης βλέποντα κατὰ λίβα καὶ κατὰ χῶρον.

9 Since much time had been lost and sailing was now dangerous, because even the Fast had already gone by, Paul advised them, 10 saying, "Sirs, I can see that the voyage will be with danger and much heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." 11 But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. 12 Since the harbor was not suitable for spending the winter, the majority was in favor of putting to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, where they could spend the winter. It was a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest.

Once on board, this second ship things took a different turn as they were in open sea more (vv. 7-8): 7 ἐν ἱκαναῖς δὲ ἡμέραις βραδυπλοοῦντες καὶ μόλις γενόμενοι κατὰ τὴν Κνίδον, μὴ προσεῶντος ἡμᾶς τοῦ ἀνέμου ὑπεπλεύσαμεν τὴν Κρήτην κατὰ Σαλμώνην, 8 μόλις τε παραλεγόμενοι αὐτὴν ἤλθομεν εἰς τόπον τινὰ καλούμενον Καλοὺς λιμένας ὧς ἐγγὺς πόλις ἦν Λασαία. 7 We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind was against us, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. 8 Sailing past it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.<sup>437</sup> Because Roman ships were not designed to utilize contrary winds in sailing, when they were encountered the sails went down and the rows of oarsmen went to work keeping the ship moving forward. Luke mentions both the city of Cnidus and Salomone on Crete.<sup>438</sup>

The ship was still sailing with difficulty when they passed by Salmone on the island of Crete: μόλις τε

<sup>437</sup>“The next stage of the journey is dealt with in a long sentence which runs through the two verses and has a complicated structure. Moule (IB 101) notes that the present participle βραδυπλοοῦντες is followed by the aorist indicative ὑπεπλεύσαμεν, and raises the question whether the participle refers to action before that of the main verb or covers the whole episode. In fact the sentence is more complicated than this and it will be necessary to set out its framework as a whole: Present participle (βραδυπλοοῦντες); aorist participle (γενόμενοι); present participle (προσεῶντος); aorist indicative (ὑπεπλεύσαμεν); present participle (παραλεγόμενοι); aorist indicative (ἤλθομεν). When these are considered in the light of a map, it seems to make sense both of the grammar and of the geography to suppose that the first three participles describe the journey as far as Cnidus, ὑπεπλεύσαμεν takes the ship as far as the south coast of Crete, the next participle and finite verb to Fair Havens. The ship could sail only slowly (Begg: 4:327 suggests that βραδυπλοεῖν may be a technical term for *beating*, as εὐθυδρομεῖν (16:11; 21:1) may mean *to run*) in a direct WNW (Etesian) wind from Myra to Cnidus; it then took advantage of the N or NE wind to cross over to Crete with a view to taking the sheltered south side of the island (ὑπεπλεύσαμεν, a sort of inceptive aorist — we took shelter under the lee of Crete). Even so, however, it was with difficulty that they coasted half way along the island and eventually reached (ἤλθομεν) Fair Havens.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1185–1186.]

<sup>438</sup>“Arrived off Cnidus: This is a seaport mentioned already by Thucydides as frequented by merchant ships from Alexandria (*Peloponnesian War* 8, 24, 35). It is on a peninsula at the southwest extreme of the province of Asia Minor. *skirted Crete off Salmone*: For the translation of hypopleō as “skirt,” see the note on v. 4. Once more, the adverse winds make a straight run impossible, so the ship moves southward to sail ‘under the lee’ of Crete. The city of Salmone would appear to be on the northwest tip of the island (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 4:58; Strabo, *Geography* 10, 4, 2). For a parallel account in which temporary safety from a storm is found in Crete, see Heliodorus, *The Ethiopians* 5, 22, 7.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 446.]

παραλεγόμενοι αὐτὴν, *Sailing passed it with difficulty*.<sup>439</sup> They eventually arrived at the port known still today as Fair Havens: ἤλθομεν εἰς τόπον τινὰ καλούμενον Καλοὺς λιμένας ὧ ἐγγὺς πόλις ἦν Λασαία.<sup>440</sup> Beyond a small harbor not much else existed at Fair Havens, especially that would interest a group of several hundred Romans who formed the crew of the ship. Consequently not much interest existed in spending a few months of idle time in that port with little or nothing to do. The nearby town of Lasea evidently did not offer much either.<sup>441</sup> The layout of the harbor limited its ability to protect ships from storms, thus making it less suitable as a naval shelter.

The next stage of Paul's journey proves to be disastrous. Risk taking is sometimes necessary, but often it is foolhardy, which was the case here. Paul recognized the danger but not the centurion and the ship owner. That considerable discussion was taking place about what to do is clear in the passage. Those involved included Julius, the centurion, the ship's pilot and owner, as well as Paul. How did Paul get involved? Wasn't he a prisoner? As a fellow Roman citizen with Julius, he had gained a level of credibility with the centurion beyond what otherwise would have been the case. Although accused of some crime, he had not yet been convicted and the government authorities back in Caesarea considered him innocent -- something the Julius was certain to have learned before leaving with Paul on this trip.

The lengthy sentence in vv. 9-10 is built around the core clause expression παρήνει ὁ Παῦλος, *Paul strongly urged*. The imperfect tense form παρήνει from παραινώ is found only twice in the NT, here in vv. 9 and 22. The tense form indicates repeated speaking to the centurion with a sense of urgency.<sup>442</sup> What precedes this clause are two participle phrases providing a basis for Paul's warning. What follows this clause is the participle phrase λέγων αὐτοῖς, *telling them*, followed by the direct discourse giving the specifics of his warning to not sail as the direct object of the participle.

Why should they not sail out of Fair Havens? First, ἱκανοῦ δὲ χρόνου διαγενομένου, *and because of have lost so much time*. The ambiguous nature of this expression leaves some questions unanswered. How much time had passed? Weeks, or a few months? Also, was this wasted time the result of battling contrary winds and unfavorable sailing conditions from around Cyprus to Crete? Or, had they lost time waiting in Myra for another ship headed to Rome? Whatever the nature of the wasted time, it evidently had been enough to put them into a very dangerous period for trying to sail across the Mediterranean to Rome.

Second, καὶ ὄντος ἤδη ἐπισφαλοῦς τοῦ πλοῦς διὰ τὸ καὶ τὴν νηστείαν ἤδη παρεληλυθέναι, *sailing was now dangerous, because even the Fast had already gone by*. The wasted time had pushed them into the dangerous season for sailing. Interestingly, Luke uses a Jewish time marker to indicate the general time period. He indicates that

<sup>439</sup>The verb *paralegomai* has the sense of 'coasting,' and the adverb *molis* ('barely'), as in vv. 7 and 16, gives the impression of proceeding with great difficulty (compare Luke 9:39; Acts 14:18; Rom 5:7; 1 Pet 4:18). Once more we gain the impression of first-century Mediterranean travel as subject to a variety of adverse conditions and often reduced to a series of short and difficult efforts." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 446.]

<sup>440</sup>Even the sheltered south side of Crete presented difficulties to the navigators, and it was with difficulty (μόλις) that they coasted (παραλεγόμενοι) as far as a place called Fair Havens. A port bearing this name still exists; it is sheltered on the west, open to the east, and would therefore give protection from northerly and westerly winds. It was about five or six miles from a place that has been identified with (and is said to be still called by local peasants) Lasaea. Apparently the place had little but safety to commend it. For the language cf. Cicero, *Ad Familiares* 14:5 (236a), Athenas venimus, cum sane adversis ventis usi essemus, tardeque et incommode navigassemus." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1186–1187.]

<sup>441</sup>**LASEA (PLACE)** [Gk *Lasaia* (Λασαία)]. A city located along the S coast of Crete about 5 miles E of Fair Havens or Kaloi Limenes. The ship carrying Paul, during his voyage to Italy, anchored at Fair Havens and supplies were probably obtained from nearby Lasea (Acts 27:8). The captain of the ship decided not to winter there, despite Paul's warnings, and sailed on to the W into a storm which wrecked the ship.

"The textual variations in the spelling of the city's name may reflect an uncertainty of the location of the site. The relatively dense distribution of cities on Crete may have led to the confusion. Some scholars have equated Lasea with the Lasos mentioned by Pliny (HN 4.12.59). A Mediterranean survey team led by T. A. B. Spratt located ruins near Fair Havens which have been identified with Lasea. The ruins of the city have never been systematically explored, but several early tholos tombs in the vicinity have been documented."

[John D. Wineland, "Lasea (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 234.]

<sup>442</sup>In view of the situation, Paul offered advice, παρήνει. One might have expected the verb παρακαλεῖν; παραινεῖν is used in the NT only here and at v. 22. Like μόλις (above) it could be a mark of a special source for this chapter; it is not a word particularly appropriate to a sea voyage — and it does nothing to confirm the view that we have here a Lucan insertion. Since the prediction that follows in v. 10 was proved false we may suppose that Luke (if he thought about the matter) took it to be Paul's human opinion, whereas his later prediction (vv. 22–26) was based on a supernatural communication from an angel." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1188–1189.]



the Day of Atonement had already passed.<sup>443</sup> The word νηστεία, *fasting*, was a commonly used Greek term to refer to the Jewish Day of Atonement celebration that centered on a day of fasting on the holy day of the festival. Coming in the Jewish calendar on the month of Tishri day ten, the would place the time frame for the ship being in Fair Havens sometime after late October to early November. Vegetius in his *De re militari* (cf. 4:39) indicates that sailing became dangerous after September 15 and normally stopped by November 11. Thus it evidently was sometime around the middle of November when the ship stopped in Fair Havens.

What Paul said to the centurion, the pilot, and the owner is defined as ἄνδρες, θεωρῶ ὅτι μετὰ ὕβρεως καὶ πολλῆς ζημίας οὐ μόνον τοῦ φορτίου καὶ τοῦ πλοίου ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι τὸν πλοῦν, “Sirs, I can see that the voyage will be with danger and much heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.”<sup>444</sup> Paul, using common sense about weather patterns this time of the year, predicts problems with τὸν πλοῦν, *the voyage*.<sup>445</sup> He is confident of that as implied in the verbal phrase μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι, *going to be*. There will be both ὕβρεως, *danger*, and ζημίας, *loss*.<sup>446</sup> The first word ὕβρις is very unusual in usage here.<sup>447</sup> With the root

<sup>443</sup>“The first two statements in the verse are made in absolute genitives, the latter expanded by διὰ τό (the use of the article is characteristic of Acts) and an accusative and infinitive: *because the Fast had now already passed*. The Fast is the Day of Atonement, the only fast in the Jewish calendar. ‘On the Day of Atonement, eating, drinking, washing, anointing, putting on sandals, and marital intercourse are forbidden’ (Yoma 8:1). Many other passages connect the Day of Atonement with fasting, e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 17:165: ... μίαν ἡμέραν, ἣν Ἰουδαῖοι νηστείαν ἄγουσιν; cf. 14:66; Philo, *Moses* 2:23; *De Specialibus Legibus* 1:186; 2:193: μετὰ δὲ τὴν τῶν σαλπύγγων ἄγεται νηστεία ἑορτή; Gaius 306. The Day of Atonement fell on 10 Tishri; Tishri corresponds to the latter part of September and the former of October. The 10th would fall at the end of September or the beginning of October. By this time sailing was unsafe, ἐπισηφαλῆς (here only in the NT, but not an uncommon word). Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 16:15: τὸν γὰρ πλοῦν, ἐμβαίνοντος τοῦ χειμῶνος, οὐκ ἐνόμιζον ἀσφαλῆ. According to Vegetius, *De re militari* 4:39 sailing became dangerous after 15 September and ceased after 11 November. The reference to the Fast has been used as a means of dating the journey. The Fast, τὴν νηστείαν, is introduced by καὶ which should mean The Fast too, or even the Fast. This (see W. P. Workman, *ExpT* 11 (1900), 316–19 and many commentaries, e.g. Begg. 4:328f.; see also J. Behm in *TWNT* 4:928–32) has been held to mean that this year the Fast (= 10 Tishri) fell late, later at least than the autumnal equinox. In AD 59 the date was 5 October; it was earlier in 57, 58, 60, 61, 62. From this some have inferred that the date of Paul’s journey was AD 59. It is true that problems arise at 28:11 (see the note there); the voyage to Malta must have ended, and the stay in Malta begun, by about the end of October; the last part of the voyage, after three months, will therefore have begun at the end of January, that is, in the period when sailing would be considered impossibly dangerous. Perhaps in view of Claudius’s encouragement of the corn trade this matters little. But it seems that a great deal is being made to rest on the word καὶ, to which there is no need to give this quasi-superlative force. It was late; even the day usually considered as marking the end of navigation had gone by. There must have been an uncertain period; p. Shabbath 2:5b:25 reckons sailing to be unsafe after the Feast of Tabernacles, 15 Tishri. On this reckoning the Day of Atonement was late but not impossibly late. See Marshall (406).

“Hanson (245) speculates on where Paul had observed the Day of Atonement, whether on shipboard or at Lasaea (if there was a synagogue there). It might be more useful to ask whether he would have observed it at all; see Gal. 4:10.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1188.]

<sup>444</sup>“The sentence that follows the vocative has a mixed construction. It begins θεωρῶ ὅτι; this should be taken up by a finite verb, but in fact the sentence continues with an accusative and infinitive (μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι τὸν πλοῦν), which should have followed upon θεωρῶ without ὅτι. The construction has however been defended. M. 1:213 says that there are classical parallels (from various sources the following may be noted: Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2:2:2, ... εἰδὼς ὅτι ... θᾶπτον τῶν ἐπιτηδείων ἔνδειαν ἔσσεσθαι; *Cyropaedia* 8:1:25; Thucydides 5:46:3; Plato, *Phaedo* 63c; we may add POxy 2:237.col.5:8, δηλῶν ὅτι εἰ τὰ ἀληθῆ φανεῖν μηδὲ κρίσεως δεῖσθαι τὸ πρᾶγμα). Blass (274): ‘sine ὅτι Qerat periculum ne coniungerentur θεωρῶ μετὰ κτέ, *et idem ὅτι multis interiectis facile e mente elapsum est.*’ Delebecque (130) calls ὅτι with the infinitive a ‘tour classique’, which perhaps stretches the evidence somewhat. To Knowling (520) it is ‘a vivid dramatic touch’. See also Begg. 4:329; H. J. Cadbury in *JBL* 48 (1929), 419f. Cf. Acts 16:19 D. The future infinitive (found in the NT only in Acts and Hebrews) is rightly used with μέλλειν.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1189.]

<sup>445</sup>πλόος (Hom. et al.) or contracted πλοῦς (Att.; ins, pap, Wsd 14:1; Philo, Joseph., Just.), ὁ orig. belonging to the second declension. In Hellenistic times it passed over to the third decl. and is declined like βους (s. B-D-F §52; W-S. §8, 11, end; Mlt-H. 127; 142). In our lit. the word is limited to Ac, where it has the gen. πλοός (Peripl. Eryth. 61; Xenophon Eph. 1, 14; 5, 12; OGI 572, 21 [c. 200 A.D.]; but πλοῦ Just., D. 142, 3) and the acc. πλοῦν (Jos., Bell. 2, 40, Ant. 8, 181; Just., D. 142, 1) **movement of a boat through water, voyage, navigation** (so Hom. et al.) **Ac 27:9f.** τὸν πλ. διανύειν (s. διανύω 1) **21:7.** Also ἐτελέσθη ὁ πλ. AcPl Ha 7, 35.—DELG s.v. πλέω. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 831.]

<sup>446</sup>“For ‘damage’ (*hybris*) in this sense, compare 3 Macc 3:25 and Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 1:60; and for ‘loss’ (*zēmia*), see *Antiquities of the Jews* 4:211; Epictetus, *Discourses* 2, 10, 14–15.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 447.]

<sup>447</sup>“ὕβρις (also at v. 21) is an unexpected word. LS 1841, in addition to giving the usual meanings of the word (wanton violence, insolence, lust, lewdness, an outrage, especially on the person) have a third division, ‘III used of a loss by sea’ for which they cite only our passage and Pindar, with a cross-reference to ναυσίστανος. Here (LS 1162) ναυσίστανος ὕβρις is rendered ‘the lamentable loss of

meaning of insolence and arrogance it may well be a deliberate subtle affirmation of danger due to arrogance in the decision making. It also carries with it the sense of damage coming out of danger.<sup>448</sup>

The second word ζημίας, *loss*, is heavily qualified with several defining expressions. It will be πολλῆς ζημίας, *great loss*, indicating substantial quantity of loss. This was intended to catch the attention of the owner of the ship who would suffer considerable financial loss in this case. The specific losses are both material and people: οὐ μόνον τοῦ φορτίου καὶ τοῦ πλοίου ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν, *not only of the cargo and of the ship, but also of our lives*. The loss of the cargo would be very costly, given the probably tonnage of at least 150 tons, and very likely much more than this.<sup>449</sup> The word φορτίον, translated as ‘*cargo*,’ is general and inclusive of all kinds of merchandise being transported. But given that it was a ship from Alexandria Egypt



Bronze *modius* measure (4th century AD) with inscription acknowledging Imperial regulation of weights and measures. A *modius* equals 8 dry liters of volume.

the ships’, with reference to Pindar, Pythian Odes 1:72 (ναυσίστανον ὕβριν ἰδὼν τὰν πρὸ Κύμας). Their interpretation may not be correct. B. L. Gildersleeve (Pindar: the Olympian and Pythian Odes; 1885) explains the sentence as equivalent to ὄτι ἡ ὕβρις ἢ πρὸ Κύμης ναυσίστανος (sic Gildersleeve) ἐγένετο, and writes (p. 249), ‘There is no Pindaric warrant for the use of ὕβρις as “loss”, “damage”. The reflection that their overweening insolence p 1190 [ὕβρις] off Cumae had brought groans and lamentation to the ships (cf. P[yth]. 2:28) would silence their savage yell and keep them quiet at home.’ Luke’s repeated use of the word however suggests that he had reason to think it appropriate, and there is ground for this. See BA 1660, with e.g. Anthologia Palatina 7:291:4 (7:29:3f.), δείσασα θαλάττης ὕβριν (a personal outrage inflicted by the sea); Josephus, Ant. 3:133, τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὄμβρων ὕβριν. Ζημία gives rise to no problem: ‘damage and much loss not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives’. For the last five words contrast v. 24.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1189–1190.]

<sup>448</sup>ὕβρις, εως, ἢ (s. prec. and next entry; Hom.+)

**1. the quality or state of being insolent, insolence, arrogance**, the act. sense (Appian, Basil. 5 §2 καθ’ ὕβριν=out of arrogance; Pr 11:2; 29:23; Is 9:8; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 186; Jos., Ant. 6, 61; Tat., Ath.) ὕβρ. ὑπερηφάνων 1 Cl 59:3 (ὕβρ. w. ὑπερηφάνια: Ael. Aristid. 28, 101 K.=49 p. 524 D.; Paroem. Gr.: Zenob. [II A.D.] 5, 44. Also ὑβριστικῶς κ. ὑπερηφάνως Diod S 16, 41, 2).

**2. the experience of insolence, shame, insult, mistreatment**, the pass. sense (PEleph 1, 8 [311 B.C.] ἐφ’ ὕβρει=for insult, for outrage; PMagd 24 verso; PsSol 2:26f; JosAs 28:14 Philonenko [Bat. p. 84, 7]; SibOr 3, 529; Philo, In Flacc. 58; Just.; Celsus 4, 46) ὕβριν ὑποφέρειν Hm 8:10. ὕβριν ποιεῖν τινι do harm to someone Hs 9, 11, 8 (JosAs 23:13). Pl. mistreatment (Polyb. 6, 8, 5; 10, 37, 8; 11, 5, 7; Sb 5235, 12 [I A.D.] ὕβρεις καὶ πληγὰς; PLond II, 358, 8 p. 172 [II A.D.]; Sir 10:8; SibOr 4, 164.—‘Chastisements’ Theoph. Ant. 2, 25 [p. 162, 7]) **2 Cor 12:10.**

**3. damage caused by use of force, fig. hardship, disaster, damage** caused by the elements (Pind., P. 1, 72 [140]; Anth. Pal. 7, 291, 4 δείσασα θαλάττης ὕβριν; Jos., Ant. 3, 133 τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὄμβρων ὕβριν) w. ζημία **Ac 27:10** (μετὰ ὕβ. as SIG 780, 18; 30; 3 Macc 3:25; JosAs 7:5; Jos., Ant. 1, 60), 21. Of Judas’ illness εἰς ὕβριν to (his) shame Papias (3:2).—DMacDowell, Hybris in Athens: Greece and Rome 2 ser. 23, ’76, 14–31; NFisher, Hybris and Dishonour, pt. I: ibid., 177–93; pt. II, ibid., ’79, 32–47; PMarshall, Hybrists not Gnostics in Corinth: SBLSP 23, ’84, 275–87; DCohen, Sexuality, Violence, and the Athenian Law of Hybris: Greece and Rome 38, ’91, 171–88; JHooker, The Original Meaning of ὕβρις: Archiv f. Begriffsgeschichte 19, ’75, 125–37; s. lit. cited by CBrown, Mnemosyne 49, ’96, 7 n. 13.—Schmidt, Syn. IV 273–80. DELG. M-M. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1022.]

<sup>449</sup>Grain prices were closely regulated by the Roman government:

The laws on grain were to have a more enduring effect on the history of Rome. From at least the time of the fourth century B.C., the Roman government bought supplies of corn or wheat in times of shortage and resold them to the people at a low fixed price. Under the tribune Caius Gracchus the Lex Sempronia Frumentaria was adopted, which allowed every Roman citizen the right to buy a certain amount of wheat at an official price much lower than the market price. In 58 B.C. this law was “improved” to allow every citizen free wheat. The result, of course, came as a surprise to the government. Most of the farmers remaining in the countryside simply left to live in Rome without working. [“Price Fixing in Ancient Rome,” Ludwig von Mises Institute.org]

Wheat and barley prices varied greatly from one another and were measured in units called *modius* which equals eight dry liters of substance. Barley was rated at 60 and wheat at 100. The *Edict of Maximum Prices* was issued periodically and calculated on the basis of a table rate of exchange included in the edict. Subsequently only the table would be updated periodically. Barley went for 60 denarii per modius, while wheat cost 100 denarii. For a helpful detailed listing of prices, salary etc. see “What Things Cost in Ancient Rome,” Ancient Coins for Education. The smaller sized grain ships carried about 10,000 modii of grain (= 70 metric tonnes) and the largest ships in the first century Roman world carried at least 50,000 modii of grain. “Grain was the basic source of food for the population. According to an anonymous source of the fourth century A.D., under Augustus Egypt sent 20,000,000 modii of grain each year to Rome -- that is, about 140,000 tonnes. According to Flavius Josephus, during Nero’s reign Egyptian grain fed Rome for four months. Each year 60,000,000 modii of grain had to reach Rome by sea -- in other words, 420,000 tonnes or 525,000,000 litres.” [“Merchant vessles and maritime commerce in Roman times,” rgzm.de]

If this were a large grain ship loaded with wheat, then the cargo would amount in value to some 600,000 denarii. To get some idea of comparison, the typical wages for a barber was 2 denarii per customer, 25 denarii per day for a manual laborer, a stone mason earned about 50 denarii per day. For the ship owner to risk losing his cargo by sailing in dangerous seas was indeed foolhardly in the extreme.

headed to Rome (cf. v. 6), the likelihood of it having either wheat or barley -- or both -- as its cargo is overwhelming. But Paul is convinced not only of the probability of loosing the cargo but also of loosing the ship as well, if they sail out of Fair Havens.

But he also believes that there will be loss of life as well: ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν, *but also of our lives*. In saying this Paul expresses a personal opinion that did not happen, as is made clear by vv. 22, 44.<sup>450</sup> This apprehension most likely came from Paul having already been in three shipwrecks previously, according to 2 Cor. 11:25. When the ship crashed on the rocks, it and the cargo was lost but all 276 people on board (v. 37) made it safely to land with no one perishing. Is Luke here depicting Paul as a ‘prophet’ to those in charge of the ship? Some commentators use this label.<sup>451</sup> But such a label is highly questionable, particularly since Luke makes it clear that Paul’s projections were not correct about the loss of life.<sup>452</sup> But later Luke does present Paul as the prophet in vv. 21-26 who have been told by God that although the ship will be lost, all the people will be safe. Talbert correctly notes that Paul’s warning absolves him of any later accusation of guilt since the ancient world tended often to view shipwrecks as being brought about by the gods as punishment of some evil person on board the ship.<sup>453</sup> Although Paul escapes such accusations from those on the ship, the snake bite on Malta does bring them against him from the locals (28:3-6).<sup>454</sup>

Paul’s advice is ignored by the centurion in favor of the recommendations from the ship’s pilot and owner (v. 11): ὁ δὲ ἑκατοντάρχης τῷ κυβερνήτῃ καὶ τῷ ναυκλήρῳ μᾶλλον ἐπέιθετο ἢ τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λεγομένοις, *But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said*. Quite interestingly the

---

<sup>450</sup>“Given the circumstances described in the previous note, Paul’s ‘prophecy’ here appears as simple common sense and prudence.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 447.]

<sup>451</sup>“Luke depicts Paul as a prophet who addresses his message to the authorities on board.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 775.]

<sup>452</sup>“Luke does not tell us how much time had passed since the Fast, but he does inform us that Paul took the liberty to advise those in charge as follows: ‘Sirs, I can see the voyage will be with danger and much heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.’<sup>45</sup> In other words, Paul was advising battening down the hatches and staying in Fair Havens throughout the winter. It is a measure of Luke’s honesty and accuracy that he reports this advice in full, for in fact when the craft does sail on there is no loss of life, and Paul himself says God had informed him this would be the case (cf. vv. 21–24). We should then probably take v. 10 not as an example of prophetic insight but simply as the sort of commonsense advice a seasoned traveler on the seas would offer at this time of year.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 762–763.]

<sup>453</sup>“Some of these sea stories functioned merely as a record of historical events (e.g., Tacitus, *Annals* 2.23–24); others served primarily as entertainment (e.g., Petronius, *Satyricon* 114). Certain of the narratives, however, served to teach either theological or moral lessons. Examples of moral lessons taught by sea narratives include (a) reckless pride leads to destruction (e.g., Polybius, *Histories* 1.37; cf. Acts 27:9–12); (b) wealth is a burden and is a transient possession (e.g., Phaedrus, *Fables* 4.23; cf. Acts 27:18, 38); (c) a true friend is willing to risk his life for the other (e.g., Lucian, *Toxaris* 19–21; cf. Acts 27:31–32); (d) only the true philosopher is calm in a crisis (e.g., Lucian, *Peregrinus* 43–44; Diogenes Laertius 9.68; cf. Acts 27:33–36); (e) when in crisis pray (e.g., T. Naphthali 6:1–10; cf. Acts 27:23–26). Most of these moral points function in subsidiary roles in Acts 27.

“The theological functions of sea narratives are best seen when the stories are looked at in terms of causality. Viewed in terms of causality, the narratives fall into four categories of the sea storm type-scene: (a) a storm is caused by gods or God//the outcome is due also to gods or God, whether deliverance or death (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.499–511; 5.291–453; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 647–66; Herodotus 7.188–192; Euripides, *Daughters of Troy* 77–86; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1391–1489; Apollonius Rhodius 2.1093–1121; Chariton 3.3; Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.122–252; Seneca, *Agamemnon* 456–578; Statius, *Thebaid* 5.360–421; Flaccus 1.614–58; Silius Italicus 17.244–90; Jonah 1:3–17); (b) a storm is caused by gods or God//outcome is due to mortals on the ship (e.g., Euripides, *Helen* 400–413; Plautus, *The Rope* 62–78); (c) the storm is due to natural causes//the outcome is due to the gods or God (e.g., Herpyllis; Lucian, *On Salaried Posts* 1–2; *The Ship* 7–9; Aelius Aristides, *Sacred Tales* 2.12–14; Achilles Tatius 1.1; 3.1–5; Vergil, *Aeneid* 3.253–75; Ovid, *Tristia* 1, 2.1–110; T. Naphthali 6:1–10; Josephus, *Life* 13–16); (d) the storm is due to natural causes//the outcome is due to natural or human agents (e.g., Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.1228–47; Polybius 1.37; Ninus C; Chion 4; Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 7.2–7; Xenophon, *Ephesian Tale* 2.11; 3.2; 3.12; Lucian, *Toxaris* 19–21; *True Story* 1.5–6; 2.47; Aelius Aristides, *Sacred Tales* 2.64–68; Apollonius King of Tyre 11–12; Heliodorus 1.22; 5.27; Vergil, *Aeneid* 5.14–43; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.472–574; Quintus Curtius, *Alexander* 4.3.16–18; Phaedrus, *Fables* 4.23; Petronius, *Satyricon* 114; Lucan 5.560–677; 9.319–47; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.23–24; Josephus, *War* 1.14.2–3 §§ 279–80).”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 212–213.]

<sup>454</sup>“Paul’s prediction (27:10), based on the time of year (27:9; cf. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* III.15), is overridden by greed (27:11) and an unsatisfactory harbor (27:12) — that is, the storm and shipwreck are not due to Paul’s wickedness.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 213.]



Roman centurion seems to have the final authority. This would have been quite unusual in the first century world in such situations.<sup>455</sup> Also the precise roles of τῷ κυβερνήτῃ and τῷ ναυκλήρῳ is not very clear.<sup>456</sup> At minimal the κυβερνήτης represented the person in charge of the nautical aspects of the ship's travel. And the ναύκληρος could specify either the ship's owner, in the case of private ownership of the ship, or the manager of the ship in the case of the ship being a part of the government fleet. For the first term κυβερνήτης, the translation can legitimately vary from 'captain' to 'pilot.' And for the second term ναύκληρος, it can correctly range from 'owner' to 'manager.' Not surprisingly, with the agreement of these two individuals to sail, the centurion sided with them over against Paul's warning not to sail. In the background also lies the uncertainty of the phrase πλοῖον Ἀλεξανδρινόν, *Alexandrian ship*, (v. 6) as to whether this was a ship in the Roman fleet with the name Alexanderian or a privately owned ship by Egyptians being used to haul grain to Rome.

After extended discussion evidently taking place over several days, Luke indicated that οἱ πλείονες ἔθεντο βουλήν ἀναχθῆναι ἐκεῖθεν, *the majority favored putting out to sea from there*. Who the 'majority' was is not specified.<sup>457</sup> Contextually, four individuals have been brought center stage by Luke, but the term could imply that other individuals were involved as well. The dominate feeling was to leave Fair Havens for a better harbor. Luke has signaled this with the Genitive Absolute participle phrase at the beginning of the sentence: ἀνευθέτου δὲ τοῦ λιμένος ὑπάρχοντος πρὸς παραχειμασίαν, *Since the harbor was not suitable for spending the winter*. Luke does not indicate why it was unsuitable, only that it was.<sup>458</sup> The irony is that this harbor, λιμὴν, was named *Fair Havens*, Καλοὶ λιμένες., using a plural form from λιμὴν.

Even in the majority decision uncertainty<sup>459</sup> abounds: εἴ πως δύναιτο κατανήσαντες εἰς Φοίνικα

<sup>455</sup>“The ‘owner’ (*nauklēros*) would be the chief authority over the disposition of the ship and its cargo, with the ‘captain’ (*kybernētēs*) next in line (see Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 13 [Mor. 807B]); the usage seems to have been flexible, however, so that the ‘captain’ could refer to the chief in command, with the nauklēroi referring to pilots (see Plutarch, *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 18 [Mor. 162A]; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 9:209; and compare as well Petronius, *Satyricon* 101). In this case, of course, Luke makes the centurion the final authority, and — most surprisingly — has the prisoner Paul given a voice in the deliberations. In the end, it is the ‘majority’ (*hoi pleiones*) making the decision (v. 12).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 447.]

<sup>456</sup>“The κυβερνήτης was the steersman, and the primary and ultimately responsible steersman was the captain of the ship. The word is used in this sense; so e.g. Plato, *Republic* 341cd, τί δὲ κυβερνήτης; ὁ ὀρθῶς κυβερνήτης ναυτῶν ἄρχων ἐστὶν ἢ ναύτης; ναυτῶν ἄρχων. A special use of the word is for the captain of a Nile-boat (LS 1004). The role of the ναύκληρος is not clear. In some contexts the word denotes the ship-owner (who would certainly even if not travelling be very interested in the possibility of shipwreck). This may well be the meaning here. Many of the ships in the corn fleet were in private ownership (see v. 6); some however were not, and in such a case the ναύκληρος would presumably be the man who represented the ‘owner’ — that is, the official responsible for the fleet. It may be said that the κυβερνήτης and the ναύκληρος would represent respectively the nautical and the financial interest. If these agreed it would be most unlikely that the centurion would accept the contrary view of Paul. There is an important note on ναύκληρος in MM 422f.; see also BA 1081. A passage in Plutarch, *Praecepta Politica* 13 (807b), is sometimes quoted as if it settled the relation between ναύκληρος and κυβερνήτης: ναύτας μὲν ἐκλέγεται κυβερνήτης καὶ κυβερνήτην ναύκληρος. This is however a very difficult passage. It is introduced by the words δεινὸν γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ σχετλίον, εἰ ναύτας μὲν ἐκλέγεται, κτλ. See Hemer (138f.).

“Conzelmann (141) notes that the κυβ. and the ναυκ. are not mentioned in the account of the wreck and infers that the present verse is an insertion. Stählin (316) thinks that two sources may have been combined, since v. 11 suggests a Führungsgruppe, v. 12 a democratic decision among all (or at least all free) travellers.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1190–1191.]

<sup>457</sup>“This being so the majority (οἱ πλείονες) formed a plan, ἔθεντο βουλήν. For this expression cf. Judges 19:30; Ps. 12(13):3; Plutarch, Galba 4 (1054), προῦθηκε βουλήν τοῖς φίλοις. προτίθεσθαι β. seems to be more common than τίθεσθαι β. Who were the majority? The majority of the whole ship's company? The captain and owner against Paul? See on v. 11. Parallels with the emperor's council, sometimes drawn, are pointless. In a difficult and doubtful situation there is no need for imperial precedent; an intelligent man like Julius knows that it will be wise to call together the interested and knowledgeable parties and find out their views. The majority view is that they should not stay in Fair Havens, equally that they should not attempt the long voyage to Rome, but should make for Phoenix, a little way along the coast.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1191.]

<sup>458</sup>“Luke does not state the reason that the harbor was ‘unsuitable’ for wintering — perhaps it was unsuitably vulnerable to the harshness of winter weather or perhaps was lacking in “social amenities for the crew” (Barrett 1998, 2:1191).” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 355.]

<sup>459</sup>“There was doubt about even this objective; they were to get to Phoenix εἴ πως δύναιτο. M. 3: 127 says that such uses of εἴ are not so much real conditions as final clauses’, and adds Acts 17:27. Others recognize the uncertainty imported into the clause by πως and the optative: Moule (IB 154), the optative gives to the indirect question ‘a more tentative and cautious tone’; Zerwick (§ 403); Radermacher (131), ‘Die Partikel εἴ leitet, parallel unserm “ob”, einen Satz ein, der den erwarteten Erfolg einer Ueberlegung angibt.’ BDR 375, n. 4 compare Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4:1:21, εἴ πως δυνάμην. Delebecque (130) speaks of the indirect question depending on



Harbor Facing Two Directions in Phoenix, Crete

παραχειμάσαι λιμένα τῆς Κρήτης βλέποντα κατὰ λίβα καὶ κατὰ χῶρον, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, where they could spend the winter. It was a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest. What this statement does signal is that even though the majority felt they should not stay in Fair Havens, neither did they think that the ship should try to make it on to Rome. Rather, they needed to find a better place to spend the winter that Fair Havens offered. Their thinking from past observations was that the harbor at Phoenix would offer a more suitable location. The precise location of Φοῖνιξ is uncertain, since it has never been located with clear certainty by modern archaeology.<sup>460</sup> But it appears to have been on further to the west and according to Luke's depiction offered much better protection from the winter storms with λιμένα τῆς Κρήτης βλέποντα κατὰ λίβα καὶ κατὰ χῶρον, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest. In any case, they never reached their goal because of the huge storm out on the open waters.

### 8.1.3.3 Third Phase of the Trip: Facing the Storm at Sea, Acts 27:13-38

What Luke describes here is the shipwreck experienced because the leaders did not heed Paul's warning to spend the winter in the harbor at Fair Havens.<sup>461</sup> In so describing this event, Luke reaches out to a pre-existing

---

a verb of action (ἀναχθῆναι) as a '... tour, constant depuis Homère'. εἰ means "‘pour voir si’", "‘au cas où’", "‘dans l’ espoir de’". [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1192.]

<sup>460</sup>III. Φοῖνιξ, ἴκος, ὁ a seaport mentioned Ac 27:12. Two sites merit attention. The Phoinix mentioned Strabo 10, 4, 3 (475) lying in the territory of Lappa, some distance to the east fr. Loutro (s. 1), is not a serious contender; for, if correctly identified, it lacks a harbor.

1. **Phoinix** (Ptolemy, Geogr. 3, 17, 3; Stadiasmus sive Periplus Maris Magni [a Byzantine version of a 3d cent. A.D. anonymous work] 328–29 [=GGM I 507f]) on the south coast of Crete near Loutro. On the protection offered to mariners by this harbor s. esp. Ogilvie, also Hemer, Acts 139 (lit.); but Warnecke discounts its value, given the size of the ship and the large number of crew and passengers (Ac 27:37), and favors

2. **Phoinikos** (Ptolemy, Geogr. 3, 15, 3; Pausan. 4, 34, 12) on the southern coast of the area known as Messenia (Od. 21:15). According to Warnecke 28f (but without supporting grammatical references), the phrase λιμὴν τῆς Κρήτης means 'a harbor for Crete' (=a harbor suitable for trade to and fro fr. Crete). Paul's anxiety would stem from awareness of the type of weather conditions that would put mariners in peril on a trip from Crete to Messenian Phoinikos (cp. Hom., Od. 3, 291–98).—HBalmer, D. Romfahrt des Ap. Pls 1905, 319ff; Zahn, AG 1921, 825ff; ROgilvie, JTS n.s. 9, '58, 308–14; Warnecke, Romfahrt 19–36; Hemer, Acts 139–41; Pauly-W. XX 4335; Kl. Pauly 800; BHHW III 1464; Haenchen ad loc.; PECS 708.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1063.]

<sup>461</sup>“The second paragraph of scene one (27:13–20) is organized around the fulfillment of Paul's prediction. The story is told in a stock fashion: for example, Chion of Heraclea's mid-first-century novel in letters has a warning not to sail because of weather signs, but the warning is overridden by the crew — a fair wind blew initially promising a fine trip, but then there was a terrible gale (letter 4); or the surviving fragment of the second-century AD romance Herpyllis contains a prediction of bad weather and a warning not to sail that is overridden — the sun appears initially but then there is darkness, thunder, and winds with no prospects of coming out alive. So in Acts 27:13 the south wind blows gently, leading the sailors to weigh anchor and sail along the coast of Crete. Before long, however, a tempestuous wind strikes (v. 14) and the ship is helpless in the wind's fury (v. 15). Fearful that they will be driven aground on the shoal of Syrtis, they lower the anchor and are dragged along (v. 18). Then they jettison cargo and even some of the ship's tackle (v. 19). 'Finally, all hope of our surviving was taken away' (v. 20).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 214.]

literary genre call shipwreck stories that provided a core structure and literary strategy for framing his account of what happened to the ship after it left Fair Havens.<sup>462</sup> Given the fact that he was on the ship as a passenger -- the 'we' section -- provided him a first hand account of what happened. But framing it inside the established literary pattern along with using highly specialized terminology found in such stories enabled him to communicate the event against a backdrop that provided deeper meaning and significance to how Paul's faith in Christ enabled him to emerge as a leader on the ship while it was struggling to survive the storm. To a first century readership, this communicated very well. Our challenge is to understand the literary pattern better and then the deeper meanings in Luke's narrative.

One of the issues raised by this 'shipwreck story' is why Luke gives so much more detail to this narrative than any other segment of Paul's entire ministry over an almost thirty year span. To a modern reader it seems to be only incidental to the big picture of Paul's life and ministry. Yet Luke devotes several times the amount of writing space to this month or so of Paul's experience beyond that given to any similar period of time.

One thing that becomes obvious here is Luke's Hellenistic cultural background.<sup>463</sup> The literary forms of 'sea voyages' and 'shipwreck stories' represented both the finest expression of literary creativity in the Greco-Roman cultural world and also stood as a necessary element in good story telling and history writing. Additionally, such stories often functioned as the vehicle for inserting moral lessons into one's written expression. What

<sup>462c</sup>For those familiar with the works of Homer, certain echoes of those works, in particular the *Odyssey*, will be apparent in Acts 27:13–44. For example, in Acts 27:41 we hear about the beaching of the ship using the words *επεκειλαν την ναυν*. This verb and noun are used several times in the *Odyssey* to describe this activity (cf. 9.148, 546; 13.113–14), but there are no other occurrences of this verb or noun anywhere in Luke-Acts or the rest of the NT. Elsewhere in this very passage Luke uses *πλοιον* to refer to the ship in question (cf. 27:2, 6, 10, 15, 17, 19, 22, 30, 31, 37, 38, 39, 44; 28:11).<sup>54</sup> Again, the idea of praying for the day to come in v. 29 echoes what we find in *Odyssey* 9.151, 306, 436.<sup>55</sup> It would be a mistake to under- or overestimate these sorts of echoes. A balanced approach to this matter is necessary. As S. M. Praeder puts it, the 'onslaught of the storm, the sailing operations, and the sentiments of the sailors and the passengers in vv. 13–20 show first-hand or second-hand familiarity with the storm scenes in Greek and Latin literature. As a whole, however, the passage falls short of the formulas for literary or rhetorical storm scenes.'<sup>56</sup> These conclusions are the very opposite of those of Lüdemann, who sees vv. 6–44 as almost entirely a result of Luke's reading and literary art.<sup>57</sup> Even Dibelius saw in these verses either Luke's eyewitness report or a reliable tradition about Paul's misadventures on his journey to Rome, though he thought the report was written up on the basis of literary models.<sup>58</sup> There appears to be some truth to this latter claim." [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 764–765.]

<sup>463c</sup>Perhaps no feature of Luke's narrative more clearly suggests his Hellenistic culture than this sea-voyage. The ancient Israelites, it appears, were land-bound as much by preference as by circumstance; although the author of Proverbs marvels at 'the way of a ship on the high seas' (Prov 30:19), we sense that the observation was made at a distance. The psalmist speaks wonderingly of 'some who went down to the sea in ships' and describes in vivid detail the disastrous character of that endeavor (Ps 107:23–30). The terrible things that could happen to Jews on sea voyages are reflected as well in the accounts of sea storms in Jonah 1:4–2:10, the Testament of Naphtali 6:2–10, and such Rabbinic tales as that of the little boy who calmed the sea in *jT Ber.* 9:1. The sparsity of the accounts, however, suggests the fundamental abhorrence of the sea as a place too deeply identified with the powers of chaos (Gen 1:2; Ps 104:6; Ezek 26:19–20).

"In sharp contrast, Greek and Roman prosperity, culture, and empire alike were rooted in the ability to transverse the waters of the Mediterranean. Yet despite the positive benefits of sea-travel, these people knew even better the harsh reality that when setting out on the deep four things can happen, and three of them are bad. The good thing was safe arrival, but even that was sometimes achieved at the cost of pirates, storms, or shipwrecks, the 'terrors of the sea' (Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* 7:6). The epic literature in which Greco-Roman cultural ideals found their first and finest expression are filled with sea adventures, including terrible storms and wrecks (*Odyssey* 5:291–332; 9:62–81; 12:201–303; *Aeneid* 1:44–153).

"Not surprisingly, the same themes find their way into the popular romances of the Hellenistic period, so much so that a sea-voyage complete with storm and shipwreck is a regular element of the genre. As the notes to this section illustrate, the novels of Chariton of Aphrodisias, Achilles Tatius, Petronius, Heliodorus, Xenophon of Ephesus and Longus, all have at least one of these adventures as a feature of their plot. And the plot mechanism continues into the apocryphal acts that continue the tradition of the popular romance (see e.g., Pseudo-Clementine Homilies 12, 9, 3–10, 4).

"So predictable were the voyage, storm and shipwreck that satirists poked fun at the conventions (Juvenal, *Satires* 12:17–82; Lucian of Samosata, *On Salaried Posts in Great Houses* 1–2), or parodied them (Lucian of Samosata, *A True Story* 1:6). The setting of storm and shipwreck could also, however, be used for the teaching of moral lessons, such as the placidity (or lack thereof) shown by a philosopher in crisis (e.g., Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Aristippus) 2:71; Lucian of Samosata, *Passing of Peregrinus* 43–44) or the beauty of loyalty and friendship (Lucian of Samosata, *Toxaris* 19–20), or the efficacy of prayer made to the true God (*jT Ber.* 9:1).

"No reader in the least familiar with these literary antecedents could fail to notice their presence in Luke's account. Indeed, as so often in his appropriation of such conventions, Luke's version is a highly compressed compendium of the motifs. When read against the comparative backdrop, the narrative does not appear excessive or exaggerated just at this point or that; rather, it appears to be totally defined by the conventions of the genre."

[Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 450–451.]



Luke does here is to reflect hugely advanced skills in utilizing such literary forms into his narrative of Paul's life experience. If possible to insert historically such in writing a βίος oriented piece about one's central character, such provided a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the exemplary character of the central figure. The way Paul represented himself while on the ship, and especially during the storm, provided Luke just the right occasion to cast this deeply within the framework of these two very important literary patterns in his time. One of the common traits of such literary genres in ancient literature was detailed depiction of events during the voyage and the struggle with the storm. It was felt that such detail was necessary in order to fully bring out the true character of the central figure in the story. Then the obvious conclusion to the answer to the question of why so much detail here by Luke becomes clear in light the literary conventions of Luke's time. He was simply doing what any good history writer of his day would do. Thereby his writing achieved much greater believability and interest from its readers once it was in circulation. Further, it demonstrated unquestionably that first century Christian writers were not ignorant individuals with little skill in presenting their ideas to a reading public.



#### 8.1.3.3.1 Trouble at Sea, Acts 27:13-20

13 Ὑποπνεύσαντος δὲ νότου δόξαντες τῆς προθέσεως κεκρατηκέναι, ἄραντες ἄσσον παρελέγοντο τὴν Κρήτην. 14 μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ ἔβαλεν κατ' αὐτῆς ἄνεμος τυφωνικός ὁ καλούμενος εὐρακύλων· 15 συναρπασθέντος δὲ τοῦ πλοίου καὶ μὴ δυναμένου ἀντοφθαλμεῖν τῷ ἀνέμῳ ἐπιδόντες ἐφερόμεθα. 16 νησίον δὲ τι ὑποδραμόντες καλούμενον Καυδα ἰσχύσαμεν μόλις περικρατεῖς γενέσθαι τῆς σκάφης, 17 ἦν ἄραντες βοθηταῖς ἐχρῶντο ὑποζωννύντες τὸ πλοῖον, φοβούμενοί τε μὴ εἰς τὴν Σύρτιν ἐκπέσωσιν, χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος, οὕτως ἐφέροντο. 18 σφοδρῶς δὲ χειμαζομένων ἡμῶν τῇ ἐξῆς ἐκβολὴν ἐποιούντο 19 καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ αὐτόχειρες τὴν σκευὴν τοῦ πλοίου ἔρριψαν. 20 μήτε δὲ ἡλίου μήτε ἄστρον ἐπιφαινόντων ἐπὶ πλείονας ἡμέρας, χειμῶνός τε οὐκ ὀλίγου ἐπικειμένου, λοιπὸν περιηρεῖτο ἐλπίς πᾶσα τοῦ σώζεσθαι ἡμᾶς.

13 When a moderate south wind began to blow, they thought they could achieve their purpose; so they weighed anchor and began to sail past Crete, close to the shore. 14 But soon a violent wind, called the northeaster, rushed down from Crete. 15 Since the ship was caught and could not be turned head-on into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven. 16 By running under the lee of a small island called Cauda we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control. 17 After hoisting it up they took measures to undergird the ship; then, fearing that they would run on the Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and so were driven. 18 We were being pounded by the storm so violently that on the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard, 19 and on the third day with their own hands they threw the ship's tackle overboard. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

The first sentence in verse 13 highlights the overconfidence of the ship's leaders in making the trip some forty to fifty miles further west in order to get to the port at Phoenix: Ὑποπνεύσαντος δὲ νότου δόξαντες τῆς προθέσεως κεκρατηκέναι, ἄραντες ἄσσον παρελέγοντο τὴν Κρήτην, *When a moderate south wind began to blow, they thought they could achieve their purpose; so they weighed anchor and began to sail past Crete, close to the shore.* What fooled them was Ὑποπνεύσαντος νότου. The gentle blowing (ὕποπνέω<sup>464</sup>) of a wind out of the south (νότος) led them to think they could use it to move westward while staying close to the shore on the north side of the boat. That should be sufficiently safe. This wind led to δόξαντες τῆς προθέσεως κεκρατηκέναι, *supposing to be able to achieve their objective.*<sup>465</sup> Here is where English translation fails the modern reader. The use of the Aorist participle δόξαντες, *having assumed*, along with the perfect tense infinitive κεκρατηκέναι, *to have been achieved*, with the genitive of direct object noun τῆς προθέσεως, *their objective*, creates an idea of already completed purpose. In their thinking this gentle breeze coming from the south made reaching the port of Phoenix so certain that it was as good as accomplished before they started -- in their minds, but not in actuality. They did not take

<sup>464</sup>Here (ὕποπνέω) is one of the *hapax legomena* that is only found in this narrative and nowhere else in the NT

<sup>465</sup>“A light south wind was exactly what the seamen wanted; it would enable them to reach Phoenix without difficulty, and they supposed that they had already achieved (κεκρατηκέναι) their intention. κρατεῖν here with an abstract noun does not readily fall in with the ‘rule’ for the use with it of accusative and genitive (see BDR § 170:2, n. 3; M. 3: 232). The voyage seemed as good as complete before it was begun.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1193.]

other factors into consideration as they should have. After having raised the anchor (ἄραντες<sup>466</sup>), they began sailing around Crete (παρελέγοντο τὴν Κρήτην) to the port of Phoenix while staying close to land (ἄσσον).

What they did not count on -- but should have -- is a sudden storm blowing down across Crete from the northeast (v. 14): μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ ἔβαλεν κατ' αὐτῆς ἄνεμος τυφωνικός ὁ καλούμενος εὐρακύλων, *But soon a violent wind, called the northeaster, rushed down from Crete.*<sup>467</sup>



The wind is described as ἄνεμος τυφωνικός which depicts a hurricane or typhoon level wind.<sup>468</sup> This one was so common that it had a name: ὁ καλούμενος εὐρακύλων, *called the northeaster.*<sup>469</sup> It was a powerful storm that overwhelmed the ship.<sup>470</sup> The wind was coming over the mountains on Crete in just the opposite direction that the ship needed. It blew down against the ship (ἔβαλεν κατ' αὐτῆς) before it had made much progress from Fair Havens (μετ' οὐ πολὺ).

In the face of such severe wind the ship was helpless (v. 15): συναρπασθέντος δὲ τοῦ πλοίου καὶ μὴ δυναμένου ἀντοφθαλμεῖν τῷ ἀνέμῳ ἐπιδόντες ἐφερόμεθα, *Since the ship was caught and could not be turned head-on into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven.* The Aorist passive participle συναρπασθέντος from συναρπάζω indicates that the ship was 'seized' by this wind so that the wind was more powerful in pushing it a certain direction than the oarsmen on the ship. In Luke 8:29 this verb is used of an unclean spirit seizing control of an individual. The impact of the wind is defined by the second participle in the Genitive Absolute construction: καὶ μὴ δυναμένου ἀντοφθαλμεῖν τῷ ἀνέμῳ, *and not being able to turn to face the wind.*<sup>471</sup> With the widely established

<sup>466</sup>The nautical meaning of αἶρω: "to raise a ship's anchor for departure, weigh anchor, depart, ext. of 1, abs. (cp. Thu. et al.; Philo, Mos. 1, 85; Jos., Ant. 7, 97; 9, 229; 13, 86 ἄρας ἀπὸ τῆς Κρήτης κατέπλευσεν εἰς Κιλίκιαν) **Ac 27:13**.—Rydbeck 155f; B. 669f. DELG s.v. 1 αἶρω. M-M. TW." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 29.]

<sup>467</sup>The Textus Receptus has εὐροκλύδων as the name of the storm, which would seemingly refer to a southeast gale, but this is not the dreaded storm of the Mediterranean. The northeasterly storm is, and this seems to be the meaning of the word εὐροκύλων found in the best early text witnesses (P<sup>74</sup>, Ⲙ, B, A). Εὐροκύλων is a rare word, once considered a hapax, but it has since been found in the excavation of a pavement at Thugga in proconsular North Africa which contains a mosaic design depicting the winds in a twelve-point format. The Latin term *europaquilon* occurs in the position thirty degrees north of east, precisely the direction of the winds in the gregale. The term seems to be a hybrid formed from the Greek *euros* (east wind) and Latin *aquilo* (north wind). See C. J. Hemer, "Europaquilo and Melita," *JTS* 26 (1975): 110–11." [John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995).]

<sup>468</sup>τυφωνικός, ἢ, ὄν like a whirlwind ἄνεμος τυφωνικός **a typhoon, hurricane Ac 27:14** (Etym. Mag. p. 755, 11 τῶν τυφωνικῶν καλουμένων πνευμάτων; schol. on Soph., Ant. 418 p. 239 P. τὸν τυφώνιον ἄνεμον; Eustath. in Il. 2, 782 p. 345, 43).—Rdm.2 28f.—Frisk s.v. τύφομαι. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1021.]

<sup>469</sup>εὐρακύλων, ὄνος, ὁ (CIL VIII, 26652 'europaquilo'; a hybrid formation of Lat.-Gk. sailor's language, made fr. εὐρος and Lat. aquilo, B-D-F §5, 1d; 115, 1; Rob. 166) **the northeast wind, Europaquilo, the northeaster Ac 27:14** (v.l. εὐροκλύδων, q.v.). JSmith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul* 1880, 119ff; 287ff; Hemer, *Acts* 141f; Warnecke, *Romfahrt* 37–39.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 411.]

<sup>470</sup>As a recognized (and probably not unfamiliar) phenomenon the wind had a name, Εὐρακύλων. Like Χῶρος this is probably a Latinism, at least in part, a compound of Εὐρος, south east wind (Bruce 1:458, east), and Aquila, north wind. For the compound cf. Εὐρόνοτος, a compound of εὐρος and νότος (Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 363b 22 (2:6)). The name Europaquilo suggests a wind blowing somewhat east of north. Εὐρακύλων is the reading of P<sup>74</sup> Ⲙ A B\* latt (co); Ψ M sy have Εὐροκλύδων, a south east wind that stirs up the waves (κλύδωνες). It may have been suggested to copyists by *Etymologicon Magnum* (ed. Gaisford) 772:30, τυφῶν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ ἀνέμου σφόδρα πνοή, ὃς καὶ εὐροκλύδων καλεῖται. See further C. J. Hemer, 'Europaquilo and Malta', *JTS* 26 (1975), 100–11." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1194.]

<sup>471</sup>Again the narrative is carried forward by a genitive absolute — a double genitive absolute. The ship was seized (by the wind) and was unable to head into (ἀντοφθαλμεῖν, *face up to*, used metaphorically at Wisdom 12:14 and in the reading of D al at 6:10) it. There was nothing to do but let go and be carried along by it.

"Composition with συν—, and the position of the participle, strengthen the sense: '... été saisi d'un coup' (Delebecque 131). Cf. Sophocles, *Electra* 1150f., πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας θύελλ' ὅπως βέβηκας. This is metaphor. Cf. Thucydides 6:104:3, ἄρας παρέπλει τὴν Ἰταλίαν, καὶ ἀρπασθεὶς ὑπ' ἀνέμου ... ἀποφέρεται ἐς τὸ πέλαγος; Lucian, *Verae Historiae* 1:34, ἀρπασθέντες ἀνέμῳ σφοδρῶ."

tradition of Roman ships having eyes painted on each side of the bow of the ship, this metaphor takes on additional meaning with the sense of looking eye to eye into the wind.<sup>472</sup> The only option then was to give in to the dominating wind and let it carry the ship along: ἐπιδόντες ἐφερόμεθα.<sup>473</sup> The participle ἐπιδόντες requires an object in the dative case and here τῷ ἀνέμῳ, *to the wind*, stands between ἀντοφθαλμεῖν and ἐπιδόντες and is linked to both the infinitive and the participle -- something common in ancient Greek but not possible in modern English.<sup>474</sup>

The northeastern wind pushed the ship south of the island of Cauda, some 40 kilometers south of the mainland of Crete (v. 16): νησίον δέ τι ὑποδραμόντες καλούμενον Καῦδα ἰσχύσαμεν μόλις περικρατεῖς γενέσθαι τῆς σκάφης, *By running under the lee of a small island called Cauda we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control*. The name of the small island is spelled differently in ancient literature, but in modern times is known as Gavaos.<sup>475</sup> The participle ὑποδραμόντες indicates they were pushed to the south side, or sheltered side, of the island by the wind.<sup>476</sup> After suffering such loss of control they were eventually able to regain control, but just barely: ἰσχύσαμεν μόλις περικρατεῖς γενέσθαι τῆς σκάφης, *with difficulty we were able to regain control of the boat*. Coming by the sheltered side of Cauda enabled them to regain control. What Luke centers on here is control of the σκάφη rather than of the πλοῖον. The πλοῖον specified the ship they were traveling on, while the σκάφη was a small craft being towed by the larger ship and functioned mainly as a lifeboat.

They regained control of this σκάφη by hoisting it up on to the deck of the larger ship (v. 17): ἦν ἄραντες, *after raising it up*.<sup>477</sup> It was secured so that it would not be lost to the storm. But that was not all that needed to be done in order to secure the ship: βοηθείαις ἐχρῶντο ὑποζωννύντες τὸ πλοῖον, *they took measures to brace the ship*.<sup>478</sup> The precise actions that were taken are unclear because of the general nature of βοηθείαις from βοήθεια

---

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1194.]

<sup>472</sup>V. 15 indicates that the ship was caught by this wind and was unable to look the wind eye to eye (αντοφθαλμεῖν; cf. Polybius, Hist. 1.17.3). This last expression likely comes from the practice of painting eyes on each side of the bow of a ship.<sup>61</sup> In fact, ancient ships were not made so that they could tack and sail directly into such a violent wind, so the only other choice was to give way to the wind and be carried along by it, trying to maintain some control." [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 765–766.]

<sup>473</sup>Some MSS (614, 2147) of the WT read: 'we gave ourselves over to it as it blew, and we furled the sails and let ourselves be driven on'." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 776.]

<sup>474</sup>ἐπιδόντες stands oddly on its own (see below). According to ND 1:49 it needs a reflexive pronoun. BDR § 241:5, n. 7 suggests an ellipse of τῷ ἀνέμῳ but τῷ ἀνέμῳ stands in the text and might be taken with ἐπιδόντες rather than with ἀντοφθαλμεῖν; possibly with both? It would be awkward to repeat it. In such a context as this one thinks of the English 'We let go', with no object, reflexive or other." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1194–1195.]

<sup>475</sup>Καῦδα *Cauda* (Clauda), a small island 9 km. by 5 km. south of Crete (mod. Gaudos; Pliny, NH 4, 12 [61] and Pomponius Mela 2, 7: Gaudus) **Ac 27:16**. The mss. and edd. vary: also Κλαῦδα, -αν, -ην (Ptolemy 3, 15, 8: Κλαῦδος); Γαῦδην. The reason for this is prob. not a confusion betw. two different islands (W-S. §5, 31, p. 68 note 72); rather, the name of the same island is variously written (RHarris, ET 21, 1910, 17ff; Haenchen ad loc.; Warnecke, Romfahrt 35, 1; Pauly-W. VII 861; IX 57; BHHW II 961).

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 535–536.]

<sup>476</sup>ὑποτρέχω 2aor. ὑπέδραμον; run in under; as a nautical technical term, literally sail under the lee, i.e. along the sheltered side of a landmass (**Ac 27:16**). [Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 393.]

<sup>477</sup>The small lifeboat (*skaphē*) was ordinarily towed behind the ship (Heliodorus, *The Ethiopians* 5, 27, 6). But in a great storm, it might be cut loose and lost. So it was lashed to the ship itself." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 448.]

<sup>478</sup>Further steps were necessary. χρῆσθαι with the dative (βοήθειαν, accusative singular in κ\* gig, and βοηθείας, genitive singular or accusative plural, in 6 36 81 453 614 1241 2464 pc, are not to be accepted) means *to make use of*; but in this context the meaning of βοήθεια is not clear. It may mean generally help; that is, the sailors made use of unspecified helping devices, designed to reduce danger by increasing their control of the ship and its stability. Or it may have a specific meaning as a nautical technical term. The latter is strongly suggested by a few passages such as Philo, Joseph 33, κυβερνήτης ταῖς τῶν πνευμάτων μεταβολαῖς συµμεταβάλλει τὰς πρὸς εὐπλοῖαν βοηθείας, εὐθύων τὸ σκάφος οὐχ ἐνὶ τρόπῳ. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2:5:18. If however the word does refer to specific procedures or instruments we do not know what they were. This does not justify the conjecture (S. A. Naber, *Mnemosyne* 23 (1895), 267–9) of βοείαις, 'ropes of ox-hide', though these might fit with one possible interpretation of ὑποζωννύντες. This word (for the participle in —υς see M. 2: 205) occurs here only in the NT; see Polybius 27:3:3. It appears to mean to provide a ship with ὑποζώματα. Plato, *Republic* 616c, says that the rainbow holds together τὴν περιφεραν, the circle of the universe, οἷον τὰ ὑποζώματα τῶν τριήρων, 'the ropes or braces used to strengthen the hull of a *trireme*' (LS 1811). It seems that the sailors perhaps used the recovered dinghy to



meanings simply aid or help. In a nautical use the term most likely refers to the use of ropes or cables that were wrapped around the ship either end-to-end or side-to-side in order to help prevent the ship from coming apart from the pressure of the huge waves generated by the storm.<sup>479</sup> The motivation behind this was fear: φοβούμενοι τε μὴ εἰς τὴν Σύρτιν ἐκπέσωσιν, *fearing that they would run on the Syrtis*. The Σύρτις, Syrtis, was the “name of two gulfs along the Libyan coast which, because of their shallowness and shifting sand-banks, were greatly feared by mariners.”<sup>480</sup> Interestingly this danger was some 375 miles south of Cauda and not a great likelihood for them to encounter, but fear of running aground here was extreme among sailors in the ancient world.<sup>481</sup>

Also to note is that the actions of ‘fragging’ the ship with the ropes would not have helped should they run aground on the Lybian coast. Their fear, instead, motivated them to lower the sea anchor to act as a brake in order to slow them down from being pushed across the Mediterranean by the winds: χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος. The uncertainty of the specific meaning of σκεῦος has led alternatively to lowering the mainsail of the ship as the implied meaning.<sup>482</sup> Whatever σκεῦος means in v. 17, it means something different in v. 19 and is usually translated as ‘tackle’ there. And regardless of whether it refers to an anchor or sails, the objective of slowing down the speed of the boat being driven along by the wind remains the same: οὕτως ἐφέροντο, *and so were driven*.

After a day of this the crew of the ship decided to take further action for their safety (v. 18): σφοδρῶς δὲ χειμαζομένων ἡμῶν τῇ ἐξῆς ἐκβολὴν ἐποιούντο, *We were being pounded by the storm so violently that on the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard*. Once more the ‘we’ perspective returns briefly to the narrative, indicating that Luke was among those getting shaken around by the storm. The sentence is introduced by another Genitive Absolute participle construction<sup>483</sup>: σφοδρῶς δὲ χειμαζομένων ἡμῶν, *and because we were being pounded*

---

frap the ship, running ropes round it, presumably at right angles to its axis, in order to prevent it from breaking up under the violence of the waves. The main objection to this interpretation is that the process described does not seem likely to have done anything to prevent what, according to the next words, the sailors feared. That fear, however, was dealt with by what follows.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1196.]

<sup>479c</sup>“Took means to lash down the ship: The precise action here is obscure, although the general idea is clear: they ‘undergird’ (*hypozynnumi*) the ship. But what are the ‘aids/helps/means’ (*boētheia*), and how are they used? Perhaps the term refers to cables that were used to wrap the ship planks either end-to-end or side-to-side, either internally or externally, in order literally to hold the ship together against the force of the waves.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 448.]

<sup>480</sup>Σύρτις, εὼς, ἡ (Hdt. et al.) *Syrtis*; name of two gulfs along the Libyan coast which, because of their shallowness and shifting sand-banks, were greatly feared by mariners (Apollon. Rhod. 4, 1235ff; Strabo 17, 3, 20; Dio Chrys. 5, 8–11; Jos., Bell. 2, 381). The Syrtis meant in **Ac 27:17** is the so-called Great one, toward Cyrenaica.—Pauly-W. 2d ser., IV 1796–824; Kl. Pauly V 475; BHHW III 1922–24; Haenchen, comm., ad loc.; Warnecke 35.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 978.]

<sup>481c</sup>“The term refers to a zone of shallows and quicksands off the coast of Cyrenaica (the Gulf of Sidra), which was well-known as a terrible hazard to mariners (see Dio Chrysostom, Oration 5:8–11; Pliny, Natural History 5:26). Josephus said ‘its very name strikes terror’ (Jewish War 2:381). Less clear is the action now taken by the sailors to avoid that hazard.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 448.]

<sup>482c</sup>“What it was that the crew did we do not know. χαλᾶν means to loose or to let down; σκεῦος means gear, equipment in general, or might refer to a particular piece of equipment as a technical term whose meaning is now lost. BA (1507) think that probably the sea-anchor was meant; to drop this would slow the boat’s movement towards the danger they feared. Similarly Preuschen (152), quoting Plutarch, *De Garrulitate* 10 (507A), νεῶς μὲν γὰρ ἀρπαγείσεις ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἐπιλαμβάνονται σπείρας καὶ ἀγκύρας τὸ τάχος ἀμβλύνοντες. See also Schneider (2:391). This seems to be the meaning of the reading of g (not given in the apparatus of NA26; see Begg. 3:243): *vas quoddam dimiserunt quod traheret*. On the other hand 2495 pc s (syp) have (for τὸ σκεῦος) τὰ ἱστία (τὸ ἱστίον); this probably means that the sailors loosed the previously reefed sails, with a view to sailing as close to the wind as they could (though Roloff (362) thinks that reefing of the sails is ‘nicht ganz ausgeschossen’). It will be remembered that the word σκεῦος was used for the sheet (?) of 10:11. These two variant readings (of g and of the Peshitto) represent guesses at the meaning of χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος. They are interesting; one of them might be right; neither is the original text, which remains obscure. Note the occurrence of τὴν σκευὴν in v. 19.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1197.]

<sup>483</sup>The grammar construction labeled Genitive Absolute was a device in ancient Greek whereby verbal action being produced by someone or something other than the subject of the main clause verb would be expressed this way. The range of function by the Greek participle is many, many, many times greater than that of the English participle. The verbal action and also its ‘subject’ would be written in the genitive case of the Greek using the participle for the verbal expression. It always had an adverbial role to play in being linked to the main clause verb by defining the connection in terms of causal, temporal, instrumental etc. for the participle phrase. No such grammar construction exists in any of the modern western languages, thus forcing translators to resort to alternative forms in the receptor language with translation. The pattern here in v. 18 expresses causality with the violent pounding of the wind being the reason for throwing the cargo over board. By placing the Genitive Absolute participle phrase at the beginning of the sentence in vv. 18-19, Luke highlights the

so heavily.<sup>484</sup> Thus on the next day (τῆ ἑξῆς) the crew began throwing cargo overboard (ἐκβολὴν ἐποιοῦντο). As v. 38 clearly indicates not all of the cargo was dumped. In fact this may have been just of the personal items of the crew and passengers, and not any of the grain on the ship. On the following day (τῆ τρίτῃ<sup>485</sup>) by hand (αὐτόχειρες), the crew began throwing overboard the tackle: τὴν σκευὴν τοῦ πλοίου ἔρριψαν. Assuming here that σκευὴ means the tackle of the ship,<sup>486</sup> it becomes clear later on that only a part of it was cast overboard as is clear from vv. 29, 30, 32, 40.

This unit is concluded by the loss of hope of surviving the storm in v. 20: μήτε δὲ ἡλίου μήτε ἄστρων ἐπιφαινόντων ἐπὶ πλείονας ἡμέρας, χειμῶνός τε οὐκ ὀλίγου ἐπικειμένου, λοιπὸν περιηρεῖτο ἐλπίς πᾶσα τοῦ σῶζεσθαι ἡμᾶς, *When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.* The severity of the storm extended itself for several days (ἐπὶ πλείονας ἡμέρας). With neither the sun or stars shining either in daytime or night time (μήτε ἡλίου μήτε ἄστρων ἐπιφαινόντων), the sailors were at a loss in determining their location on the vast waters of the Mediterranean. Couple that with the fear of shipwreck on the Lybian coast, and all hope of getting through this storm began disappearing. The brutal waves crashing against the sides of the ship were unrelenting: χειμῶνός τε οὐκ ὀλίγου ἐπικειμένου, *and no small tempest was raging.* Although not clear in the translation, the literal meaning of χειμῶν is winter and the derivative meaning is stormy weather in winter time. Thus a most appropriate term for Luke to use here. A typical Lucan litotes like in 12:18 surfaces here: οὐκ ὀλίγου, *no small.* Gradually the atmosphere on the ship turned completely negative: λοιπὸν περιηρεῖτο ἐλπίς πᾶσα τοῦ σῶζεσθαι ἡμᾶς, *all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.* With almost 300 people on the ship the atmosphere on it must have been gloomy indeed. This will provide Paul the opportunity to rise to a leadership role aboard the ship.

### 8.1.3.3.2 Adrift at Sea, Acts 27:21-26

21 Πολλῆς τε ἀσιτίας ὑπαρχούσης τότε σταθεὶς ὁ Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἔδει μὲν, ὧ ἄνδρες, πειθαρχήσαντάς μοι μὴ ἀνάγεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς Κρήτης κερδοῆσαι τε τὴν ὕβριν ταύτην καὶ τὴν ζημίαν. 22 καὶ τὰ νῦν παραινῶ ὑμᾶς εὐθυμεῖν· ἀποβολὴ γὰρ ψυχῆς οὐδεμία ἔσται ἐξ ὑμῶν πλὴν τοῦ πλοίου. 23 παρέστη γὰρ μοι ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ὧ καὶ λατρεύω, ἄγγελος 24 λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ, Παῦλε, Καίσαρά σε δεῖ παραστήναι, καὶ ἰδοὺ κεχάρισται σοὶ ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας μετὰ σοῦ. 25 διὸ εὐθυμεῖτε, ἄνδρες· πιστεύω γὰρ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὕτως ἔσται καθ' ὃν τρόπον λελάληται μοι. 26 εἰς νῆσον δὲ τίνα δεῖ ἡμᾶς ἐκπεσεῖν.

21 Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and thereby avoided this damage and loss. 22 I urge you now to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.’ 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. 26 But we will have to run aground on some island.”

Paul uses the despair of the crew and passengers to offer hope to them from his God. This unit of text material is composed of direct discourse, vv. 21c-26, with a narrative introduction in v. 21a-b. The source of Paul’s reassuring words is a vision from God that he received during a dream while sleeping.

**Narrative Introduction, v. 21a-b:** Πολλῆς τε ἀσιτίας ὑπαρχούσης τότε σταθεὶς ὁ Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν εἶπεν, severity of the storm even further.

<sup>484</sup>The sentence begins with yet another genitive absolute, and the narrative returns briefly to the first person (ἡμῶν), since all those on board were storm-tossed (χειμαζομένων), but it immediately reverts to the third person, for it was the crew who, on the next day (τῆ ἑξῆς; cf. 21:1; 25:17), jettisoned the cargo (cf. Jonah 1:5, οἱ ναυτικοὶ ... ἐκβολὴν ἐποιήσαντο τῶν σκευῶν τῶν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ; there are classical and Hellenistic parallels too). As in Jonah, the middle of ποιεῖν is correctly used, since ἐκβολὴν ποιεῖσθαι is equivalent to a single verb. On the story of Jonah see the long passage of Pirque R. Eliezer 10, quoted in StrB 1:644–647; also the Targum of Eccles. 3:6; רבא עידן בחיר למשדי עסקא בימא בעידן נחשולא (There is a time for throwing a thing into the sea, namely a time of great tempest). Cf. Josephus, War 1:280, τοῦ φόρτου τὸ πλεῖον ἐκβαλὼν μόλις εἰς Ῥόδον διασώζεται — a winter voyage.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1197–1198.]

<sup>485</sup>Ancient Greek is saturated with abbreviated phrases such as this one where τῆ τρίτῃ literally implies τῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, *on the third day.* .

<sup>486</sup>σκευή, ἦς, ἡ (Pind., Hdt. et al.; TestSol 5:12; Philo; Jos., Bell. 3, 117, Ant. 4, 301; BGU 775, 6; 11; POslo 187, 6; PWarr 18, 25) a collective for a variety of items that fall in the category of σκευός, *equipment* (used elsewhere of attire, military gear, chorus props, etc.) in our lit. of a ship’s gear or equipment (Diod S 14, 79, 4; Appian, Bell. Civ. 5, 88 §367 [= τὰ σκευή τὰ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ Jon 1:5]) ἡ σκευὴ τοῦ πλοίου of the equipment of a ship that can be dispensed w. **Ac 27:19** (acc. to CVoigt, Die Romfahrt des Ap. Pls: Hansa 53, 1916, 725–32 the tackle or rigging of a ship; so NRSV et al.; s. comm.)—DELG s.v. σκευός. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 927.]

Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among them and said,

With Luke's standard use of the Genitive Absolute construction, we are informed of a new aspect having taken place on the ship: lack of eating meals. It wasn't because of lack of food, since the ship had many metric tones of wheat in its cargo hold. The violent seas most likely kept most everyone intensely seasick during these many days, as well as made food preparation very difficult if not impossible, particularly where cooking the food was involved. The noun ἀσιτίας from ἀσιτία literally means 'lack of appetite.'<sup>487</sup> The translation 'without food' is based on an assumption taken from ἀσιτία, rather than expressing its direct meaning. The addition of the adjective Πολλῆς adds a quantitative qualification, indicating intense hunger by those on board the ship. The Genitive Absolute participle phrase Πολλῆς τε ἀσιτίας ὑπαρχούσης provides the reason for Paul's speaking to everyone.

But also modifying the core narrative expression of ὁ Παῦλος...εἶπεν (Paul said) is τότε σταθεῖς, *then after standing up*. A few commentators are puzzled by the insertion of τότε, *then*, in front of the participle (e.g., C. K. Barrett, ICC, p. 1199), but this very common temporal adverb (155x in NT) and in Acts (19x), simply underscores that with the realization of the hunger of the crew, and immediately following Paul's visionary dream, he moves to speak to everyone on the ship to give them encouragement about surviving this ordeal. Luke says that he spoke after having stood up (σταθεῖς). In order to be heard clearly he would have to be standing on his feet. Plus, this is closely linked to the prepositional phrase ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν, *in their midst*. Somewhere on the deck of the ship he found a place where he could speak and the majority at least of the 276 people on board could hear him. It carries with it having gained permission from Julius the centurion to address those on the ship. Very likely he was more open to hearing what Paul wanted to say since the earlier warning about not sailing out of Fair Havens was proving itself to have been sound advice.

**Paul's words to the others on the ship, vv. 21c-26:** ἔδει μὲν, ὧ ἄνδρες, πειθαρχήσαντάς μοι μὴ ἀνάγεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς Κρήτης κερδήσαι τε τὴν ὕβριν ταύτην καὶ τὴν ζημίαν. 22 καὶ τὰ νῦν παραινῶ ὑμᾶς εὐθυμεῖν· ἀποβολὴ γὰρ ψυχῆς οὐδεμία ἔσται ἐξ ὑμῶν πλην τοῦ πλοίου. 23 παρέστη γὰρ μοι ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ὧ καὶ λατρεύω, ἄγγελος 24 λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ, Παῦλε, Καίσαρι σε δεῖ παραστῆναι, καὶ ἰδοὺ κεχάρισται σοι ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας μετὰ σοῦ. 25 διὸ εὐθυμεῖτε, ἄνδρες· πιστεύω γὰρ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὕτως ἔσται καθ' ὃν τρόπον λελάληταί μοι. 26 εἰς νῆσον δέ τινα δεῖ ἡμᾶς ἐκπεσεῖν. "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and thereby avoided this damage and loss. 22 I urge you now to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.' 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. 26 But we will have to run aground on some island."

The summary of what Paul said is given by Luke as a speech, although the summary is exceedingly brief and makes precise literary genre analysis very difficult.<sup>488</sup> In contrast to many similar speeches in the sea voyage stories in the ancient world where the speaker described impending doom for everyone aboard, Paul's speech is focused on encouragement and hope of surviving the storm. The speech profiles Paul as a person of compassion and concern for everyone on the ship, not just for his fellow believers who were traveling with him to Rome. His description of God reflects this same compassion for the welfare of the people on the ship, even those

<sup>487</sup> ἀσιτία, ας, ἡ (s. next entry; Eur., Hdt. et al.; JosAs 11 [p. 12 n. 12, line 4 Istrin] Vatican cod. 364; Jos., Ant. 12, 290; PRyl 10, 6 and 12 [theol. text] in the sense 'a fast, hunger'; so ἀσιτέω Esth 4:16; 1 Macc 3:17) *lack of appetite* (Hippocr., Aphor. 7, 6; Hippiatr. I 54, 10; ἄσιτος='without appetite' in Ostrakon 2, 35 in Preisendanz, PGM II p. 234 H.) πολλῆς ἀ. ὑπαρχούσης since almost nobody wanted to eat because of anxiety or seasickness (seasickness: Ael. Aristid. 48, 68 K.=24 p. 483 D. ἀσιτία οὐκ ὀλίγη in a storm.—JMadan, JTS 6, 1905, 116–21.—Hippiatr. I 3, 7 ἀσιτίας μενούσης) **Ac 27:21**.—DELG s.v. σῖτος ('grain'). M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 143.]

<sup>488</sup> In vv. 21–25 Paul makes a brief speech to counter the despair that had set in. This speech summary is too brief for detailed rhetorical analysis, but its general character seems to be deliberative — exhorting the audience to take action that will be useful or beneficial to them in the near future.<sup>67</sup> After the opening address (ὦ ἄνδρες), there is a brief *narratio*, where Paul reminds his audience of what he had previously advised, advice which had gone unheeded. The function of the mention of the earlier advice is to strengthen the force or authority of the advice to eat that was about to follow. The speech has some nice rhetorical touches such as the irony in referring to the 'gaining of this injury and loss.' Various commentators have questioned the credibility of this speech, which they think would be unlikely to be given during a raging storm.<sup>68</sup> Praeder also points out, however, that such speeches were commonplaces of the accounts of storm scenes (cf. Homer, Ody. 5.299–312; Lucian, Bel. Civ. 5.653–71; Seneca, Ag. 510–27; Virgil, Aen. 1.92–101).<sup>69</sup> It seems unlikely to me that this widespread convention was based on pure human imagination. Furthermore, this speech is, in character and rhetorical function, quite the opposite to what we find in the literary speeches in some of the sources cited above. In those speeches the message is about the danger of the situation and preparation for impending doom.<sup>70</sup> Here the message is one of hope in the midst of despair."<sup>71</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 767.]



who did not worship or acknowledge Him. It should be noted that God's interest didn't extend to either the ship or its cargo. People, not things, were at the center of God's interest and concern. This was a powerful testimony to Paul's religion that stood in stark contrast to the general orientation of virtually all other religions of that day where such storms at sea were understood as the anger of the gods at humans and reflected an anger that was determined to destroy those whom the deity was displeased with.

Paul begins with a reference to his previous warning to not sail out of Fair Havens (cf. v. 10). The vocative of direct address ὦ ἄνδρες is appropriate to the situation with individuals in the audience all the way from slaves to government leaders, and is similar to the early speaking to the leaders in v. 10 with just ἄνδρες. Many commentators see this first sentence in the modern I-told-you-so negative tone, but such is not the case in the first century setting. His earlier words were spoken only to the leaders and not to all those on the ship as is the case here. Neither was then intended to embarrass those leaders who had ignored Paul's words now before the entire crew and passengers. Instead it referenced Paul's earlier conviction based on human observation as being essentially accurate since now it had been re-enforced by his dream vision from God.

This sentence is built off the foundation of the impersonal verbal expression in the imperfect tense ἔδει from δεῖ, **it was necessary**. The significance is that δεῖ inside the NT references obligation mandated by God rather than circumstance or humans. This verb always has an infinitive phrase functioning as its 'subject' and here is a pair of infinitives, μὴ ἀνάγεσθαι, **not to have set sail**, and κερδήσαι, **not to have gained**. That is, the God whom Paul worshipped did not want them to sail out of Fair Havens, and did not want them to 'gain' the damage and loss that the sailing brought down upon them. The participle phrase πειθαρχήσαντάς μοι, from πειθαρχέω reflected their having disobeyed what Paul had said to the leaders. It was their disobedience to a spokesman of God to them that led them to disobey God's will and desire. Now they were going to pay a price for their actions, but if they had listened to Paul earlier all this could have been avoided.

What Paul says here would have resonated well with these pagans who were listening to him. The sea storm stories almost always carried speeches from central characters in the story asserting that the dangers posed by the storm were punishment from deity for disobeying the deity in some manner. Such an assumption was a common belief in the first century world of the Romans. Thus Paul's reflection back to his previous words at Fair Havens was not an egotistical I-told-you-so, but instead an essential point of affirmation of divine displeasure at acts of disobedience. This they understood well out of their pagan background.

But what Paul goes on to say (v. 22) represents a radical departure from the pagan background of these folks on the ship. The sea story stories normally called upon those on a ship in danger of sinking in the sea to brace themselves in preparing to die. Such stories were normally a gloom and doom speech. But not Paul's speech. Instead, he offered assurances from God that everyone would survive the storm even though the ship and its cargo would be lost. Paul's God, unlike Zeus or any of the other Greco-Roman gods, cared deeply for people and wanted to give them opportunity to live and respond to Him in faith surrender.

Paul begins with καὶ τὰ νῦν παραινῶ ὑμᾶς εὐθυμεῖν, **and now regarding these thing I strongly urge you to keep up your course**. These are strong, forceful words from Paul.<sup>489</sup> He powerfully urges them to not despair in the conviction that they all are going to perish in the sea. Sea storm speeches typically re-enforce the feeling of gloom, but Paul goes the opposite direction here. The second thing Paul says provides clarification of his encouragement to not despair: ἀποβολὴ γὰρ ψυχῆς οὐδεμία ἔσται ἐξ ὑμῶν πλὴν τοῦ πλοίου, **for there will not be the loss of a single life, rather only of the ship**. The basis of not despairing is that no one on the ship will perish in the storm. The ship will, but not the people on board. This was a bold assertion for Paul to make that ran square in the face with the usual experience of ships being caught in such severe storms as this Northeaster, εὐρακύλων (cf. v. 14). As Josephus had said, mere mention of the "Northeaster" struck terror in the hearts of sailors in the ancient world. Even today this weather pattern stills exists and is known as the *grigal* (Γραίγος) or *gregate* in that part of the world.<sup>490</sup> For Paul to claim that not one of the 276 people on the ship would die from this storm seemed indeed far fetched to this group of people.

His encouragement and claims did not reflect his human intuition. Rather, this information had come to

---

<sup>489</sup>“The verb *parainō* (‘advise’) is used in the NT only in v. 6 and here. The first case seems more appropriate than this one, since Paul is not really offering ‘advice’ this time around, but encouragement. It is typical of Luke, however, to use the same term repeatedly in a small patch of narrative, and never employ it again. For *euthymeō* (‘be of good spirit’), see below in v. 25 and 36 as well as Acts 24:10.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 449.]

<sup>490</sup>“Today in Mediterranean lands it is known as the *grigal* or *gregale*.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 485.]

him in dream through which his God had spoken them to him. Paul describes that experience that he had had the night before (vv. 23-24): 23 παρέστη γάρ μοι ταύτη τῆ νυκτὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ᾧ καὶ λατρεύω, ἄγγελος 24 λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ, Παῦλε, Καίσαρί σε δεῖ παραστῆναι, καὶ ἰδοὺ κεχάρισται σοι ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας μετὰ σοῦ. 23 For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.’ Paul begins by indicating the vision happened to him while he was sleeping the previous night: ταύτη τῆ νυκτὶ. Paul does not immediately say that an angel spoke to him, for the Greek is παρέστη μοι ... τοῦ θεοῦ, *there stood beside me from God*, implying ‘one from God’ which most translators and commentators assume to be an angel. Paul’s words and phraseology stress that the revelation came from God. The subject, ἄγγελος, *angel*, of the verb παρέστη, *stood by*, at the beginning of the sentence is not stated until the end of the sentence. This word order, although possible in ancient Greek, is highly unusual for Koine Greek expression.<sup>491</sup> It may well have been generated by common terminology with common stories about θεῖος ἀνὴρ receiving divine revelations of protection being granted to them automatically because they also possess a divine nature along side their humanity. To this pagan audience inclined to hear in Paul’s words a claim to being a θεῖος ἀνὴρ, Paul goes out of his way to stress that he is no such thing. He has a relationship with God, but it is the relation of belonging to that God and giving service to Him: οὗ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ᾧ καὶ λατρεύω, *to whom I belong and to whom also I give religious service*. Paul claimed no special status with God, unlike the typical Greco-Roman θεῖος ἀνὴρ, *divine man*.

What the angel said to Paul (v. 24) is μὴ φοβοῦ, Παῦλε, Καίσαρί σε δεῖ παραστῆναι, καὶ ἰδοὺ κεχάρισται σοι ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας μετὰ σοῦ, *don’t fear, Paul, before Caesar is it necessary for you to appear, and indeed for your sake God has granted mercy upon all those sailing with you*. What Paul experienced in this vision was essentially the same message already given to him earlier. The night before appearing before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (cf. 23:11) in a vision from God, Paul was told to not be afraid.

Τῆ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν· θάρσει· ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὕτως σε δεῖ καὶ εἰς Ῥώμην μαρτυρῆσαι.

*That night the Lord stood near him and said, “Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome.”*

On previous occasions the Lord had appeared to Paul with reassurance of God’s protection of Paul for continued ministry.

1) In the temple in Jerusalem upon his first trip to the city as a believer: 22:17-18

17 Ἐγένετο δέ μοι ὑποστρέψαντι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐν ἐκστάσει 18 καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν λέγοντά μοι· σπεῦσον καὶ ἔξελθε ἐν τάχει ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ, διότι οὐ παραδέξονται σου μαρτυρίαν περὶ ἐμοῦ.

17 “After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw Jesus saying to me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’

2) In his sermon at Miletus to the leaders of the Ephesian church (20:22-23)

22 Καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ δεδεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ συναντήσοντά μοι μὴ εἰδώς, 23 πλὴν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατὰ πόλιν διαμαρτύρεται μοι λέγον ὅτι δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις με μένουσιν.

22 And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.

3) In his letter to the Romans while at Corinth before traveling to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:28-29)

<sup>491</sup>“The order of words is striking. According to Haenchen (674) it is Lucan, but even so it is unusual. παρέστη stands first, though there seems to be no reason why it should bear the emphasis that this position would give it. The word itself is common in narratives of epiphanies, angelic visitations, and the like. Cf. 12:7 (ἐπέστη); Josephus, Ant. 1:341, ὁ θεὸς παραστὰς [Jacob] ἐκέλευσε θαρρεῖν; Plutarch, Lysander 20 (444), ἔνιοι ... φασιν αὐτῷ παραστῆναι τὸν π 1201 Ἄμμωνα. It is interesting that in the next verse another semi-technical use of the same verb appears. τοῦ θεοῦ not only precedes ἄγγελος but is separated from it by the relative clause, which thus receives some prominence. This is not unimportant. It has often been pointed out (e.g. Conzelmann 144) that supernatural visitations and supernatural protection are characteristic of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ; it is characteristic of Luke, recognizing this, to point out that though in some respects Paul may resemble figures represented as θεῖοι ἄνδρες, he is in fact no such thing. He is the property (οὗ εἰμι) and the servant (ᾧ λατρεύω) of another, who alone can bear the title θεός. See 10:26; 14:15; et al. Elsewhere in Acts λατρεύειν is used for service of the God of Israel (7:7, 42; 26:7); 24:14 (λατρεύω τῷ πατρὶ ὡς θεῷ) is particularly important. Paul is not speaking here of Christ as θεός. The service implied here is the same as that described in Rom. 1:9 (ᾧ λατρεύω ... ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ). It is the service of preacher and evangelist.” [C. K. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1200–1201.]

28 τοῦτο οὖν ἐπιτελέσας καὶ σφραγισάμενος αὐτοῖς τὸν καρπὸν τοῦτον, ἀπελεύσομαι δι' ὑμῶν εἰς Σπανίαν· 29 οἶδα δὲ ὅτι ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν πληρώματι εὐλογίας Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι.

28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

What becomes clear is that Paul lived out his life and ministry following God's leadership in where he traveled and how he presented the Gospel message. At important junctures God appeared to Paul in special revelation to give direction or re-assurance for carrying out previous instructions given to Paul from God. Although at first glance what Paul says about God protecting him may have come across to this group of frightened people on board the ship as θεῖος ἀνὴρ kind of language, careful analysis of what Paul precisely said moves a very different direction, clearly away from a privileged status with deity and the bestowal of such privilege on his friends on the ship. Rather the focus is on Paul the prisoner being assured by God that he will stand trial before Nero: Καίσαρὶ σε δεῖ παραστήναι. This was for sure not θεῖος ἀνὴρ language! And as such must have caught the attention of those on that ship who heard him speaking.

The bonus blessing from the God of Paul was that everyone else would benefit from God's plan to protect Paul so he could stand trial: καὶ ἰδοὺ κεχάρισται σοὶ ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας μετὰ σοῦ, and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you. This was most likely what really caught their attention. The core assertion κεχάρισται ὁ θεός, God has granted favor, is not specifically a promise of surviving the anticipated ship wreck. But rather that God will be gracious to them as well and that because of Paul: σοι, for your sake. What this means specifically will become clear later in the narrative.

In verse 25, Paul returns to a word of encouragement to the group listening to him: διὸ εὐθυμεῖτε, ἄνδρες· πιστεύω γὰρ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὕτως ἔσται καθ' ὃν τρόπον λελάληταί μοι, So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. The introductory conjunction διὸ picks up an implication embedded in the preceding statement and makes it explicit in the following statement. Thus in light of what God had said to Paul in the vision, there was every reason to 'get fired up' about surviving the storm. The verb εὐθυμεῖτε from εὐθυμέω has the etymological sense of being heated up well and is very close idiomatically to the English idiom to get fired up. Thus Paul admonishes repeatedly his listeners on the boat; the present tense imperative verb form stresses repeated action rather than a single action. The basis for this admonition is Paul's confidence in God to do exactly what He promised to do: πιστεύω γὰρ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὕτως ἔσται καθ' ὃν τρόπον λελάληταί μοι, for I have confidence in my God that exactly what He said to me will be so. This phraseology is very similar to the beatitude spoken about Elizabeth in Luke 1:45, καὶ μακαρία ἡ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἔσται τελείωσις τοῖς λελαλημένοις αὐτῇ παρὰ κυρίου, And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord. The expression καθ' ὃν τρόπον λελάληταί μοι is very Lukan as is noticed in Luke 2:20 and 22:13. The idiom καθ' ὃν τρόπον literally means according to which manner and is equivalent to the English just as. This language should have communicated to Paul's pagan audience since similar terminology about prophecy in the sea storm stories was commonly used.<sup>492</sup> The believability of Paul's words would have been solid because of the polytheism of that culture.<sup>493</sup> Thus Paul affirms the reliability of God so that exactly what He said would happen would indeed take place.

The one proviso contained in God's words to Paul in the vision is εἰς νῆσον δέ τινα δεῖ ἡμᾶς ἐκτεσεῖν, But we will have to run aground on some island (v. 26). This was the bad news segment of his good news/bad news message to those on the ship. Paul indicates that a shipwreck is going to happen.<sup>494</sup> He doesn't know exactly where,

<sup>492</sup>For a similar expression of piety, that everything happening in a shipwreck was guided by a divine agency, compare Aelius Aristides, Sacred Tales 2:12–13, and for one's fate at sea as the fulfillment of a prophecy, see Odyssey 5:300–302." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 449.]

<sup>493</sup>Only inside a monotheism mind-set does the issue of true and false gods arise. This is not an issue inside polytheism. The religious world of the first century was as polytheistic oriented as modern India with its polytheistic Hindu tradition. Paul could easily speak of his God without his audience reacting by rejecting the existence of this deity. Their only response would potentially be that this deity was Paul's but not theirs. This would be the basis for ignoring what Paul's God had said to him.

<sup>494</sup>The verb *ekpiptō* is the same used in v. 17. In reference to sea-voyaging, it can mean to 'run adrift' or to be 'cast ashore'





but it will be on an island in the Mediterranean. In actuality, that unknown island would be Malta. A few commentators separate this statement from the preceding ones that report the message from God to Paul as though this final statement was not a part of the message from God to Paul. But this runs square into the face of the use of the impersonal verb δεῖ which designates necessity mandated by God. Clearly this was part of what the angel of God told Paul. The only limitation was that he didn't tell Paul which island it would be. The infinitive ἐκπεσεῖν comes from ἐκπίπτω, *to fall off*, but functioned as the passive voice expression of ἐκβάλλω with the meaning *to be thrown out*. In nautical usage, it literally meant to *be thrown out of the water* in the sense of to *run aground*.<sup>495</sup>

What Paul attempted to do on this occasion after many days of drifting through the Mediterranean while being pushed along by the Northeaster was to offer encouragement to all those aboard. No immediate reaction to his speech is provided by Luke. Thus we don't know how well his words were received. By implication in the description in vv. 27-32, his words had little initial positive impact. But subsequent words were heeded at least by the centurion and the Roman soldiers on the ship.

### 8.1.3.3.3 Despair at Sea, Acts 27:27-32

27 Ὡς δὲ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ νύξ ἐγένετο διαφορομένων ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ Ἀδρία, κατὰ μέσον τῆς νυκτὸς ὑπενόουν οἱ ναῦται προσάγειν τινα αὐτοῖς χώραν. 28 καὶ βολίσαντες εὔρον ὄργυιὰς εἴκοσι, βραχὺ δὲ διαστήσαντες καὶ πάλιν βολίσαντες εὔρον ὄργυιὰς δεκαπέντε· 29 φοβούμενοι τε μή που κατὰ τραχεῖς τόπους ἐκπέσωμεν, ἐκ πύρμνης ῥίψαντες ἀγκύρας τέσσαρας ἤρχοντο ἡμέραν γενέσθαι. 30 Τῶν δὲ ναυτῶν ζητούντων φυγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου καὶ χαλασάντων τὴν σκάφην εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν προφάσει ὡς ἐκ πύρμνης ἀγκύρας μελλόντων ἐκτείνειν, 31 εἶπεν ὁ Παῦλος τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη καὶ τοῖς στρατιώταις· ἐὰν μὴ οὗτοι μείνωσιν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ, ὑμεῖς σωθῆναι οὐ δύνασθε. 32 τότε ἀπέκοψαν οἱ στρατιῶται τὰ σχοινία τῆς σκάφης καὶ εἶασαν αὐτὴν ἐκπεσεῖν.

27 When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. 28 So they took soundings and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. 29 Fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. 30 But when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, on the pretext of putting out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift.

Here Luke becomes somewhat more specific chronologically. Prior to this the time references have been more general than specific: v. 21, Πολλῆς τε ἀσιτίας ὑπαρχούσης, *without food for a long time*; v. 20, ἐπὶ πλείονας ἡμέρας, *for many days*; v. 19, τῇ τρίτῃ, *on the third day*; v. 18, τῇ ἐξῆς, *on the next day*; v. 14, μετ' οὐ πολὺ, *soon*. In verse 27, Luke indicates that the ship had been caught up in the storm for 14 nights: Ὡς δὲ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ νύξ ἐγένετο, *when the fourteenth night had come*.<sup>496</sup> That was some kind of a storm to last for two weeks.

The location of the ship is defined as διαφορομένων ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ Ἀδρία, *while we were drifting across the sea of Adria*. The Ἀδρία is the ancient name for what is now referred to as the Adriatic Sea.<sup>497</sup> The thirteen or fourteen days to get from Cauda to Malta



in a shipwreck (see Herodotus, *Persian Wars* 3:138). The prophecy is shown to have come true in 28:1. Ships coming to grief on rocky shores is again a favorite shipwreck motif (see Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 7:2; Lucian of Samosata, *Salaried Posts* 2; *A True Story* 1:6; Achilles Tattius, *Clitophon and Leucippe* 3:4).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 449–450.]

<sup>495</sup>Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 308.

<sup>496</sup>“The time of action of the main clause (ὑπενόουν οἱ ναῦται) is given threefold determination: (a) in a temporal clause introduced by ὡς (temporal ὡς is characteristic of Acts; see v. 1), When the 14th night came (ἐπεγένετο, A 81 pc vg, differs little from the simple ἐγένετο); (b) by a genitive absolute, διαφορομένων (for the meaning of this verb see below) ἐν τῷ Ἀδρία (see below); (c) by the adverbial phrase κατὰ μέσον τῆς νυκτὸς, about the middle of the night.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1202.]

<sup>497</sup>Ἀδρία, οὐ, ὁ (Hdt. et al.; ins since 325 B.C. Meisterhans3-Schw.; B-D-F §261, 8) *the Adriatic Sea* (the sea betw. Crete and Sicily is included in it: Eudoxus [III B.C.]: 79 Fgm. 1 Jac.; Ptolem. 3, 4, 1; 17, 1; Ael. Aristid. 48, 66 K.=24 p. 483 D.; Jos., Vi. 15) **Ac** Page 657

represents an accurate calculation of travel time.<sup>498</sup>

The third time reference is κατὰ μέσον τῆς νυκτός, *at the middle of the night*. This is more precise and indicates that around midnight something happened which is defined as ὑπενόουσι οἱ ναῦται προσάγειν τινὰ αὐτοῖς χώραν, *the sailors began suspecting that some land was approaching them*. Although to modern readers this perspective seems strange, one does find it in ancient literature.<sup>499</sup> Visually on the water with no landmarks to note movement, it would seem that land was coming closer when doing the soundings to measure the depth of the water.

This sensing of land coming closer prompted efforts to measure the depth of the water (v. 28): καὶ βολίσαντες εὔρον ὄργυιὰς εἴκοσι, βραχὺ δὲ διαστήσαντες καὶ πάλιν βολίσαντες εὔρον ὄργυιὰς δεκαπέντε, *So they took soundings and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms*. The Aorist participle βολίσαντες from βολίζω literally means ‘to heave the lead’ and depicts the tossing of a weighted line over the side of the ship and letting it down until it touched the ocean floor.<sup>500</sup> The determination of length was calculated in units of a fathom, ὄργυιᾶ.<sup>501</sup> Their first reading indicated 20 fathoms (ὄργυιὰς εἴκοσι) down to the ocean floor. They waited for a while (βραχὺ δὲ διαστήσαντες), then checked again (πάλιν), and this time it was only 15 fathoms (ὄργυιὰς δεκαπέντε) deep. The depth of the water went approximately from 120 feet to 90 feet. The Roman *merchant ships* normally had a deep V-shaped hull, and thus would set lower in the water, especially when loaded with cargo, than the more flat bottomed war ships. How long they waited before taking the second sounding is specified by the adverb βραχὺ from the adjective βραχύς, εἶα, ὕ, with the temporal meaning of a very brief period of time.<sup>502</sup>

---

27:27. Warnecke, Romfahrt 69–74.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 21.]

<sup>498</sup>Smith (124–8) calculates that 13 or 14 days would be the time required, under the conditions described, for the passage from Cauda to Malta. The converse also applies (128): ‘... there is no other place [than Malta] agreeing, either in name or description, within the limits to which we are tied down by calculations founded upon the narrative.’ [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1202.]

<sup>499</sup>At this time the sailors supposed, thought, προσάγειν τινὰ αὐτοῖς χώραν. This is the text of NA<sup>26</sup>; it is read by  $\kappa\epsilon\ \alpha\ C\ \Psi\ M$ . This is a strange expression; they thought that a certain land was approaching them. This does in fact make sense as a matter of relative motion, and it is not without precedent. Blass (279) quotes the sixth century commentator on Epictetus, Simplicius 38: δι’ ἀπειρίαν [sailors] δοκοῦσιν οὐκ αὐτοὶ προσιέναι τῇ πέτρᾳ, ἀλλὰ τὴν πέτραν κατ’ ὀλίγον ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς ἰέναι. Cf. Vergil, Aeneid 3:72, *provehimur portu terraeque urbesque recedunt*. There are several variants. προσεγγίζεῖν (614 2147 2495 (sy)) makes no difference in meaning: *a certain land was drawing near to them*. προαγαγεῖν (B\* (pc)) might be taken to mean that land was ahead of them, but it is hard to understand why anyone should express himself in this way. B<sup>2</sup> has προσανέχειν. It might be just possible to make this mean that land was awaiting them, that is, that it was just ahead. But B\* has προσαχεῖν. This could be regarded as a Doric form (α for η) of προσηχεῖν to resound or re-echo (so LS 1513). What gives this significance is that g has *resonare sibi aliquam regionem*, and s, *resonare sibi quandam regionem*. M. 2:71 describes this as a very attractive reading ‘which accounts for the variants’. It ‘has the difficulty of being a Doric (etc.) form which disagrees with the common derivatives of the same root: κατηχεῖν and ἦχος are conspicuous in the NT. Could it have been used by sailors from Crete, Cyprus, Lesbos, Corinth, or some other maritime country outside the Ionic-Attic area, appropriated as a t.t.?’ See on the other hand M. 3:51, where προσάγειν is assumed without reference to variants. Metzger (498) prefers προσάγειν on the ground that its ‘harshness’ may have given rise to the other readings, and so does Ropes (Begg. 3:245) (πρόσάγειν, although itself difficult, is to be preferred’. Clark (385) however prefers προσαχεῖν (= προσηχεῖν = resonare). Hemer (146) takes up the suggestion of Smith (119–22) that the sailors became aware of the breakers on the rocky point of Koura, in the neighbourhood of St Paul’s Bay (see on v. 28 and 28:1). The reading must remain doubtful; fortunately the meaning is not. The sailors became aware that they were not far from land.’ [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1202–1203.]

<sup>500</sup>βολίζω (via βόλος ‘a throw w. a net’, and βολή [s. prec.]) 1 aor. ἐβόλισα **to use a weighted line to determine depth, take soundings, heave the lead** (the sounding would be taken with a βολίς, an implement shaped like a missile [s. βολίς next entry] and prob. made of lead, μόλυβδος, hence Sch. II. 24, 80 renders βολίς ‘sounding-lead’) **Ac 27:28** twice (elsewh. only in Geoponica 6, 17 [pass.=‘sink’] and Eustathius on Homer 563, 30; 731, 46). LCasson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Anc. World*, ’71, 246, n. 85; further details Hemer, *Acts* 147 n. 131.—DELG s.v. βάλλω. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 180.]

<sup>501</sup>ὄργυιᾶ (or ὄργυια, but in the pl. prob. ὄργυιᾶί; s. Kühner-BI. I 392f; MIt-H. 58. Derived fr. ὀρέγω ‘stretch’; Hom., Hdt. et al.; ins; POxy 669, 39; Jos., Bell. 1, 411) ἄς, ἡ **the distance measured by a person’s arms stretched out horizontally, fathom** reckoned at 1.85 meters, a nautical t.t., used to measure the depth of water (Diod S 3, 40, 3) **Ac 27:28ab**.—DELG s.v. ὄργυια. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 721.]

<sup>502</sup>A high percentage of ancient Greek adjectives also possessed an adverbial capability either by using the neuter singular adjec-

Thus the drop in the depth of the water seemed to be happening very quickly and prompted hasty measures to slow down the movement of the ship (v. 29): φοβούμενοι τε μή που κατὰ τραχεῖς τόπους ἐκπέσωμεν, ἐκ πρύμνης ῥίψαντες ἀγκύρας τέσσαρας ἤρχοντο ἡμέραν γενέσθαι, *Fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.* Note that the first person plural ‘we’ signals all on board the ship, while the ‘they’ specifies the sailors manning the ship. Literally the fear (φοβούμενοι) was that of the ship being thrust onto rough, jagged ground: μή που κατὰ τραχεῖς τόπους ἐκπέσωμεν.<sup>503</sup> In order to prevent this, the sailors thrust over the stern of the ship four anchors: ἐκ πρύμνης ῥίψαντες ἀγκύρας τέσσαρας, *after having thrust over four anchors from the stern.*<sup>504</sup> The anchors from the stern were lowered first in order to position the ship with the wind so that it wouldn’t take on the high waves broadside. After lowering these anchors, Luke says that the primary thing they did was ἤρχοντο ἡμέραν γενέσθαι, *they began praying for day to come.* Of course, he doesn’t imply that their prayers were directed to the God of the Christians on the ship.<sup>505</sup> In the Greek literary tradition of shipwrecks at sea such actions of praying to one’s god or gods in such a time of danger was common.<sup>506</sup> Although they prayed to their respective deities for deliverance, it was the God that Paul worshipped who delivered them.<sup>507</sup>

Next, Paul has to intervene in order to stop a disaster in the making (v. 30): Τῶν δὲ ναυτῶν ζητούντων φυγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου καὶ χαλασάντων τὴν σκάφην εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν προφάσει ὡς ἐκ πρῶρης ἀγκύρας μελλόντων ἐκτείνειν, *But when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, on the pretext of putting out anchors from the bow.* This lengthy expression stands as another of Luke’s Genitive Absolute constructions, this time in an adverbial temporal connection to the main clause verb εἶπεν in v. 31. The core of this Genitive Absolute expression is Τῶν ναυτῶν ζητούντων . . . καὶ χαλασάντων, *while the sailors were attempting . . . and were lowering.* Sailors in the ancient world did not have a positive reputation for trustworthiness, just as Luke reflects on these manning this ship.<sup>508</sup> First, the sailors Τῶν ναυτῶν ζητούντων φυγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου, *were seeking to escape from the ship.* Luke’s expression indicates that they devised a plan to escape and were just beginning to put it into action. Second, καὶ χαλασάντων τὴν σκάφην εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, *and were lowering the boat down into the sea.* The σκάφη (3x only in Acts 27) was a smaller boat, often called today a dingy, carried aboard the larger ship for various purposes. At first it had been towed behind the larger ship (v. 16) but at the beginning of the storm it had been hoisted aboard the larger ship. Now the soldiers will cut it loose from the big ship (v. 32) in order to prevent the sailors from escaping. The reason for this is stated by Luke as προφάσει ὡς ἐκ πρῶρης



tive ending -- here -ύ for this particular type of third declension adjective -- or by attaching the ending -ως to the adjective stem.

<sup>503</sup>“The danger was that the ship might be thrown by wind and wave upon τραχεῖς τόπους, rocky (literally rough, jagged) places. τραχὺς is a stock epithet of Ithaca (Homer, *Odyssey* 9:27; 10:417). For τραχεῖς, P<sup>74</sup> 104 2495 pc have βραχεῖς. This may be a slip; otherwise it is hard to make a better guess at its meaning than ‘auf enge [?] Stellen’ (Schneider 2:386).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1204.]

<sup>504</sup>“To avoid the danger of running into the rocks the sailors let down (literally, threw, ῥίψαντες) four anchors from the stern. It was usual to anchor by the bows (e.g. Vergil, *Aeneid* 3:277, *ancora de prora iacitur*), but since the ship was driving before the wind (vv. 15, 17) this would be the natural way to check its progress; see however v. 30. What had to be avoided at all costs was allowing the ship to take heavy seas broadside on. See Smith (133).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1204.]

<sup>505</sup>“Moulton (2.324) argues that in contrast to προσεύχομαι, which was used of Christian prayer, εὔχομαι was used of either pagan prayer or generic wishing. While it may be possible, though unlikely, to view most NT uses of εὔχομαι as expressions of general wishes (Acts 26:29; Rom 9:3; 2 Cor 13:7, 9; 3 John 1:2), James 5:16 clearly uses εὔχομαι to refer to Christian prayer.” [Martin M. Culy and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 523.]

<sup>506</sup>“Homer, *Odyssey* 9:151, 436 (ἐμείναμεν Ἡῶ δῖαν) is sometimes quoted as a parallel, but in these two lines Odysseus and his men are on shore. See also Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 2:8, διὰ τοῦτο θάπτον εὐχόμεθα γενέσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1204.]

<sup>507</sup>“As in the shipwreck of Odysseus, the pagan sailors now prayed to their gods for daylight to come and for deliverance through the night.<sup>38</sup> Their prayer was ultimately answered — not by their gods but by Paul’s God.” [John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 525.]

<sup>508</sup>“The sailors (*nautai*) have been the subject of all the action since verse 27. They above all perceive the danger to the ship and seek to save themselves. Their ‘pretense’ (*prophasei*, see Luke 20:47) consisted in lowering the boat as though they were going to lower the bow anchors as they had those from the stern; once in the boat, they could cut themselves free and get clear of the inevitable wreck. For the untrustworthiness of sailors, see Plutarch, *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 18 [Mor. 161C], and for their incompetence in a crisis, see Aelius Aristides, *Sacred Tales* 2:12, 65–67. The motif of sailors’ abandoning ship by means of the lifeboat is found also in Achilles Tatius, *Clitophon and Leucippe* 3:3; Petronius, *Satyricon* 102.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 454.]



ἀγκύρας μελλόντων ἐκτείνειν, on the pretext as though they were going to stretch out the anchors from the bow<sup>509</sup> of the ship.<sup>510</sup> The noun προφάσει from πρόφασις here signals a false motive behind an action, with the following ὡς ἐκ πρῶρης ἀγκύρας μελλόντων ἐκτείνειν defining what that phoney excuse was: to stretch out anchors from the bow of the ship in order to stabilize its position in the water.

In verse 31 we come to the main clause of this sentence in vv. 30-31: εἶπεν ὁ Παῦλος τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη καὶ τοῖς στρατιώταις, Paul said to the centurian and to the soldiers. Logistically this clearly suggests that Paul was allowed to stay on the deck rather than below where prisoners would normally be kept, since this all happened around midnight. This indicates the loose nature of his ‘imprisonment’ during the trip.<sup>511</sup>

What he said to the centurion and the soldiers is ἐὰν μὴ οὗτοι μείνωσιν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ, ὑμεῖς σωθῆναι οὐ δύνασθε, If these do not remain on the ship, you yourselves will not be able to be saved. Luke does not indicate how Paul uncover the escape plan of the sailors while the centurion and his soldiers were oblivious to it. What Paul offers to these Romans is not some prophecy, but common sense advice. Without this σκάφη, boat, available, not only would it have been impossible to stabilize the ship by stretching out the anchors in front of the ship but also it would have made it hard, if not impossible, to ferry the ship’s passengers and crew to land safely after the sun came up.

The response of the Roman soldiers (v. 32) was dumb and also endangered the lives of the passengers and crew: τότε ἀπέκοψαν οἱ στρατιῶται τὰ σχοινία τῆς σκάφης καὶ εἶασαν αὐτὴν ἐκπεσεῖν, Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift. The sailors had already lowered the dinghy into the water but it was still tied to the side of the larger ship. What they should have done was simply post a guard for the remainder of the night to prevent the crew from using it to escape. But instead, they cut the boat loose from the ship and it drifted away from the ship. Probably their actions were ordered by the centurion rather than being spontaneous on their part. But in either case, it was a bad decision.<sup>512</sup>

#### 8.1.3.3.4 Paul Encourages Everyone, Acts 27:33-38

33 Ἄχρι δὲ οὗ ἡμέρα ἡμελλεν γίνεσθαι, παρεκάλει ὁ Παῦλος ἅπαντας μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς λέγων· τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην σήμερον ἡμέραν προσδοκῶντες ἄσιτοι διατελεῖτε μηθὲν προσλαβόμενοι. 34 διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει, οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θριξ ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολεῖται. 35 εἶπας δὲ ταῦτα καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ ἐνώπιον πάντων καὶ κλάσας ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν. 36 εὐθυμοὶ δὲ γενόμενοι πάντες καὶ αὐτοὶ προσελάβοντο τροφῆς. 37 ἡμεθα δὲ αἱ πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ διακόσισαι ἐβδομήκοντα ἕξ. 38 κορεσθέντες δὲ τροφῆς ἐκούφιζον τὸ πλοῖον ἐκβαλλόμενοι τὸν σῖτον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν.

33 Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some

<sup>509c</sup> πρῶρα, ης f: the forepart of a boat — ‘bow.’ ἐκ πρῶρης ἀγκύρας μελλόντων ‘intending to lay anchors from the bow’ Ac 27:30. In a number of languages there are rather technical terms for the bow and stern of a boat, but where such terms are lacking, one can speak of ‘the front of a boat’ for πρῶρα and ‘the back of the boat’ for πρύμνα (6.47).” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 58.]

<sup>510c</sup> Again the narrative is taken forward by means of a genitive absolute, the main indicative verb not appearing till v. 31. Having let down anchors from the stern (v. 29) the sailors prepared to let down more from the bow (πρῶρης, instead of the expected πρόρας — see BDR § 43:1, n. 1). It may be supposed that the stern anchors had checked the forward motion of the ship and that the sailors’ intention (if it was not that which Luke attributes to them) was to maintain the ship’s position in the line of the wind, and so to prevent it from being struck broadside by the heavy seas. This, it seems, would make sense, and whereas the sailors would simply drop anchors over the stern they would need the dinghy to stretch out (ἐκτείνειν) the anchor lines from the bow. For χαλᾶν see v. 17; the dinghy would have to be let down by rope (see v. 32) over the high prow of the ship. For σκάφη see v. 16.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1204–1205.]

<sup>511c</sup> Paul says to the centurion and soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved’ (v. 31). This indicates that on ship Paul is kept above deck (in a lenient custody). Only thereby can he address the centurion and soldiers.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 214–215.]

<sup>512c</sup> Begg, 4:335f. argues strongly that Luke here misrepresents the sailors; they were in fact attempting to do what they said they were doing, would not have attempted to escape in a dark and stormy night in a tiny boat that would hold very few of them, and must have been very sorry to lose the dinghy through the soldiers’ precipitate action. The dinghy would have helped them to beach the boat properly and would have assisted passage from the boat to land. It is worth observing that if Luke was making a mistake he was probably making a mistake about something that really happened; one can hardly suppose that he invented an action and invented also, without letting his reader into the secret, a mistaken interpretation of it. Hanson (249) agrees with Begg. Schille (466) argues that this observation fails to recognize the literary character of the story; Luke is describing a panic. Conzelmann (145) points out that the flight of the crew is a regular feature in Greek stories; see Achilles Tatius 3:3; Petronius 102, cf. 114.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1205.]

food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads.” 35 After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. 36 Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves. 37 (We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons in the ship.) 38 After they had satisfied their hunger, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

Note how precisely Luke marks the passing of time with this episode: 1) the ship came near land at midnight (v. 27); 2) after checking the depth of the water the realize it is getting shallow which prompts prayers for daylight (v. 29); 3) now daylight is about to break when Paul takes actions (v. 33; Ἄχρι δὲ οὐ ἡμέρα ἤμελλεν γίνεσθαι, and just before day was going to happen); and 4) finally daylight comes (v. 39; Ὅτε δὲ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο, and when day happened).<sup>513</sup> Although typical for ancient sea voyage narratives, Luke does not provide such narrative detail about short intervals of time passing elsewhere in his story of early Christianity. He does so here primarily out of following the format of this ancient literary genre. The signaling of time frames adds drama to his depiction, which was the intent behind the pattern in the genre.

Just about dawn the apostle made a symbolical action that was re-enforced with words of encouragement (v. 33): Ἄχρι δὲ οὐ ἡμέρα ἤμελλεν γίνεσθαι, παρεκάλει ὁ Παῦλος ἅπαντας μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς λέγων, just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food saying. The somewhat unusual time expression modifying the imperfect verb form, Ἄχρι δὲ οὐ ἡμέρα ἤμελλεν γίνεσθαι, παρεκάλει ὁ Παῦλος, strongly implies that Paul had been imploring the crew to cheer up for quite some time during the night with the more literal sense of Paul repeated urged until just before it was going to become day.<sup>514</sup> The implication is clear that it took quite a bit of encouraging of the crew and passengers before they were ready to listen to his words. Luke highlights the entirety of those on board the ship with ἅπαντας μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς, everyone to take food.<sup>515</sup>

His words (λέγων) in vv. 33b-34 constitute the essence of his encouragement: τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην σήμερον ἡμέραν προσδοκῶντες ἄσιτοι διατελεῖτε μὴθὲν προσλαβόμενοι. διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει, οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θριξὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολείται, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads.”<sup>516</sup> Several unusual grammar aspects surface here. First, the time reference assumes the unusual counting of nights before days with τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην σήμερον ἡμέραν προσδοκῶντες meaning today is the fourteenth day waiting. In light of the reference to the 14th

---

<sup>513</sup> Luke marks the sequence of time carefully: they near land at midnight (v. 27), then after making soundings pray for day to come (v. 29), now day is about to arrive (v. 33), and finally day comes in v. 39. This is Paul’s fourth intervention, and he is now obeyed by everyone! The storm at sea or shipwreck or encounter with pirates provides a fine setting for testing the philosopher’s mettle for good or for bad; see *Odyssey* 12:270–300; *Lucian of Samosata*, *Toxaris* 20; *Epictetus*, *Discourses* 4, 1, 92; 4, 1, 174; *Diogenes Laertius*, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2:71, 77 (Aristippus); 2:130 (Menedemus); 4:50 (Bion); 6:74 (Diogenes); 7:2 (Zeno); 9:68 (Pyrrho).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 454–455.]

<sup>514</sup> According to *Begs*. 4:336 (comparing μέχρι at 10:30, and the African rendering — *in die quo* — of ἄχρι in 1:2), ἄχρι gives no good sense if it be rendered “until”. The clause is translated, ‘And when it was nearly day’. It is true that this is what the reader would expect, but it is hardly justifiable as a rendering of ἄχρι δὲ οὐ, especially as this is followed by the imperfect παρεκάλει. The imperfect is indeed often used in verbs of requesting, entreating, and the like (these in themselves represent incomplete action; see *M.* 3:65; *BDR* § 455:3b, n. 6), but παρεκάλει may well be iterative: *Until day was about to break, Paul kept on exhorting ...* It may be that this should be connected with v. 23, ταῦτη τῆ νυκτί, if this means, *In this night, which is not yet over* (see the note). This could bear on the construction of the chapter, especially if it is thought to include ‘Pauline’ insertions into an independent sea-voyage story; on this see pp. 1178f.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1206.]

<sup>515</sup> Paul exhorted them all to partake of food. If ἅπαντας is to be distinguished as a stronger word than πάντα, it will be intended to make the point that Paul had in mind his fellow passengers, the soldiers, and the sailors. This however would be the natural meaning if πάντα were used. It may be no more than a mannerism: ἅπας occurs in *Lk.* 11 times, in *Acts* 10 times, in the rest of the NT 11 times. For taking food Paul uses here μεταλαμβάνειν with the genitive; later in the verse, προσλαμβάνεσθαι with the accusative; in v. 34 μεταλαμβάνειν (but H L P Ψ 049 326 1241 2495 have προσλαμβάνεσθαι) and the genitive; in v. 35, ἐσθίειν with no object; in v. 36, προσλαμβάνεσθαι with the genitive. *LS* 1113 quote only *Acts* for μεταλαμβάνειν with the meaning to partake of food, but it is clear that this meaning was coming into use in the post-classical period; so *Josephus*, *War* 2:143; *PRyl* 2:77:19 (BA 1035). For the use of προσλαμβάνεσθαι for taking food *MM* 549f. offer nothing and *BA* 1436 only *Clementine Homilies* 3:21 (active). See *BDR* § 169:2, n. 5.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1206–1207.]

<sup>516</sup> Second, as day is about to dawn, since they have not eaten for fourteen days, Paul encourages the travelers to take some food (cf. *Aelius Aristides*, *Sacred Tales* 2.68, who tells of being adrift for fourteen days with no one on board being able to eat during that time).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., *Reading the New Testament Series* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 215.]

night, Ὡς τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτη νύξ ἐγένετο, *when the fourteenth night had come*, in v. 27, this following day is considered the 14th day.<sup>517</sup> Paul reminds everyone that two weeks had passed since they first encountered the storm just off the coast of Crete. Second, the main clause with its other participle phrase modifier, ἄσιτοι διατελεῖτε μηθὲν προσλαβόμενοι, contains an uncommon mixture of words. Already we have been told that they were not able to eat food on a regular schedule (v. 21): Πολλῆς τε ἀσιτίας ὑπαρχούσης, *since being without food for a long time*. At what point in this two week period of time Paul made this first statement to those on the ship (vv. 21-26) is not given. From the statement in v. 27 it evidently was some



days prior to this second mentioning of not eating.<sup>518</sup> The verb διατελεῖτε, *you continue*, from διατελέω specifies continuation in some particular state of being, that is usually defined either by an adjective or a participle. Here both, ἄσιτοι (adjective) and μηθὲν προσλαβόμενοι (participle phrase) are used. Both essentially assert the same idea, evidently intended to emphasize the lack of eating during the storm mostly likely due to seasickness and the difficulty of preparing food on a ship being tossed about by high waves from the storm.<sup>519</sup> Neither expression, however, implies total deprivation from eating or drinking.

Luke has not signaled that the storm has let up as the day begins, but Paul urges everyone to eat in spite of the storm (v. 34): διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει, οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θρῖς ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολεῖται, *Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads*. Using some of the same terms, the first main clause is an encouragement to eat: παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς, *I urge you to take some food*. Over the interpretive history a few ancient commentators took this as Paul leading an Eucharistic service, but such is clearly not the case here.<sup>520</sup> The coordinate conjunction διὸ links this encouragement to the preceding statement as a natural

<sup>517</sup>Paul's exhortation begins with another curious expression of time. (cf. v. 27). BDR § 161:3, n. 6 describe τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην σήμερον ἡμέραν προσδοκῶντες as a 'besondere Redensart' (as it is), and translate, 'jetzt schon den 14. Tag wartend'. This can only mean (as prima facie the Greek can only mean), 'We are now awaiting the 14th day'. This presumably is to be associated with the 14th night (in v. 27), and the statement at the beginning of the present verse that day was about to break. If nights are counted before days, we have now had almost the whole of the 14th night and are now awaiting the imminent beginning of the 14th day (the omission of the article before τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην follows old custom) of flying before the NE wind." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1207.]

<sup>518</sup>ἀσιτία, *ας, ἦ* (s. next entry; Eur., Hdt. et al.; JosAs 11 [p. 12 n. 12, line 4 Istrin] Vatican cod. 364; Jos., Ant. 12, 290; PRyl 10, 6 and 12 [theol. text] in the sense 'a fast, hunger'; so ἀσιτέω Esth 4:16; 1 Macc 3:17) **lack of appetite** (Hippocr., Aphor. 7, 6; Hippiatr. I 54, 10; ἄσιτος='without appetite' in Ostracon 2, 35 in Preisendanz, PGM II p. 234 H.) πολλῆς ἀ. ὑπαρχούσης *since almost nobody wanted to eat because of anxiety or seasickness* (seasickness: Ael. Aristid. 48, 68 K.=24 p. 483 D. ἀσιτία οὐκ ὀλίγαι in a storm.—JMadan, JTS 6, 1905, 116–21.—Hippiatr. I 3, 7 ἀσιτίας μενούσης) **Ac 27:21**.—DELG s.v. σῖτος ('grain'). M-M.

ἄσιτος, *ον* (s. prec. entry; Hom.+; Arrian, Anab. 4, 9, 4; TestZeb 4:4) **without eating, fasting Ac 27:33** (Galen XI 242 K. ἄ. διετέλεσε; cp. Jos., Ant. 10, 258).—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 143.]

<sup>519</sup>Paul's calm demeanor here may suggest that we are meant to see him as a true philosopher (cf. Diogenes Laertius, Lives 2.71; Lucian, Peregrin. 43–44). 'Ancient people evaluated the sincerity of philosophers (e.g. Aristippus) according to how calm they stayed under pressure.'<sup>88</sup> This may perhaps mean that there had been no formally prepared meals during the storm.<sup>89</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 772.]

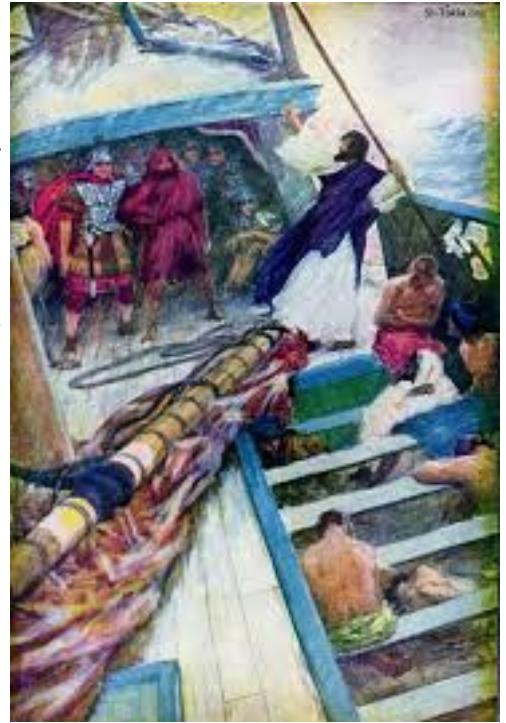
<sup>520</sup>As with the σωζω language, commentators have been much too eager to see Paul as serving some sort of eucharistic or symbolic meal at this point. The only point really in favor of this conclusion is the similarity in language between 27:35 and Luke 22:19 (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23f.).<sup>90</sup>



consequence of Paul had just said in v. 33b about them not having eating for fourteen days.

Two reasons (γάρ) are given for the encouragement. First, τοῦτο γάρ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει., *for this is for your deliverance*. The idea here is deliverance from the storm, not spiritual salvation.<sup>521</sup> After going through a two week period of inadequate food and drink, their bodies were weak and Paul's earlier contention that they would run aground meant they would need strength in order to find food and perhaps to make it to shore safely when the ship crashed. The second reason re-enforces the first with a Jewish proverb: οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θριξ ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολεῖται, *for none of you will lose a hair from your heads*. In the background here is a number of OT texts as well as Lk. 21:18.<sup>522</sup> Thus the two reasons together pointedly underscore the affirmation that God is going to take care of those aboard this ship, even though the vast majority of them are pagans.

Paul's words of encouragement are backed up by action (v. 35): εἶπας δὲ ταῦτα καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ ἐνώπιον πάντων καὶ κλάσας ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν, *After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat*. This compound sentence contains two main clauses: εὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ, *he gave thanks to God*, and ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν, *he began to eat*.<sup>523</sup> Although the terminology echoes some of the language of the Lord's Supper, Luke employs this familiar language to highlight not the observance of communion, but Paul's publicly eating a meal as an expression of religious commitment to his God before these pagans.<sup>524</sup> In his prayer to God, Paul gave thanks for divine blessing upon the ship and



“Against this conclusion are weighty considerations. (1) There is nothing anywhere in Luke-Acts that suggests that Luke believed that salvation came by means of taking part in the Lord's Supper. In fact we have noted earlier in the commentary how little attention Luke pays to the Lord's Supper in general. Some would say he may not even mention it in Acts!<sup>91</sup> (2) The language of taking bread, breaking it, and giving thanks ultimately comes not from the Lord's Supper but from Jewish thanksgiving meals. The Lord's Supper was indebted to this earlier Jewish practice, not the other way around.<sup>92</sup> (3) There is no mention here of wine at all, nor any interpretive discussion of the elements.<sup>93</sup> (4) Paul does not distribute anything to anyone; rather, he sets the example of eating and others follow him. (5) This meal is said to satisfy the hunger of the passengers (v. 38), and so is more like the account of the feeding of the five thousand than the Lord's Supper. (6) This meal, unlike the Lord's Supper, is not a community-forming or community-building meal. The pagans remain pagans after eating, and are not being treated as potential Christians here.<sup>94</sup> (7) The focus of this narrative is on Paul's heroic actions to rescue his fellow travelers, not on ecclesiology. The Lukan portrait of Paul is what we are meant to notice here, and here he is portrayed as a good Jewish Christian pastor, drawing on his Jewish heritage and caring for his fellow passengers.<sup>95</sup>”

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 772–773.]

<sup>521</sup>“V. 34 states that eating was necessary for their survival (cf. NRSV). In fact, echoing a well-known Jewish maxim, Paul says that not one hair on their heads will be harmed (cf. Luke 12:7; 21:18; and the background in the LXX versions of 1 Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 14:11; 1 Kings 1:52). The term σωτηρία here in all likelihood means survival in the mundane sense, not salvation.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 772.]

<sup>522</sup>“The promise recalls that of v. 22; the expression is proverbial; cf. 1 Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 14:11; 1 Kings 1:52; Lk. 12:7 = Mt. 10:30; Lk. 21:18 is important because it is a Lucan insertion. Luke, we may suppose, liked the image. For ἀπολεῖται, Ψ M gig sy<sup>h</sup> sa have πεσεῖται. After ὑπάρχει gig adds *spero enim in deo meo quia*; this MS shows great freedom in handling the wording of the text.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1208.]

<sup>523</sup>“Luke's readers can hardly have failed to note the eucharistic allusions; yet these terms and allusions are all such as are rooted in ordinary Jewish practice — a meal began with the blessing of God and the breaking of bread. No explanation of the data is satisfactory that does not include the inference that they belong to a time, probably lasting at least till the date of the composition of Acts, in which the eucharist (understood in the narrow sense of a rite involving the symbolic eating and drinking of bread and wine to which a theological interpretation is attached) was not yet separated from a fellowship meal in which normal quantities of food and drink were consumed. This inference is consistent with the other references in Acts to the breaking of bread (and, it may be added, with Pauline and other NT evidence; see I Corinthians 231–5, 261–77; CMS 60–76).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1209.]

<sup>524</sup>“The fourfold action of taking (*labōn*), giving thanks (*eucharistēsen*), breaking (*klāsas*) and beginning to eat (*ērxato esthiein*) need not refer to the Eucharist, since all Jewish meals involved the saying of blessings (see e.g., bT Ber. 16a, 17a, 20b, 21b, 34b; 1 Tim 4:4); but the sequence is sufficiently allusive to point the reader back to earlier passages where the Eucharistic gestures seem deliberately to be invoked (see Luke 6:4; 9:16; 22:19; 24:30). The addition of ‘having given also to us’ in the Western Text makes the allusion

all those on board. Before praying Paul λαβὼν ἄρτον, *after having taken bread*. The term ἄρτον from ἄρτος clearly implies the presence of baked wheat<sup>525</sup> on the ship, either freshly baked or stored for use during the trip.<sup>526</sup> In a typical Jewish meal time manner, he then broke the loaf of bread into several pieces before beginning to eat them: καὶ κλάσας ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν, *and after having broke it into pieces he began to eat them*. In a manner typical of eloquent ancient Greek Luke attaches the prepositional phrase ἐνώπιον πάντων, *before everyone*, to the verb εὐχαρίστησεν, *he gave thanks*, but centers the prepositional phrase in the center of the sentence for emphases purposes. Paul's prayer and eating were carefully calculated to be completely public in view of everyone on the ship. This gave them maximum impact on all those watching.

The impact was positive (v. 36): εὐθυμοὶ δὲ γενόμενοι πάντες καὶ αὐτοὶ προσελάβοντο τροφῆς, *Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves*. The initial impact was to 'lift the spirits of everyone on the ship' as εὐθυμοὶ δὲ γενόμενοι πάντες asserts. This participle phrase takes place as a basis for the main clause action: καὶ αὐτοὶ προσελάβοντο τροφῆς, *these also took food for themselves*.<sup>527</sup> The adjective εὐθυμοὶ plays off the earlier use of the infinitive in v. 22, ὑμᾶς εὐθυμεῖν, *you to keep up your courage*, and the verb εὐθυμεῖτε, *keep up your courage*, in v. 25. Although it took some time and effort by Paul, everyone on the ship eventually found renewed optimism for survival.

Luke then adds a parenthetical statement as to the number of people on the ship (v. 37): ἡμεθα δὲ αἱ πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ διακόσiai ἐβδομήκοντα ἕξ, *(We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons in the ship.)*. Note that he shifts back to the "we" perspective in giving this number. Some uncertainty in the manuscript copies exists about the number of people.<sup>528</sup> But the high number of 276<sup>529</sup> has greater text support,<sup>530</sup> and is well below

---

even stronger. The real point of the gesture, however, is found in the phrase *enōpion pantōn* ('in front of them all'): Paul is presenting an example for them, one which in fact they imitate (v. 36, see also Luke 24:43). [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 455.]

<sup>525</sup>In the koine ἄρτος is the main word for bread. Hippocr. *Acut.*, 37 still distinguished ἄρτος (white bread) from μᾶζα (barley-bread). Philo Spec. Leg., I, 173: ἄρτος ἐραστῆ σοφίας διαρκῆς τροφή.<sup>377</sup> [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:477.]

<sup>526</sup>In the expressions λαμβάνειν, (κατα-) κλᾶν, (δια-, ἐπι-) δίδοναι τὸν ἄρτον (Lk. 24:30; Jn. 21:13; Ac. 27:35; Mk. 6:41 par.; 8:19 par.; Jn. 6:11), it has the strict meaning 'bread.' The reference here is to the head of the house who at the beginning of a meal takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it and gives to those at table with him.<sup>177</sup> [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:477.]

<sup>527</sup>προσελάβοντο, aorist middle, the 'correct' form (see v. 33), is read by B C M. There are several variants. μεταλάμβανον (614 2147 pc) assimilates to μεταλαβεῖν in v. 34, and so (in the use of active rather than middle) do προσέλαβεν (A Ψ 1175 pc) and προσελάμβανον (2495). μεταλαβαν (sic) though read by κ as well as 1241, bears witness only to careless inattention." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1210.]

<sup>528</sup>The article before πᾶσαι indicates the totality of persons present (M. 3:201—'We were in all ...'; Zerwick § 188; BDR § 275:3, n. 6). Unfortunately the number is textually uncertain. The majority of witnesses have διακόσiai ἐβδομήκοντα ἕξ, 276; but B (pc) sa have ὡς ἐβδομήκοντα ἕξ, about 76. The textual problem is complicated by the fact that 276, if not written in words, would be written σος, and 76 as ος. Metzger (499f.) represents a common opinion in the words, The reading of B sa 'probably arose by taking πλοιωσΟΣ as πλοιωσΟΣ. In any case, ὡς with an exact statement of number is inappropriate (despite Luke's penchant for qualifying numbers by using ὡς or ὡσεῖ, cf. Lk. 3:23; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:7, 36; 10:3; 13:18, 20; 19:7, 34).' Metzger notes other variants: A has 275; 69 and Ephraim have 270; bomss have 176 or 876; 522 and 1680 have 76; Epiphanius has about (ὡς) 70. Metzger (similarly Ropes, Begg. 3:247) is probably right but like most commentators does not note the problem of the iota subscript, which in uncials is often though not always written adscript. Thus the two readings discussed might well be not as given above but πλοιωιΣΟΣ and πλοιωωσΟΣ. This makes simple confusion less likely. The number 276 is not impossibly large; Josephus (Life 15) records his own experience of shipwreck (in Adria), as a result of which about 600 were obliged to swim all night. On the size of ships see Smith (187–90) and Hemer (149f.) A surprising number of commentators repeat the statement that 276 is the sum of the digits from 1 to 24. It π 1211 is not; it is the sum of the digits from 1 to 23. The fact seems in any case irrelevant; there is no hint of numerical or other symbolism here." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1210–1211.]

<sup>529</sup>In the original uncial text the number 276 would have been written as ΣΩΣ, rather than as διακόσiai ἐβδομήκοντα ἕξ, like in the N-A 28th edition *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Earlier forms of Greek used letters of the alphabet to signify numbers rather than separate words as was done in later Koine patterns. In modern western languages the choice is between using [Arabic numerals](#) (276) or words (two-hundred seventy-six).

<sup>530</sup>The number 276 will have been written in Greek with letters standing for numbers. The letter sigma may stand for the number 200, the letter omicron for 70, and the letter digamma for 6. The reading 'about seventy-six' probably arose by taking πλοιωΣΟς as πλοιωωσΟς, that is, the omega at the end of πλοιω was accidentally written twice and the sigma standing for the number 200 was read as the sigma in the adverb ὡς. This is the basis for the rendering 'there were about seventy-six souls of us on board, all told' (Moffatt, and similarly *The Bible: An American Translation*, 1935). In any case, ὡς (about) with an exact statement of number is inappropriate

the 600 passengers that Josephus mentions in connection to his ship wreck experience.<sup>531</sup> Merchant ships during the Roman empire were often much larger than this one, e.g., the ship named “[Isis](#).”

The next step of survival was to lighten the ship in the hopes of preventing it from crashing on the rocks as it came into the bay (v. 38): κορεσθέντες δὲ τροφῆς ἐκούφιζον τὸ πλοῖον ἐκβαλλόμενοι τὸν σῖτον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, [After they had satisfied their hunger, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea](#). Already (cf. vv. 18-19) they had thrown overboard some of the cargo and tackle of the ship.<sup>532</sup> The mentioning here of ἐκβαλλόμενοι τὸν σῖτον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, [throwing the wheat into the sea](#), refers to food supplies rather than cargo.<sup>533</sup> First they ate to their fill (κορεσθέντες τροφῆς), and then sensing that they were approaching land, being able to beach the ship rather than crashing it seemed more important than protecting their remaining food supplies.

Although still dark, Paul’s action and words of encouragement here (vv. 33-38) provided the needed encouragement to the crew and passengers that they were not going to die after all. The apostle’s previous encouragements and warnings (vv. 9-12; 21-26) had been ignored, but no longer. The pagan religious orientation of those on the ship apart from Paul and his Christian companions left them without hope and turned them toward a negative fatalism expecting the worst rather than the best. Couple that with the well understood dangers of sea travel and encountering storms at sea, and there was nothing but pessimism aboard the ship. Paul’s words at first seemed unbelievable, but, as they progressively proved to be accurate, the people on the ship became increasingly open to heeding what this Jewish preacher was saying. To Paul’s credit, he didn’t give up on these people after a couple of rejections. Rather, he kept on encouraging them with the messages coming from his God until they came to a point of willingness to listen to him. There’s a lesson for us in his example when we face rejection of our witness to our God to unbelievers.

#### 8.1.3.4 Paul’s Experience at Malta, Acts 27:39-28:10

This next pericope centers on the time spent on the island of [Malta](#). The island has had a long history even into the present day.<sup>534</sup> When Paul landed there in 59 or 60 AD, the is-

(despite Luke’s fondness for qualifying numbers by using ὡς or ὡσεῖ, cf. Luke 3:23; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:7, 36; 10:3; 13:18, 20; 19:7, 34). Other witnesses present a curious variety of numbers: 275, 270, 176, 876, and 76.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 288.]

<sup>531</sup>“Accordingly I came to Rome, though it were through a great number of hazards, by sea; (15) for, as our ship was drowned in the Adriatic Sea, we that were in it, being about six hundred in number, swam for our lives all the night; when, upon the first appearance of the day, and upon our sight of a ship of Cyrene, I and some others, eighty in all, by God’s providence, prevented the rest, and were taken up into the other ship:” [Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), SV. *Life*, 15].

<sup>532</sup>**Acts 27:18-19.** 18 σφοδρῶς δὲ χειμαζομένων ἡμῶν τῇ ἐξῆς ἐκβολὴν ἐποιούντο 19 καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ αὐτόχειρες τὴν σκευὴν τοῦ πλοίου ἔρριψαν.

18 We were being pounded by the storm so violently that on the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard, 19 and on the third day with their own hands they threw the ship’s tackle overboard.

<sup>533</sup>“There had already been a jettisoning of the cargo (*ekbolē*) in v. 19; the literary parallels are given in the note to that verse. Here the *sitos* (‘grain’) may in fact be the ship’s provisions in contrast to its cargo (compare *sitometrion* in Luke 12:42). Now that they had eaten and planned to make a run for the shore, they needed no more provisions but maximum buoyancy so as to ride as high as possible up on the shore — or such seemed to have been the plan.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 455.]

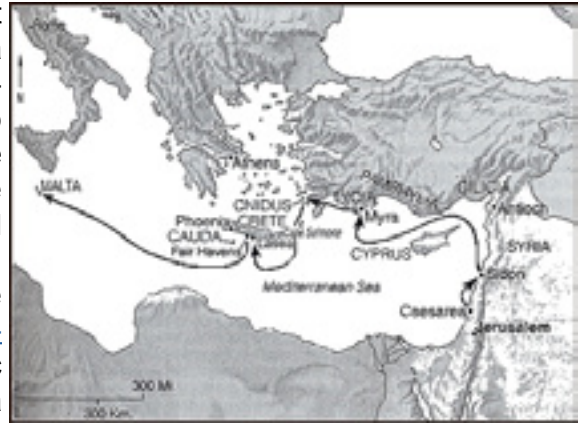
<sup>534</sup>**MALTA (PLACE)** [Gk Melitē (Μελίτη)]. An island in the Mediterranean, about 60 mi. S of Cape Passero, Sicily and 220 mi. N of Tripoli, Libya; with 95 sq. mi., it is the largest of the five islands making up the modern country of Malta. Archaeological evidence exists for its occupation from about 3800 B.C., first by cave-dwelling farmers who produced a material culture similar to that found in Sicily and, later, elaborate tombs, temples, and a unique underground burial chamber, the Hypogeum, as it is called (2400–2000 B.C.). This was replaced by a culture of a southern Italian style. A Phoenician trading colony was established on the island before or during the 8th century B.C. The name of the island comes from a Semitic word (*melita*) meaning ‘refuge,’ indicating a safe harbor. Diodorus (5.12.2–3; 1st cent B.C.), who himself came from nearby Sicily, says that the place was chosen as a stopping-off place to trade with the west (Spain).

“The island came under control of Carthage, another Phoenician colony, in the 6th century B.C., when their homeland was taken by the Assyrians. In 218 B.C., the island came under Roman rule as part of the province of Sicily. Under the reorganization of the





land was in the midst of an economic recovery from a period of lost economic influence and suffering from pirate raids etc. It retained a Punic character in spite of being a Roman province with the previous Phoenician settlers in the sixth century BC having left a deep mark on the island culture. The Semitic nature of their language provided Paul a means of communication via its connection to the Aramaic of Paul's Jewish heritage. It would become 'home' for Paul and those on the ship for three months after they crash landed on the island and lost their ship to the storm. The final recorded miracle of Paul would take place here. Interestingly, for many centuries [Malta](#) has been a dominate Christian region and the Roman Catholic Church has been the [official religion](#) of the modern country of Malta since its beginning as an independent nation in 1964 with about 94% of the population claiming membership in the Roman Catholic Church. It remains one of the most religiously oriented countries in the European Union.



#### 8.1.3.4.1 Shipwreck at Malta, Acts 27:39-44

39 Ὅτε δὲ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο, τὴν γῆν οὐκ ἐπεγίνωσκον, κόλπον δὲ τινα κατενόουν ἔχοντα αἰγιαλὸν εἰς ὃν ἐβουλεύοντο εἰ δύναιτο ἐξῶσαι τὸ πλοῖον. 40 καὶ τὰς ἀγκύρας περιελόντες εἶων εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ἅμα ἀνέντες τὰς ζευκτηρίας τῶν πηδαλίων καὶ ἐπάραντες τὸν ἀρτέμωνα τῇ πνεοῦση κατεῖχον εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν. 41 περιπεσόντες δὲ εἰς τόπον διθάλασσον ἐπέκειλαν τὴν ναῦν καὶ ἡ μὲν πρῶρα ἐρείσασα ἐμεινεν ἀσάλευτος, ἡ δὲ πρῦμνα ἐλύετο ὑπὸ τῆς βίας [τῶν κυμάτων]. 42 Τῶν δὲ στρατιωτῶν βουλή ἐγένετο ἵνα τοὺς δεσμώτας ἀποκτείνωσιν, μὴ τις ἐκκολυμβήσας διαφύγῃ. 43 ὁ δὲ ἑκατοντάρχης βουλόμενος διασῶσαι τὸν Παῦλον ἐκώλυσεν αὐτοὺς τοῦ βουλήματος, ἐκέλευσέν τε τοὺς δυναμένους κολυμβᾶν ἀπορίψαντας πρῶτους ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐξίναί 44 καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς οὓς μὲν ἐπὶ σανίσιν, οὓς δὲ

empire by Augustus, Malta was put under its own procurator. Although initially a prosperous island, it declined significantly as a result of frequent raids by pirates and the civil wars of the 1st century B.C. It had recovered by the mid-1st century A.D. and was (along with the neighboring island of Gozo [Gaulos]) granted municipal status (Lat *municipium*) in the early 2d century. Its citizens were granted Roman citizenship under Emperor Justinian (518–65). Even under Roman rule, however, the Maltese continued to maintain aspects of their Punic/Phoenician culture and language. In 870 Malta was taken by the Abbasid caliphs, but in 1090 it came under the control of a series of Christian crusader groups, culminating in the domination of the city by the Knights of St. John, who successfully defended the island against the Turkish forces of Suleiman I (1565). Its unique language in the present day is a mixture of N African Arabic and Silician Italian, and its culture reflects the rich diversity of its history.

“Paul and his associates were shipwrecked here in the late autumn of A.D. 59 (Acts 27:27–28:11), having been driven helplessly for two weeks by the E–NE wind called ‘Euraquilo’ (‘Northeaster,’ NIV; Acts 27:14; its name is a Gk-Lat hybrid, Gk *euros* ‘east wind’ + Lat *aquilo* ‘north wind’; today it would be called the *gregale*). The traditional site of the shipwreck is St. Paul’s Bay, some 8 mi. NW of the modern capital of Valletta. In spite of recent attempts to suggest a location for the wreck on the island of Mijet or Melitene off the coast of Dalmatia (Acworth 1973, on the basis of the grammar of the narrative of Acts, historical data, and the name; Meinardus 1974, 1976, 1979, on the basis of ecclesiastical and local traditions), this is most likely the correct location (so Ramsay 1920; Finegan 1981; Kettenbach 1986; Bruce Acts, NICNT 21988; Hemer 1975; 1989; the latter has definitively answered the objections of Acworth), since it fits almost perfectly with the description given in Acts.

“The local inhabitants are called ‘barbarians’ (Gk *barbaroi*) by the author of Acts (28:2, 4), which indicates only that they did not speak Greek or Latin (hence the RSV’s translation as ‘natives’ and the NIV’s ‘islanders’). Since their language was a Semitic tongue, Paul was probably able to converse with them by means of Aramaic. The leading local official, one Publius by name, is designated ‘first man’ or ‘chief’ (28:7, Gk *prōtos*), a title that is attested in inscriptions (CIG 14.60; CIL 10.7495). With reference to Paul’s brush with the ‘viper’ (Gk *echidna*; 28:3–4), it is worth noting that while there are no vipers or poisonous snakes on Malta today there is the *Coronella austriaca*, which resembles the viper. The native people’s reaction to the snake’s attaching itself to Paul — ‘No doubt this man is a murderer, for though he escaped from the sea, Justice [Gk *dikē*] has not allowed him to live’ (28:4, NIV)’ — may refer to a hellenization of a Punic deity.

“Some contemporary scholars have suggested that the travel narrative of Acts 27 and 28 is fictitious, patterned on the ancient novel. If that is so, it has been constructed with great skill, for it is, in fact, ‘one of our chief sources for ancient Greek language about seafaring’ (Johnson 1987: 151) and is meticulously accurate in regard to its historical and geographical setting. As a result, few who are intimately familiar with the archaeological and historical data are inclined to doubt its essential historicity.

“Among the more notable archaeological excavations of significance for the study of early Christianity are the remains of a large Roman villa at San Pawl Milqi, which has been identified with the home of Publius in which Paul and his associates would have been received; and a Punic sanctuary that fell into disuse toward the end of the 1st century and later was converted into a Christian church (Claridge 1976).”

[W. Ward Gasque, “Malta (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 489–490.]

ἐπί τινων τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου. καὶ οὕτως ἐγένετο πάντας διασωθῆναι ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.

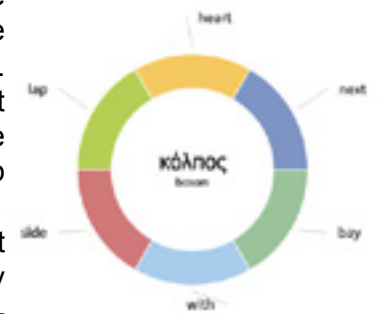
39 In the morning they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned to run the ship ashore, if they could. 40 So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. 41 But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. 42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; 43 but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, 44 and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.



This first sub-pericope of Paul's Malta experience centers on the shipwreck that put Paul and the others on the ship on the island.<sup>535</sup> The first time marker sets the stage for the description of the crashing of the ship on to land: Ὅτε δὲ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο, and when day came. The fourteenth night (τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ νύξ, v. 27) of being on the sea in the storm was indeed a busy night with little if any sleep by anyone on the ship. About midnight (κατὰ μέσον τῆς νυκτὸς, v. 27) the sailors sensed that they were approaching land and began checking the depth of the water. With the depth rapidly diminishing from their repeated checks (v. 28) they became concerned about a crash and so let down anchors to station the ship in place (v. 29) until daylight so they could see what to do. Shortly after the sailors tried to escape but were prevented from doing so by the Roman soldiers (vv. 30-32). Then just before daybreak while it was still dark (Ἄχρι δὲ οὐ ἡμέρα ἤμελλεν γίνεσθαι, v. 33), Paul offered encouraging words and actions to everyone on the ship. Once everyone followed Paul's example and ate generously, they tossed the remaining food supplies overboard in order to lighten the ship (v. 38). Now daylight has come so they can see what needs to be done (v. 39).

But the first thing that happens is that they see land but don't know where they are: τὴν γῆν οὐκ ἐπεγίνωσκον, they do not recognize the land. They will have to arrive on the shore before learning that they are on Malta (cf. 28:1). At first glance, Luke's use of the imperfect tense form οὐκ ἐπεγίνωσκον, they were not recognizing, seems strange. But the most likely implication of the durative action form of the verb is to suggest that progressively as it became lighter where they could increasingly see more clearly, they still didn't recognize where they were. Clearly no one on board the ship had ever seen this part of the island of Malta in order to identify the location.

But what they did spot was κόλπον δὲ τινα κατενόουν ἔχοντα αἰγιαλὸν, but they did began noticing a bay having a beach. The imperfect tense verb κατενόουν parallels ἐπεγίνωσκον with durative action.<sup>536</sup> With the coming up of the sun they in-



<sup>535</sup>From a literary structural standpoint, vv. 27-44 form the second paragraph of Paul's prophecy with three sub-segments: vv. 27-32; vv. 33-38; vv. 39-44. Charles Talbert has a helpful analysis of this against the background genre of ancient shipwreck stories:

Scenes two and three (27:9-44) belong to category three of ancient sea storm type-scenes: the storm is due to natural causes; the outcome is due to the divine will. In Acts 27 the narrator makes no mention of divine action in sending the storm. Rather there are references that indicate the natural causes of the storm: (a) the time of the year (27:9—"the time of the fast had already gone by, so Paul warned them"); (b) the apparent greed of the pilot and owner of the ship who want to sail despite the bad time of year (27:11—"the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and the owner of the ship than to what Paul said"; cf. Pliny, Natural History 2.47.125—"not even the fury of the storms closes the sea; pirates first compelled men by the threats of death to rush into death and venture on the winter seas, but now avarice exercises the same compulsion"); (c) the search for a suitable harbor in which to spend the winter (27:12—"since the harbor was unfavorably situated for spending the winter, the majority planned to put out to sea ... in the hope of reaching Phoenix, a port in Crete"); (d) the fact that other ships had spent the winter in a safe harbor (28:11—"three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island"). All of these details make the same point. The storm and shipwreck were not due to divine judgment but to a natural cause, namely, the time of the year.

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 215.]

<sup>536</sup>M. 1:117 notes that 'durative action is most certainly represented in the present κατανοεῖν, except Acts 27:39'; for this imperfect Moulton tentatively suggests 'noticed one after another'. If one is to make such guesses, the suggestion 'as daylight increased they perceived more and more clearly' might do as well; but it is probably best to suppose that on this occasion Luke did not choose the most suitable tense. What they saw was a bay, with a beach. This offered a way of escape from the storm. Had the dinghy still been available it might have been used for successive trips to the shore; it was not available (v. 32), and the alternative was to run the ship on

creasingly could make out the bay with a beach on the shoreline. Although κόλπος normally specifies the chest of a person, here it refers to a bay of water surrounded by land on three sides. It is variously translated into English as the chart on the right illustrates for the NRSV. The modern name of this bay is “[St. Paul’s Bay](#)” on the northern side of the island. It appeared to them as a safer place to try to beach the ship, and so plans were made to attempt this. Of course, if they hadn’t cut loose the dinghy earlier, they could have anchored the ship in the bay and then with successive trips used the dinghy to carry passengers etc. safely to the shore. But their foolish action earlier prevented this from being an option.



St. Paul’s Bay on Malta

Thus their plan was εἰς ὃν ἐβουλεύοντο εἰ δύναιτο ἐξῶσαι τὸ πλοῖον, [into which they were deciding if possible to run the ship ashore](#). They determined to run aground the ship on the beach if possible. This plan proved to not be a good one, but at the moment it seemed to be their best option.<sup>537</sup>

This plan required some actions in order to be implemented (v. 40): καὶ τὰς ἀγκύρας περιελόντες εἶων εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ἅμα ἀνέντες τὰς ζευκτηρίας τῶν πηδαλίων καὶ ἐπάραντες τὸν ἀρτέμωνα τῇ πνεύσῃ κατεῖχον εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν, [So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach](#).<sup>538</sup> The two anchors at the stern on the back of the ship were cut loose and allowed to drop into the sea.<sup>539</sup> The loosening of the ropes tying the two rudders of the ship together freed the ship even more to move forward.<sup>540</sup> Finally, to get some momentum going

shore (ἐξῶσαι). ἐξῶσειν has other meanings, but this is attested in Thucydides 2:90:4; 7:52:2; 8:104:3. B\* C pc have ἐκῶσαι, identical in sound (the variant being due to dictation?) but weaker in meaning (M. 2:108; but Begs. 4:337 think B C may be right). They did beach the ship, and they did not save it. Their planning (ἐβουλεύοντο) was qualified by the parenthetical (so M. 3:196, ‘if possible’; cf. v. 12 and 20:16, but see below) εἰ δύναιτο. On the optative see M. 3:196; also Radermacher (131). Moule (IB 151) finds the meaning unclear. We have to choose between Planning whether they could ... and Planning (if they could) to ... In the former alternative, considering might be a preferable alternative. But it seems better to regard εἰ δύναιτο as parenthetical.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1211.]

<sup>537</sup>“There has been debate as to where this was located, with some arguing that it refers to a shoal or sandbar and others that it refers to the channel between Salmonetta Island and the mainland of Malta. In favor of the latter is that this narrow channel, not more than one hundred yards wide, was a place where the bay water and the sea met. This latter was Smith’s view, but he did not take into account that in ancient times the shoal, now called Saint Paul’s Bank, was much more substantial than it is today.<sup>99</sup> Saint Paul’s Bank is a more probable location, for the sailors were unlikely to try to squeeze their boat through so narrow a passage in order to reach the beach, when they were having trouble controlling it anyway. This conclusion is also supported by the use of the key word in Dio Chrysostom which suggests that it refers to a feature of land that creates ‘two seas,’ that is, a sandbar (Dio Chrysostom, Dis. 5.9; cf. Strabo, Geog. 1.1.8; 2.5.22).” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 774.]

<sup>538</sup>“The verse describes an obviously tricky maneuver, involving three coordinated actions: First, they released the anchors on both sides (of the stern, since those at the bow had not been lowered; *periaireō tas ankyras*). Apparently they left them (or let them fall) in the sea. Second, at the same time (*hama*), they freed the rudder from the cables that had secured it (see v. 17); or, they cut the cables attaching the ship to the rudder. The first would allow them to steer, and seems to be the point. Third, they raised a sail (*artemōn*), probably a foresail. These steps enabled them to catch the wind and head toward the beach. For the expression *katechein eis ton aigialon*, see Herodotus, *Persian Wars* 7:188.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 455–456.]

<sup>539</sup>“*περιελόντες* is a surprising word (it is used at v. 20 and in yet another sense at 28:13); it means to strip off, to take off; here it presumably means that the anchors were detached from the ropes that held them and allowed (εἶων) to drop into the sea.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1212.]

<sup>540</sup>“At the same time (for ἅμα with participle see BDR § 425:2, n. 2) they (the sailors) let go the fastenings of the rudders. Fastenings translates τὰς ζευκτηρίας. According to LS 754 ζευκτηρία is equivalent to ζεύγλη, which (LS 753) means, in addition to a fastening on a yoke for draught animals, the ‘cross-bar of the double rudder’. This is the meaning it will have here, used in connection with the steering-paddles, of which Greek ships normally had two. The action described by Luke is reasonably clear: the anchors were let go, the steering apparatus was dismantled. The crew had given up any thought of steering the ship; the wind would drive it where they wished to go.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1212.]

But another more logical explanation of this action in regard to the rudders is given by Parsons: “They dropped the four stern anchors *and at the same time released the pennants of the steering oars, which had been raised out of the water and tied down to prevent them from banging about, in order to steer the ship to land* (Casson 1995, 228n17). Finally they raised the foresail and made for shore.” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 359.]



for the ship to push it ashore a foresail was hoisted.<sup>541</sup> With these actions completed κατείχον εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν, they began heading onto the beach.

Unfortunately they didn't make it all the way to the beach (v. 41): περιπεσόντες δὲ εἰς τόπον διθάλασσον ἐπέκειλαν τὴν ναῦν καὶ ἡ μὲν πρῶρα ἐρείσασα ἔμεινεν ἀσάλευτος, ἡ δὲ πρύμνα ἐλύετο ὑπὸ τῆς βίας [τῶν κυμάτων], *But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves.* What the ship hit is not precisely defined. The phrase περιπεσόντες δὲ εἰς τόπον διθάλασσον literally means *having fallen into a place of two waters.* From ancient Greek usage of such a phrase, it appears they hit a sandbar normally visible at low tide but not visible during this storm. This seems to be the most natural meaning of the expression.<sup>542</sup> Whatever it was, it clearly was a surprise to the ship's crew who had not spotted it in advance.

Once they hit ground, the ship was stuck and the fierce waves continued to pound the ship from the back side: καὶ ἡ μὲν πρῶρα ἐρείσασα ἔμεινεν ἀσάλευτος, ἡ δὲ πρύμνα ἐλύετο ὑπὸ τῆς βίας [τῶν κυμάτων], *the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves.* Although we could wish for more details, what Luke describes is the hitting of an underwater obstacle some ways from the shore. The ship being as large as it was sat fairly deep in the water and thus snagged this barrier before reaching the shore. With the winds and waves pounding the back of the ship but not dislodging the front from being stuck on the barrier, the ship began to break apart.

This posed a problem made worse by the earlier decision to ditch the dinghy. With it all the people and some supplies could have been safely transported from the ship to the shore. The standard procedure in such situations for soldiers transporting prisoners was to execute them on the ship in order to prevent any from escaping (v. 42): Τῶν δὲ στρατιωτῶν βουλή ἐγένετο ἵνα τοὺς δεσμώτας ἀποκτείνωσιν, μή τις ἐκκολυμβήσας διαφύγῃ, *The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape.* This because they would themselves face severe discipline from their superiors for allowing a prisoner to escape. See [Acts 12:19](#) and [16:27](#) for examples illustrating this severe accountability for prisoners by Roman soldiers.

Fortunately for these prisoners, the centurion had developed a positive attitude toward Paul and thus forbid any of the prisoners from being executed in order to save Paul (v. 43a): ὁ δὲ ἑκατοντάρχης βουλόμενος διασῶσαι τὸν Παῦλον ἐκώλυσεν αὐτοὺς τοῦ βουλήματος, *but the centurion intending to save Paul prevented them from carrying out their plan.*<sup>543</sup> Earlier Paul had relayed to the centurion what God had promised in the vision

---

Not being a sailor and having experience at managing boats, I'm not sure which depiction is the most accurate one. The latter one, however, does make more sense logically.

<sup>541</sup>“To accelerate their progress they raised the foresail (τὸν ἀρτέμωνα) to the breeze. τῇ πνεύσει is simply that which was blowing. Unless with P<sup>74</sup> we read τῇ πνοῇ, there is probably (see BDR § 241:6, n. 8; M. 3:17) an ellipse of τῇ αὔρᾳ; cf. Arrian, *Epistola ad Traianum* 3:2 (3), ταῖς αὔραις ταῖς ἐκ τῶν ποταμῶν πνεύσαις. αὔρα is a breeze, but sometimes in particular an off-sea breeze; this is evidently what was in mind here. With this behind them they held on (κατείχον; cf. Herodotus 6:101:1; 7:59:3, ἐς τοῦτον τὸν αἰγιαλὸν κατασχόντες τὰς νέας) to the beach. As appears from the quotation it is necessary to understand τὴν ναῦν as object of κατείχον.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1212.]

<sup>542</sup>“περιπίπτειν is (among other things — for an example see ND 3:141) — a nautical term, used of ships falling foul of one another, also of ships being wrecked. Page (262f.) points out its suggestion of the unexpected; they were making for the beach when their course was unexpectedly interrupted, as they fell upon a τόπος διθάλασσοσ. The adjective is used of a double sea, that is, a sea divided into two parts (as the Euxine, Strabo 2:5:22). LS 427 give for the present passage, ‘between two seas, where two seas meet, as is often the case off a headland’. This suggests a headland jutting out between two distinguishable stretches of water; Page (263) similarly thinks of a ridge or reef running out to sea. Begg. 4:339, though unwilling in translation to commit themselves further than ‘of two seas’, evidently favour the meaning shoal, and this certainly makes good sense of the narrative. If the ship ran on to land it is hard to see why the travellers should need to swim or otherwise take to the water (vv. 42–44). Even if they were at the stern of the ship, this did not break up at once (see below) and they could have made their way to the bow and jumped to the ground (ships often carried a ladder that could have been used). If however the bow was stuck in a shoal and the stern was exposed to the force of the waves all is clear. Everyone would be obliged to swim ashore, or find some other means of getting through the water. The meaning shoal is adopted by BA 392 (‘eine dem eigentl. Strand vorgelagerte Sandbank’), but it must be admitted that it rests only upon a consideration of what appears to fit the present context. It is not inconsistent with the etymology of διθάλασσοσ. There was sea before and behind the ship.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1212–1213.]

<sup>543</sup>“The centurion was of another mind. From early in the voyage he had treated Paul with consideration (v. 3), though he had failed to take his advice (v. 11). If διασῶσαι is anything more than a strengthened form of the simple verb it will mean that Julius wished to bring Paul safely through the present danger; v. 44; 28:1, 4. There may be a special application (as these verses suggest) to coming safely through water; cf. Josephus, Apion 1:130, Νῶχος ... διεσώθη. There may also have been a desire to distinguish rescue from shipwreck from being saved in a Christian, religious sense.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1214.]

(27:23-26):

23 παρέστη γάρ μοι ταύτη τῇ νυκτί τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ᾧ καὶ λατρεύω, ἄγγελος 24 λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ, Παῦλε, Καίσαρί σε δεῖ παραστῆναι, καὶ ἰδοὺ κεχάρισται σοι ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας μετὰ σοῦ. 25 διὸ εὐθυμεῖτε, ἄνδρες· **πιστεύω γὰρ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὕτως ἔσται καθ’ ὃν τρόπον λελάληταί μοι. 26 εἰς νῆσον δέ τινα δεῖ ἡμᾶς ἐκπεσεῖν.**

23 For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, **God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.**’ 25 **So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. 26 But we will have to run aground on some island.**

Most likely this early word, and now that the details seemed to be happening just as Paul had said they would, made a difference to the centurion that was strong enough for him to risk severe disciplining from his superior should one of the prisoners escape. The assumption is that Julius gave a command to his soldiers to not kill any of the prisoners.<sup>544</sup>



Along with his intention to save Paul, the centurion formulated a plan to get everyone safely ashore (v. 43b-44a): ἐκέλευσέν τε τοὺς δυναμένους κολυμβᾶν ἀπορίψαντας πρώτους ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐξιέναι 44 καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς οὓς μὲν ἐπὶ σανίσιν, οὓς δὲ ἐπὶ τινῶν τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου, **He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, 44 and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship.** First, all the prisoners who could swim were to jump overboard first and swim for the shore. Second, those who could not swim would jump into the water and find a broken piece of the ship to hang on to in order to make it into the shore.<sup>545</sup> Evidently this plan was to be followed not just by the prisoners but by all 276 people on board the ship.

The conclusion of the matter comes in v. 44b: καὶ οὕτως ἐγένετο πάντας διασωθῆναι ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, **And so it was that all were brought safely to land.**<sup>546</sup> Luke ends the shipwreck narrative on this very positive note. Not only did this confirm the accuracy of the promise of God to Paul in the earlier vision, but also confirmed to all those

<sup>544</sup> ἐκόλωσεν is a perfective aorist (M. 3:72; similarly Zerwick § 252); Julius succeeded in preventing the soldiers from carrying out their intention. For κολύειν with accusative of the person prevented from doing something or having something done, cf. 8:36; 11:17. He could not however save Paul without saving all, or at least giving all the opportunity of saving themselves. Some could swim (from 2 Cor. 11:25 one guesses that Paul could); they were to throw themselves overboard — ἀπορίπτειν, normally a transitive verb, is here used intransitively, or reflexively (without the reflexive pronoun). They were to begin (πρώτους) the evacuation of the wreck and get to land p 1215 (ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν; Zerwick § 123 contrasts the use of ἐπὶ here with the accusative with that in v. 44 where dative and genitive are used).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1214–1215.]

<sup>545</sup> The non-swimmers would need help. Two groups are distinguished by οὓς μὲν ... οὓς δὲ ..., where τοὺς μὲν ... τοὺς δὲ ... would have been better. Of Luke’s construction BDR § 293:3b, n. 11 say, ‘Bei den Attikern kaum belegt (K[ühner]-G[ert] II 228), häufiger in hell. Zeit (Mayer II 1, 57).’ The first group went ἐπὶ σανίσιν. σανίς is a plank, board, almost any piece of timber, and ἐπὶ presumably means on. The second group went ἐπὶ τινῶν τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου. Here ἐπὶ is constructed with the genitive, which also would normally mean on (it is not clear how Zerwick § 123 is distinguishing between in tabulis and super ea quae de navi erant). But what were the σανίδες if they were not τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου, broken pieces of timber coming from the ship? This raises the question whether τῶν should be regarded as masculine, οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου. Those who could not swim were assisted by men from the ship who could. M. 3:272 regards ἐπὶ with the dative and ἐπὶ with the genitive as here interchangeable; similarly BDR § 235:1, n. 1. It is not however easy to see why Luke should have repeated himself: some on planks or pieces of timber (which must have come from the ship) and others on some of the things that came from the ship (which unless they were pieces of wood would not have been much use as floats). The use of μὲν ... δὲ indicates a real distinction and this can only have been in the manner of coming ashore. We may add by way of support Hanson (251): τινῶν without a noun is ‘more usually applied to persons than things’; Delebecque (135); ‘τῶν (ἀπό) ne peut être un neutre, car l’expression οἱ ἀπό est courante en grec pour désigner des “hommes de”, ou “venant de”’, Cf. Testament of Naphtali 6:6: ὁ δὲ Ἰωσήφ ἐπὶ ἀκατίῳ ἐπορεύθη. ἡμεῖς δὲ διεχωρίσθημεν ἐπὶ σανίδων ἐννέα.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1215.]

<sup>546</sup> The overall impression left by this narrative is of God’s providence overruling all the natural circumstances which could have led to death and total disaster, and that Paul’s presence on the ship, on whom God had placed his protective hand, saved the rest of those traveling as well. While it is probably too much to call this a ministry to Gentiles, especially since there are no converts, nevertheless what happened was a testimony to the pagans of the power of Paul’s God.<sup>1057</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 774–775.]

on board the ship that Paul's God was fully capable of keeping people safe and would keep His promises.

In addition another motive for ending the story on this positive note comes out of the 'shipwreck' story genre in ancient literature. Overwhelmingly this literary form focused on the exposure of the 'guilty party' on board the ship who had angered the gods so that everyone was put in danger by the shipwreck. Those who drown while seeking safety were judged to have been the guilty individuals who brought on the shipwreck.<sup>547</sup> But the framing of this narrative by Luke underscores just the opposite in the case of Paul. The shipwreck was due to 'natural' causes, and not to divine wrath. Plus, Paul's God demonstrated unusual mercy in keeping everyone alive on the ship -- both His followers and the pagans. To Luke's initial readers, this would come across as a powerful affirmation of the integrity both of Paul and his God.



Beyond these objectives stands also the Lukan pattern of parallelism between Peter and Paul. Peter had his near death experience in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 12) and now Paul has a somewhat similar experience on the open sea (Acts 27).<sup>548</sup> That God's hand of blessing was upon Paul's preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles is given further affirmation by his surviving this dangerous event on the sea. Some slight echoes of the prophet Jonah's sea rescue surface here as well.

#### 8.1.3.4.2 Stranded on Malta, Acts 28:1-10

This unit of material stands as the third 'scene' in the literary unit of 27:1-28:16.<sup>549</sup> Although those on the ship did not know initially where they were, eventually they realized that they had landed on the island of Malta.<sup>550</sup>

<sup>547</sup>“Shipwreck stories were common in ancient writings (Seneca, *Con.* 7.1.4; 8.6; cf. Miles and Trompf 1976, 259–67) and contained common elements (cf. Talbert 2005, 212). Often the storm or shipwreck was attributed to the presence of some offending party on board, who had incurred divine wrath (cf. Jonah; Seneca, *Con.* 7.1). Thus ancient auditors might be tempted to view Paul's shipwreck as evidence of divine wrath and judgment upon him; certainly this was the initial view of the inhabitants of Malta (cf. 28:4). But not all shipwreck stories functioned this way. Luke's story of Paul's shipwreck (27:39–44) belongs to that category of storm and shipwreck stories that attribute the cause of the storm to natural causes and the outcome as the result of divine activity (for the taxonomy of shipwreck stories in antiquity, see Talbert 2005, 212–13). Thus Luke depicts a combination of the time of year (the Fast, 27:9), the impatience of the ship's owner and captain (27:11), and an unsuitable harbor as the cause of the storm and subsequent shipwreck (Talbert 2005, 215). In other words, “Paul's presence was in no sense responsible for the storm.... On the contrary, Paul's presence was responsible for their deliverance from the storm” (Polhill 1992, 530). Paul's innocence is vindicated by God and his witness before Rome is insured.” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 360.]

<sup>548</sup>“Luke also uses this sea voyage with all its colorful details and rich imagery to depict the symbolic death and resurrection of Paul, much as he narrates the imprisonment and release of Peter in Acts 12. Both prison and shipwreck are common metaphors for death in antiquity. Night, the disappearance of heavenly luminaries (27:20; cf. Luke 23:44–45), and the loss of hope (27:20; cf. Luke 24:21) all echo the passion of Jesus and allude to Paul's symbolic death. References to daylight, the third day (21:19), a shared meal (27:33–35; cf. Luke 24:30–31), and Paul's deliverance from the tomb of the sea (27:44) all point to a kind of symbolic resurrection.” [Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 360.]

<sup>549</sup>“Acts 28:1–10 constitutes scene three in the thought unit 27:1–28:16. It consists of two parts: 28:1–6 and 28:7–10.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 216.]

<sup>550</sup>“Malta Listeni/ mɔltə/ (Maltese: Repubblika ta' Malta, pronounced [re'pɔbb.li.kə 'tə 'mɛl.tə]) is a southern European country in the Mediterranean Sea. It lies 80 km (50 mi) south of Sicily, 284 km (176 mi) east of Tunisia and 333 km (207 mi) north of Libya. The country covers just over 316 km<sup>2</sup> (122 sq mi), making it one of the world's smallest<sup>[8][9][10]</sup> and most densely populated countries. The capital of Malta is Valletta, which is also the smallest capital in the EU at 0.8 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>[11]</sup> Malta has two official languages: Maltese and English.

“Malta's location as a naval base has given it great strategic importance throughout history, and a succession of powers including the Phoenicians, Romans, Moorish, Normans, Aragonese, Habsburg Spain, Knights of St. John, French and the British have ruled the islands. Malta gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1964 and became a republic in 1974. Malta was admitted to the United Nations in 1964 and to the European Union in 2004; in 2008, it became part of the eurozone.

“Malta has a long Christian legacy and is an Apostolic see. According to the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>[12]</sup> St. Paul was shipwrecked on Malta.<sup>[13]</sup> Catholicism is the official religion in Malta.<sup>[14][15]</sup>

“Malta is a favoured tourist destination with its warm climate, numerous recreational areas, and architectural and historical



Although Paul survived the shipwreck, at first it seemed that he might not survive because of the snake bite. But God's intervening actions prevent this from happening and turn the experience of being stranded on the island into an opportunity for the Gospel.<sup>551</sup> In Luke's presentation, two themes are stressed: the miracle (vv. 1-6) and the hospitality extended by the islanders (vv. 7-10).<sup>552</sup>

During the empire of the Romans, Malta enjoyed a favored status from the Romans.<sup>553</sup> This in turn gave them freedom and economic advantage.<sup>554</sup> Prior to the middle of the first Christian century it had suffered from

---

monuments, including nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Hal Safieni Hypogeum,<sup>[16]</sup> Valletta<sup>[17]</sup> and seven Megalithic Temples which are some of the oldest free-standing structures in the world.<sup>[18][19][20]</sup>

[“Malta,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)]

<sup>551</sup>“In Malta, Paul survives a viper's bite, an event full of irony because it first looked as if having survived the dangerous sea voyage, he might fall to a similar fate elsewhere. Some of the islanders think when he is bitten that it shows he is guilty. But ideas can change quickly when circumstances go in a different direction! So when Paul survives, these polytheists think he is a god. Paul heals many on the island, so that when the travelers leave, provisions are given to them.” [Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 94.]

<sup>552</sup>“Acts 28:1–10 constitutes scene three in the thought unit 27:1–28:16. It consists of two parts: 28:1–6 and 28:7–10. In the first part, Paul is bitten by a viper (v. 3), which causes the natives to think he is a murderer who, though he escaped from the sea, has now been caught by divine justice (v. 4). When he is not affected by the snakebite, the natives change their opinion (v. 5). He is not a murderer; he is a god. Two things emerge from vv. 3–4. First, there is an explicit statement by the characters of the Mediterranean assumption that the animal kingdom, often a serpent, functioned as a vehicle of divine justice. Second, the serpent bite is explicitly understood as a corollary to involvement in storm and shipwreck. Both are believed by the natives to function in the same way, as divine judgment.

“Three examples from the Greco-Roman world illustrate one or the other or both of the dimensions of the case. (a) In the Greek Anthology 7.290, we read:

The shipwrecked mariner had escaped the whirlwind and the fury of the deadly sea, and as he was lying on the Libyan sand not far from the beach ... naked and exhausted by the unhappy wreck, a baneful viper slew him. Why did he struggle with the waves in vain, escaping then the fate that was his lot on the land?

“Here both dimensions are combined: snakebite and shipwreck as vehicles of divine destiny.

“Heliodorus, An Ethiopian Story 2.20, tells of a brigand, Themouthis, making his escape, who lay down to sleep, ‘but the sleep he slept was the final sleep, the brazen sleep of death, for he was bitten by a viper.’

“An Egyptian papyrus of the fourth through fifth centuries AD offers a similar perspective:

A son having murdered his own father and fearing the laws fled into the desert. As he passed through the mountains he was pursued by a lion; and being pursued by a lion he went up into a tree, and finding a snake as he went up into a tree and being unable to go up on account of the snake, he came down again. Wrong doing does not escape the attention of god. The divine always brings the wicked into Dike. (Cadbury 1955,27)

“Similar assumptions are found in Jewish sources as well. (a) In the Tosefta, Sanhedrin 8:3 (E), R. Simeon ben Shatah (c. 80 BC) said he saw a man with a sword running after a fellow. The two ran into a deserted building. When Simeon entered, he saw the one slain and the other with the sword dripping blood. The rabbi comments, ‘but He who knows the thoughts of man will exact punishment from the guilty. He did not move from the spot before a snake bit him and he died.’ (b) In the Jerusalem Talmud, Berakoth 5:1 (XIV.D), there is a tradition about R. Haninah ben Dosa (before AD 70), who, when praying, was bitten by a snake but did not interrupt his prayers. Not only was the rabbi not affected by the bite but the snake died at the entrance to its den. In the Babylonian Talmud, after these events Hanina is reported to have said, ‘It is not the snake that kills, but sin’ (b. Berakoth 33a). A righteous man is unaffected by snakebite, just as a wicked man is punished by it (cf. Mark 16:18).

“The latter point corresponds to the Jewish mind-set found in Dan 6:22, where Daniel says to the king, ‘My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths ... because I was found blameless before him.’ That this is not limited to a Jewish context is evidenced by the Greco-Roman tradition found in Horace, Odes 1.22. There the poet proves his righteousness with the news that while he was strolling unprotected through the woods, a wolf fled from him, leaving him unharmed. The animal kingdom, like the sea, punishes the wicked as the agent of divine justice. It does not, however, harm the righteous.

“There seems to be no other way to read Acts 28:1–6 in a Mediterranean context. The natives think Paul guilty when he is bitten; they change their minds when he is unaffected. So God declares Paul innocent! Neither storm nor serpent bite is to be taken as God's judgment on Paul. Quite the contrary. God protects and vindicates his upright one.”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 216–218.]

<sup>553</sup>“Other mss read *melitēnē*, but those supporting *melitē* are to be preferred; the location is in all likelihood the Mediterranean island south of Sicily known as Malta.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 461.]

<sup>554</sup>“After the fall of Phoenicia in 332 BC, the area came under the control of Carthage, a former Phoenician colony.<sup>[43]</sup> During this time the people on Malta mainly cultivated olives and carobs, and produced textiles.<sup>[43]</sup>

“During the First Punic War of 264 BC, tensions led the Maltese people to rebel against Carthage and turn control of their garrison over to the Roman consul Sempronius.<sup>[24]</sup> Malta remained loyal to Rome during the Second Punic War and the Romans rewarded it with the title *Foederata Civitas*, a designation that meant it was exempt from paying tribute or the rule of Roman law, although at this

pirate raids but managed to regain stability and prosperity.<sup>555</sup> The traditional site of the shipwreck remains the most likely location even in spite of some efforts to locate it elsewhere.<sup>556</sup>

#### 8.1.3.4.2.1 A Miracle at Malta, Acts 28:1-6

28.1 Καὶ διασωθέντες τότε ἐπέγνωμεν ὅτι Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος καλεῖται. 2 οἱ τε βάρβαροι παρεῖχον οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, ἄψαντες γὰρ πυρὰν προσελάβοντο πάντας ἡμᾶς διὰ τὸν ὑετὸν τὸν ἐφεστῶτα καὶ διὰ τὸ ψῦχος. 3 Συστρέψαντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου φρυγάνων τι πλῆθος καὶ ἐπιθέντος ἐπὶ τὴν πυρὰν, ἔχιθνα ἀπὸ τῆς θερμῆς ἐξελθοῦσα καθήψεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ. 4 ὡς δὲ εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι κρεμάμενον τὸ θηρίον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔλεγον· πάντως φονεὺς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος ὃν διασωθέντα ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης ἡ δίκη ζῆν οὐκ εἶασεν. 5 ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀποτινάξας τὸ θηρίον εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἔπαθεν οὐδὲν κακόν, 6 οἱ δὲ προσεδόκων αὐτὸν μέλλειν πίμπρασθαι ἢ καταπίπτειν ἄφνω νεκρόν. ἐπὶ πολὺ δὲ αὐτῶν προσδοκῶντων καὶ θεωρούντων μηδὲν ἄποπον εἰς αὐτὸν γινόμενον μεταβαλόμενοι ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν.

28.1 After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta. 2 The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us around it. 3 Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live." 5 He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. 6 They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

After describing the shipwreck Luke then moves to what Paul and the others experienced on the island.

As Luke mentions in v. 11, they spent three months on the island before finding a ship headed toward Rome that could take them to their intended destination. With just the two events described by Luke in these ten verses, it becomes obvious just how summary in nature this description is. He focuses only on the snake episode that happened soon after landing on the island (vv. 1-6) and on the hospitality that happened toward the



time it fell within the jurisdiction of the province of Sicily.<sup>[24]</sup> Punic influence, however, remained vibrant on the islands with the famous Cippi of Melqart, pivotal in deciphering the Punic language, dedicated in the 2nd century BC.<sup>[44][45]</sup>

"By 117 AD, the Maltese Islands were a thriving part of the Roman Empire, being promoted to the status of Municipium under Hadrian.

"When the Roman Empire split into Eastern and Western divisions in the 4th century, Malta fell under the control of the Greek speaking Byzantine Empire from 395 to 870,<sup>[40]</sup> which ruled from Constantinople.<sup>[46]</sup> Although Malta was under Byzantine rule for four centuries, not much is known from this period. There is evidence that Germanic tribes, including the Goths and Vandals, briefly took control of the islands before the Byzantines launched a counterattack and retook Malta.<sup>[46]</sup>"

["Malta," [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malta)]

<sup>555</sup>"The island came under control of Carthage, another Phoenician colony, in the 6th century B.C., when their homeland was taken by the Assyrians. In 218 B.C., the island came under Roman rule as part of the province of Sicily. Under the reorganization of the empire by Augustus, Malta was put under its own procurator. Although initially a prosperous island, it declined significantly as a result of frequent raids by pirates and the civil wars of the 1st century B.C. It had recovered by the mid-1st century A.D. and was (along with the neighboring island of Gozo [Gaulos]) granted municipal status (Lat municipium) in the early 2d century. Its citizens were granted Roman citizenship under Emperor Justinian (518–65). Even under Roman rule, however, the Maltese continued to maintain aspects of their Punic/Phoenician culture and language. In 870 Malta was taken by the Abbasid caliphs, but in 1090 it came under the control of a series of Christian crusader groups, culminating in the domination of the city by the Knights of St. John, who successfully defended the island against the Turkish forces of Suleiman I (1565). Its unique language in the present day is a mixture of N African Arabic and Sicilian Italian, and its culture reflects the rich diversity of its history." [W. Ward Gasque, "Malta (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 489.]

<sup>556</sup>"The traditional site of the shipwreck is St. Paul's Bay, some 8 mi. NW of the modern capital of Valletta. In spite of recent attempts to suggest a location for the wreck on the island of Mijet or Melitene off the coast of Dalmatia (Acworth 1973, on the basis of the grammar of the narrative of Acts, historical data, and the name; Meinardus 1974, 1976, 1979, on the basis of ecclesiastical and local traditions), this is most likely the correct location (so Ramsay 1920; Finegan 1981; Kettenbach 1986; Bruce Acts, NICNT 21988; Hemer 1975; 1989; the latter has definitively answered the objections of Acworth), since it fits almost perfectly with the description given in Acts." [W. Ward Gasque, "Malta (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 489.]

end of this three month stay (vv. 7-10). Barely a week of this three month period is covered by Luke.

The introductory topic sentence identifies their location: Καὶ διασωθέντες τότε ἐπέγνωμεν ὅτι Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος καλεῖται, *After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta.*<sup>557</sup> The beginning participle phrase signals that they did not know where they were until after getting ashore safely: Καὶ διασωθέντες, *after having been saved*. Because of being translated several different ways by modern translators, the extensive use of διασώζω, meaning to *rescue* or *deliver from harm*, plays an important role (5x in Acts of 8x in NT) in Luke's narrative on the protection of Paul by God: 23:24; 27:43, 44; 28:1, 4. The literary function of this participle phrase is to link vv. 1-10 back to the shipwreck narrative in vv. 39-44; note διασῶσαι and διασωθῆναι in vv. 43-44.

Once they reached the shore, τότε ἐπέγνωμεν ὅτι Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος καλεῖται, *then we recognized that the island is called Malta*. The verb used by Luke, ἐπέγνωμεν, most naturally implies that some of the experienced sailor or soldiers recognized where they were after having a chance to look around.<sup>558</sup> But the mentioning of the locals in the next statement may very well be the source of their understanding. However they came to understand their location, they realized that it was both an ἡ νῆσος, *island*, and that its name was Μελίτη, *Malta*.

They were met by some of the local population (v. 2a): οἱ τε βάρβαροι παρεῖχον οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, *and the barbarians allowed us to experience unusual kindness*.<sup>559</sup> This excessively literal translation highlights the unusual way of Luke in stressing unusually friendly greetings to these shipwrecked people from the local residents.<sup>560</sup> By this point in time the island not only belonged to the Roman empire but the inhabitants had demonstrated several times an unusually high loyalty to the Romans. The presence of the Roman soldiers along with the crew of the ship as transporting grain to the Roman capital clearly linked these individuals with the empire in the minds of the locals. Luke identifies the locals as οἱ βάρβαροι, *the barbarians*. His use of this term signals that the first group of locals encountered on the beach were non-Greek speaking individuals who continued to speak Punic that had preceded the arrival of the Greeks and Romans on the island.<sup>561</sup> But Publius

<sup>557</sup>It is usually supposed that Μελίτη (in B\* lat sy<sup>h</sup> bo, Μελιτήνη; see M. 2:359 — an adjective agreeing with νῆσος (understood)? or dittography within Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος (Metzger 500)?) refers to the island now known as Malta, where the traditional site of the wreck is known as St Paul's Bay. Early writers seem to have made little or no attempt to identify the scene of the wreck, but in the 8th century Constantinus Porphyrogenitus (*De Administrando Imperio* 36) thought not of Malta but of an island in the Adriatic now known as Meleda, Melite, or Mljet, in antiquity as Cephallenia. This belief, that Paul was shipwrecked in the Adriatic, has been argued at length by H. Warnecke, *Die tatsächliche Romfahrt des Apostels Paulus*, SB 127 (Stuttgart, 1987), on the basis of detailed nautical, topographical, and meteorological observations, which could be pursued here only by throwing the commentary out of proportion and could be assessed only by a commentator with adequate knowledge of the sciences involved. Some relevant facts will be mentioned as they arise in the following verses; here that a gale that threatened to drive the ship on to the Syrtes (27:17) must have been a north easter, and it is hard to see how it could have led to a wreck on the east side of the Adriatic." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1219–1220.]

<sup>558</sup>The island was called Μελίτη. How the stranded travellers were able to recognize the land Luke does not say. The local inhabitants are mentioned in the next verse; perhaps it may be assumed that they had already appeared and been questioned, though if this were so we learned, or we were informed, would have been more suitable than we recognized. It may be, of course, that, once ashore, experienced travellers would know where they were." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1219.]

<sup>559</sup>For the litotes 'not ordinary' (ou tēn tychousan), compare Acts 19:11. We saw the same 'love of humanity' (*philanthrōpia/philanthrōpōs*) shown toward Paul by the centurion Julius in 27:3. See the note on that verse for the peculiarly Hellenistic valuation of that quality. Here it is attributed to 'barbarians.' This should not surprise us, for although the theory had it that Greek culture was superior, in fact Greeks were fascinated and often impressed by aliens, and were willing to grant in them virtues they perceived as deficient in themselves (see e.g., Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2:26; 2:30; 3:24–25)." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 461.]

<sup>560</sup>The barbarians certainly greeted the shipwrecked men in a friendly fashion. For παρεῖχον the middle might have been expected (M. 3:56); for φιλανθρωπία cf. 27:3 (φιλανθρώπως). For οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν cf. 19:11; the word is characteristic of the second part of Acts. There is an excellent linguistic parallel (though the meaning reverses that of the present clause) in BGU 1:36 [= 436]:9f. (a Fayyum papyrus of the 2nd or 3rd century AD), ὕβριν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν συνετέλεσαντο." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1221.]

<sup>561</sup>The local inhabitants are described as οἱ βάρβαροι. In Acts the word is used only here and at v. 4; cf. Rom. 1:14; 1 Cor. 14:11; Col. 3:11. Its primary meaning related to language and was presumably *onomatopoeic*. The βάρβαρος was one who did not speak Greek and whose words therefore sounded (to a Greek) like a meaningless ba-ba-ba. He was someone other than a Greek; the word was used 'specially of the Medes and Persians'; after the Persian war it came to mean 'brutal, rude' (LS 306). This verse suggests that the latter meaning is not in mind; these barbarians were not brutal and rude, but showed courtesy and kindness. The word therefore probably retains its linguistic reference (as it does in 1 Cor. 14:11). This is used by Warnecke (111–18) as an argument in favour of Cephallenia rather than Malta as the scene of the shipwreck. Before the first century AD Malta had been both hellenized and romanized. Inscriptions in both Greek and Latin are found, together with ruins of Roman villas, theatres, and baths. Julius Caesar settled some of his veterans in Malta, and a little later the island received the citizenship, p 1221 as is confirmed by coins (see also Strabo 7:833). On the other hand,



who was τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου, a leader on the island (v. 7), was able to speak either Greek or Latin -- or probably both. So communication with him was not a problem. But these locals warmly welcomed the folks from the ship.

As Luke stresses with γὰρ in the second half of this compound sentence in v. 2, this show of φιλανθρωπία, brotherly love, was expressed in building a fire for these shipwrecked individuals who were cold: ἄψαντες γὰρ πυρὰν προσελάβοντο πάντας ἡμᾶς διὰ τὸν ὑέτὸν τὸν ἐφεστῶτα καὶ διὰ τὸ ψῦχος, for after having lit a fire, they invited all of us to it because of the rain that had begun and because of the cold.<sup>562</sup> For these who had come from Egypt and Judea even a mild temperature would seem quite cold and especially with a blowing rain and with already wet clothes from being in the water while getting to the shore.

In typical Christian fashion,<sup>563</sup> Paul sought to help build the fire, but a snake was in the pile of wood he picked up (v. 3): Συστρέψαντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου φρυγάνων τι πλῆθος καὶ ἐπιθέντος ἐπὶ τὴν πυρὰν, ἔχιδνα ἀπὸ τῆς θέρμης ἐξελοῦσα καθῆψεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ, Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.<sup>564</sup>

The term ἔχιδνα with 5 NT uses refers to a snake here and in the other four uses has a figurative meaning.<sup>565</sup> Because the



viper | 5 of 5

- Mt 3:7** But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
- Mt 12:34** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
- Mt 23:33** You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?"
- Lk 3:7** John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
- Ac 18:3** Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.

Zahn (842) (quoted by Haenchen 681) wrote that it is proved by inscriptions (details conveniently in Hemer 152) that ‘der gemeine Mann, die Fabrikarbeiter und Packträger, die Handlungsgärtner und Hundezüchter auf Melita nur ihre punische Muttersprache verstehen, sprechen und lesen konnten.’ Similarly Page (264): ‘Diod[orus] Sic[ulus] v. 12, ἔστι δὲ ἡ νῆσος αὕτη Φοινίκων ἄποικος. Their language therefore was probably Punic.’ Cf. Cicero, In Verrem 2:4:46 (103), Itaque in his inscriptum litteris punicis fuit ... It may be assumed that both in Malta and Meleda there were uneducated people who could not, and educated people who could, speak Greek (or Latin or both), and that the former would qualify for the term βαρβαροί.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1220–1221.]

<sup>562</sup>“Their kindness was shown in that they lit (ἄψαντες; m has ἀνάψαντες with no difference in meaning) a fire and welcomed, or received, us all, or simply brought us to it. Action of this kind was desirable because of the rain and the cold. One might have expected a reference to the wetting in the sea that all had experienced. The rain was ἐφεστῶτα; perhaps, that came on suddenly, unexpectedly; cf. 1 Thess. 5:3; also Polybius 18:20:7 (Blass 284), διὰ τὸν ἐφεστῶτα ζῶφον. Warnecke (100–2) observes that in Malta the average rainfall in October is 83.3 mm, whereas in Melida, off the Dalmatian coast, the rainfall is heavy. He quotes the geographer Partsch (Kephallenia 33f.), ‘... stärker und anhaltender setzen sie [Gewitter] erst im Oktober ein. Noch pflegt ein kleiner Nachsommer zu folgen ehe der November und Dezember ihre gewaltigen Regenmengen ausschütten. In diesen Monaten rauschen die zahlreichsten und kräftigsten Niederschläge nieder.’ As for temperature (Warnecke 102–4), the average minima and maxima are for October 17:2°C and 27:8°C, for November, 12:2 and 23:3. The lowest of these would certainly not strike someone from Northern Europe as cold. Cephallenia is much colder. Two points, perhaps, to Warnecke, but men in wet clothes, with a good breeze blowing, would not be sorry to see a fire.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1221.]

<sup>563</sup>“**συστρέφειν** is used in a variety of ways: of animals gathering themselves to spring; of a man screwing up his eyes; of soldiers rallying, forming a compact body; it is not easy to find a parallel to what is evidently the meaning here. Paul gathered and twisted together a bundle of twigs with a view to feeding the fire. πλῆθος elsewhere in Acts refers to a company of people, here to a quantity (colloquially in English, a lot) of sticks, φρύγανα, for the fire. So Xenophon, Anabasis 4:3:11, φρύγανα συλλέγοντες ὡς ἐπὶ πύρ.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1222.]

<sup>564</sup>“The picture of Paul is consistent with that in Acts and in his letters as one who is willing to work with his own hands in order to serve the needs of others (Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–8), in the image of Jesus who also modeled the true character of authority as service (Luke 22:24–27). Throughout the journey narrative, Paul’s actions and advice have been of the most practical and helpful sort (27:10, 22, 31, 34).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 461.]

<sup>565</sup>ἔχιδνα, ης, ἡ (Hes.; Hdt.; Aq. Is 59:5; TestAbr A; Just., A I, 60, 2; Tat. 18, 2; Ath. 20, 3; loanw. in rabb.) *snake*, our texts do not permit identification of species, but the term ordinarily suggests a poisonous one: prob. vipera ammodytes, commonly known as

snake ‘grabbed hold’ of his hand (καθῆψεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ<sup>566</sup>) rather than just bite it, all kinds of speculation about what kind of snake it was can be found in the commentaries.<sup>567</sup> But there is no way to know this from an ancient description of a snake bite.<sup>568</sup>

When the locals saw the snake grabbing hold of Paul’s hand they assumed the ancient superstition of a snake bite as divine justice at work (v. 4): ὡς δὲ εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι κρεμάμενον τὸ θηρίον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔλεγον· πάντως φονεὺς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος ὃν διασωθέντα ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης ἡ δίκη ζῆν οὐκ εἶσεν, *When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.”* What they saw is described by Luke as κρεμάμενον τὸ θηρίον<sup>569</sup> ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ, *hanging the creature off his hand*. The participle κρεμάμενον from κρεμάννυμι literally means to hang on, but does not imply



hanging for more than a few seconds. Thus no basis exists to contend that this was not a poisonous snake since “poisonous snakes do not bite and then hang on.”<sup>570</sup> What is more significant is the use of ἡ δίκη which should be spelled ἡ Δίκη, since compelling reasons are present to understand this not in terms of a abstract term but rather as a reference to the Greek goddess Δίκη, *Justice*, known in Latin as *Iustitia*.<sup>571</sup> Their belief as well as most all

---

sandviper (Diod S 4, 38, 2; Conon [I B.C./I A.D.] Fgm. 1, 8; Lucian, Alex. 10; Artem. 2, 13) **Ac 28:3** (present-day Malta has no poisonous snakes, but Kephallenia, the site of Paul’s shipwreck as determined by HWarnecke [Romfahrt 145–56], has the species vip. ammod., Romfahrt 108–10; 152–54).—Fig. of persons (Aeschyl., Choeph. 994; Eur., Ion 1262) γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν brood of vipers (cp. Theophyl. Sim., Ep. 73 τὰ τῆς ἐχίδνης κοῦματα; AcPICor 2:38) **Mt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Lk 3:7**.—OKeller, Die antike Tierwelt II, 1913, 284–557; NHenkel, Studien zum Physiologus im Mittelalter 76, 181–85 (ancient sources); Pauly-W. III A 1, 1927, 494–57.—B. 194. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 419–420.]

<sup>566</sup>“The snake fastened on Paul’s hand; for καθῆψε, the middle καθήψατο might have been expected. This is read by C 36 453 614 1891 2495 pm, but this is plainly copyists’ ‘improvement’. Begs. 4:341 quotes Epictetus 3:20:10, ὁ μὲν τοῦ τραχήλου καθάπτων; this however is in wrestling.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1222.]

<sup>567</sup>“The genitive absolute (συστράψαντος ... τοῦ Παύλου) is combined with another genitive participle, ἐπιθέντος. Paul put the bundle of sticks on the fire. Escaping the heat (ἀπὸ τῆς θερμῆς), a snake (ἐχιδνα) came out (ἐξελοῦσα; H L P Ψ 049 323 614 945 1241 M have διεξελοῦσα — came out through the flames, through the sticks?). It appears in the following verses that the snake did Paul no harm. Luke plainly regards this as a miracle, and therefore understood the word ἐχιδνα in its proper sense; he also represents the native inhabitants of the island as sharing his view — a man bitten by one of ‘their’ snakes should swell up and fall down dead. (v. 6). The occurrence of snakes in Malta and Cephallenia is discussed by Warnecke (108–10). There were, it seems, no poisonous snakes on Malta. ‘Auf Malta gibt es weder Sandvipern noch überhaupt eine Vipernart, ja, nicht einmal irgendwelche Giftschlange: “Die drei auf Malta lebenden Schlangensarten sind ungiftig”’ (Warnecke 108, quoting H. Egger, Malta 159). Cephallenia on the other hand has about twenty kinds of snake, including the *Vipera ammodytus*, that is, the ἐχιδνα. This seems to be a point in favour of Cephallenia as the scene of the incident; alternatively, it means that the story is fictitious (or possibly, belongs to another setting), and was written by one who did not know what kinds of snake were to be found on Malta. A further possibility is that in the first century Malta was richer in snakes than it is now, and possessed poisonous snakes.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1222.]

<sup>568</sup>“The Greek *echidna* refers generally to snakes or vipers (see Lucian of Samosata, *Alexander the False Prophet* 10). It is used metaphorically for wicked folk in Luke 3:7 (compare Matt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33). The Greek does not describe a ‘strike’ so much as a ‘gripping’ (*kathēpsen*; for the verb *kathaptō* see Epictetus, Discourses 3, 20, 10). It is useless to pursue herpetological questions (what sort of snake/viper was it, for example) for which we have no real means of finding answers. The perceptions reported are in any case not of a scientific character. For some of the common beliefs about snakes held even by the educated (that they are all poisonous, that they seek vengeance on the killer of their spouses), see Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 8:85–86.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 462.]

<sup>569</sup>The use of τὸ θηρίον as a broad, inclusive term for snake is found in Acts 11:6; 28:4-5. This usage is common in ancient literature.

<sup>570</sup>Conzelmann, Hans. *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. Edited by Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews. Translated by James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel. Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 223,

<sup>571</sup>“It might be better to spell δίκη with a capital Δ. The word occurs at 2 Thess. 1:9; Jude 7; nowhere else in the NT (unless at Acts 25:15, where E Ψ m have δίκην in place of καταδίκην. The barbarians may well have personified Justice as a divine being. Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone* 538f., ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐάσει τοῦτό γ’ ἡ δίκη σ’, ἐπεὶ οὐτ’ ἠθέλησας οὐτ’ ἐγὼ κοινωσάμην; Oedipus at Colonus 1381f.; Hesiod, *Theogony* 902; Plutarch, *De Exilio* 5 (601B); Alexander 52 (695A), τὴν Δίκην ἔχει πάρεδρον ὁ Ζεὺς καὶ τὴν Θέμιν.” [C. K.

the ancient non-Jewish and non-Christian world was that this goddess makes certain that all sins are punished. Murder was one of the more serious sins, and numerous accounts exist where Iustitia sent a snake to inflict the death penalty on murderers.<sup>572</sup> Luke affirms their superstitious belief as a background contrast to what happened when Paul was unharmed.<sup>573</sup>

To their utter amazement nothing happened to Paul (v. 5): ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀποτινάξας τὸ θηρίον εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἔπαθεν οὐδὲν κακόν, *He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.* Luke here is introducing a miracle from God that would challenge the superstitions of the locals on Malta. This may also be an allusion to Lk. 10:18-19.<sup>574</sup> Clearly this experience of Paul played a role in the addition of Mark 16:9-20 some centuries after the original writing with the inclusion of v. 18a, [καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν] ὄφεις ἀροῦσιν κἂν θανάσιμόν τι πῖωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάψῃ, *they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them.*

In reaction the thinking of the locals shifted to the opposite end of the religious spectrum that Paul is some kind of a god (v. 6): οἱ δὲ προσεδόκων αὐτὸν μέλλειν πίμπρασθαι ἢ καταπίπτειν ἄφνω νεκρόν. ἐπὶ πολὺ

---

Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1223.]

<sup>572</sup>“The thought that sins are not left unpunished (and that a snake bite may be used) is illustrated in StrB (2:772) by a long quotation from Sanhedrin 37b. For a very close parallel to Luke’s story see the *Anthologia Palatina* 7:290—a shipwrecked sailor is killed by a viper.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1223.]

<sup>573</sup>“In the first part, Paul is bitten by a viper (v. 3), which causes the natives to think he is a murderer who, though he escaped from the sea, has now been caught by divine justice (v. 4). When he is not affected by the snakebite, the natives change their opinion (v. 5). He is not a murderer; he is a god. Two things emerge from vv. 3–4. First, there is an explicit statement by the characters of the Mediterranean assumption that the animal kingdom, often a serpent, functioned as a vehicle of divine justice. Second, the serpent bite is explicitly understood as a corollary to involvement in storm and shipwreck. Both are believed by the natives to function in the same way, as divine judgment.

“Three examples from the Greco-Roman world illustrate one or the other or both of the dimensions of the case. (a) In the Greek Anthology 7.290, we read:

The shipwrecked mariner had escaped the whirlwind and the fury of the deadly sea, and as he was lying on the Libyan sand not far from the beach ... naked and exhausted by the unhappy wreck, a baneful viper slew him. Why did he struggle with the waves in vain, escaping then the fate that was his lot on the land?

“Here both dimensions are combined: snakebite and shipwreck as vehicles of divine destiny.

“Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Story* 2.20, tells of a brigand, Themouthis, making his escape, who lay down to sleep, ‘but the sleep he slept was the final sleep, the brazen sleep of death, for he was bitten by a viper.’

“An Egyptian papyrus of the fourth through fifth centuries AD offers a similar perspective:

A son having murdered his own father and fearing the laws fled into the desert. As he passed through the mountains he was pursued by a lion; and being pursued by a lion he went up into a tree, and finding a snake as he went up into a tree and being unable to go up on account of the snake, he came down again. Wrong doing does not escape the attention of god. The divine always brings the wicked into Dike. (Cadbury 1955,27)

“Similar assumptions are found in Jewish sources as well. (a) In the Tosefta, Sanhedrin 8:3 (E), R. Simeon ben Shatah (c. 80 BC) said he saw a man with a sword running after a fellow. The two ran into a deserted building. When Simeon entered, he saw the one slain and the other with the sword dripping blood. The rabbi comments, “but He who knows the thoughts of man will exact punishment from the guilty. He did not move from the spot before a snake bit him and he died.” (b) In the Jerusalem Talmud, Berakoth 5:1 (XIV.D), there is a tradition about R. Haninah ben Dosa (before AD 70), who, when praying, was bitten by a snake but did not interrupt his prayers. Not only was the rabbi not affected by the bite but the snake died at the entrance to its den. In the Babylonian Talmud, after these events Hanina is reported to have said, “It is not the snake that kills, but sin” (b. Berakoth 33a). A righteous man is unaffected by snakebite, just as a wicked man is punished by it (cf. Mark 16:18).

“The latter point corresponds to the Jewish mind-set found in Dan 6:22, where Daniel says to the king, ‘My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths ... because I was found blameless before him.’ That this is not limited to a Jewish context is evidenced by the Greco-Roman tradition found in Horace, *Odes* 1.22. There the poet proves his righteousness with the news that while he was strolling unprotected through the woods, a wolf fled from him, leaving him unharmed. The animal kingdom, like the sea, punishes the wicked as the agent of divine justice. It does not, however, harm the righteous.

“There seems to be no other way to read Acts 28:1–6 in a Mediterranean context. The natives think Paul guilty when he is bitten; they change their minds when he is unaffected. So God declares Paul innocent! Neither storm nor serpent bite is to be taken as God’s judgment on Paul. Quite the contrary. God protects and vindicates his upright one.”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 216–218.]

<sup>574</sup>**Luke 10:18-19.** 18 εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς· ἐθεώρουν τὸν σατανᾶν ὡς ἀστραπὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεσόντα. 19 ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ὑμῖν *τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων*, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ, καὶ οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ.

18 He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19 See, I have given you *authority to tread on snakes and scorpions*, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you.



δὲ αὐτῶν προσδοκῶντων καὶ θεωρούντων μηδὲν ἄτοπον εἰς αὐτὸν γινόμενον μεταβαλόμενοι ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν, *They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.*<sup>575</sup> What I find interesting is the unanswered question of how did the others who had been on the ship feel about this? Most likely the non-Christians felt about the same way as did the locals on the island. When Paul's hand did not swell up nor did he drop dead, the folks assumed that some kind of divine power was at work thus making him divine. This was the second time that something like this happened to Paul. On the first missionary journey the Lycaonians in Acts 14:8-13 assumed Paul was a god when he healed a man. When individuals have been enslaved to superstition, any unusual occurrence is interpreted by wild, far-fetched viewpoints. Unlike the account in 14:8-13, Luke does not 'finish out' the story with an accounting of Paul's reaction. One would assume it moved generally the same direction as the earlier narrative describes.<sup>576</sup>

#### 8.1.3.4.2 Hospitality at Malta, Acts 28:7-10

7 Ἐν δὲ τοῖς περὶ τὸν τόπον ἐκεῖνον ὑπῆρχεν χωρία τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου ὀνόματι Ποπλίῳ, ὃς ἀναδεξάμενος ἡμᾶς τρεῖς ἡμέρας φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν. 8 ἐγένετο δὲ τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Ποπλίου πυρετοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίῳ συνεχόμενον κατακεῖσθαι, πρὸς ὃν ὁ Παῦλος εἰσελθὼν καὶ προσευξάμενος ἐπιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ ἰάσατο αὐτόν. 9 τούτου δὲ γενομένου καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας προσήρχοντο καὶ ἐθεραπεύοντο, 10 οἱ καὶ πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀναγομένοις ἐπέθεντο τὰ πρὸς τὰς χρείας.

7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. 8 It so happened that the father of Publius lay sick in bed with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and cured him by praying and putting his hands on him. 9 After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10 They bestowed many honors on us, and when we were about to sail, they put on board all the provisions we needed.

The second theme in 28:1-10 is hospitality.<sup>577</sup> Most likely the first narrative, a miracle story, helped pave the way for the second emphasis by creating a favorable attitude toward Paul from the locals. Several questions emerge from Luke's depiction.

First, what did Luke intend with the location reference Ἐν δὲ τοῖς περὶ τὸν τόπον ἐκεῖνον ὑπῆρχεν χωρία?<sup>578</sup>

---

<sup>575</sup>“Once more the logic is sound enough once the premise is granted: if someone can withstand deadly serpents, then some divine dynamis must be at work in him (compare Mark 16:18). Notice, however, that there may also be here a subtle allusion to Luke 10:18–19: the fall of Satan is connected to ‘authority to walk over snakes and scorpions (opseōn kai skorpiōn), over every power of the enemy.’ The reaction of the natives here is similar to that of the Lycaonians in Acts 14:8–13; for the motif in Hellenistic novels, see notes on 14:11–12. It is found as well in the apocryphal acts, such as Acts of Thomas 106; Acts of Peter 29.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 462.]

<sup>576</sup>“There is no worship of Paul or attempt to worship recorded here, and so there is no rebuke for doing so as in Acts 14. From a Jewish context the most interesting parallel to this story is the tale told about Hanina ben Dosa, who was once bitten by a poisonous snake, but he was such a holy man that the snake died instead of the man (y. Ber. 5:1; cf. t. Sanh. 8:3)! More proximately it is in order perhaps to see this story as an example of the fulfillment of the word in Luke 10:18–19 about Jesus' followers having the power or authority to walk over snakes and scorpions.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 779.]

<sup>577</sup>“Acts 28:7–10 functions in two ways. First, it refutes the natives' wrong belief that Paul is a god (v. 6). How? In v. 8, in connection with the healing of Publius's father, Paul ‘prays’ for the healing. A god does not pray for a healing but heals out of himself (cf. Luke 8:46). Likewise, a magician with pretensions of deity would not pray but would regard the miracle as his own doing. This is made clear by Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 8.7.9. In Apollonius's defense before Domitian, he contends that he is no magician even though he has eradicated the disease causing a plague in Ephesus. Why? Because he ‘prayed’ to Hercules for the healing. A magician would not do this because he would consider it his own achievement. Contrary to the natives' opinion, Paul is neither a god nor a pretender to divine honors (a magician; cf. 8:10).

“Second, it indicates that Paul is a righteous man. James 5:16b–18, in the context of prayers for healing, uses Elijah as an example to indicate that ‘the fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.’ John 9:31, again in the context of healing, has the formerly blind man declare, ‘We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him.’ That Paul's prayer is answered is an indication that he is a righteous man. Acts 28:1–10 declares Paul innocent by God's decree. This goes hand in glove with the same point being made in ch. 27. Acts 27 says Paul is not guilty even if he was in a storm and shipwreck. Acts 28 says Paul is not guilty even if a serpent bit him. Both affirm Paul is God's servant, a righteous man to whom God discloses his will and whose prayers are answered. By God's decree, Paul is innocent. If so, Acts 27:1–28:16 functions to declare divine vindication of Paul just as 23:1–26:32 functions to declare Paul innocent before human authorities.”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 218.]

<sup>578</sup>“It is hardly necessary to ask what noun should be supplied with ἐν δὲ τοῖς. The phrase τὰ περὶ τὸν τόπον ἐκεῖνον means *the neighbourhood of that place* (the place of the wreck). It is possible however that we should think of τοῖς χωρίοις; Among the estates

The NRSV translates it “Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to...”. Also the NLT: “Near the shore where we landed was an estate belonging to...” The BdAm: “Y cerca de allí había unas tierras que pertenecían al...”. LB (1912): “An diesen Örtern aber hatte der Oberste der Insel, mit Namen Publius, ein Vorwerk...”. The sense of the phrase seems to be that not far from the place of the shipwreck was the property that formed the estate of a Publius who lived on the island.

Second, ὑπῆρχεν χωρία τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου ὀνόματι Ποπλίῳ, *lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius*. The name Ποπλίῳ is clearly a Roman name,<sup>579</sup> as affirmed by later copyists (P<sup>74vid</sup> 81. 104. 945. 1739 pc) attempting to modify the spelling (Πουπλίῳ) in order to better conform to the Latin spelling *Publius*.<sup>580</sup> The uncertainty and confusion centers on the meaning of τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου, literally *the first man of the island*.<sup>581</sup> Does this imply a governmental leadership position? Or, is it merely indicating the Publius was wealthy and possibly a patron to the poor on the island? The former has been commonly assumed with τῷ πρώτῳ being translated as the governor or a *legatus* (representative of the procurator) based on some Roman governors, *procurators*, assuming the Latin title *primus*. But there is little indication that Luke used ὁ πρώτος as a title for governmental office. Plus the *procurator* with Roman authority over Malta was based in Sicily early in the empire. But by the middle of the first century (our time frame here is 59 to 60 AD) the interests of the Romans in Malta were being taken care of by a *legatus* of the governor of Achaea. Based on the highly questionable associating of Publius as the procurator over Malta it is assumed that he was Roman and not a native of Malta. Most scholars now reject this understanding as false. The reality is that no one can be certain about the leadership role of this man Publius. Possibly he had some sort of governmental function, but this would be limited to that of a *legatus*, or representative of the procurator over Malta based in Achaea and not in Malta. At minimal he was a wealthy man considered to be among the ranks of the upper levels of local society on the island.

Third, ὃς ἀναδεξάμενος ἡμᾶς τρεῖς ἡμέρας φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν, *who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days*. Note the “we” emphasis again in this narrative. Luke includes himself as a part of the 276

surrounding that place were estates belonging to ... The general meaning is clear. ‘Le singulier χωρίον signifie “champ”; le pluriel doit désigner un ensemble de champs, donc une “campagne”, où un “domaine”, selon l’importance du terrain’ (Delebecque 136). Delebecque adds that the meaning here will be domaine since the estate is the property of the chief man of the island. See 1:18. for ὑπῆρχεν with the dative as a way of expressing possession cf. 3:6; 4:37; see BDR § 189:1, n. 1.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1224.]

<sup>579</sup>Πόπλιος, ου, ὁ (Diod S 11, 41, 1; 13, 7, 1; 14, 47, 1 al.; Plut.; ins, pap; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 333; Jos., Ant. 14, 236) *Publius*, a Roman praenomen (first or personal name; s. AWalde, Latein. etymolog. Wörterbuch 2 1910 s.v. poplicus; B-D-F §41, 2; cp. Mlt-H. 155). **Ac 28:7f** mentions a Π. as πρώτος τῆς νήσου for the island of Malta. The title is also attested elsewh. for Malta: IG XIV, 601 [=IGR I, 512] Λ. Κα[στρί]κιος Κυρ(εῖνα) Προῦδηνης ἱππεὺς Ῥωμ(αίων), πρώτος Μελιταίων καὶ πάτρων, ἄρξας καὶ ἀμφοιπολεύσας θεῶ Αὐγούστῳ; CIL X, 7495 [munic]ipi Mel(itensium) primus omnium (but s. Bruce, Acts 532f on this ins). As a rule it is taken for granted that it was a designation for the highest Roman official on the island (Holtzmann, Wendt, Bruce et al.). It has also been thought to refer to any office that was non-Roman in origin (AMayr, Die Insel Malta im Altertum 1909, 116; AWikenhauser, Die AG 1921, 345f; Beginn. IV 342; s. Haenchen and other comm. ad loc.). Diff. Warnecke [Romfahrt, 119–33 esp. 123], who associates a Publius Alf(ius) Primus w. the island of Cephallenia.—BHHW III 1531. Boffo, Iscrizioni 177–81 (lit). LGPN I. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 852.]

<sup>580</sup>“The owner was Publius; the variant spelling Ποπλίῳ (P<sup>74vid</sup> 81 104 945 1739 pc) underlines the connection with the Roman name Publius (BDR § 41:1, n. 3).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1224.]

<sup>581</sup>“He is described as the πρώτος τῆς νήσου. The use of this title in Malta is confirmed by epigraphic evidence; see especially IG 14:601: Λ. Καστρίκιος Κυρ(εῖνα) Προῦδηνης ἱππεὺς Ῥωμ(αίων), πρώτος Μελιταίων καὶ πάτρων, ἄρξας καὶ ἀμφοιπολείσας θεῶ Αὐγούστῳ. Cf. CIL 10:7495, municipi Melitensium primus omnium: on this however see Hemer (153). It seems that in this inscription *primus* is not a title but claims that the person named was the first to make certain benefactions. It has often been understood that the inscription(s) referred to the chief Roman administrator of the island, which had long been joined with and governed by the procurator of Sicily. Malta however was separated from Sicily in the early years of Augustus, and CIL 10:7494 (proc. insularum Melti. et Gaul.) indicates that Malta and the neighbouring small island of Gaulos (modern Gozo) were governed by a procurator. It is now usual to see in the Protos a local native officer. Cephallenia was a civitas libera (Pliny, *Natural History* 4:54), in which Roman interests were looked after by a *legatus* of the governor of Achaea. This office might well have borne the title of *primus*; Warnecke (123) draws attention to one holder of it, at about the time that must be assigned to Paul’s journey, whose name was *Publius Alf*. (= Alfius or Alfessus) *Primus*. This must be taken with the fact, which also has often been observed, that it is unusual for a Roman official to be referred to by his *praenomen* alone, as Publius. Warnecke suggests that the solution of two problems — the use of the name *Publius* and the title *primus* (πρῶτος) — may lie here. Luke gives a confused recollection of the name Publius Primus. The suggestion is not convincing. The title πρώτος was used in Malta, whether of a Roman or a local official. Lüdemann (272) thinks that Publius and πρώτος were both drawn from tradition.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1224–1225.]

people on the boat who made it to shore and then became recipients of Publius' hospitality. This was a lot of people to give food and shelter to suddenly without forewarning.<sup>582</sup> Although some would suggest that only Paul and his Christian traveling companions were included in the ἡμᾶς who received Publius' hospitality,<sup>583</sup> no linguistic basis for such a conclusion exists. The most natural meaning here contextually is that this leading citizen of island with his position was fully able to extend hospitality initially (for three days) to the entire number of those who had been on board the ship. The hospitality from Publius lasted just τρεῖς ἡμέρας, *three days*. The large number of individuals needing care would have mandated that the group be divided out into small groups and re-assigned to others on the island. For as v. 11 clearly suggests their stay on the island lasted three months. From all indication Paul and those with him were invited to stay with Publius, while the others went to other homes. Very possibly the centurion as a Roman military officer was included in this group. Paul would have likely been invited because of the snake bite miracle on the beach that had been reported to Publius from the locals who were convinced that Paul was some kind of a very special holy man (v. 6, αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν). That greatly elevated his status in the eyes of the locals.

The depiction of hospitality here is set up interestingly: ὃς ἀναδεξάμενος<sup>584</sup> ἡμᾶς . . . φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν, *who after having received us, entertained us warmly*. The aorist participle ἀναδεξάμενος denotes the initial welcoming reception of the group. It is attached temporally to the finite verb ἐξένισεν which defines the entertaining of a stranger in one's home. The manner of that activity is defined by the adverb of manner φιλοφρόνως in the sense of very friendly. When all of this is put together for form a single description the impacts is to stress very generous hospitality on the part of Publius.<sup>585</sup> Given the very positive cultural attitude toward the importance of showing hospitality to strangers in the first century world, the picture painted here by Luke is not particularly unusual or abnormal. Some of the modern commentators' issues with this picture arise out of their living in an entirely different cultural mentality about hospitality, and especially toward people one doesn't already know. But where ancient patterns of hospitality exist in the modern world, such among most Arabs in the middle east, a depiction such as Luke's is easily understandable and seems entirely normal.

At some point during Paul's stay with Publius, the apostle leaned of the sick father of Publius (v. 8): ἐγένετο δὲ τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Ποπλίου πυρετοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίῳ συνεχόμενον κατακεῖσθαι, *It happened that the father of Publius was lying down being sick with fever and dysentery*. Luke uses a traditional Jewish way of introducing a new story, even a miracle narrative, that is rather commonplace in Acts: ἐγένετο with an infinitive phrase as the verb subject.<sup>586</sup> This pattern signals a unit of material, normally narrative rather than discourse is being introduced

<sup>582</sup>“Some have assumed that the first-person plural language here no longer refers to the whole ship's company (as it does in vv. 1–2 and the previous chapter), but that it applies to Paul and his companions alone. Nevertheless, it is possible that all were included in this hospitality, and that after three days, ‘the burden of housing and feeding Julius, his soldiers and the prisoners would probably have fallen to various members of the community’.” [David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 701.]

<sup>583</sup>“Publius received and for three days entertained us (ἡμᾶς), now in all probability no longer the whole company from the ship but Paul and his companions.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1225.]

<sup>584</sup>A wide range of verb forms suggests the welcoming of others into one's home, as the Louw-Nida lexicon illustrates:

**34.53** προσλαμβάνομαι<sup>ε</sup>; παραλαμβάνω<sup>δ</sup>; ἀπολαμβάνω<sup>δ</sup>; δέχομαι<sup>β</sup>; ἀναδέχομαι<sup>ε</sup>; ἀποδέχομαι<sup>ε</sup>; ἐπιδέχομαι<sup>ε</sup>; εἰσδέχομαι; ὑποδέχομαι; προσδέχομαι<sup>β</sup>; παραδέχομαι<sup>β</sup>: to accept the presence of a person with friendliness—‘to welcome, to receive, to accept, to have as a guest.’<sup>10</sup>

fn. 10 = 10 There are no doubt certain contextual constraints involved in the choice of ἀναδέχομαι, ἀποδέχομαι, ἐπιδέχομαι, εἰσδέχομαι, ὑποδέχομαι, προσδέχομαι<sup>β</sup>, and παραδέχομαι<sup>β</sup> in the sense that the spacial relationships involved in the welcoming of a guest can be reflected in the prepositional prefixes. For example, in Lk 8:40 the use of ἀποδέχομαι may focus upon the particular source, while ἐπιδέχομαι in 3 Jn 10 may be relevant in view of the fact that the believers are coming to a particular point. προσδέχομαι in Lk 15:2 may suggest a kind of reciprocal relationship which is established with outcasts, and παραδέχομαι in Ac 15:4 may simply point to spacial proximity. However, it would be wrong to insist upon clear distinctions in meaning based on the very limited number of contexts involved. Some of these same distinctions in spacial relations may exist for the set προσλαμβάνομαι, παραλαμβάνω<sup>δ</sup>, and ἀπολαμβάνω<sup>δ</sup> sup.

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 452.v]

<sup>585</sup>“This man had probably received the gift of Roman citizenship because of his position or his public benefactions.<sup>21</sup> He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days (*hos anadexamenos hēmas treis hēmeras philophronōs exenisen*, ‘who received us and for three days kindly showed hospitality’). The language is emphatic here since *exenisen* means ‘entertained as a guest’ and the adverb *philophronōs* stresses that he did this ‘in a friendly manner’ (BAGD).” [David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 701.]

<sup>586</sup>“Καὶ ἐγένετο (or ἐγένετο δὲ) suggests the familiar Hebrew וַיְהִי; the verb with the waw consecutive that would follow in Hebrew is represented in various ways. Thus:



with what in modern grammar would be labeled a topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph. Also to note is the use of the plural form for fever, πυρετοῖς from πυρετός is standard ancient medical reference.<sup>587</sup> But this really says nothing about Luke's assumed medical background, since the medical language was widely present in the Greek historians' materials, which Luke does know quite well. The mentioning also of καὶ δυσεντερῖω, and [dysentery](#), reflects a health problem never mentioned in the Jewish literature outside of Josephus.<sup>588</sup> The depiction of the man's illness suggests he was in a serious condition.<sup>589</sup>

Paul upon learning of this need arranged to visit the father and to heal him (v. 8b): πρὸς ὃν ὁ Παῦλος εἰσελθὼν καὶ προσευξάμενος ἐπιθεῖς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ ἴασατο αὐτόν, [to whom Paul went in and having prayed, having layed his hands on him, he healed him.](#)<sup>590</sup> The core clause of this involved sentence is at the front end, and it [happened that the father was laying in bed.](#) Everything else plays off this foundational statement, including this relative clause at the end of the with its core, πρὸς ὃν ὁ Παῦλος . . . ἴασατο αὐτόν, [regarding whom Paul . . . healed him.](#) The method of healing was a combination of touch and prayer: προσευξάμενος ἐπιθεῖς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ.<sup>591</sup> The use of prayer as part of the healing procedure underscores that Paul is not a god as the locals had so thought after surviving the snake bite (cf. v. 6).<sup>592</sup>

4:5: ἐγένετο δέ with accusative and infinitive, συναχθῆναι τοὺς ἄρχοντας . . .

9:3: ἐγένετο with accusative and infinitive, αὐτὸν ἐγγίξειν

9:32: ἐγένετο δέ with accusative and infinitive, Πέτρον κατελθεῖν

9:43: ἐγένετο δέ with the infinitive, μεῖναι

10:25: ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο with accusative and the genitive of the infinitive, τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν τὸν Πέτρον

11:26: ἐγένετο with dative, καί, and infinitive, αὐτοῖς καὶ συναχθῆναι

14:1: ἐγένετο δέ with accusative and infinitive, εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοῦς

16:16: ἐγένετο δέ with accusative and infinitive, παιδισκίην ὑπαντήσαι

19:1: ἐγένετο δέ with accusative and infinitive, Παῦλον κατελθεῖν (and ἐν τῷ with accusative and infinitive)

21:1: ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο with accusative and infinitive, ἀναχθῆναι ἡμᾶς

21:5: ὅτε δὲ ἐγένετο with accusative and infinitive, ἡμᾶς ἐξαρτίσαι

28:8: ἐγένετο δέ with accusative and infinitive, τὸν πατέρα κατακεῖσθαι

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), xlvi.]

<sup>587c</sup>πυρετός is used in the plural by medical writers; BA 1462 cites Galen, De Diff. Febr. 1:1 (7:275) and Alexander of Aphrodisias, De Febribus Libell. 31. This proves nothing regarding the identity of the writer; the plural was used also by non-medical writers, e.g. Aristophanes, Wasps 1038; Plato, Timaeus 86a (dysentery is mentioned in the same context). P<sup>74</sup> has the singular πυρετῶ. δυσεντέριον is a late form of δυσεντερία (M. 2:125, 342).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1225.]

<sup>588c</sup>δυσεντέριον is a late form of δυσεντερία (M. 2:125, 342).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1225.]

<sup>589</sup>Interesting is that δυσεντερῖω, [with dysentery](#), from δυσεντέριον is only found here in the entire NT, and never occurs in the LXX. But the term is relatively common in the rest of ancient Greek writings. Not sure that the Jewish people had no such health problem. More likely they gave it a completely different label not related to the Greek understanding of this health issue.

δυσεντερία, ἡ, Ion. -λη dysentery, Hp.Aph.3.12 (pl.), al., Hdt.8.115, Pl.Ti.86a (pl.), Arist.Pr.861b16, etc., in horses, BCH66-7.181 (Abdera, iv B.C.).

δυσεντερῖάω, suffer from dysentery Hippiatr.39, Alex.Trall.9.3.

δυσεντερικός, ἡ, ὄν, afflicted with dysentery, Hp.Coac.451, Arr.Epict.2.21.22, Mnesith.ap.Orib.4.4.4; liable to it, Plu.2.101c; δ. πάθη Epicur.Fr.138; τὰ δ. Dsc.1.51.

δυσεντεριον, τό, late form of δυσεντερία, Act.Ap.28.8, Moeris129.

δυσεντεριώδης, ες, ill with dysentery, Hp.Epid.1.5, 3.8; symptomatic of or belonging to it, ib. 3.17.θ; τρόπος Aret.SD2.9.

δυσεντερος, ον, suffering from dysentery, Nic.Al.382.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 456.]

<sup>590c</sup>Hemer (153f.) suggests that ‘the cause of fever may well have been that associated with this island, ‘Malta fever’, discovered in 1887 to be caused by an endemic microorganism *Micrococcus Melitensis*, which infected the milk of the Maltese goats’. A point in favour of Malta against Cephallenia, but a small one; there are other causes of fever.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1226.]

<sup>591c</sup>For the laying on of hands for healing, see Luke 4:40; 10:30; 13:13; Acts 16:23; for prayer accompanying the laying on of hands, see Acts 6:6 and 13:3. The ministry of healing has throughout Luke-Acts been closely associated with the proclamation of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:38–44; 6:17–20; 7:20–23; 9:1–11; Acts 3:12–16).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 463.]

<sup>592c</sup>Paul prayed that the cure might be effected. ‘By praying Paul makes it plain that he is not the one responsible for the miracle, but only the minister, so that God may not be defrauded of His glory’ (Calvin 2:303). Later writers make the same observation and relate it to the view that Paul is represented in Acts as a θεῖος ἀνὴρ. So Roloff (367); Pesch (2:299); also Weiser (670): ‘Darin ist

The impact of Paul's healing of the father of Publius is substantial and is described in the single sentence found in verses nine and ten: 9 τούτου δὲ γενομένου καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας προσήρχοντο καὶ ἐθεραπεύοντο, 10 οἱ καὶ πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀναγομένοις ἐπέθεντο τὰ πρὸς τὰς χρείας. 9 After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10 They bestowed many honors on us, and when we were about to sail, they put on board all the provisions we needed. The signalling of this sentence as an impact of Paul's healing of Publius' father is stated with the genitive absolute participle phrase: τούτου δὲ γενομένου, and this having happened.

The compound core clauses, οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας προσήρχοντο καὶ ἐθεραπεύοντο, lays out the primary impact: the rest who were having sicknesses with disease began coming and were being healed. The shift in terminology from *ιάσατο* to *ἐθεραπεύοντο* here for healing does not signal that Paul healed Publius' father but Luke took care of the others with conventional medical treatments.<sup>593</sup> Two verbal actions are central. They had to first come to where Paul was: *προσήρχοντο*. He did not heal without seeing the people, and evidently without personal contact. Both verbs are cast in the Greek imperfect tense asserting an ongoing action of both coming and healing. The specification of the subject of both verbs, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας, also the rest who were possessing sickness with illness, indicates that large numbers of the sick people on the island lined up to seek healing from Paul. This didn't happen all at once. Verse 11 indicates the length of stay by Paul and the others on the island was *τρεῖς μῆνας*, three months.

The secondary impact is defined by the relative clause in v. 10: οἱ καὶ πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀναγομένοις ἐπέθεντο τὰ πρὸς τὰς χρείας, who also honored us with many honors and when about to sail they put on board the things for our needs. What does *πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς* precisely mean?<sup>594</sup> Although *πολλαῖς τιμαῖς* could mean many fees being paid for the healings, and Luke does tend to imply money with this term in Acts 4:34; 5:2–3; 7:16; 19:19, the more likely meaning is that money was given to Paul, but not as a payment of a fee, and instead as an expression of gratitude for the miraculous healing and to help Paul in his travel expenses.<sup>595</sup> This understanding better matches the second action of gratitude from the people on the island *ἐπέθεντο τὰ πρὸς τὰς χρείας*, they put on board the things for our needs.<sup>596</sup> This would have centered on food supplies for use while traveling by ship to their destination, since they had lost those supplies with the shipwreck at Malta with the previous ship. No indication is given by Luke about how much or even if any of the supplies on the previous

---

ein wichtiges Korrektiv gegenüber der verbreiteten hellenistischen Auffassung von Wundertätern als “göttlichen Menschen” (*theioi andres*) zu sehen.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1226.]

<sup>593</sup>“The cure of Publius’ father naturally kindled hope in other inhabitants of the island who were ill (*ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας*); these came to Paul for healing and were cured. There is no ground for the suggestion that while Paul (miraculously) cured Publius’ father (*ιάσατο*) the other inhabitants were given non-miraculous attention (*ἐθεραπεύοντο*) by Luke and his medical team. Cf. *ἐθεραπεύοντο* at 5:16.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1226.]

<sup>594</sup>“The translation of *pollais timais etimēsan* is uncertain, since time can refer either to honor (Herodotus, Persian Wars 1:168; 2 Macc 9:21; John 4:44; Rom 13:7; 1 Cor 12:24; 1 Tim 1:17) or to payment/price (see Josephus, Life 153; 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Tim 5:7). Luke tends to use the term in the monetary sense (Acts 4:34; 5:2–3; 7:16; 19:19). Despite that, the translation chooses “honors” since the next phrase spells out the gift of possessions.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 463.]

<sup>595</sup>Although ancient non-Christian ‘healers’ often charged fees for their services, not only was this never done with any healing described in the NT, it would run contrary to the principle of healing as an affirmation of the Gospel of the free grace of God.

Somewhat hyperbolically no doubt, v. 9 says the rest of the sick on the island came to Paul after this first miracle and were cured. Instead of bestowing on Paul great divine titles, they offer instead *τιμαῖς*, which may mean honors (cf. 2 Macc. 9:21; John 4:44; Rom. 13:7; 1 Cor. 12:24; 1 Tim. 5:7), but Luke regularly uses the term in a monetary sense (cf. Acts 4:34; 5:2–3; 7:16; 19:19). In view of the connection in v. 10 of these gifts with provisions that were put on board the ship when Paul and the others were leaving, it is probable that we should see this as traveling funds, something that elsewhere Paul was willing to receive from grateful supporters (cf. 1 Cor. 16:6).<sup>136</sup> As Johnson says, the sharing of possessions is a sign in Acts of sharing in the good news, and so perhaps we are to think that Paul did indeed share the gospel in Malta, though the text does not say so.<sup>137</sup> While the focus of this entire narrative is on Paul, it is not impossible, in view of the “we” in v. 10, that Luke aided in the curing of various people, practicing his profession.

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 780–781.]

<sup>596</sup>“The general meaning is clear, but the precise translation is uncertain: *epitithēmi* could be taken in the physical sense: ‘as we were sailing away (*anagomenois*), they put on board the things we needed (*ta pros tas chreias*, see 20:34),’ or could be taken in the broader sense, they ‘bestowed.’ As always in Luke-Acts, the sharing of physical possessions is a symbol of sharing in the good news (Luke 6:32–36; 8:3; 12:32–34; 14:13–14; 18:22; 21:1–4; Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–37).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 463.]

ship were recovered after the shipwreck. Thus a lot of supplies would be needed for 276 people on the new ship that the centurion had contracted with to take them on to Rome. Evidently the new ship, named the Twin Brothers (v. 11) was also a large Alexandrian grain ship like the previous one. Perhaps the centurion contracted to purchase some of the necessary food supplies from this ship's owner. Luke doesn't mention this with his focus on the generosity of the islanders to the group. Although the ἡμᾶς, *us*, could just imply Paul and those Christians including Luke who were traveling with him, Luke has used the pronoun earlier in reference to the entire group of 276 people, and thus most likely means the same thing here.

The episode of the shipwreck on the island of Malta serves to highlight Paul as a godly servant of Christ, and to correct any confusion with him being divine.<sup>597</sup> In this final recorded miracle in Paul's ministry his action both in the individual healing of Publius' father and in the subsequent summary narrative of multiple non-described miracles Luke portrays Paul along the same lines of the healing ministry of Jesus, e.g., the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in Lk. 4:38-41 (// Mt. 8:14-17 // Mk. 1:29-34). Additionally the larger objective of Luke with 27:1-28:10 is achieved within the framework of ancient Hellenistic signals of guilt or innocence of crimes against both the government and humanity. Surviving both the shipwreck and the snake bite provided very convincing proof that Paul was innocent of any charges being brought against him from Judea.<sup>598</sup> God's plan for Paul is being carried out step by step, even though the apostle is not given many of the details of how God is going to work.

By using the two ancient literary genre of the sea voyage and the shipwreck at sea in chapters 27 and 28, Luke adds a powerful level of persuasion to his story of God's working in the life of Paul. This was particularly true for Theophilus (cf. 1:1) and other non-Jewish readers of Acts. Luke's skillful use of these literary forms stands out as a remarkable example of ancient writers making effective use of such patterns in order to communicate their points through ancient history writing.

### 8.1.3.5 Final Leg of the Trip: Malta to Rome, Acts 28:11-15

11 Μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς μῆνας ἀνήχθημεν ἐν πλοίῳ παρακεχειμακότη ἐν τῇ νήσῳ, Ἀλεξανδρίνῳ, παρασήμῳ Διοσκοῦροις, 12 καὶ καταθέντες εἰς Συρακοῦσας ἐπεμείναμεν ἡμέρας τρεῖς, 13 ὅθεν περιελόντες κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον. καὶ μετὰ μίαν ἡμέραν ἐπιγενομένου νότου δευτεραῖοι ἤλθομεν εἰς Ποτιόλους, 14 οὗ εὐρόντες ἀδελφοὺς παρεκλήθημεν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπιμείναι ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ· καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἤλθαμεν. 15 κάκειθεν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἀκούσαντες τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν ἤλθαν εἰς ἀπάντησιν ἡμῖν ἄχρι Ἀππιίου φόρου καὶ Τριῶν ταβερνῶν, οὓς ἰδὼν ὁ Παῦλος εὐχαριστήσας τῷ θεῷ ἔλαβεν θάρσος.

11 Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; 13 then we weighed anchor

<sup>597c</sup> Acts 28:7–10 functions in two ways. First, it refutes the natives' wrong belief that Paul is a god (v. 6). How? In v. 8, in connection with the healing of Publius's father, Paul 'prays' for the healing. A god does not pray for a healing but heals out of himself (cf. Luke 8:46). Likewise, a magician with pretensions of deity would not pray but would regard the miracle as his own doing. This is made clear by Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 8.7.9. In Apollonius's defense before Domitian, he contends that he is no magician even though he has eradicated the disease causing a plague in Ephesus. Why? Because he 'prayed' to Hercules for the healing. A magician would not do this because he would consider it his own achievement. Contrary to the natives' opinion, Paul is neither a god nor a pretender to divine honors (a magician; cf. 8:10).

"Second, it indicates that Paul is a righteous man. James 5:16b–18, in the context of prayers for healing, uses Elijah as an example to indicate that 'the fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.' John 9:31, again in the context of healing, has the formerly blind man declare, 'We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him.' That Paul's prayer is answered is an indication that he is a righteous man. Acts 28:1–10 declares Paul innocent by God's decree. This goes hand in glove with the same point being made in ch. 27. Acts 27 says Paul is not guilty even if he was in a storm and shipwreck. Acts 28 says Paul is not guilty even if a serpent bit him. Both affirm Paul is God's servant, a righteous man to whom God discloses his will and whose prayers are answered. By God's decree, Paul is innocent. If so, Acts 27:1–28:16 functions to declare divine vindication of Paul just as 23:1–26:32 functions to declare Paul innocent before human authorities."

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 218.]

<sup>598c</sup> At the same time Acts 27:1–28:10 functions to show that Paul is pronounced innocent by God, it also serves to show that what transpires happens according to the divine plan. According to Luke-Acts, a divine plan stands behind the events of history. It is spoken of in various ways: for example, the plan of God (*boulō tou theou*) in Luke 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 5:38–39; 13:36; 20:27; God's will (*thelōma*) in Luke 22:42; Acts 21:14; 22:14; God's authority (*exousia*) in Acts 1:7. Events of history happen according to God's plan in Luke-Acts. This is often described with the term *dei* ('it is necessary,' 'must,' 'be destined'; Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 21:9; 22:37; 24:7; 24:26; 24:44; Acts 1:16; 1:21; 3:21; 4:12; 9:16; 17:3; 23:11; 27:24). The realization of the divine plan is often spoken of in terms of fulfillment: Luke 1:20; 4:21; 21:24; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 13:27 all use *plōroun*; Luke 9:51 uses *sympplōrounthai*; Luke 18:31 and 22:37 employ *telein*." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 218–219.]



and came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. 14 There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. 15 The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

In this final leg of the voyage to Rome Luke continues the rather detailed narrating of the maritime travels. The port cities of Syracuse, Rhetum, Puteoli are described, as well as the inland cities of the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns before arriving in Rome itself.

The internal structure of vv. 11-15 follows a twofold pattern with the remaining ship voyage in vv. 11-14 from Malta to Puteoli and then the overland trip from Puteoli to Rome in v. 15 and perhaps v. 16 to be included as well.<sup>599</sup>

**The remaining ship voyage to Puteoli**, vv. 11-14. 11 Μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς μῆνας ἀνήχθημεν ἐν πλοίῳ παρακεχειμακῶτι ἐν τῇ νήσῳ, Ἀλεξανδρίνῳ, παρασήμῳ Διοσκούροις. 12 καὶ καταχθέντες εἰς Συρακούσας ἐπεμείναμεν ἡμέρας τρεῖς, 13 ὅθεν περιελόντες κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον. καὶ μετὰ μίαν ἡμέραν ἐπιγενομένου νότου δευτεραῖοι ἤλθομεν εἰς Ποτιόλους, 14 οὗ εὐρόντες ἀδελφοὺς παρεκλήθημεν παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ· καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἤλθαμεν. 11 Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; 13 then we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. 14 There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome.

The first sentence in v. 11 functions as an introductory topic sentence with the core verb of the main clause ἀνήχθημεν, from ἀνάγω and here with the meaning of ‘to set sail.’<sup>600</sup> The verb is cast in the first person plural, we, spelling thus maintaining Luke’s ‘we’ section emphasis. From the beginning of the landing on Malta “we” refers not just to Paul and his traveling companions, but all 276 individuals on the ship: cf. v. 1, 2, 7, 10. Thus to understand the “we” in verse eleven as referring only to Paul and his friends is completely unjustified, even though a few commentators do so.

Everything else in the sentence is anchored directly or indirectly to this verb.

First is the temporal prepositional phrase Μετὰ τρεῖς μῆνας, after three months. From the context it is clear that this three months specifies the time spent on Malta by Paul and the others from the point of the shipwreck. Quite clearly Luke in 28:1-10 only describes two events that occupied but a brief period of this three months, one at the beginning and the second toward the end of the period.

At what point on our calendar these three months should be positioned is not clear. Acts 27:9 identifies their arrival at Fair Havens on Crete soon after the Jewish Day of Atonement, διὰ τὸ καὶ τὴν νηστείαν ἤδη

<sup>599</sup>“The journey from Malta to Rome, probably undertaken in the early part of A.D. 60, appears to have gone quite smoothly, especially compared to what preceded it. Luke has chosen to begin and end the discussion of Paul’s journey to Rome with a straightforward travelogue (cf. 27:1–8; 28:11–16). As Praeder says, the ones in 27:1–8 and 28:11–16 are shorter than many such travelogues that are found in Greco-Roman literature, but one can not discern the genre or purpose of Acts, or this section of it, purely on the basis of the presence of a travelogue in Acts 27 and 28. They do, however, suggest the author’s interest in personal reports and reminiscences.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 783.]

<sup>600</sup>ἀνάγω fut. ἀνάξω LXX; 2 aor. ἀνήγαγον; 1 aor. pass. ἀνήχθην (Hom.+; ins, pap, LXX, En 28:3; TestSol, TestAbr, Test12Patr, Philo, Joseph., Just.; Mel., Fgm. 9, 6; Ath. 11, 2 ἐπὶ παρησίαν ἀναγαγεῖν ‘raise [my voice] to a pitch of boldness’). . . .

4. as a nautical t.t. (ἀ. τὴν ναῦν put a ship to sea), mid. or pass. ἀνάγεσθαι to begin to go by boat, put out to sea (Hdt., Demosth., also Polyb. 1, 21, 4; 1, 23, 3 al.; pap [Mayer 380]; Jos., Bell. 3, 502): ἀνήχθημεν ἐν πλοίῳ we put to sea in a ship Ac 28:11. ἀ. ἀπὸ τῆς Πάφου (cp. Epict. 3, 21, 12 ἀ. ἀπὸ λιμένος) put out from Paphos Ac 13:13; cp. 16:11; 18:21; 27:21. ἐκεῖθεν (Jos., Ant. 14, 377) 27:4, 12. W. the course given εἰς τὴν Συρίαν 20:3 (cp. BGU 1200, 14 [I B.C.] ἀ. εἰς Ἰταλίαν). ἐπὶ τὴν Ἄσσον vs. 13. Abs. ἀνήχθησαν they set sail Lk 8:22, cp. Ac 21:1f; 27:2; 28:10; AcPl Ha 7, 13 (Just., D. 142, 2).

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 61-62.]



παρεληλυθέναι, which would have been late October. They shipwrecked about two weeks later at Malta. Thus the three months would mean November, December, and January, depending on what τρεῖς μήνας specified precisely -- probably not 90 days. Then setting out from Malta in early February would have put them still in a rather dangerous winter travel period.<sup>601</sup> But it is not difficult to understand that a grain ship might be in a hurry to get on to Rome, since it was already close by.

After the verb comes ἐν πλοίῳ παρακεχειμακότι ἐν τῇ νήσῳ, Ἀλεξανδρίῳ, παρασήμῳ Διοσκούροις, *by a boat which had spent the winter at the island, an Alexandrian ship, marked as Twin Brothers*. The verb action is signaled by the prepositional phrase ἐν πλοίῳ thus marking out the action as nautical. Then the boat is defined three ways. It is one that had spent the winter at Malta: παρακεχειμακότι ἐν τῇ νήσῳ. To spend the winter at some island before crossing the broad expanse of water from the region of Greece over to the Italian peninsula had been the intention of the ship's owner and the Roman centurion. Initially their goal was to stay at Phoenix on the island of Crete (cf. 27:12). What Luke implies here is that ships often used Malta for wintering their ships. Even the small waterways from Malta up the Italian coast could be quite dangerous for navigation during the winter months.

Next the ship is identified as Ἀλεξανδρίῳ, *an Alexanderian ship*. In the two uses of this term in 27:6 and 28:11, both ships are identified as a part of the *merchant ships* carrying wheat and barley from Alexandria, Egypt to Rome.<sup>602</sup> Additionally the ship was identified as παρασήμῳ Διοσκούροις. Precisely what does this mean?<sup>603</sup>

<sup>601</sup>As a period of delay on a sea voyage it can be paralleled (Josephus, War 2:203, συνέβη χειμασθῆναι τρεῖς μήνας ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ), but Paul's voyage began after the Day of Atonement (27:9) and presumably not very long afterwards or there would have been no point in using the Day as a date; allowing for all the time references given in the narrative, one would suppose that Malta was reached by the end of October. Three months would elapse by the end of January, a very early date for sailing to resume. See the passages cited on 27:9 and cf. Apuleius, Metamorphoses 11:5: On the day of Isis (5 March) it could be said *sedatis hybernis tempestatibus, et lenitis maris procellosis fluctibus, navigabili jam pelago*. Jam does not mean that sailing began on this day but it is implied that it had not been in progress long. There were however reasons why a grain ship (see below) might be in a hurry (see Hemer 154), and the crossing to Rhegium was one that might have been made early (Preuschen 156). 'Three months' is in any case to be regarded as an approximation, though Bauernfeind (278) insists that the journey recommenced in January." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1227.]

<sup>602</sup>Maritime archeology and ancient manuscripts from classical antiquity show evidence of vast Roman commercial fleets. The most substantial remains from this commerce are the infrastructure remains of harbors, moles, warehouses and lighthouses at ports such as Civitavecchia, Ostia, Portus, Leptis Magna and Caesarea Maritima. At Rome itself, Monte Testaccio is a tribute to the scale of this commerce. As with most Roman technology, the Roman seagoing commercial ships had no significant advances over Greek ships of the previous centuries, though the lead sheeting of hulls for protection seems to have been more common. The Romans used round hulled sailing ships. Continuous Mediterranean "police" protection over several centuries was one of the main factors of success of Roman commerce, given that Roman roads were designed more for feet or hooves than for wheels, and could not support the economical transport of goods over long distances. The Roman ships used would have been easy prey for pirates had it not been for the fleets of Liburnian galleys and triremes of the Roman navy.

"Bulky low-valued commodities, like grain and construction materials were traded only by sea routes, since the cost of sea transportation was 60 times lower than land. Staple goods and commodities like cereals for making bread and papyrus scrolls for book production were imported from Ptolemaic Egypt to Italy in a continuous fashion.

"The trade over the Indian Ocean blossomed in the 1st and 2nd century AD. The sailors made use of the monsoon to cross the ocean from the ports of Berenice, Leulos Limen and Myos Hormos on the Red Sea coast of Roman Egypt to the ports of Muziris and Nelkynda in Malabar coast. The main trading partners in southern India were the Tamil dynasties of the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras. Many Roman artifacts have been found in India; for example, at the archaeological site of Arikamedu, in Puducherry. Meticulous descriptions of the ports and items of trade around the Indian Ocean can be found in the Greek work Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (see article on Indo-Roman trade)."

[“Roman commerce: Sea routes,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)]

<sup>603</sup>The sense of the last two words in the verse is clear but their construction is not. Ships in antiquity often bore an image, or images, of a god, whose name provided the name of the ship (Lucian, Navigium 5, ... τὴν ἐπόνυμον τῆς νεῶς θεὸν ἐχούσα τὴν Ἴσιν ...); this one carried and was known by the sign of the Dioscuri. παρασήμῳ and Διοσκούροις are both in the dative case. παρασήμῳ may be an adjective; if so, it would agree with πλοίῳ: a boat marked with, indicated by, the Dioscuri. This, if admissible, makes good p 1228 sense; it seems to be preferred by BA 1257. But the adjective παράσημος seems almost always to have an unfavourable meaning. The meanings listed in LS 1323 are 'marked amiss or falsely, counterfeit ... falsely stamped ... of words and phrases, false, incorrect ... eccentricity of style ... marked by the side, noted ... marked, notorious for ... remarked as ... conspicuousness ... indicative'. In nearly all these meanings the effect of the compounded παρά is evident. It seems more probable that Luke is using the noun παράσημον, for which LS give as a general meaning distinguishing mark, with examples including ensign of a ship, or of a city, or of patricians and plebeians, insignia praetoria (παράσημα στρατηγικά), birthmarks (παράσημα σωματικά), password. If this way of taking παρασήμῳ is adopted one is left with the problem of the datives. Turner (M. 3:243) thinks that this may be an example of a dative absolute, mentioning Mt. 14:6 and Mk 9:28 (P45) as other NT examples (of which the latter must be considered very doubtful). He refers to Moule (IB 45), but Moule regards the Matthean and Marcan passages as the only NT examples and would presumably therefore not consider Acts 28:11



This is difficult to answer. The general sense of the adjective παράσημος, ον is “pert. to being marked (on the side) so as to be distinguished, marked.”<sup>604</sup> But does this mean images of these two Greek gods painted on either side of the bow of the ship? Or, a carved figurine image attached to the bow? Or, little more than the name of the ship? Most translators and commentators assume both the last two meanings. The title Διόσκουροι, *Twin Brothers*, designated the twin sons of Zeus and Leda, Greek gods in the ancient world, whose names were Castor and Pollux. They were often regarded as the patron protectors of sailors and ships on the sea.<sup>605</sup> Against the backdrop of the ridiculing of such practices by the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon in chapters thirteen and fourteen, is Luke injecting a touch of sarcasm by his more precise identification of this ship? Perhaps so. Obviously it has been the God whom Paul worships that has brought them through their perils at sea. Some dead piece of wood certainly will not carry them the rest of the way to Rome!



The second Greek sentence is found in verses 12-13a: 12 καὶ καταθέντες εἰς Συρακούσας ἐπεμείναμεν ἡμέρας τρεῖς, 13 ὅθεν περιελόντες κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον. The core verb ἐπεμείναμεν underscores the primary point that Luke wishes to make: that the ship was in port for three days. The temporal participle phrase sets up the main verb: καὶ καταθέντες εἰς Συρακούσας, *after having put in port at Syracuse*. This verb κατάγω has a nautical meaning of

one. There is a long note in BDR § 198:7, n. 11: ‘Als Dat. soz. “mit den Dioskuren als Schiffszeichen” (Ramsay, Luke 36f. als korrekt nach Inschriftengebrauch); vielfach als Dat. instr. aufgefasst: “gekennzeichnet durch die Dioskuren” (Bauer sv παράσημος Haenchen zSt; vgl Plut. mor. 823B [= Praecepta Politica 31] ἐπιφθόνους παράσημος “durch Gehässigkeiten sich bemerkbar machend”); vielleicht aber auch nur mechanische Deklination eines registraturmässigen (πλοῖον) παράσημον Διοσκούροι “ein Schiff, Schiffszeichen die D.”’ The last suggestion is perhaps the best. Similarly Page (266), quoting an inscription, ... gubernatore navis parasemo Isopharia. The inscription is given in full in Smith (269). See also Plutarch, Septem Sapientium Convivium 18 (162A); Mulierum Virtutes 9 (247f.).

“Διοσκούροις is the reading of most MSS; P74 P\* Ψ 81c 104 326 453 2464 al have Διοσκόροις. This is the Attic spelling; —ου— is the Hellenistic, though it occurs in Plato and Thucydides (BDR § 30:3, n. 6). ‘Διόσκουροι, ὀρθότερον Διόσκοροι. γέλασε οὖν τοὺς σὺν τῷ υ λέγοντας’ (Phrynichus 212; see Lobeck quoted in Rutherford, 310f.). See also M. 2:88. The minuscules that have Διοσκόροις ‘are mainly of the I-groups, and it may well have stood in the “Western” text’ (Ropes, Begs. 3:251).

“The Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces (Latinized as Pollux), were a natural choice as patrons of the ship; they were called upon by sailors as helpers in time of need. Epictetus 2:18:29, τοῦ θεοῦ μέμνησο, ἐκεῖνον ἐπικαλοῦ βοηθὸν καὶ παραστάτην ὡς τοὺς Διοσκόρους ἐν χειμῶνι οἱ πλέοντες.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1227–1228.]

<sup>604</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 771.

<sup>605</sup>“It had the Dioscuri as its figurehead (v. 11). The Dioscuri were the twin sons of Zeus, Castor and Pollux, who were associated with protection at sea (Homeric Hymns 33; Euripides, *Orestes* 1635–37; Diodorus Siculus 4.43.1–2). Theocritus, *The Hymn to the Dioscuri* 14–22, speaks of them with awe.

Night comes, and with it a great storm from the sky, and the broad sea rattles and splashes with the battery of the blast and of the irresistible hail. But for all that, ye, even ye, do draw both the ship and the despairing shipmen from out of hell; the winds abate, the sea puts on a shining calm, the clouds run asunder this way and that; till out comes the Bears peeping, and betwixt the Asses lo! that Manger so dim, which betokens all fair for voyaging on the sea.

“A figurehead of the Twins, saviors from the sea, was carved from wood and located at the front of the ship (v. 11). The Wisdom of Solomon ridicules such pagan idolatry, speaking of prayers ‘for a prosperous journey’ to ‘a thing that cannot take a step’ (13:18). ‘Again, one preparing to sail and about to voyage over raging waves calls upon a piece of wood more fragile than the ship which carries him’ (14:1). Deliverance from the sea comes from the Creator: ‘O Father ... thou hast given it [the ship] a path in the sea, and a safe way through the waves, showing that thou canst save from every danger’ (14:3–4). Is Luke reflecting such sarcasm when he says the ship protected by the Dioscuri spent the winter safely in the harbor while Paul and his companions were rescued from their peril at sea by the living God who has power even over storms? (cf. Luke 8:22–25; Talbert and Hayes 1995, 321–36).”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 219–220.]



coming into port, and Luke has used the verb three times this way in the Sea Voyage description: 27:3; 28:12, and 21:3 possibly. The location here was Συρακούσας from Συράκουσαι, *Syracuse*.<sup>606</sup> The three day stay probably signaled either unfavorable winds to continue on or the loading/unloading of cargo. Luke doesn't mention the visiting of a Christian congregation by Paul during this stay, as at Puteoli later.

Connected to the reference to Συρακούσας is the adverbial local relative clause introduced by ὅθεν, *from there*. The next leg of the journey is then specified: ὅθεν περιελόντες<sup>607</sup> κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον, *from there having weighted anchor we arrived at Rhegium*.<sup>608</sup> Again Luke uses a naval meaning of περιελόντες from περιαιρέω to

---

606“**SYRACUSE** (PLACE) [Gk *Syrakousa* (Συρακουσα)]. A Greek city on the SE coast of Sicily (37°07'N; 15°11'E) where Paul's ship put in for three days on the voyage to Rome after having been shipwrecked on the island of Malta (Acts 28:12). The long stay of three days could be attributed to wind conditions or to the unloading and loading of cargo (Haenchen 1971:718). The city is situated at the edge of the great south Sicilian limestone formations. Originally only on the small island of Ortygia, right off of the coast of Sicily, the city eventually grew and spread to the mainland. At first the island was connected to the mainland by a dam but later a bridge was built.

“According to Thucydides (6.3.2; see also Strab. 6.2.4) Syracuse was founded by Archias from Corinth one year after Nexos was founded (734 B.C.). At first Syracuse was ruled by land proprietors or gamoroi, those who divide the land (Finley 1979:18). The city prospered under its tyrants Galon and his brother Hieron who succeeded him (ca. 485–467 B.C.). In 413 B.C., Syracuse was besieged by Athens and the Athenian armies were defeated. This marked the turning point in the Peloponnesian War. Eventually the city was taken by Marcellus in 212 and became a Roman province. (A more extensive survey of Syracuse' political history can be found in PW 8:1478–1535.)

“At the time of Paul's visit, Syracuse was still a very prosperous city. Cicero (106–43 B.C.) gives an extensive description of the city and calls it the richest and fairest city in all of Sicily, strong and beautiful to behold (Cic. Verr. 2.4 115–19). Two harbors are found in the city, a large one on the mainland and a small one on the island.

“A few remains of ancient Syracuse are still in existence. The temple of Apollo and a Roman amphitheater are on the mainland; the temple of Athena on the island was built into the Church of Santa Maria delle Colonne along with a number of early Christian catacombs. On the W side of the island there is still the fresh water spring called Arethusa.”

[Arnold Betz, “Syracuse (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 270–271.]

<sup>607</sup>“περιελόντες (κ\* B Ψ (gig)) is so surprising a reading that the variant περιελθόντες (P<sup>74</sup> κc A 066 M lat sy) is easily explained. But περιελόντες may be too difficult to be accepted. Its usual meaning is that suggested by its etymology; it means to take away from round something. No object is expressed, but BA 1301 (and others) explain it as referring to the raising of anchors. See Hort, Introduction 226f. (‘the elliptic employment of transitive verbs being common in Greek nautical language as in English’). See 27:40. Metzger (500f.) refers to Hort, but also observes that περιελόντες could easily be derived from περιελθόντες through the simple dropping of Θ before O. Given the habit noted by Hort (cf. Delebecque 137) it seems best to take the participle to mean ‘weighing anchor’, perhaps ‘casting off’. It is in any case clear that the ship headed northwards for the strait of Messina and came (καταντῶν as at 27:12; the word occurs 9 times in Acts, 4 times in the rest of the NT) to Rhegium. After one day, to which no incident is assigned, a south wind arose—exactly what was needed for a voyage up the west coast of Italy. The name of the wind, νότος (it ought perhaps to be printed Νότος; cf. 27:14), has no article; see M. 3:172; BDR § 253:5, n. 7.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1229.]

<sup>608</sup>“**RHEGIUM** (PLACE) [Gk *Rhēgion* (Ῥήγιον)]. The modern city of Reggio di Calabria, located along the SW coast of the ‘toe’ of Italy (38°06'N; 15°39'E) opposite the Sicilian city of Messina. The Strait of Messina, which separates Sicily and Italy, is only ca. 7 miles wide near Rhegium. During his voyage to Rome, Paul stopped at this city after traveling from Syracuse. He and the others on the ship waited one day at Rhegium for a S wind which allowed them to tack N to the city of Puteoli (Acts 28:13).

“The Alexandrian ship which carried Paul to Rhegium had a carved figure of the heads of the ‘Twin Gods’ (Acts 28:11). Rhegium, as found on coins of the city, was noted for the worship of the Dioscuri or the ‘Twin Gods,’ namely Castor and Polydeuces or Pol-lux, who were the ‘Sons of Zeus’ and patron deities of sailors. Rhegium is near two infamous sailing hazards which may have fostered this devotion to the ‘Twin Gods.’ These hazards were located just to the N of Rhegium at either side of the Strait of Messina and were identified in Greek mythology with two sisters, Scylla and Charybdis. The dangerous whirlpool of Charybdis was located on the Sicily side of the Strait of Messina while the threatening rock of Scylla was on the Italian side.

“The etymology of the name of the city is unclear. Some ancient sources, using the idea that Sicily was separated from Italy by an earthquake, trace it to the Greek term rhenymyi, ‘to split or rend’ (Aesch., Fragment 230), while other ancient authors suggest that the city had royal origins. Hence the name is from the Latin term for ‘royal,’ *regium* (Strabo 6.1.6). Many modern scholars believe that the name of the city predated Greek occupation, so they favor the latter interpretation.

“Greek colonists from Chalcis founded Rhegium in ca. 720 B.C. (Strabo Geog. 6.1.6). Rhegium grew in power during the 5th century (Hdt. 7.165), but its geographical position left it vulnerable to attack. Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse destroyed the city in 387 B.C. and he sold many of the inhabitants into slavery (Diod. 14.106ff). Rhegium was partly rebuilt by Dionysius the Younger, who was tyrant of Syracuse from 367 to 343 B.C.

“When Pyrrhus attacked Italy in 280 B.C., the inhabitants of Rhegium feared both him and the sea power of the Carthaginians. Rhegium, therefore, requested that a Roman garrison be stationed in the city for protection. The troops soon arrived from Campania under the leadership of Decius, but they quickly realized that the wealth of the city could be easily obtained. The troops, taking advantage of their situation, murdered the men and enslaved the women of Rhegium and thereby made the city their own. The conquering troops

indicate the pulling up of the ship's anchors in order to allow it to begin sailing. The aorist verb *κατηντήσαμεν* from *καταντάω* is a standard verb to specify arrival at a point from some starting point, here at [Rhegium](#), εἰς Ῥήγιον. By placing this reference in a dependent relative clause Luke de-emphasizes the importance of this port city from both Syracuse and Puteoli.

The third Greek sentence is in verses 13b-14. *καὶ μετὰ μίαν ἡμέραν ἐπιγενομένου νότου δευτεραῖοι ἦλθομεν εἰς Ποτιόλους*, 14 οὗ εὐρόντες ἀδελφοὺς παρεκλήθημεν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ· καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἦλθαμεν. The arrival at [Puteoli](#) is the most important stop on this final leg of the sea voyage in Luke's estimation. But he is focusing on the spiritual side of the trip. It is introduced temporally with *καὶ μετὰ μίαν ἡμέραν ἐπιγενομένου νότου*, and after a day with a south wind happening. Evidently putting into Rhegium was necessitated because of the lack of favorable winds to keep them moving northward toward Rome. But with an overnight stay in Rhegium the right winds came up from the south so that they could continue sailing northward. It took them *δευτεραῖοι*, on the second day, to reach Puteoli. The highly unusual construction using a nominative plural adjective as an adverb is more classical Greek than Koine Greek.<sup>609</sup> Thus after two nights at sea they arrived at Puteoli: *δευτεραῖοι ἦλθομεν εἰς Ποτιόλους*.<sup>610</sup> Here the sea voyage segment of Paul's trip to Rome comes to an

were punished by the armies of Rome and the city was returned to the few remaining citizens in 271 B.C. (Polyb. 1.7).

"The city, thenceforth, became an ally of Rome and remained loyal to this alliance during the Punic Wars, even when Hannibal nearly captured the city (Polyb. 9.7). In 91 B.C. an earthquake destroyed part of the city and its power waned. Caesar Augustus settled some of the veterans of his army at Rhegium in the early 1st century A.D. The city then became known as Rhegium Julium and its population increased."

[John D. Wineland, "Rhegium (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 709–710.]

<sup>609</sup>With the aid of this wind *δευτεραῖοι ἦλθομεν*, we came as 'second day' men. See M. 3:225; *δευτεραῖοι* is an adverbial adjective. This construction became increasingly popular in post-classical Greek, and 'eventually became the regular way of forming adverbs in M[odern] Gr[reek]'. Cf BDR § 243:1. We came to Puteoli (Greek name *Δικαιαρχία*; modern, Pozzuoli); for the formation of Ποτιόλοι from the Latin name see BDR § 41:1, n. 2." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1229.]

<sup>610</sup>**PUTEOLI (PLACE)** [Gk *Potioloi* (Ποτιόλοι)]. A city visited by Paul on his journey to Rome (Acts 28:13). Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli; 40°49' N; 14°7' E) was a port city of ancient Campania on the W coast of Italy located on the N shore of the Gulf of Naples. Puteoli was ringed by a series of volcanic hills, and the name of the city, meaning "sulfur springs," is derived from this geological situation. The volcanic dust (called *pozzolana* in modern Italian), which contributed to the sulfurous atmosphere, produced a cement that resisted seawater when mixed with lime.

"The earliest Greek settlement in the W seas was established sometime before the middle of the 8th century on the island of Pithecusae, just N of the Bay of Naples. Pottery confirms that the first colonists were from Chalcis and Eretria. It was not long before many of the settlers moved to a site on an acropolis on the opposite mainland where a native population had been importing Greek pottery. This new foundation was named Cumae after a city of the same name located on the E coast of Euboea. Although the Italian Cumae was a stronghold, the city had no harbor. Ships had to be hauled onto the sand below the acropolis. When trade began to prosper, the citizens of Cumae occupied the harbor just inside the promontory, establishing the town of Dicaearchia (later known as Puteoli) and, farther E, Naples (Strabo 5.4.5f.).

"Puteoli was conquered by the Samnites in 421 B.C.E., but there is a paucity of evidence until Campania came under Roman control in ca. 334 B.C.E. The Romans garrisoned the town in 215 B.C.E. and renamed it Puteoli. The following year the Romans defeated Hannibal at Puteoli (Livy 24.7.10–12; 12.1–13.7). In 199 B.C.E. Puteoli received a Roman customs station and was made a Roman maritime colony in 194 B.C.E. Sulla or Augustus may have conferred further colonial status on Puteoli, and Nero and Vespasian certainly did so. Vespasian substantially enlarged the city's territory.

"Trade flourished in Puteoli under the Romans, enhanced by a newly fortified harbor and connected with Rome by a series of roads (discussed below). The harbor was protected by a breakwater, the Augustan *opus pilarum* (115–16 m × 372 m), which carried 15 enormous masonry piers, with at least one triumphal arch, columns topped by statues, a lighthouse, and an architectural ship's prow at the end (Strabo 5.4.6). The remains are embedded in the modern breakwater. The emporium stretched for 1.25 miles along the shore to the W of the mole.

"Puteoli was naturally divided into an upper and lower city. Among the remains in the lower city are the great *macellum*, formerly known as the temple (or baths) of Serapis, and the temple of Augustus. Other monuments of the lower town are depicted on glass vases and engravings produced in Puteoli. The upper town was residential and recreational. A small Augustan amphitheater and a great Flavian amphitheater were situated in upper Puteoli. The Flavian complex was the third largest amphitheater in Italy seating as many as 60,000 spectators. It was constructed at the expense of the citizens of Puteoli during the reign of Vespasian. The baths of Trajan (or Janus), which may have been the same complex as the so-called temple of Neptune (or Diana), were also situated in upper Puteoli. The city was plundered to supply building materials for the cathedrals of Salerno and Pisa.

"Oriental goods from Egypt and Palestine and most importantly grain from Egypt were imported through Puteoli (Suetonius Aug. 98.1–10; Strabo 17.1.7; Seneca *Epistulae morales* 77.1f.). Export trade included oil, fine wine, glassware, early imperial *terra sigillata*, and probably Republican black (Campanian) pottery. Alexandria's close trade connections with Puteoli began at the end of the Second Punic War (201 B.C.E.) and lasted until the city's prominence was eclipsed in the 2d and 3d centuries C.E.

end. Appropriately the use of the distinctive Sea Voyage genre will also come to an end for Luke. From verse 14 to the end of Acts the more typical pattern of telling a story using an episodic narrative form dominates Luke's writing strategy. The most obvious signal of this, especially from a translation source, is the sudden diminishing of specific time references. Thus with the statement καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἦλθαμεν. and thus we came to Rome in v. 14c to verse 31 at the end of Acts only three time references surface. This stands in stark contrast to four time references in the four sentences in vv. 11-14.

The relative adverb οὗ, *where*, brings to a climatic point the arrival in Puteoli with a dependent clause: οὗ εὐρόντες ἀδελφούς παρεκλήθημεν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ, *where having found brothers we were invited to stay with them for seven days*. At this point the "we" narrative perspective shifts back to referencing Paul and those Christian friends traveling with him to Rome. This would not be unexpected since the role of both the ship passengers and sailors on the earlier ship slips out of the narrative. By the late 50s the harbor at Portus near Ostia on the Tiber River close to Rome was functioning where the ship would have unloaded its cargo, although passengers normally disembarked at Puteoli.<sup>611</sup> Interestingly, no direct mention of the Roman centurion Julius (cf. 27:1) surfaces from the shipwreck narrative to the end of Acts. Very likely upon reaching Syracuse or later the former ship owner and his crew left the group for their home port somewhere along the Italian coast. Or, perhaps they stayed aboard to help the present ship owner with unloading the cargo at Portus. Likely also is that the other passengers got off the ship at Puteoli and when their own individual ways from there. That would leave only Julius, his soldiers and the other prisoners. Very possibly Julius and the bulk of the soldiers continued on to Rome directly, with the centurion leaving a few soldiers to escort Paul on to Rome. The not too likely scenario

---

"Puteoli's population of 65,000 was entrepreneurial and highly cosmopolitan. A number of oriental cults were found in the city including those of Serapis (105 B.C.E.), Cybele, Jupiter Dolichenus, Bellona, Dusares, I. O. M. Heliopolitanus, in addition to the usual Greco-Roman and imperial worship. Puteoli was also one of the earliest Italian cities to have a sizable Jewish population (Josephus Ant 17.328; 18.160; CIL 10.1893; 10.1971). There is also an intriguing tombstone of a Puteolian Jewish freedman named Acibas, who was an agent for his master's iron mines and vineyards (CIL 10.1931; CII 1.75).

"There is epigraphical evidence for trade connections between the Greeks of Palestine and Puteoli (CIL 10.1746). Jewish merchants were also organized in a closely knit Mediterranean trade cooperative in which Jews from Puteoli and Alexandria played an integral role (cf. 3 Macc. 3:10). After the battle of Pydna and the decline of Rhodes (167 B.C.E.) a triangular trade developed between Alexandria, Delos, and Puteoli. The extent to which Jewish merchants were involved, specifically in the Alexandrian grain trade, cannot be determined, despite the allegations of Josephus (AgAp 2.64). There is evidence, however, that the Jewish *alabarchs* of Alexandria held credits in Puteoli during the reign of Tiberius (see Josephus Ant 18.159–60 for the incident between Agrippa I and the Alexandrian alabarch Alexander).

"Sometime after Herod's death, a charlatan called Alexander appeared and deceived Jewish inhabitants of Crete and Puteoli of considerable funds. The imposter claimed to be the son of Herod and Mariamme the Hasmonean in order to finance his trip to Italy (Josephus Ant 17.327–28; JW 2.103–4). In 39/40 C.E. the Jewish-Alexandrian delegation led by Philo met with Gaius (Caligula) in Puteoli about injustices they suffered in Egypt. It was in Puteoli that the delegation first learned of Gaius' command that a statue of himself was to be placed in the temple in Jerusalem (see Philo Gaius 184–348; Josephus Ant 18.261–309; and JW 2.184–203).

"Commerce and travelers went from Puteoli to Naples and then to Capua, where the Via Appia (built ca. 312 B.C.E.) led to Rome, 132 miles away. The Via Latina was a heavily traveled alternative route which went from Casilinum (just outside Capua) to Rome. In order to ease the difficulties of travel on the pre-Sullan road between Puteoli and Naples, the Crypta Neapolitana, a tunnel 750 m in length, was constructed (see Seneca Ep. Luc. 57.1–2) and improved by Nerva and Trajan. Nero attempted to join Puteoli with the Tiber by means of a canal. In 95 C.E. Domitian constructed the Via Domitiana, a less costly alternative, which went along the Campanian coast from Puteoli to Sinuessa (modern Mondragone), where it joined the Via Appia.

"When Paul's ship landed in Puteoli, he found Christians (probably Jewish converts) living in the city. He stayed with the converts seven days before journeying to Rome by way of Capua and the Via Appia (Acts 28:13–14). A similar journey to Rome is described in the apocryphal Acts of Peter 6 and seems to be implied in the Acts of Paul.

"Although Claudius installed the port at Ostia, Puteoli continued to prosper through the 2d century C.E., followed by a gradual decline until the town was abandoned in the 6th century C.E. Puteoli, like other cities on the Bay of Naples, continued to be a favorite resort area; and the wealth is evident in the magnificence of the columbria, hypogea, and mausoleums in the region. In Christian times some tombs were reused for inhumations. Many of the villas in the region can still be seen, although some are now covered by the sea. Cicero had a villa in this region, as did Nero's mother, Agrippina the younger (see Tacitus Ann. 14.5; Seneca Octavia)."

[Scott T. Carroll, "Puteoli (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 560–561.]

<sup>611</sup>"*came on the second day to Puteoli*: This port city is on the Bay of Naples, near the cities of Naples, Pompeii, and Herculaneum. It was the most important port in Italy (Strabo, *Geography* 5, 4, 6), where both cargo and passengers disembarked, until the new harbor of Portus was built at Ostia on the Tiber by Claudius (Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 20:1); after that, the cargo went to Ostia, but passengers continued to disembark at Puteoli. Seneca describes the crowds that watched the 'Alexandrian ships' come in (*Moral Epistles* 77:1–2). See also Suetonius, *Life of Titus* 5:3; Josephus, *Life* 16." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 464.]



was for Julius, his soldiers, and the other prisoners to be entertained by the Christian community in Puteoli along with Paul and his friends. But it is not unreasonable that this was what happened.

Most likely due to a large Jewish community in Puteoli, a Christian congregation existed in the city as well.<sup>612</sup> Soon after arrival in the city, Paul learned of the presence of the believers in the city (εὐρόντες ἀδελφούς). When contact with them was made, this community extended an invitation for Paul and his friends to stay with them for a week: παρεκλήθημεν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας ἑπτά.<sup>613</sup> This signals how extensively the Gospel had spread out from the city of Rome, almost a 100 miles to the north, and how positive the image of Paul was to these believers. If Julius was included in this invitation, this Roman centurion gained very quickly an image of the statue of the apostle Paul inside the Christian movement.<sup>614</sup> Hopefully he was and that this experience became life-changing for him. Even though this provided a time to rest up from the sea travel and to prepare for the somewhat challenging trip overland via the Appian Way into Rome, this Christian community had a once in a life-time opportunity to hear the apostle Paul personally. I'm quite confident that these seven days were filled with meetings, discussions etc. about the Gospel and Paul's situation. The subsequent depiction of what happened in Rome, cf. vv. 17-28, happened here, only focused on exchange of ideas among Christians without non-believing Jews being present as in Rome. At the end of the seven days Paul and those with him left Puteoli and traveled using the

With a horrible verse division, verse 14 ends with the boundary marker of καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἦλθαμεν, and thus we came to Rome. Key to the role of this statement is what is referenced by οὕτως, thus. If it refers to the entire voyage by sea from Caesarea to Puteoli then it functions to mark the end of the Sea Voyage narrative in 27:1-28:14. But quite often οὕτως will set up anticipation for some about to be described, rather than something previously described. Very likely this second meaning is the intended sense of οὕτως here. This makes καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἦλθαμεν a header for vv. 15-16 which describes the overland minimum five day walk along the [Appian Way](#) from Puteoli to Rome, about 130 miles. In either case, Luke does draw a clearly

<sup>612c</sup> Luke tells us that 'we' found 'brothers' in Puteoli. While the term 'brothers' could conceivably refer to Jews as in Acts 2:29 and 13:26, three things count against this conclusion: (1) this reference to brothers comes in a 'we' passage and it is doubtful Luke would have spoken of Jews as 'brothers,' being a Gentile; (2) vv. 14-15 are most naturally read as being about Paul's reception by Christians in Italy, especially in view of Paul's reaction to their welcome in v. 15b; (3) the two references to Jews as brothers come in speeches by Jewish Christians (Peter and Paul), but here we are in indirect speech, and elsewhere in Acts in indirect speech 'brothers' means Christians (cf. 1:15; 6:3; 9:30; 10:23; 11:1; 15:1, 32; 16:40). In view of this, there is nothing to commend the thesis of Conzelmann and Haenchen that Luke intends to portray Paul as the founder of Christianity in Rome or Italy.<sup>9</sup> Of course Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome makes very clear that he was not the founder of Roman Christianity (cf. Rom. 1:8, 15; 16:3-16), and makes equally clear Paul's great desire to visit the Christians in Rome (Rom. 1:10-13; 15:22-24)." [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 785.]

<sup>613c</sup> The initial leg of Paul's trip comes to an end at Puteoli (the port city on the bay of Naples where passengers disembarked in order to pick up the Appian Way into Rome; v. 13). 'There we found some brothers and were urged to stay with them for seven days. And thus we came to Rome' (v. 14; cf. 23:11). The Jesus movement is already in Italy when Paul arrives. What is more, it is hospitable to Paul. A rest from the sea travel and preparation for the next leg of the journey are in order. Both would be necessary given that the Acts of Peter 2:6 says the road from Puteoli to Rome was rough and flinty, making significant demands on travelers." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 220.]

<sup>614c</sup> The remark that 'we' were invited to stay for a week in Puteoli with the Christians there has surprised most and been thought unlikely by many. There are several comments that need to be made. First, it is probable that 'we' here has its narrower sense of Paul and his companions, although it is not impossible that there was a well-to-do Christian who entertained the Roman centurion (and soldiers?) as well. Secondly, the main way for a Roman centurion to deal with the expenses of transporting prisoners was by requisition. Thus, the suggestion of Rapske makes good sense:

The evident material pressures and the hostility that was often felt toward officials who had to be billeted at cost to proprietors and private individuals would have made the centurion's responsibility for seeing to his party's needs along the way a generally tension-filled and unhappy one. Might not then the sincere offer of hospitality (Acts 28:14) to the entire party from a Christian community (perhaps staying in the home of a wealthy Christian patron?) have been a quite welcome alternative?<sup>12</sup>

"A further consideration makes this suggestion even more plausible. The general quality of lodging at wayside inns and taberna was poor, often very poor, and a centurion not on a tight schedule to get to Rome may well have appreciated some good hospitality and rest before making the last leg of the trip, which according to the *Acts of Peter* 2.6 involved a demanding walk up a rough and flinty road to Rome. The centurion may also have expected little room and even less welcome for soldiers and prisoners in such inns, especially in crowded town full of visitors like Puteoli. The entire journey to Rome from Puteoli was some 130 miles, and would be undertaken on foot, taking probably five days of hard walking through some hill country and passing through the Pontine Marshes. It is not surprising if rest and refreshment were seen as necessary before this trip."

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 785-786.]

defined boundary between the sea voyage and the overland segments of Paul's trip.

**The overland trip to Rome**, v. 15. 15 κάκειθεν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἀκούσαντες τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν ἦλθαν εἰς ἀπάντησιν ἡμῖν ἄχρι Ἀππίου φόρου καὶ Τριῶν ταβερνῶν, οὓς ἰδὼν ὁ Παῦλος εὐχαριστήσας τῷ θεῷ ἔλαβεν θάρσος. 15 The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. Off of the main verb ἦλθαν, they came, are several modifiers that 'flesh' out the statement. First is the subject οἱ ἀδελφοί, the brothers. The brothers in the church at Rome came out to meet Paul and his friends as they were making their way to Rome. That they were a part of the Roman church is clear from the adverb of place κάκειθεν, meaning "and from there," which reaches back to τὴν Ῥώμην, Rome, for its reference point. Their trip out of the city to meet Paul was prompted by ἀκούσαντες τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν, after hearing the things concerning us. Their goal was εἰς ἀπάντησιν ἡμῖν, to a meeting with us. They met up with Paul and his group ἄχρι Ἀππίου φόρου καὶ Τριῶν ταβερνῶν, at the Forum of Appius and at Three Taverns. This prompted great thanksgiving to God and renewed courage from Paul: οὓς ἰδὼν ὁ Παῦλος εὐχαριστήσας τῷ θεῷ ἔλαβεν θάρσος, whom after seeing and having given thanks to God Paul took courage.<sup>615</sup>



Two towns are mentioned as meeting places with two separate groups of believers from the Roman church: Ἀππίου φόρου, the [Forum of Appius](#) (43 miles from Rome; *Appii Forum* in Latin) and [Three Taverns](#) (33 miles from Rome; *Tres Tabernae* in Latin).<sup>616</sup> Mostly these were stop over places for travelers headed to Rome. Very likely Christian communities existed in both of them as well by this point in time. They would have been hosts for these groups who met up with each other. There is no basis for splitting up the two delegations coming out to greet Paul in a Jewish and a Gentile group, as a few commentators have tried to do.<sup>617</sup>

The positive attitude by the Roman congregation toward Paul was most encouraging to him. Remember that the church in Rome had been in existence for quite some time, very likely tracing its beginnings to Jewish converts from Rome in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in 30 AD (cf. Acts 2:10). This gave Christianity in and around the Roman capital city a strongly Jewish Christian flavor, most likely more similar to the church in Jerusalem than to most of the churches that Paul had founded in his missionary travels. For the church to eagerly embrace this very controversial Jewish Christian leader who was on his way to a trial before the emperor

<sup>615</sup>“The word ἀπαντησιν suggests some sort of official welcome or greeting, in this case extended by Roman Christians who went out to meet Paul and walk with him into the city.<sup>19</sup> Its use in 1 Thess. 4:17 and Matt. 25:6 of Christ suggests this connotation. The news must have traveled to Rome while Paul and the others spent time in Puteoli. Paul is then depicted here as some sort of dignitary, whose ‘epiphany’ was seen as an important event, with a reception committee meeting him outside the city and returning with him into it. Though it is probably going too far to see an allusion to the Roman triumph here, this verse does suggest the importance of Paul to early Christianity, and that he was seen as something of a celebrity by this time, one who had overcome many obstacles to bring his gospel to Rome.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 787.]

<sup>616</sup>“These are locations on the Appian Way heading toward the city of Rome. The Forum of Appius was forty-three miles from the city. The satirist Horace refers to it as ‘full of sailors and wicked tavern-keepers’ (Satires 1, 5, 3–4). The Three Taverns was closer, some thirty-three miles from the city. It is mentioned several times by Cicero in his Letters to Atticus (1, 13, 1; 2, 12, 2; 2, 13, 1), as a place where letters were exchanged, and in one of his short notes to Atticus, it is identified as the place of composition (2, 10).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 464–465.]

<sup>617</sup>They were also now in contact with the city, since the (the article οἱ is omitted by B, perhaps because it suggested that all the Christians of Rome made the journey) brothers (that is, Christians, as in v. 14) came (ἦλθαν; Ψ m have ἐξῆλθαν to meet us — the first person plural is still in use. They came as far as Appius’ Market and Three Taverns; these were distinct places, and we must suppose that two groups came from Rome. This may mean only that one (an advance guard? Pesch 2:303) had more leisure, or could walk better, than the other; it has been suggested that one consisted of Jewish the other of Gentile Christians (Rackham 498), but there is nothing in the text to support this view. They came because they had heard τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν (these words are omitted by gig vg sy<sup>p</sup>), our affairs; about us would probably serve in English. It is natural to suppose (see above) that they had heard from Puteoli; the seven days of v. 14 might have allowed messengers to reach Rome in time to arrange a deputation. They had presumably had some notice of an intended visit from the Epistle to the Romans, but this would not tell them when to meet the writer. Luke is not interested in the details of such arrangements.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1230–1231.]

from charges brought by Jewish leaders in Jerusalem was indeed heart warming to the apostle. As Luke's final description of Jewish attitudes toward him in vv. 24-25 there was difference of opinion about him in Rome itself. Some time toward the end of Paul's two year stay in Rome, he confirms that the negative attitude against him existed inside the Christian community as well; see Phil. 1:12-18b for details.

But for now with this warm reception given to him twice by believers from the church Paul could relish the blessings of God in finally bringing him to Rome as he had indicated in chapter fifteen of Romans. One does wonder how many of those mentioned in Romans 16 came out to greet him who were leaders in various house churches in Rome and that Paul already knew. On the sea in the midst of a storm, Paul could give thanks to God (27:35), and now in safety on land and sure of reaching Rome he could give thanks to God.<sup>618</sup> His later advice, from Rome just a little while after this event written to the Philippians, simply reflected how he lived his own life: Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε, *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice* (Phi. 4:4).

#### 8.1.4 House Arrest in Rome (AD 61-62),<sup>619</sup> Acts 28:16-31; Phil. 1:12-26; 2:19-30; 4:1-3, 10-19.<sup>620</sup>

Luke provides us with but a short glimpse into the subsequent two years of Paul's life lived out in Rome. Depending on how one understands the so-called Prison Letters,<sup>621</sup> the question of sources here becomes important. In this study, the historical references in both Philippians and Acts will be taken to refer to events taking place in Rome. But those references in Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon refer to personal circumstances in Paul's life at the time of their writing while Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea some six months to two and one half years before.

The literary structure of Acts 28:16-31 is helpful to the interpretative process:

**V. 16. Introduction** setting up the event

**VV. 17-22. Scene One:** Meeting the Jewish leader

**VV. 23-28. Scene Two:** Paul's preaching ministry in Rome from his home

**VV. 29-31. Scene Three:** Summarizing statement of two years in Rome

In this way Luke brings to a conclusion his three decade history of the beginnings of Christianity. He traces the movement of Christianity from Jerusalem, the religious center, to Rome, the political and military capital, and thus follows one of the current guidelines for good history writing in the first Christian century. He does not need to carry the story forward beyond this point since a major objective for the history has been reached. He leaves his readers with the apostle to the Gentiles preaching the Gospel even while a prisoner of Rome to the Gentiles of the city of Rome (v. 28).<sup>622</sup>

<sup>618</sup>“The line wonderfully compresses both the intensely religious character of Paul and his humanity. He had poured out his own courage for those sailing with him (27:21–25) and in those terrifying circumstances had also given thanks to God (27:35). Now in safety, he gives thanks again and takes courage (tharsos) from the presence of welcoming brethren, who have come out from the city to meet him.” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 465.]

<sup>619</sup>Possibly the prison epistles written during this period.

<sup>620</sup>Eph. 3:1, 4:1, 6:18-22; Col 4:7-18; Philm 22-24 are the personal situation references in these writings of Paul at Caesarea.

<sup>621</sup>Traditionally all four of Paul's letters have been assigned to a Roman origin during this two year period at the end of Acts. This was largely based on the Marcionite postscripts attached to the end of the letters in the mid second century by the heretic Marcion.

But for quite a number of years I have been persuaded by superior arguments that only Philippians of these letters was composed by Paul in Rome. The other three, which traveled essentially to the same cities -- Ephesians and Colossians -- includes the letters to the Ephesians, the Colossians and to Philemon at Colossae, and were composed sometime quite earlier while Paul was a prisoner in the governor's palace at Caesarea, approximately 58-60 AD.

On this view the references inside the letters to Paul's personal circumstance at the time of the writing would allude to Caesarea for these letters, but to Rome for those references in Philippians. This is the perspective used in the above study. This viewpoint has gradually been moving to the dominant perspective among biblical scholars over the past fifty to seventy years. A third option of an Ephesian origin for all four letters that emerged in the mid-twentieth century has never gained a foothold among biblical scholars. Even less accepted by today's scholars is that all of the letters are anonymous in their origin.

<sup>622</sup>{A} omit verse 29 P<sup>74</sup> x A B E Ψ 048 33 81 181 1175 1739 2344 2464 (l 60 omit verse 28 and 29) it<sup>dem, e, ro, s</sup> vg<sup>ww, st</sup> syr<sup>p</sup> cop<sup>sa</sup>,  
bo arm eth<sup>pp</sup> geo // add verse 29: καὶ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, πολλὴν ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συζήτησιν. (with minor variants) 36 307 453 610 614 945 1409 1678 1891 Byz [L P] *Lect* (l 593 omit καὶ ... εἰπόντος) it<sup>ar, c, sig, p, ph, w</sup> vg<sup>cl</sup> syr<sup>h</sup> with \* arm<sup>ms</sup> eth TH slav Chrysostom; Cassiodorusvid

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).

“The Western text has an addition after v. 28 that was adopted by the Byzantine text and lies behind the AV rendering, ‘*And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.*’ The addition was probably made because of the abrupt transition from v. 28 to v. 30.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testa-*



Thus Acts ends on a very positive note with the advancement of the Gospel.<sup>623</sup>

#### 8.1.4.1 Minimum Detention in Rome, Acts 28:16

16 Ὅτε δὲ εἰσήλθομεν εἰς Ῥώμην, ἐπετρέπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ.

16 When we<sup>624</sup> came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself,<sup>625</sup> with the soldier who was guarding him.

Luke begins with a positive affirmation of Paul's experience in Rome. One suspects that the Roman centurion from Caesarea, Julius, had a lot to do with this. In this single sentence, the core expression ἐπετρέπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν, *allowed for Paul to remain by himself*. The verb ἐπετρέπη in the aorist passive form continues Luke's de-emphasis on the presence of the Roman military escort of Paul.<sup>626</sup> This enables Paul to become the absolute center of focus in this closing section of Acts. But clearly Julius, the centurion from Caesarea, handed Paul over to the Roman authorities in the imperial palace at Rome. After checking into Paul's particular status and past history as a prisoner from Jerusalem onward, he was given *custodia libera* status rather than the standard *custodia militaris*. This meant that if he could finance the leasing of a private home in the city, then he would be allowed to live there, rather than in a military jail in the palace while awaiting trial before the emperor. The only provision was the assignment of two Roman soldiers to guard him, each on a twelve hour shift.

This sentence begins with the dependent temporal clause: Ὅτε δὲ εἰσήλθομεν εἰς Ῥώμην, *And when we entered Rome*. A lot of formal Roman military protocol was carried out upon the arrival of Paul in the city under the military escort. A hint of that is implicit in the rewording of this sentence by a few Western text manuscripts: ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος παρέδωκεν τοὺς δεσμίους τῷ στρατοπεδάρχῳ(-χη), τῷ δὲ Παύλῳ ἐπετρέπη, *the centurion delivered the prisoners to the stratopedarch [=captain of the guard]; but Paul was allowed...* Note that both the external and internal evidence is overwhelmingly against this re-working of the sentence as being original. A part of the difficulty with several of the later copies is that they envision a procedure that did not exist until at least well into the second century.<sup>627</sup> What is envisioned here is a protocol where a prisoner was handed over the 'captain of

*ment: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 290.]

<sup>623c</sup> Apart from the final verses, 28:30, 31, considered below (pp. 1248–53), this is the end of Luke's story. It should be considered first in this light, as a narrative piece which fulfils the goal frequently alluded to in the course of Acts (1:8; 9:15; 19:21; 23:11; 27:24; cf. also Lk. 3:6; 24:47). Paul has now reached Rome, and is (notwithstanding his appeal to the Emperor's court, before which he must in due course appear) in circumstances favourable to the proclamation of the Gospel; Weiser (674) rightly draws attention to the fact that the present paragraph is framed by 28:16 and 28:30f., which depict a hopeful situation. Luke is primarily a narrator, and the end of his book represents the successful achievement of a primary goal, and thereby the victory of the word of God." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1235.]

<sup>624c</sup> After vs 16, the 'we' disappears, once again after the arrival at a destination (cf. Europe/Philippi, Palestine/Jerusalem before his arrest). The description is in purely Lukan style." [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 224.]

<sup>625</sup> {A} ἐπετρέπη τῷ Παύλῳ P<sup>74</sup> vid x A B Ψ 048<sup>vid</sup> 066 81 1175 1739 2344 2464 I 60 it<sup>ar</sup>, c, dem, ph, ro, w vg syr<sup>p</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup> arm (eth<sup>pp</sup>) geo Chrysostom // ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος παρέδωκεν τοὺς δεσμίους τῷ στρατοπεδάρχῳ(-χη), τῷ δὲ Παύλῳ ἐπετρέπη 36 307 453 610 614 945 1409 1678 1891 Byz [L P] *Lect* (I 599 δεσμιώτας) it<sup>sig. p</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup> (syrh with \*) cop<sup>sa</sup> (eth<sup>TH</sup>) slav

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

"The Western text expands 'it was allowed to Paul' into 'the centurion delivered the prisoners to the stratopedarch [captain of the guard]; but Paul was allowed ...' The addition passed into the Byzantine text and lies behind the AV."

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 290.]

<sup>626c</sup> Davies (Land 281) notes that as in v. 15 there is no reference to the military escort (why should there have been?) so here there is no reference to the Roman authorities, to whom Paul was being delivered at so much trouble, danger, and expense. The fact is (see further below) that Luke is allowing the legal proceedings against Paul to drop out of his narrative. In any case, Davies' observation needs some qualification. Paul was permitted (ἐπετρέπη) ... But ἐπετρέπη implies someone who ἐπέτρεψε, permitted Paul to take up the relatively free situation described in this verse, and this must have been a Roman authority. Paul was permitted to stay καθ' ἑαυτόν, on his own, that is presumably not in a public prison but in private accommodation (cf. 28:30), in *custodia libera*, not *custodia militaris* (see Tajra 179–181). The concession to legal requirements was that he should remain with the soldier who was guarding him. Luke's expression does not contradict the custom that a prisoner was handed over to two soldiers; no doubt they would watch in shifts. If this is correct it must have been at least provisionally decided that Paul was not a threat to public order." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1232.]

<sup>627c</sup> The στρατοπέδάρχος (some MSS have —ἀρχης) is the *praefectus castrorum*; so LS 1653; whether this is a correct interpretation of the present passage is disputed. At a later time the official who would most naturally receive prisoners from abroad would be the prefect of the Praetorian Guard; thus Pliny, Epistles 10:57:2, where Trajan writes to Pliny that a person who had been banished

the guard' likely meaning the [Prefect](#) of the [Praetorian guard](#), perhaps at the Praetorian barracks<sup>628</sup> at the [Porta Viminalis](#).<sup>629</sup> An examination of the situation of the prisoner would be conducted to determine the level of his imprisonment, which was based in large part on the conclusions about how dangerous the prisoner might be (cf., [Ulpian Digesta](#) 4.6.10 and 48.2.3 for details).<sup>630</sup>

The sentence ends with a prepositional phrase σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ, [with the soldier guarding him](#). Such an arrangement for a prisoner of Rome with Roman citizenship was not that unusual.<sup>631</sup> Paul

---

‘vinctus mitti ad praefectos praetorii mei debet’. *The Prefect from AD 51 to 62 was Afranius Burrus*; Sherwin-White (108–11) however, thinks it unlikely that Paul would be committed to him. More probable is the view that the prisoners would be handed over to the *princeps peregrinorum*; this may be supported by the association of this princeps with the *frumentarii*, the officers responsible for exercising oversight of the corn fleet (to which Paul's ship probably belonged; see v. 11) and receiving and distributing the cargoes of corn. This association however had probably not yet come into being, and a still more probable view is that the prisoners were received and dealt with by the *princeps castrorum*, the chief administrative officer of the Praetorian Guard. It is however to be noted that in this passage *gig* has *Principi Peregrinorum*. P has *Prefecto*.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1233.]

<sup>628</sup>“ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς (outside the Praetorian camp, or barracks) interprets καθ’ ἑαυτοῦ. In the variants we see editors or copyists filling out a rather thin text on the basis of more or less correct and complete knowledge of Roman procedures. In addition to Sherwin-White see a detailed note by Clark (386–8) on the Western text, *princeps peregrinorum*, and *frumentarii*; also Tajra (177–9) and Hemer (157, 199f.)” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1233.]

<sup>629</sup>“The Koine and Western texts have inserted a surrendering of the prisoners to the στρατοπεδάρχης (or -ος), ‘captain of the guard.’ This probably means the prefect of the Praetorian guard; compare Pliny Ep. 10.57.2: Trajan orders, ‘He must be sent in chains to the officers in command of my imperial guards’ (vinctus mitti ad praefectos praetorii mei). The Western text also mentions the παρεμβολή, the Praetorian barracks at the Porta Viminalis (Tacitus Hist. 1.31, etc.). The Old Latin MS *gig* freely translates στρατοπεδάρχης as princeps peregrinorum = commander of the courier corps (the frumentarii), but apparently this was first organized by Trajan.<sup>24</sup> The translator has anachronistically inserted the conditions of a later time into the time of Paul. As a rule, a prisoner was given over to two soldiers.<sup>25</sup> It was possible to inquire about his affairs (Ulpian Dig. 4.6.10). In regard to the rented house, see Ulpian Dig. 48.2.3. For the conditions during an investigation, compare also the Second Edict of Augustus from Cyrene.<sup>26</sup>” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 224–225.]

<sup>630</sup>“**ULPIAN** (Domitius Ulpianus), Roman jurist, was of Tyrian ancestry. The time and place of his birth are unknown, but the period of his literary activity was between A.D. 211 and 222. He made his first appearance in public life as assessor in the auditorium of Papinian and member of the council of Septimius Severus; under Caracalla he was master of the requests (magister libellorum). Heliogabalus banished him from Rome, but on the accession of Alexander (222) he was reinstated, and finally became the emperor's chief adviser and praefectus praetorio. His curtailment of the privileges granted to the praetorian guard by Heliogabalus provoked their enmity, and he narrowly escaped their vengeance; ultimately, in 228, he was murdered in the palace, in the course of a riot between the soldiers and the mob.

“His works include *Ad Sabinum*, a commentary on the jus civile, in over 50 books; *Ad edictum*, a commentary on the Edict, in 83 books; collections of opinions, responses and disputations; books of rules and institutions; treatises on the functions of the different magistrates — one of them, the *De officio proconsulis libri x.*, being a comprehensive exposition of the criminal law; monographs on various statutes, on testamentary trusts, and a variety of other works. His writings altogether have supplied to Justinian's Digest about a third of its contents, and his commentary on the Edict alone about a fifth. As an author he is characterized by doctrinal exposition of a high order, judiciousness of criticism, and lucidity of arrangement, style and language.

“Domitii Ulpiani fragmenta, consisting of 29 titles, were first edited by Tilius (Paris, 1549). Other editions are by Hugo (Berlin, 1834), Böcking (Bonn, 1836), containing fragments of the first book of the Institutiones discovered by Endlicher at Vienna in 1835, and in Girard's *Textes de droit romain* (Paris, 1890).”

[“Ulpian,” [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)]

<sup>631</sup>“We must note that Paul appears to have been under the most lenient form of military custody, with only a soldier guarding him. V. 16 indicates Paul was not in prison, and probably not kept in a military camp either.<sup>26</sup> The most likely conclusion, in light of v. 30, is that Paul lived at his own expense in his own rented dwelling, being under a relaxed form of house arrest.<sup>27</sup> This conclusion is probably supported by the last word found in Acts, that Paul's preaching and teaching went on ‘unhindered.’

“A στρατιώτῃ was certainly not a centurion, but rather an ordinary soldier. The significance of this fact has been underappreciated because it probably tells us something about the estimation of Paul's case, as it was conveyed in the official documents that would have been transported with him to Rome. It must be remembered that up until his arrival in Rome, Paul has continually been under the supervision of a centurion, beginning at least as early as his custody in Caesarea (see 24:23) and continuing with his journey to Rome (see 27:1ff.). This is not the case once Julius relinquishes Paul.

“It is not feasible to see the ordinary soldier as an indication that Paul was no longer seen as a prisoner of some social status and importance, since the narrative has stressed this fact up to this point and Paul's treatment while in custody in Rome would be based on his Roman citizenship and the estimate of him and the seriousness of his case conveyed in the official documents from Palestine. Generally ‘the more important the prisoner was, the higher ranking and more experienced the soldier assigned to him and the great number of co-

thus enjoyed relative freedom in this situation.<sup>632</sup>

There would be a maize of activities for the apostle once he settled into his new living quarters. Luke chooses to include only *one episodic narrative* -- meeting with Jewish leaders, vv. 17-22 and 23-29 -- which took place on two separate days, and also *a summary narrative* in vv. 30-31 summarizing the next two years of activity based in the home where Paul was staying. These two dominant literary patterns for all of Acts then bring to a conclusion the book of Acts. Additionally a brief summation of the essence of Paul's words to these Jewish leaders on the second day of meeting, vv. 25b-28, represents the other major compositional element in Acts, the speeches of key figures, mainly Peter and Paul. Thus Luke concludes the book with not only a content emphasis on the Gospel reaching Rome, but also with a literary thrust on the major building blocks for his story.

#### 8.1.4.2 Meeting with the Jewish Leaders, Acts 28:17-22

17 Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ ἡμέρας τρεῖς συγκαλέσασθαι αὐτὸν τοὺς ὄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρώτους· συνεληθόντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἔλεγεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς· ἐγὼ, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, οὐδὲν ἐναντίον ποιήσας τῷ λαῷ ἢ τοῖς ἔθεσιν τοῖς πατρώοις δέσμιος ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων παρεδόθην εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν Ῥωμαίων, 18 οἵτινες ἀνακρίναντές με ἐβούλοντο ἀπολύσαι διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν αἰτίαν θανάτου ὑπάρχειν ἐν ἐμοί. 19 ἀντιλεγόντων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἠναγκάσθη ἐπικαλέσασθαι Καίσαρα οὐχ ὡς τοῦ ἔθνους μου ἔχων τι κατηγορεῖν. 20 διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν παρεκάλεσα ὑμᾶς ἰδεῖν καὶ προσλαλῆσαι, ἕνεκεν γὰρ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ τὴν ἄλυσιν ταύτην περικείμεαι. 21 οἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπαν· ἡμεῖς οὔτε γράμματα περὶ σοῦ ἐδεξάμεθα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας οὔτε παραγενόμενός τις τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἀπήγγειλεν ἢ ἐλάλησέν τι περὶ σοῦ πονηρόν. 22 ἀξιοῦμεν δὲ παρὰ σοῦ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ φρονεῖς, περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης γνωστὸν ἡμῖν ἔστιν ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται.

17 Three days later he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 When they had examined me, the Romans wanted to release me, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to the emperor—even though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason therefore I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." 21 They replied, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything evil about you. 22 But we would like to hear from you what you think, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

With Luke's typical beginning statement as the introduction, he sets up the first episodic narrative: Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ ἡμέρας τρεῖς συγκαλέσασθαι αὐτὸν τοὺς ὄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρώτους, *And after three days there occurred him calling together those being chief of the Jews.*<sup>633</sup> After the initial greetings from the Christian community in Rome

---

watchers.<sup>28</sup> Here we have one ordinary soldier guarding Paul, not even the two that was the customary Roman practice (cf. Acts 12:6), though presumably the duty was rotated among the many soldiers in the nine or more cohorts of Caesar's elite guard. Josephus suggests the rotation was every four hours (Ant. 18.169). Knowing Paul, he would have seen this as opportunity for witness to a 'captive' audience, as Philippians in fact suggests.

"The above comports with the evidence we find in Phil. 1:13, which suggests that Paul was guarded on a rotation basis by various members of the Praetorian Guard but was in no way prevented from having ongoing dealings with his coworkers (Phil. 2:19–30) and various Roman Christians (4:19), not to mention lesser members of Caesar's own household, presumably slaves.<sup>29</sup> One may also compare the evidence in Colossians and Philemon of Paul's ongoing dealings with people in Rome, which also does not suggest a different conclusion from what Acts indicates.

"Now if Paul was considered a dangerous malefactor, but one of considerable social standing, one might expect light custody but restricted access to the outside world. As Rapske says, Paul is granted considerable leniency in both regards. The remainder of Acts 28 suggests that all and sundry had access to Paul and his lodgings, and that he could summon people to come to his house. He is portrayed as master of his own quarters with a regular flow of visitors.<sup>30</sup>

"What we see here is that Paul's custody in Rome is the least restrictive of all the forms he had endured since being taken captive by the Romans in Jerusalem. What conclusions should we draw from this fact? Here can only agree with Rapske that since social status cannot entirely account for this phenomenon, 'the only other rationale for such a light custody must be found in the weakness of the case against Paul as indicated in the documentation sent with him to Rome.'<sup>31</sup> The litterae dimissoriae of Festus would have included not only Paul's appeal to the emperor but also the rehearsal of what Felix, Festus, and for that matter Agrippa had concluded about the matter—namely, that Paul was not guilty of any significant crime (crimen maiestatis) under Roman law.<sup>32</sup>"

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 789–790.]

<sup>632c</sup> We are to envisage a sort of house arrest (see v. 30), in which Paul is accompanied by (and indeed attached by a chain to [v. 20]) a single soldier for a period of two whole years (v. 30). Paul has truly come to rest at last." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 465.

<sup>633c</sup> It is not unimportant that Luke describes two meetings of Paul with the Jews. In vv. 17–22 Paul sends for the Jews (he is in custody and cannot come to them). When they arrive he introduces himself as one who had been obliged to appeal to Caesar not because



even before Paul reached the city, he now approaches the leaders of the Jewish community.<sup>634</sup> This pattern of referencing the Jewish leaders in Rome follows the same pattern which Luke has used in regard to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, cf. Lk. 19:47 and Acts 25:2. Both a theological and a practical reason motivated the setting up of this meeting by Paul. His divine mandate was Jew first and then Gentile. Additionally, the Jewish community in Rome was very large and influential with the Roman government.<sup>635</sup> Since substantial documentation exists from the first century onward detailing Jewish efforts to discredit the Christian movement all over the eastern empire, it would be very important for Paul to know in advance of his appearance before Nero whether such an effort had been made by the Jews in Jerusalem. The response of the Jewish leaders (cf. v. 21) indicates that Paul successfully uncovered that no such effort had been made to this point.

Talbert effectively sets forth the literary structure of this narrative.<sup>636</sup>

**A—v. 17a:** Paul calls together the leaders of the Jews.

**B—v. 17b:** Paul identifies himself as a Jew who, though he had done nothing against “our ancestral customs,” was handed over to the Romans as a prisoner.

**C—v. 18:** The Romans wanted to release Paul because they found nothing against him deserving the death penalty.

**B’—v. 19:** Paul, although he had no accusation to make against “my own nation,” was forced to appeal to Caesar because the Jews would not accept the Roman verdict.

**A’—v. 20:** Paul’s reason for requesting to see the Jews is to explain that he is in chains because of the hope of Israel.<sup>637</sup>

---

he wished to accuse his own people (v. 19) but simply as a measure of self-defence. He wished to make it clear that his imprisonment was for the sake of the ‘hope of Israel’ (v. 20). His hearers reply simply that they are ignorant of the whole affair; they have heard nothing, at least nothing evil, of Paul himself. They have heard of Christianity as a (Jewish) sect, and know that it has a bad reputation. This does not predispose them to view it favourably, but they are fair-minded enough to invite Paul to declare his mind to them (v. 22). This leads to a second invitation and appointment. The Jews come to Paul’s lodging, as, presumably, they had done in v. 17. Paul now (v. 23) addresses them in terms that recall Luke’s customary summaries of the Gospel, and with the customary result: some believe and some do not. Paul then comments on the situation by quoting Isa. 6:9f. and asserting, as in 13:46; 18:6, that the good news of salvation has been sent (he does not say, will now — from this time — be sent) to the Gentiles, who certainly will listen. This double encounter between Paul and the Jews recalls to Weiser (678) the ‘Doppelszene am Anfang der ersten Missionsreise (13:14–43, 44–48)’. There seems little point however in an artificial repetition of this double scene; it would have been easy to compress p 1237 the substance of vv. 17–28 into one event, and there is therefore some probability that there is some distinct traditional recollection of what took place, though the language, especially of vv. 23–28, is undoubtedly Lucan.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1236–1237.]

<sup>634</sup>Literally, ‘the first men (*hoi prōtoi*) of the Jews,’ a designation Luke uses also for the Jerusalem leaders in Luke 19:47 and Acts 25:2. It is striking that this last encounter involves Jewish leaders who have throughout the story been portrayed as fundamentally hostile to Jesus and to the movement proclaiming him as Messiah. The Jewish community in Rome may go back to the mid-second century B.C.E., and by Paul’s time the community seems to have been a large one (see 1 Macc 14:16–18; 15:15–24; Josephus, *Life* 13; *Jewish War* 2:80–92; *Antiquities of the Jews* 17:300; 18:81–83; Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 155–158; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 60, 6, 6). The vicissitudes of the Roman community included periodic expulsions, as under Tiberius (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18:83) and Claudius (Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 25:4; Acts 18:2).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 468–469.]

<sup>635</sup>Why would Paul immediately (after three days — v. 17a) seek to converse with the leaders of the Roman Jewish community? After all, he is in Rome to appear before Caesar. The most obvious Lukan answer is theological: Paul goes first to Israel (Acts 3:26; 10:36). Another more significant reason has to do with sociological factors. The Jewish community in Rome was large and powerful in Paul’s time. It was not uncommon for Roman Jews to try to influence the decisions of Roman authorities on matters of interest to them. Three examples illustrate this: (a) Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.66–69, notes how Roman Jews attempted, successfully, to use their influence against the governor and in favor of their co-religionists’ interests in the courts. (b) Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.11.1 § 300 and *War* 2.6.1 §§ 80–92, tells how some eight thousand Roman Jews supported their Judean brethren’s complaint against Archelaus presented before Augustus. (c) Josephus, *Life* 3 §§ 13–16, tells how he went to Rome to try to secure acquittal by the emperor of certain Jewish priests sent as prisoners by Felix. He did this by using a Jewish actor, Aliturus, who was much beloved by Nero, to make the acquaintance of Poppea, Nero’s mistress and a Jewish sympathizer. He then entreated Poppea on the priests’ behalf and was successful in gaining their release. Intervention by Roman Jews was often provoked by appeals from Jerusalem. Paul would have had every reason to wonder whether such an appeal had already been made. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 17, 108, and 117, says that Jewish delegates were sent throughout the world in his time to speak against the Messianists. Eusebius, *In Isaiah* 18.1–2, says that in the writings of the ancients he found that the priests and elders of the Jews in Jerusalem sent letters to Jews of every country slandering the doctrine of Christ. The characters in Acts 28 seem to assume that such was a possibility in Paul’s time. It has, however, not happened, at least so far. Being so forewarned would be an indispensable part of Paul’s defense.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 222–223.]

<sup>636</sup>Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 222.

<sup>637</sup>As a sidenote, one of the best ways for understanding the differing levels of idea expression in a scripture text is through analyzing it from a literary structural viewpoint. With scripture texts having heavy Jewish thought structures, the literary shaping of a text around parallelism is quite prevalent. And this parallelistic shaping of ideas in ancient Judaism took place both at the surface level -- most easily identified in ancient Hebrew poetry -- and at the sub-surface level, which is where most of it is found in the New Testa-

In this understanding of the text arrangement the chief point made by the narrative is point C that the Romans had found nothing against Paul.<sup>638</sup> The response of the Jewish leaders is framed by Luke around a chiasmic structure as well, although simpler in design:<sup>639</sup>

**A—v. 21:** Roman Jews have received neither letters nor oral reports from Judea with negative comments about Paul personally.

**B—v. 22a:** The Jewish leaders would like to hear Paul present his views.

**A'—v. 22b:** Roman Jews know the Messianist sect of Judaism is denounced everywhere.

The chief point of their response is that they want to hear more about Paul's views.<sup>640</sup>

The second main clause of this lengthy sentence covering vv. 17-18 introduces the summary of Paul's speaking to the group: *συνελθόντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἔλεγεν πρὸς αὐτοῦς*, and once they came together Paul began speaking to them. Clearly this gathering took place at the residence where Paul was now living. Nothing is said about how many people were in the meeting, but given the large size of the Jewish community one would assume a pretty large group of people came to meet Paul. It is interesting that no mention of the Christian community is made through the end of this section in v. 31. Why this was done by Luke has a lot to do with his writing strategy rather than with historical curiosity.<sup>641</sup> Paul's story in Acts ends with Paul reaching out to both Jews and Gentiles with the Gospel, not fellowshiping with fellow believers. This evangelistic image is the one Luke intended to leave with his readers.

What Luke provides us with in vv. 17b-20 is a brief summation of a defense of his situation given by the apostle to these gathered Jewish leaders. Clearly this is the case, since they would not have taken the trouble to travel across this large city to Paul's residence for a 30 second speech! I seriously doubt that Paul was even capable of giving a 30 second sermon.

The contents of the summary are quite logical and clear:<sup>642</sup>

- 1) In spite of doing nothing wrong the Jews in Jerusalem arrested him and turn him over to the Romans (v. 17b)
- 2) Roman investigation revealed that Paul had done nothing wrong and they wanted to release him (v. 18)
- 3) Jewish objection to releasing Paul forced him to use his appeal option as a Roman citizen.(v. 19)
- 4) The entire basis for Paul's imprisonment is "the hope of Israel" (v. 20)

Each of these segments provide helpful insight that merit closer examination.

First is the opening words *ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί*, *men brothers*.<sup>643</sup> This reflects a similar pattern in Acts when a Jewish audience is being addressed; cf. 2:29 and 22:1. The term *ἀδελφοί*, if not referring to blood kind, mostly ment, especially in the synoptic gospels, Acts, Hebrews, James, and also in Revelation to a fair degree. Paul uses it less than the other NT writers.

<sup>638</sup>“The central member of the chiasmus (C—v. 18) indicates its main point: Paul's innocence (23:29; 25:18–19; 26:31; 26:32). Other Lukan themes are also present: for example, Paul's Jewishness (16:3; 17:2; 18:18; 20:16; 21:23–26; 22:3; 23:6; 24:17–18; 26:5), his commitment to an ancestral religion (22:3; 24:14; 28:17), which would have appealed to anyone influenced by Roman values (Esler, 214–16), and the fact that the issue in his imprisonment is the resurrection from the dead (23:6; 24:21; 25:19; 26:6).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 222.]

<sup>639</sup>Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 222.

<sup>640</sup>“Again the central member indicates the central point. After hearing Paul speak the first time, the Jewish leadership is open to hearing Paul's views. Why? They know nothing negative about Paul personally, although they know the movement he is a part of has a bad reputation (e.g., Luke 21:17, ‘you will be hated by all for my name's sake’; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44, ‘a class hated for their abominations, who are commonly called Christians’; 1 Pet 2:12, ‘they speak against you as wrongdoers’; 4:4, ‘they abuse you’; Heb 10:33, ‘publicly exposed to abuse’).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 222.]

<sup>641</sup>“After only three days Paul's first step was to call together (the active and middle of *συνκαλεῖν* seem to be used indifferently; see BDR § 316:2, n. 3) the leading men among the Jews. From this point we hear no more of the Christians in Rome. Luke offers no explanation of this and no conjecture (see e.g. Lüdemann 273f.) is wholly satisfying. It may well be that the reception of Paul by the Roman Christians was anything but whole-hearted. 1 Clement 5:5 ascribes his martyrdom to *ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις*; these may have been found within the Christian community itself. That Luke wished to make a final clarification of the position of church and Gospel over against Judaism may be true but it is not a sufficient reason for omitting all further reference to the church.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1237.]

<sup>642</sup>As a side note, if you are looking for a short, concise summation of Acts 21-28, this is the best one I could possibly recommend. But it must not be overlooked that this is a highly interpretative summary strictly from Paul's point of view. It is not a historical recapitulation of the events surrounding his arrest in Jerusalem and imprisonment subsequently.

<sup>643</sup>“In good Attic style, the vocative stands close to the beginning of the sentence.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1238.]

identifies fellow Christians. But Paul can also apply the term to fellow Jews as well, as is the case here.

1) ἐγώ, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, οὐδὲν ἐναντίον ποιήσας τῷ λαῷ ἢ τοῖς ἔθεσιν τοῖς πατρώοις δέσμιος ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων παρεδόθην εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν Ῥωμαίων, *Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans* (v. 17b).

Although impossible to reflect in the English translation the verb subject of παρεδόθην, *was handed over*, comes as the very first word of the sentence in a place of prominent emphasis: ἐγώ . . . παρεδόθην, *I . . . was handed over*. This clearly is the central point here. One must also recognize that this is Paul's evaluation of what happened, not an intended historical summation of the events which did not -- by Luke's own description -- happen exactly that way.<sup>644</sup> But Paul is not misleading his audience since his assessment is a correct one ideologically. He was charged with breaking the Jewish law, but in actuality he did not and was falsely charged by the Asian Jewish individuals. These charges came from Jewish sources and were repeated made to Roman authorities both in Jerusalem and in Caesarea. The phrase δέσμιος ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων, best taken together, means *a prisoner from Jerusalem*. Thus Paul asserts the source of the problem as coming out of Jerusalem. The use of the verb παρεδόθην, *was handed over*, is correct conceptually, but not historically. The Roman centurion and his soldiers forcibly rescued Paul from the Jewish mob in the outer court of the temple as they were in the process of beating him to death. The Jewish leaders never voluntarily handed Paul over to the Romans. Paul, from that moment of rescue in the temple court by the Romans was continuously in the custody of the Romans in Jerusalem and then in Caesarea. Also εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν Ῥωμαίων, *into the hands of the Romans*, signals the custody of Paul as coming over into the jurisdiction of the Romans. The reason implicit here behind this is the desire and intent of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to kill Paul. This was so intense that on at least two separate occasions plot were made to assassinate Paul completely illegally outside both Jewish and Roman law.

2) οἵτινες ἀνακρίναντές με ἐβούλοντο ἀπολύσαι διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν αἰτίαν θανάτου ὑπάρχειν ἐν ἐμοί, *who after having investigated me were continuously determined to release me because of no reason for death existing in regard to me*.

This adjectival relative clause is linked via pronoun antecedent back to τῶν Ῥωμαίων, *of the Romans*.<sup>645</sup> Paul places the point of the Roman assertion of Paul's innocence in a secondary role simply because here he was stressing the Jewish source of his problem to a Jewish audience. The Roman tribune in Jerusalem had great problems in formulating legitimate charges against Paul within the framework of Roman law (22:30). In Caesarea first Felix was convinced of Paul's innocence (24:22-23) and then Festus had a very difficult time determining what charges should be written out to be presented to the emperor in Rome (25:26-27) and then both Festus and Agrippa II were convinced of Paul's innocence (26:30-32). With each successive formal judicial hearing at Caesarea Paul's innocence became increasingly clear to the Roman authorities.

One must not overlook the complexity of this situation for Paul. The Jewish leadership of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem could rule on legal matters based on the Torah. To be sure, these included civil, criminal, and religious law which are bundled together inseparably inside the Law of Moses. But the Romans maintained veto power over all of this. And especially where Jewish charges mandated execution of the defendant. Further, Paul held Roman citizenship which automatically gave him special privileges that largely exempted him from obligation to Jewish law to begin with. Thus the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem had to formulate legal charges against Paul

<sup>644</sup>It is not clear whether ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων is to be connected with δέσμιος or with παρεδόθην. From Jerusalem probably represents the 'authority' under which Paul was held before the Romans took charge, but the wording here calls attention to the discrepancy between this brief summary of events and the more detailed account of the preceding chapters. Paul was certainly thought to have acted in a manner contrary to the interests of the People and the Law, though of course he denied this. The first expression of this charge was the mob violence that broke out in the Temple. As a result of this Paul was handed over (παρεδόθην) to the Romans; the Romans took him by force out of the hands of the Jews in order to prevent his being lynched; this at least was the effect of their action. Its initial intention may have been to prevent the development of a dangerous riot. From this point onwards however Paul was in what may equally be described as Roman custody and Roman protection. The Jews would have liked to try him in their own court and, if we may accept Luke's narrative, there can be little doubt that such a trial would have resulted in his death. He refused to be handed over for Jewish trial and the case was transferred to the Governor's court in Caesarea. The Romans could see nothing more serious in the matter than a Jewish theological controversy and the bizarre assertion that a dead man, Jesus, was now alive. Eventually, in order to remain in Roman hands and secure a fair (that is, a non-Jewish) trial—perhaps also in order to win a passage to Rome—Paul used his Roman citizenship in an appeal to Caesar." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1238.]

<sup>645</sup>In Koine Greek relative pronouns introducing a dependent clause provided mostly adjectival links back to a noun in the preceding clause -- usually a main clause -- via using the same number and gender forms for the relative pronouns as present in the noun they modify. Although rare deviations from this pattern exist, this is the norm which is followed here by οἵτινες as a masculine plural pronoun linked to the masculine plural noun Ῥωμαίων. Thus the relative clause functions as an adjectival modifier of the noun.



based completely within the framework of the provisions of Roman law. Realizing that they had nothing to use against Paul inside Roman law legitimately, both lame and outright false accusations were made against Paul in both legal trials held in Caesarea under Felix and then Festus. No evidence was submitted at all to justify their charges. And both Roman governors quickly recognized the falseness of their charges against Paul. But politics and legal issues were mixed together with two weak Roman governors subject to intimidation from Jewish leaders. Paul's 'trump card' that he was forced to use by the situation was his right as a Roman citizen to make a final appeal to directly to the Roman emperor, which he did in the second trial under Festus. This completely put on hold the legal process from that moment until it would be resumed in Rome with an appearance before Nero.<sup>646</sup>

3) ἀντιλεγόντων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἠναγκάσθη ἐπικαλέσασθαι Καίσαρα οὐχ ὡς τοῦ ἔθνους μου ἔχων τι κατηγορεῖν, and because of the Jews' objecting, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not as though having to make charges against my people over something (v. 19).

Here Paul focuses on his having to use his Roman citizenship right of appeal to the emperor. The basis of this necessity was ἀντιλεγόντων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, and because of the objecting by the Jews.<sup>647</sup> This genitive absolute construction is best understood as causal in its adverbial function. Their efforts to get him executed forced him to resort to this appeal. To be precise, it was Festus' question of whether Paul would be willing to go back to Jerusalem to stand court in a Roman trial that prompted Paul's appeal to the emperor<sup>648</sup> But Paul clearly recognized and here affirms that the Jewish leaders who came down to Caesarea from Jerusalem were behind the attempt to trap the apostle.

But Paul also asserts that he does not -- and is not -- blaming the Jewish people before Nero in this ap-

---

<sup>646</sup>One legal point of considerable importance to help avoid misunderstanding of this entire process is the difference with ancient Roman legal procedure between a legal trial and an informal inquiry with no legal decisions being rendered. Only two formal legal trials were conducted and both of these were in Caesarea. The first one took place with the governor Felix presiding (24:1-10). No conclusion was reached due to Felix using a technicality of Roman law requiring witnesses (24:22). The second one was conducted by Festus, who succeeded Felix as governor: 25:6-12. This one ended with Paul's appeal to the emperor which completely halted the legal procedures until Paul stood before the Roman emperor in Rome.

But during this almost three year period, numerous informal inquiries took place first in Jerusalem and then mostly in Caesarea. These began with the Roman tribune in Jerusalem with either a face-to-face inquiry (22:26-29) or a public inquiry before the Jewish Sanhedrin (26:30)- In Caesarea first before Felix the face-to-face inquiries took place repeatedly after the formal trial over a two year period (24:24-26). Then under Festus the inquiry happened after the formal trial with Agrippa II and Bernice present (25:13-22).

Although much if not all of such legal procedures would be illegal in most modern western countries today, such a pattern was not uncommon in the first century Roman world. No real separation of powers between a judiciary and an administrative branch of government existed in the Roman structure. And even less tendencies toward such were found in the imperial provinces where local ethnic traditions were permitted by the Romans to continue to be used but with Roman veto power over all decisions. Modern western concepts of law and justice did not exist in the ancient world. Any legal rights an individual could claim depended almost completely on the whim of the Roman authorities in control at the time. They were constrained in their decisions only by the threat of reprisals from their superiors. Bribery of these authorities dominated the judicial process almost totally. Wealth provided power to be used to protect the wealthy. Only in rare isolated instances of Roman law would this situation be any different. Fortunately for Paul the right to appeal to the emperor as a Roman citizen was one of rare situations. And even this fluctuated back and forth over time from its institution in the mid 30s onward to the end of the empire many centuries later.

<sup>647</sup>Paul does not conceal the fact that the Jews took a different view of the loyalty to Judaism that he professed. According to the Old Uncial text they simply denied what he said. In the Western text (represented here by 614 2147 pc sy<sup>h\*\*</sup>) they went further: καὶ ἐπικραζόντων· αἶρε τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἡμῶν, which, though it recalls 22:22, is not simply a verbal assimilation to that verse. It was their attitude that compelled (ἠναγκάσθη) Paul to appeal to Caesar (25:11). This was (he asserts) simply a matter of self-defence, a step taken in order to secure a fair trial and security till the trial was held. He denies the intention of bringing any accusation against his own race. He has in fact in the preceding sentences accused them of making an unjustified and lethal attack upon himself; it is in Caesar's court that he will not accuse them. Paul's true intention is made explicit in a further Western addition, after κατηγορεῖν (κατηγορῆσαι in Ψ m): ἀλλ' ἵνα λυτρώσωμαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ θανάτου (614 2147 pc gig p vg<sup>ms</sup> sy<sup>h\*\*</sup>). Here the Western text is not so much introducing an anti-Jewish element into the text as filling out connections that the shorter text implies but does not state, and at the same time sharpening the narrative. Delebecque (138) accepts the Western reading and defends it at length." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1239.]

<sup>648</sup>Acts 25: 7-9. 7 παραγενομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ περιέστησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβεβηκότες Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὰ καὶ βαρῆα αἰτιώματα καταφέροντες ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀποδείξαι, 8 τοῦ Παύλου ἀπολογουμένου ὅτι οὔτε εἰς τὸν νόμον τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὔτε εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν οὔτε εἰς Καίσαρά τι ἤμαρτον. 9 Ὁ Φῆστος δὲ θέλων τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις χάριν καταθέσθαι ἀποκριθεὶς τῷ Παύλῳ εἶπεν· θέλεις εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀναβᾶς ἐκεῖ περὶ τούτων κριθῆναι ἐπ' ἐμοῦ;

7 When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. 8 Paul said in his defense, "I have in no way committed an offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor." 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, asked Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?"

peal action. This was necessary for these Jewish leaders in Rome to understand that he had no plans to cause them problems with the Romans in making his defense before Nero. Given the existing anti-Semitism attitudes already present in Rome, Paul was not intending to ‘throw gasoline’ on those already existing flames. His Jewish criticism centered on the actions of the leadership back in Jerusalem, whom he labeled τῶν Ἰουδαίων, *the Jews*.<sup>649</sup> For Paul -- and Luke -- the distinction between the Jewish people and the Jewish leaders becomes τῷ λαῷ (*our people*) / τοῦ ἔθνους μου (*my people*) / τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ (*Israel*) and Ἰουδαῖοι (*the Jewish leaders*).

4) διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν παρεκάλεσα ὑμᾶς ἰδεῖν καὶ προσλαλῆσαι, ἔνεκεν γὰρ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ τὴν ἄλυσιν ταύτην περικείμεαι, *therefore because of this reason I called you together to see you and to speak to you, for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain* (v. 20).

Paul concludes (οὖν) by affirming the reason (διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν) for calling this meeting was to explain his situation to them directly (προσλαλῆσαι) rather than them hearing about it indirectly.<sup>650</sup> This is always the best option. Additionally he wanted to meet them personally and discuss his situation together.

Undergirding all of these actions is the foundational reason: ἔνεκεν γὰρ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ τὴν ἄλυσιν ταύτην περικείμεαι, *for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain*. Although elsewhere Paul has asserted that the issue at stake is hope in the resurrection (cf. 23:6; 24:15), here a broader perspective is included in the label τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, *the hope of Israel*.<sup>651</sup> Of course, the salvation of humanity including Israel does rest in the resurrection of Christ. But the Messianic promises of the OT being realized in Jesus Christ is the central point of Paul’s reference.

For Paul, it was his preaching of this Christ fulfilling the Messianic promises that led to the Jewish opposition which, in turn, led to τὴν ἄλυσιν ταύτην περικείμεαι, *I am bound with this chain*. With the apostle sitting next to the Roman soldier and linked to him with a chain, he had a clear visual aid to illustrate his situation.<sup>652</sup> The chain represented not only his situation with the Roman authorities but also all of the Jewish opposition to his preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

The response of these Jewish leaders is given in vv. 21-22, and it reflects an openness about Paul and his situation. The first part of their response is to indicate that nothing negative about Paul either in writing nor in

---

<sup>649</sup>The use of the adjective Ἰουδαῖος, αἴα, αἴων in the masculine plural form as a label for the leadership of the Jewish people is more typical in the Gospel of John than in Acts. But Luke does make use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, *the Jews*, in Acts.

That it would be appropriate for Paul to use οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι here is confirmed by a study of First and Second Maccabees. First Maccabees reflects a strong Palestinian Jewish perspective and consequently never uses οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι to refer to the Jewish people. Instead it uses Ἰσραὴλ, *Israel*, in referring to the Jewish people. On the other hand, Second Maccabees, which is very heavily Hellenistic Jewish in orientation uses οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι overwhelmingly in referring to the Jewish people. This is consistently true through all of the Hellenistic Jewish writings in Greek in the ancient world. Paul is here speaking to an Hellenistic Jewish audience in Rome, and Luke is writing to a non-Jewish audience. Thus οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is the most common designation of the Jewish people in such situations.

<sup>650</sup>“It is not clear to what reason Paul refers. The phrase may look forward (For this reason, namely because (γάρ) it is for the sake of Israel’s hope that I ...), or backward, to Paul’s explanation (v. 19) of his appeal to Caesar. The prospective reference scarcely seems adequate, and it is best to give the ‘reason’ a somewhat wider explanation than the words themselves demand. It is because my appeal to Caesar puts me in an ambiguous position, in which I am at the same time defending myself against an unwarranted attack from the Jewish side while I am in truth maintaining all that is true and valuable in Judaism, that I must seize, or create, an opportunity of making clear to you exactly what the facts are. I have been more than sufficiently misunderstood in Jerusalem, and I hope by seeing you and speaking with you to be understood by you and to be on good terms with you.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1240.]

<sup>651</sup>“Elsewhere Paul has insisted that the real point at issue between himself and his Jewish adversaries is the resurrection: 23:6; 24:15, and it may be that this is the meaning here of the hope of Israel. At 26:6 however (and perhaps at 24:15 also) the meaning of hope is different, and it is probable that here the hope of Israel is the realization of the promises God has made to his people, that is, the promise of Messianic salvation. Paul alleges that the hope has been and will be fulfilled in Jesus. For Paul (whether this is true also for Luke is a difficult question) this belief is guaranteed and anticipated by the resurrection of Jesus, but the hope is wider than the personal resurrection of the crucified Messiah. Understood in this way the statement represents fairly enough the issue between Christianity and Judaism: Jesus was or was not the one in whom the promises were fulfilled. Weiser (680) rightly comments that Luke is concerned with the question of Jewish and Christian identity.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1240–1241.]

<sup>652</sup>“It was this belief that led to Paul’s arrest and to his being now in custody. His position is vividly expressed: τὴν ἄλυσιν ταύτην περικείμεαι. This verb is used as a passive of περιτιθέσθαι (Blass 289: ‘Est κείσθαι = τιθεῖσθαι’), which takes a dative of the person wearing and accusative of the thing worn. The dative becomes the subject of the passive and the accusative remains. See BDR § 159:4, n. 4. ‘Is this metaphorical? If not, what was the force of the Lex Iulia?’ (Begg. 4:346). If Paul was not wearing a chain the metaphor would fall flat. But the wording is due to Luke.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1241.]

personal statement from their contacts in Jerusalem.<sup>653</sup>

The source of potential contact with these leaders in Rome is specified as ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας, *from Judea*. This general reference specifically implies primarily the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. Although a few commentators are inclined to assume from this statement that these Jewish leaders no longer were pushing their case against the apostle,<sup>654</sup> it would be a mistake to take correspondence with the Roman Jewish leaders as a signal of their not pressing the case as far as Rome against the apostle.<sup>655</sup> The caricature of the Jerusalem leaders painted by Luke from chapter twenty-one on is of a group very determined to get rid of Paul at all costs. During the winter months while Paul was making his voyage to Rome by ship there would have been minimal contact with Jerusalem normally by folks living in Rome. About the time of Paul's arrival in Rome at the end of January to the beginning of February, lines of communication from Rome to the eastern Mediterranean would have been opening back up after winter.

The indeterminate amount of time implied in ἡμεῖς οὔτε γράμματα περὶ σοῦ ἐδεξάμεθα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας οὔτε παραγενόμενός τις τῶν ἀδελφῶν, *we have received neither letters about you from Judea nor have any of the brothers coming here*, most likely covers a period of a couple or so years, not two or three months. In addition to written reports, γράμματα περὶ σοῦ, *documents about you*, Luke refers to oral accounts coming to Rome from Judea: ἀπήγγειλεν ἢ ἐλάλησέν τι περὶ σοῦ πονηρόν. *no one reported or said anything bad about you*. The more formal reports would have been both written -- γράμματα -- and oral -- ἀπήγγειλεν -- while the informal would have also been oral -- ἐλάλησέν. These men qualify such as περὶ σοῦ πονηρόν, *negative about you*. Consequently, Paul does not have pre-existing barriers about him personally to overcoming in presenting his message to the Jewish community in Rome.

This leads them to a curiosity about what Paul stood for: ἀξιοῦμεν δὲ παρὰ σοῦ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ φρονεῖς, *and we consider it worthwhile to hear from you about the things you think*. First, they reflect an opened mindedness about Paul's viewpoint. As the subsequent causal clause clearly implies, they understood that he was connected to τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης, *this sect*, of Judaism. Second, they express noncommittal curiosity about where Paul stood in regard to this new religious movement. The language that Luke uses to frame their statements to Paul especially highlight a distancing of themselves from this movement, as well as perhaps, a rather large amount of ignorance about what it stood for. Here was someone coming from Judea with connections to the movement but without a negative image who might help them learn more about it.

How these Jewish leaders could be this uninformed about Christianity is puzzling to some: περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης γνωστὸν ἡμῖν ἔστιν ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται, *for indeed concerning this sect it is clear to us that everywhere it is spoken against*.<sup>656</sup> That a flourishing and rather large Christian community existed in Rome is

<sup>653</sup>Cadbury and Lake (346) take ἀπήγγειλεν as 'official' and ἐλάλησεν as 'unofficial'." [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: a Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009).]

<sup>654</sup>This 'no news about Paul' is certainly different than what happened when he returned to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey, according to James in Acts 21:21, κατηγήθησαν δὲ περὶ σοῦ ὅτι ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν περιπατεῖν. *They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs*.

Both the large Jewish Christian community, along with the larger non-believing Jewish population, of Jerusalem were being fed lies about Paul and his teaching in Diaspora Judaism outside Palestine. James was concerned that Paul's presence in Jerusalem would be disruptive due to these false rumors. Evidently the news flow from Jerusalem outward as far as Rome was not as efficient as that coming into Jerusalem from elsewhere in the empire.

<sup>655</sup>The Jews in Rome cannot comment on Paul's relations with the Jews in Jerusalem or on the version of 'realized Judaism' that he presents. They are completely uninformed about Paul and have barely heard, and that unfavourably, about Christianity (v. 22). They have received no letters about Paul from Judaea. This 'assumes that there was regular correspondence and personal contact between the Jews in Rome and the Jewish supreme authority in Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin' (J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 64). The correspondence had contained no reference to Paul. That is surprising, if the Jewish authorities had in fact determined (as the earlier chapters in Acts suggest) to destroy Paul; even if they thought it unlikely (as indeed it was) that local Jewish opinion could affect the proceedings in the Emperor's court one would expect them to solicit any help that might possibly be available (the Emperor might conceivably wish to sound Jewish opinion) and to put the Roman Jewish communities on their guard against a disruptive and perverting presence." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1241.]

<sup>656</sup>The second response of the Roman Jews is somewhat more puzzling. Their knowledge of the Christians did not seem to be very intimate, only a sort of hearsay acquaintance that 'people everywhere are talking against this sect.' Christians were well established in Rome. Paul had written an epistle to the church there, and Luke had just referred to the 'brothers' who met Paul on his way to Rome (v. 15). The edict of Claudius seemed to have involved a dispute within the Jewish synagogue over Christ, and that only some ten years or so prior to this.<sup>82</sup> It is altogether likely that in the aftermath of Claudius's edict the Jewish synagogues kept themselves completely



well documented. Paul's letter to the Romans written from Corinth around 56 AD, some five or six years earlier, strongly implies this. Two separate groups of believers from this community had met him outside Rome as he made his way up the Via Appian going to the city. Although this community was dominantly Gentile a goodly number of Jewish Christians were a part of it as well as the content of the Letter to the Romans also makes clear.

How then could these leaders be ignorant of the existence of this community in their city? Their statement seems to imply complete ignorance of its presence in the city of Rome. What they do know is by nature only hearsay evidence of its negative reputation. A consideration of the [Edict of Claudius](#) becomes necessary at this point. In Acts 18:2, Paul met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth who had recently been forced to leave Rome as a Jew διὰ τὸ διατεταχέναι Κλαύδιον χωρίζεσθαι πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ τῆς Ρώμης, [because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome](#). It is well documented from Roman sources that Claudius reigned as Roman emperor from 41 to 54. Additionally Paul arrived in Corinth around 51 to 52 AD, where he met this Jewish Christian couple soon after coming to the city. That Claudius banned all Jews from the city is also well documented from a variety of sources.<sup>657</sup> The exact timing of that imperial edict is unclear, but its content is summarized by the Roman historian Suetonius as “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [the Emperor Claudius] expelled them from Rome.”<sup>658</sup> Most but not all commentators take this as internal squabbling inside the Jewish community over Christ and the Gospel being advocated by Jewish Christians from the Christian community in Rome. This edict evidently took place in the middle to late 40s, some fifteen or so years prior to Paul's arrival in Rome in Acts 28. But this was at least the third time such had been decreed by Roman leaders and always it was but a temporary injunction that was rescinded within a short period of time.

If the Jewish Christians like Aquila and Priscilla were the primary ones exiled from the city, this would have left a Christian community largely isolated from the Jewish community. In a city as large as Rome was in the mid-first century these two groups could have easily functioned without contact with one another. Then later when some of the banned Jewish Christians returned to the city and to the Christian community, their tendency would have mostly likely been to keep a low profile among Jewish acquaintances in the city. Over a decade later the Jewish community thus would have typically had only hearsay knowledge about Christianity, and it would have been mostly negative,<sup>659</sup> just as indicated by these Jewish leaders in early 61 AD to Paul.<sup>660</sup>

The labeling of Christianity as τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης, [this sect](#), reflects a pattern in Acts where Jews label Christianity as a subgroup inside Judaism: 24:5, 14, 28:22 (cf. 5:17; 15:5; 26:5). Not until well after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple is Christianity considered a separate religion from Judaism. By that point in time, it is rapidly becoming a non-Jewish movement with a rapidly declining Jewish element in the church. By the middle of the second century Christianity had a smaller percentage of Jewish members than it does in the modern world.

---

separate from the Christians,<sup>83</sup> but it seems equally likely that they would have had some acquaintance with the movement. Perhaps the Roman Jews were being ‘a model of diplomacy,’<sup>84</sup> maintaining as much distance as possible from the whole matter of Paul. In any event, their refusal to speak anything against Paul was in itself something of an indirect testimony to his innocence.” [John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 540.]

<sup>657</sup>References to a possible expulsion of Jews from Rome by the Roman Emperor Claudius, who was in office AD 41-54, appear in the Acts of the Apostles (18:2), and in the writings of Roman historians Suetonius (c. AD 69 – c. AD 122), Cassius Dio (c. AD 150 – c. 235) and fifth-century Christian author Paulus Orosius. Scholars generally agree that these references refer to the same incident.<sup>[1][2]</sup> [“Claudius’ expulsion of Jews from Rome,” [wikipedia.org](#)]

<sup>658</sup>Not all Roman historians describe the edict the same way. Cassius Dio, on the other hand, gives this summation:

“As for the Jews, who had again increased so greatly that by reason of their multitude it would have been hard without raising a tumult to bar them from the city [Rome], he [Claudius] did not drive them out, but ordered them, while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings.”

[“Claudius’ expulsion of Jews from Rome,” [wikipedia.org](#)]

<sup>659</sup>“They know the movement he is a part of has a bad reputation (e.g., Luke 21:17, ‘you will be hated by all for my name’s sake’; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44, ‘a class hated for their abominations, who are commonly called Christians’; 1 Pet 2:12, ‘they speak against you as wrongdoers’; 4:4, ‘they abuse you’; Heb 10:33, ‘publicly exposed to abuse’).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 222.]

<sup>660</sup>The related issue raised by some modern commentators on why Luke does not mention the Christian community in Rome after Paul arrives in the city has serious credibility issues attached to the question. The raising of the question reflects modern western historical curiosity and ignores completely that Acts was not intended to satisfy our modern curiosity about the early history of Christianity. Luke had first century history guidelines in mind as his writing framework, not modern historical guidelines. Central to this was the advocacy of a particular φιλοσοφία, the tracing of the movement of this new religion from its Jewish roots in Jerusalem to its world-wide Gentile focus in Rome. Paul's second meeting with these Jewish leaders in vv. 23-28 highlights his divine calling of Jew first and then Gentile. Even in his arrival in Rome the apostle was true to that calling of first focusing on the Jews and then turning to the Gentiles.

### 8.1.4.3 Paul's Ministry at Rome, Acts 28:23-28

23 Ταξάμενοι δὲ αὐτῷ ἡμέραν ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ξενίαν πλείονες οἷς ἐξετίθετο διαμαρτυρόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, πείθων τε αὐτοὺς περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀπὸ τε τοῦ νόμου Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, ἀπὸ πρωῒ ἕως ἑσπέρας. 24 καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπειθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις, οἱ δὲ ἠπίστουν· 25 ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀπελύοντο εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἓν, ὅτι καλῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν 26 λέγων· πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπὸν· ἀκοῆ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέπετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε· 27 ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν· μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνώσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἴασομαι αὐτούς. 28 γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπεστάλη τοῦτο τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ· αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται.

23 After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. 24 Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. 25 So they disagreed with each other; and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, 26 "Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. 27 For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.' 28 Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." 29

At the end of the first meeting, Paul and the Jewish leaders agree upon a second meeting where Paul was living at the time: Ταξάμενοι δὲ αὐτῷ ἡμέραν ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ξενίαν πλείονες, *And having set a day with him, they came to him at his lodging in great numbers.* Paul had experienced this kind of thing before starting at Pisidian Antioch (13:14-50) on the first missionary journey where an initial positive response leads to a second meetings with a much larger group of people present.<sup>661</sup>

No time lapse between the first and the second meetings are provided by Luke in 28, thus we don't really know whether it was a few days or quite some time. Judging from the increased response by the Jewish community it was long enough for word to be spread about the meeting across the many synagogue communities of Jews in the city of Rome. Those attending the meeting represent a larger segment of the Jewish community than were present at the first meeting, as is signaled by the adverb πλείονες. This is the nominative plural comparative / superlative form of πολὺς which can mean either 'greater' or 'greatest' and in the elative function of the superlative use the meaning is 'great.' Most likely from the contextual signals here, this is the correct meaning.<sup>662</sup> That is, a much larger crowd showed up for this second meeting.

Luke has an interesting way to designate where Paul was staying in Rome. In v. 16, Luke says ἐπιεράπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ, *Paul was allowed to remain by himself together with the soldier who was guarding him.* In v. 23, Luke calls it εἰς τὴν ξενίαν which literally means 'into his hospitality.'<sup>663</sup> And in v. 30, Ἐνέμεινεν indicates that he remained there for two complete years (διετίαν ὄλην) at his

<sup>661</sup>There is a close correspondence between the narratives of Paul's interaction with the Jews of Pisidian Antioch (13:14–50) and with those of Rome (28:17–28). The former occurred at the beginning of Paul's wider mission and the latter at its close. Both scenes involve an initial positive response from the Jews who heard Paul's testimony and a request to hear him further (13:42; 28:22). In both accounts a second hearing occurred on a subsequent day (13:44; 28:23). In the course of the second meeting with Paul, strong Jewish resistance to his witness developed (13:45; 28:24). Thereupon Paul addressed them with a quote from the prophet Isaiah. At Pisidian Antioch the text was from Isa 49:6 and pointed to the divine imperative for a mission to the Gentiles (13:47). In Rome the text was Isa 6:9f. and highlighted the Jewish rejection of the divine message (28:26f.). Together the two texts give the full picture — the witness to the Gentiles and the rejection by the Jews. It was the Jewish rejection of the gospel that gave impetus to the Gentile mission. Consequently, in both instances Paul concluded his testimony to the Jews with an emphatic statement that he was now turning to the Gentiles (13:46; 28:28)." [John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 541.]

<sup>662</sup>πλείονες is probably elative, they came in considerable numbers (rather than comparative, more came than on the previous occasion, v. 17). For the form of the word see BDR § 47:2, n. 2. πλείονες is used here and at 27:12, πλείονας at 27:20, but πλείους at 13:31; 19:32; 21:10; 23:13, 21; 24:11; 25:6, 14. This might suggest a special source for chs. 27, 28." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1243.]

<sup>663</sup>ξενία, ας, ἡ (ξένος; Hom. et al.; ins, pap, Sir 29:27 v.l.; Philo, Joseph., loanw. in rabb.) *hospitality, entertainment* shown a guest (so mostly), less frequently the place where the guest is lodged, *guest room* (Suda and sim. Hesychius equate ξενία with καταγωγή, κατάλυμα. Cp. also Sb 3924, 7; 17 [19 A.D.]; PMich 473, 13 [II A.D.]; PSI 50, 16 [IV–V A.D.]; Philo, Mos. 2, 33; Jos., Ant. 1, 200; 5, 147; Ps.-Clem., Hom. 1, 15; 8, 2; 12, 24; 14, 1; 8). In the two places in our lit. where ξ. occurs, both mngs. are possible, though the second is perh. more probable. ἐτοιμάζειν τινὶ ξενίαν *prepare a guest room for someone* **Phlm 22** (Ps.-Clem., Hom. 12, 2 τὰς ξενίας ἐτοιμάζοντες.—ξενία=guest room also schol. on Nicander, Ther. 486. Cp. Lat. hospitium parare). Of Paul's lodgings in Rome **Ac 28:23** (on the question whether ξ. here=μίσθωμα vs. 30, s. Lghtf. on **Phlm 22** and in the comm. on Phil p. 9; also s. HCadbury, JBL 45, 1926, 320ff; Haenchen ad loc.)—DELG s.v. ξένος. M-M. TW. Spicq. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A*

own expense (ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι). This signals the renting of a house which Paul was obligated to pay for during the time of his stay there. Through the generosity of friends the money came in to cover the cost of the lodging, even though the cost must have been extensive.<sup>664</sup>

When the large crowd gathered at Paul's home to listen to him, he took the entire day -- ἀπὸ πρωῒ ἕως ἑσπέρας - to explain everything to them: οἷς ἐξετίθετο. The timeframe expressed by Luke, ἀπὸ πρωῒ ἕως ἑσπέρας, literally means [from sunup to sundown](#). If this is not proof that Paul could be 'long winded' then none exists that would convince. That's around a twelve hour long sermon. The imperfect verb ἐξετίθετο from ἐκτίθημι literally means to 'put it out' in the sense here of expressing the meaning of something from its contents.<sup>665</sup> This is somewhat similar to previous episodes in Paul's ministry; cf. 17:1-4; 18:; 19:8-9. Whether the same group listened to him that long or whether they were going and coming is not made clear. Probably it was more the latter than the former. But it was the same speaker explaining and answering questions all day long.

His objective in this long speech was διαμαρτυρόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, [giving thorough witness to the kingdom of God](#). This is the core theme of Paul's speech.<sup>666</sup> Why would Paul center his Gospel message around the kingdom of God in Rome? First, and most importantly, he is speaking here not to a Gentile audience, but rather to a Jewish audience. Their entire messianic expectation had been built around the theme of the kingdom of God. Although just like Jesus, Paul had a completely different definition of the kingdom than did both Jewish audiences for Jesus and the apostle. Yet, to get the attention of a Jewish audience one had to use a theme perceived as relevant to their interests. This had been Paul's strategy consistently at Ephesus (19:8; 20:25), and among the churches early on with mostly, or significantly, Jewish members (14:22). The theme of the kingdom of God was a Jewish oriented 'insider' message, rather than an outsider Gentile theme. Gentiles had no background to understand this theme properly.

The second emphasis of Luke is on Paul's extensive use of the Hebrew Bible as the foundation of his witness to Jesus regarding the kingdom of God in the Old Testament scriptures, particularly the messianic oriented ones: πείθων τε αὐτοὺς περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀπὸ τε τοῦ νόμου Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, [and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the prophets](#). One would assume that the more detailed contents of this message beyond Luke's summary here would pretty much follow the pattern used by Paul at Pisidian Antioch in [Acts 13:16-41](#) when he spoke in a Jewish synagogue there. To a Jewish audience anchored in the Law of Moses, Jesus had to be presented clearly as the prophetic fulfillment of the scriptures about the Messiah. Throughout his entire ministry (cf. also 17:2-3; 18:4-5) when speaking to Jews rather than Gentiles,<sup>667</sup> this had been Paul's approach in presenting Jesus as the Savior.

The response to Paul's message was mixed (v. 24): καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπείθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις, οἱ δὲ ἠπίστουν, [and on the one hand some were being persuaded by what was being said, but others were disbelieving](#). Although interested in what Paul had to say, at the end of the day only some of the Jews were convinced by his words. At least this second meeting was more civil than the second meeting in Pisidian Antioch where the Jewish leadership resorted shouts and verbal bombs tossed at Paul and Barnabas (Cf. [Acts 13:44-45](#)). This kind of mixed response

---

*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 683.]

<sup>664c</sup>Paul remains for two full years in his own lodgings (v. 30a). This probably means he rented an apartment in one of the thousands of tenement buildings in Rome. If so, it would have been an expensive proposition. Juvenal 3.164-66 says that in Rome one must pay a big rent for a wretched lodging; 3.223-25 says that one could buy an excellent house outside Rome for what in Rome it costs to rent a dark garret for one year. How Paul paid for such a dwelling is unclear." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 229-230.]

<sup>665</sup>Luke Johnson is wrong in calling ἐξετίθετο an inceptive imperfect. The context argues clearly for a standard descriptive imperfect, or perhaps the iterative function. Paul's διαμαρτυρόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ is not just the first point of this speech, as Johnson's assessment assumes. It is clearly a summation of the core theme of the entire speech that took from morning to evening to give, thus making the standard descriptive imperfect the most appropriate verb tense function to describe such.

"The imperfect is inceptive, for the argument will continue from morning until evening, a long session indeed! For the sense of the passage, compare Acts 17:1-4; 18:4, 28; 19:8-9." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 470.]

<sup>666c</sup>From the beginning of Luke-Acts (Luke 4:43) to the very end (Acts 28:31), the 'kingdom/rule of God' has been the constant content of preaching both with Jesus (Luke 6:20; 7:28; 8:1; 9:11; 11:20; 12:31-32; 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:29; 19:11; 21:31; 22:30; 23:42; Acts 1:3), and with his prophetic representatives (Luke 9:2; 10:9-11; Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25)." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 470.]

<sup>667</sup>How did Paul approach speaking to non-Jews in an 'evangelistic' setting? Paul's speech on Mars' Hill in [Acts 17:22-31](#) would be one example. In this speech he never mentions a text from the Hebrew Bible. Instead, God as universal Creator and His connection to Christ is the point of emphasis. Paul understood well how to communicate the Gospel to different audiences.



from the Jewish community to the Gospel was true in virtually every place where Paul presented the Gospel: e.g., Pisidian Antioch (13:43-45); Iconium (14:1-2); Thessalonica (17:4-5); Beroea (17:11-13); Corinth (18:6-8). Thus Paul's experience in Rome was no different than what had been experienced for over three decades of preaching the Gospel.

Consequently Paul made a closing statement in light of the divided views about his message: ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀπελύοντο εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἓν, *with them being divided among one another, they began leaving as Paul said one word*. In the clear sequence of actions in this statement Paul noticed serious disagreement among these Jewish present (ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους).<sup>668</sup> He then made his final declaration to them: εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἓν. This happened just as the group began departing from the meeting: ἀπελύοντο. No emphasis is given here as in the previous settings on 'follow up' with those in agreement with Paul's message. But this setting is rather different than the others as well. Potentially at least the Christian community did gain some new members from those in agreement with what Paul had said about the kingdom of God, and Jesus' connection to it.

The ῥῆμα ἓν, *one word*, that Paul said to the departing group is quite interesting. It introduced as words spoken through the prophet Isaiah by the Holy Spirit: ὅτι καλῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν λέγων, *that well did the Holy Spirit say through Isaiah the prophet about your forefathers saying*.

Luke indicates that Paul understood that behind Isaiah's written words in Isaiah 6:9-10 lay the speaking action of the Holy Spirit. God's breath, θεόπνευστος, was embedded in these words of the OT prophet Isaiah.<sup>669</sup> Note clearly here that the fact of divine inspiration is affirmed but nothing is implied about the method of inspiration.<sup>670</sup> Keeping this distinction in mind is critical. Thus the prophet's declaration about ancient Israel represented not only his evaluation of that situation but also the view of God as well. Paul's sees in the ἀσύμφωνοι of his Jewish audience that day in Rome a parallel situation to the one Isaiah described in the seventh century BCE.

Paul's quote of Isaiah 6:9-10 to this crowd parallels earlier responses to this kind of mixed reaction during his missionary travels. In Pisidian Antioch Paul's statements were similar although not quoting OT scripture: [Acts 13:46-47](#). In Corinth after Jewish hostility reared up its ugly head, Paul symbolically 'shook the dust from his feet' in turning away from the synagogue to the Gentiles in preaching the gospel: [Acts 18:5-11](#). Thus what Luke highlights from Paul's early contact with the Jewish community upon arriving in Rome is not different from the reactions he had experienced in synagogues from Jerusalem to Pisidian Antioch during three decades of missionary service.

Some interesting aspects about the quote of Isaiah 6:9-10 emerge from careful comparative examination.<sup>671</sup>

First, only Acts 28 and Matthew 13 have a full citation of the LXX version of Is. 6:9-10

Second, Luke differs from the LXX only in the introductory line: "go to the people and say" in Luke rather than "go and say to this people" in the LXX which is in full agreement with the Hebrew text.

Third, the LXX has several small but important variations from the Hebrew text:

- a) The Hebrew has "make the heart of this people fat/heavy (*šamen*)" in the imperative, whereas the LXX has the aorist indicative, "was made/has become fat/heavy (*epachynthē*)";

<sup>668</sup>The Jews were divided, were in disagreement, ἀσύμφωνοι. The word occurs nowhere else in the NT, but elsewhere is not uncommon in both literal (unharmonious) and metaphorical senses; cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 482c, where ἀσύμφωνοι εἶναι includes ἐναντία λέγειν." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1244.]

<sup>669</sup>**2 Tim. 3:16-17.** 16 πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, 17 ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος.

16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

<sup>670</sup>Note my discussion of the biblical concept of inspiration first appearing in the *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, revised edition by Garland Press in 1996 and then summarized for the Religion 492 class at Gardner-Webb University: <http://cranfordville.com/r492Lec12.html#1.2.2> The point that is significant here is that the breath of God, the θεόπνευστος, is embedded in the words of the prophet during their composition so that they can 'come alive' as the voice of God speaking through these words when they are read subsequent to their composition. Divine inspiration, biblically understood, is focused on the spiritual impact on the reader in the reading of the words having God's breath embedded in them. The distinction between 'inspiration' and 'illumination' in modern theology is completely false and unbiblical. It is the phoney product of following the Latin *inspirio* and falsely assuming implications of 'inbreathing' rather than the Greek θεόπνευστος which focuses on 'out breathing.'

<sup>671</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 471.

- b) the Hebrew concludes with the third person “and I heal him,” whereas the LXX has “I will heal him” (*iasomai*), which is odd as well because it is in the indicative rather than the subjunctive mode demanded by the *mēpote* construction. Not surprisingly, some NT mss do supply the subjunctive form.

Also Mark and John only make limited use of the Isaiah quote, although the use of the OT prophet is to make the same essential point as found in Matthew and Acts: some Israelites respond positively to the Lord, but most reject what God has to say to them, and thus fail to experience the promised healing: *ιάσομαι αὐτούς*. Also, very interestingly Matthew closely follows the LXX text, rather than the Hebrew text which is more frequent for him.

<b>LXX: Isa. 6:9-10</b>	<b>Acts 28:26-27</b>	<b>Matt. 13:14-15</b>	<b>Mark 4:12</b>	<b>Jhn 12:40</b>
9 Πορεύθητι καὶ εἰπὸν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ Ἄκοῦ ἄκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε· † 10 ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν αὐτῶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν	26 πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπὸν· ἀκοῦ ἄκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε· 27 ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν· μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν	ἀκοῦ ἄκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε. 15 ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν	ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιῶσιν,	τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ
καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ιάσομαι αὐτούς. †	καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ιάσομαι αὐτούς.	καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ιάσομαι αὐτούς.	μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῆ ἑαυτοῖς.	καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ιάσομαι αὐτούς.

How does this OT text apply to Paul's Roman Jewish audience? Paul had introduced it with the words *ὅτι καλῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν, well did the Holy Spirit speak*. The spiritual principle announced by Isaiah regarding the Israelite people of his day was simply that although maintaining an outward appearance of being religious and devoted to God, inwardly the people's spiritual eyes and heart had turned hard and unresponsive to God's warnings. And the more His prophets spoke that divine warning the less responsive they became. Thus what awaited them was the wrath of God and not the salvation of God. Jesus used the Isaiah text to make the same essential point toward His Jewish audience in Palestine. Every opportunity to hear and respond to God's message but without positive response only deepened the rebellion of the people against God and intensified the divine wrath coming on the Day of the Lord.

This is the exact same point of Paul to his Roman Jewish audience as they leave the meeting that day at his home in the city. But for Paul -- out of his divine calling on the Damascus road -- is added another consequence: *γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπεστάλη τοῦτο τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ· αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται, therefore let it be known that to the Gentiles this salvation of God is sent; and they will indeed listen*. This Isaiah text then becomes Paul's justification scripturally for turning to the non-Jews with the Gospel message -- now in Rome just as he had in the other places of his missionary service. To be sure, it was this shift that had brought the condemnation of the Jews in Jerusalem against him and thus had brought him to Rome. To the Christian community in Rome, the apostle had laid all of this out in enormous detail some four or five years earlier in his letter to them from Corinth at the end of the third missionary journey. They well understood and rejoiced in this shift of direction in the preaching of the Gospel. But now a sizeable segment of the Jewish community was turning its back on the offer of divine salvation through Christ as the promised Messiah.

A note about verse 29: *καὶ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὴν ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συζήτησιν, and after he finished saying these things, many Jews having disputes among themselves departed*. Overwhelmingly the verse is omitted in all the major manuscripts as well as related ones: P<sup>74</sup> x A B E Ψ 048 33 81 1175 1739 2464 pc s vg<sup>st</sup> sy<sup>p</sup> co. Its insertion is in the Western text readings of *M* it vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>h\*</sup>. It was picked up in some of the Byzantine texts and thus added in Jerome's Vulgate.<sup>672</sup> This accounts for its inclusion in most of the older modern language

<sup>672</sup> This verse is added by *M* it vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>h\*</sup>, as follows: *καὶ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πολλὴν ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συζήτησιν (ζήτησιν, 104 pc)*. It is clearly of Western origin but has been taken up in the Antiochian text. It was probably felt that the story begun in v. 23 needed some narrative conclusion in addition to Paul's pronouncement in 28:28. 'The addition was probably made because of the abrupt transition from ver. 28 to ver. 30' (Metzger 502). It indicates what Luke probably intended to convey — not the

translations.

#### 8.1.4.4. Luke's Summary of Paul's Ministry in Rome, Acts 28:30-31

30 Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι καὶ ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν, 31 κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως.

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

In this closing summary statement, Luke captures the essence of Paul's ongoing ministry in Rome with two main clauses and two participle phrases that affirm the framework of Jesus' public ministry on earth. Diagramming it can demonstrate the thought structure:

30	δὲ		
1	<b>Ἐνέμεινεν</b>		<b>Static locational</b>
	διετίαν ὅλην		How long
	ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι		By what means
	καὶ		
2	<b>ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους</b>		<b>Active dynamical</b>
	πρὸς αὐτόν,		
31	<b>κηρύσσων</b> τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ		Preaching
	καὶ		
	<b>διδάσκων</b> τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ		Teaching
	μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως.		

Luke first defines the base of activities Ἐνέμεινεν, **he remained there**, and then characterizes what Paul did at his home, ἀπεδέχετο πάντας, **he was welcoming all**. The nature of this welcoming of guests was to preach -- κηρύσσων -- and teach -- διδάσκων.<sup>673</sup>

Luke carries the story of Paul into two years of activities in Rome: Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην, **and he remained there for two entire years**. The aorist verb form with the temporal qualifier sets to a time block of staying in one place for two years: (.....). The imperfect verb that follows, ἀπεδέχετο, defines repeated actions during that two year time block in his lodging: (-----).

The verb Ἐνέμεινεν, when used in reference to a place such as a home, normally implies the residence is rented and thus a temporary lodging rather than a permanent one. Interestingly, since Paul was a Roman citizen and had a registered residence in the city, he qualified for the grain ration that provided a basic supply of food for the residents of the city.<sup>674</sup> If Paul arrived in Rome in early February of 61 AD, then Luke's statement carries the reader through early February 63 AD. Implicit in this statement of Luke is that Paul's trial did not take place during this two year period. Given the massive case load of appeals during the reigns of Claudius and Nero, this is not surprising.<sup>675</sup> Added to that are the historical assertions that Nero did not place a high priority in addressing these appeals either.<sup>676</sup> With the chaotic turbulence in the imperial palace in 61-62 AD that led to the dismissal and/

total and final rejection of Judaism but a people divided in their response to the Gospel.

“The verse is not contained in P<sup>74</sup> & A B E Ψ 048 33 81 1175 1739 2464 pc s vgst sy<sup>p</sup> co.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1245]

<sup>673</sup>“The focus in Acts 28:17–31 is on Paul's dealings with Jews and in particular his preaching and teaching in Rome. Luke's emphasis and real interests lay primarily in the message Paul preached, and the growth of the social movement of which he was a part. That it reached the heart and capital of the Empire (Horace, Odes 3.29.12) and was having success there was a fitting climax in view of the larger purposes of his historical work.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 793.]

<sup>674</sup>“Being a citizen and having a registered domicile would enable Paul to receive the grain ration. His being a prisoner would not affect it (Seneca, Beneficiis 4.28.2—‘the good and the bad share alike’).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 230.]

<sup>675</sup>“The two-year delay was likely due to the volume of court business (Rapske, 317). Dio Cassius 60.28.6 says that during the reign of Claudius the number of lawsuits was beyond all reckoning. The reign of Nero would have been no different.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 230.]

<sup>676</sup>“We know that Nero, during the early years of his reign, followed closely the advice of both Seneca and the head of the Praetorian Guard, Afranius Burrus, whom Paul may well have been handed over to by the centurion Julius. Seneca had preached clemency as a major virtue of someone who had aspirations of being a great emperor. Suetonius tells us that Nero severely disliked signing



or death of his two trusted advisors, [Seneca](#) and [Afranius Burrus](#), the head of the Praetorian Guard, who would have had direct responsibility for managing the appeals, it is not surprising in the least that Paul's case dragged on and most likely was dismissed.<sup>677</sup> This would have particularly been true if none of the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem showed up to push the case forward, which from all indication they did not.<sup>678</sup>

From his lodging he welcomed all who came to visit him: καὶ ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν, [and he was welcoming all who came to him](#).<sup>679</sup> Even though caught in a bureaucratic quagmire, Paul made good use of the time, just as he had done while in jail earlier at Caesarea for two years. Fellow believers from the Christian community came to visit him; most likely interested individuals from the Jewish community came also.<sup>680</sup>

What the apostle did with these visitors is described in terms of κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, [preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the](#)

---

warrants of execution (Nero 16.2–17). We also know that, unlike Claudius, until after the black days in A.D. 62 when Nero lost both Burrus and Seneca as advisers, Nero showed no real interest in holding lengthy court sessions and personally sorting out the backlog of appeal cases. There are thus good reasons to think, then, that after a *pro forma* appearance in court and a statement of his case and appeal, Paul's case was dismissed due to lack of evidence of any serious crime. Perhaps also it was due to a lack of accusers present to pursue the matter." [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 792.]

<sup>677c</sup>In a long note in Begs. 5:319–38, Cadbury (quoting Lake at length) argues that the διετία referred to in this verse was significant in view of the Roman legal provision that if the accusers of a prisoner failed to appear within two years the prosecution would lapse and the prisoner be released. A first-century reader would then take the verse to mean that Paul had been released and that even during the time he was kept in custody he was able to preach freely. This suggestion offers what seems in many respects a satisfactory explanation of the end of Acts. It is however radically criticized by Sherwin-White (112–19). The most serious point of criticism is Cadbury's dependence on a Latin papyrus (BGU 628 recto), which Cadbury, following L. Mitteis, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde* (1912), 2:1:281, dated in the time of Nero. It seems now to be agreed that this document belongs to a much later period. Sherwin-White writes, "The rule that Cadbury requires does not make its appearance until A.D. 529. In texts dated to A.D. 385 and 409 Theodosius enacts that if an accuser fails to proceed with his case within a fixed period, finally defined as two years, he shall be punished. But that the accused should be acquitted is only laid down in a rule of Justinian dated AD 529" (115, n. 4). In the end however Sherwin-White comes to a conclusion not unlike Cadbury's. "A more probable technical solution than that of Cadbury lies, as so often, in the nature of *imperium*. Claudius in his edict about absent prosecutors did not establish a law. For that he would have used a decree of the Senate, as was his custom. He simply stated what he himself was going to do ... Nothing prevented the successor of Claudius from taking a similar line [in dismissing prisoners and the like] if he chose ... Perhaps Paul benefited from the clemency of Nero [encouraged by Seneca], and secured a merely casual release" (118f.). Sherwin-White adds, "But there is no necessity to construe Acts to mean that he was released at all" (119). The reference however to a specific period does suggest termination, whether in release or in death; see above on the aorist ἐπέμεινεν. See also the excellent critical summary in Wilson (Gentiles 233–8), and more recently Hemer (383–7, 398); also Dupont (Études 544f.), and (still to be studied) Begs. 5:319–38 (above). Haenchen's argument (692) that if after two years there had been a favourable verdict its apologetic value would have been too great to be omitted is a strong one. Schmithals (241f.) believes that Paul came to Rome as a free man and survived till Nero's pogrom. See also Schille (479) and Weiser (677, 680)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1251–1252.]

<sup>678c</sup>Acts 28:21 states flatly that the Jews in Rome had received no letters about Paul from Judea, and more importantly that none of the Jews who came visiting from Jerusalem had anything evil to say against Paul. Tajara suggests plausibly that this may indicate that the Sanhedrin had decided to avoid the expense of sending a delegation to Rome, and thus they had withdrawn from the case. "It would have been unthinkable for the Sanhedrin to have pursued the case against Paul without soliciting the active help of the Roman Jewish community which enjoyed marked influence in the imperial court."<sup>35</sup> Yet if there was one thing Roman law was adamant about, it was that accusers must follow through on their accusations, pursuing due process of Roman law to its proper conclusion.<sup>36</sup>

"Nevertheless, this did not always happen, and though there was no formal statute of limitations after which time a charge would automatically be dismissed,<sup>37</sup> nonetheless Roman law stated that if a person did not pursue his accusations to the point of getting verdict in a case, then 'if he has stopped at an earlier stage, he has not made an accusation, and we observe this rule. But if he has given up when an appeal has been lodged, he will be indulgently regarded as not having carried through his accusation' (Digest 38.14.8). The imperium of the emperor was such that he could choose to show clemency and dismiss various cases, especially when the charges were not being actively pursued."<sup>38</sup>

[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 791–792.]

<sup>679c</sup>"He received all who came to him" (v. 30b). That such accessibility would have been possible is indicated by the Martyrdom of Justin 3.3A, where the Christian philosopher says, "I have been living above the baths of Myrtinus for the entire period of my sojourn at Rome ... and I have known no other meeting-place but here. Anyone who wished could come to my abode and I would impart to him the words of truth'." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 230.]

<sup>680</sup>Two Western text manuscripts -- mss 614 and 2147 et als -- add "Jews and Gentiles" (Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας) to πάντας in order to make clear what contextually seems to be implied in the original text.

**Lord Jesus Christ.** These two adverbial modal participles define the nature of the verb action in ἀπεδέχτο.

**κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.** Paul's advocating of the kingdom of God -- as per in v. 23 -- stresses a Jewish audience. The earlier rejection of Paul's view in the second meeting early on did not deter Paul from proclaiming this same message to every Jew who came to see him. It was a fundamental message that provided the framework for understanding the mission of Christ Jesus. Jewish audiences in particular needed to understand Christ within that framework. Additionally, Acts begins with Christ talking about the kingdom of God in 1:3 and then ends with Paul talking about it in 28:31.

**καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.** Perhaps as Charles contends,<sup>681</sup> κηρύσσων and διδάσκων are synonyms, although this is not typically the case elsewhere in the New Testament. Assuming some distinction in meaning of διδάσκων in the direction of giving instruction more than advocating commitment to Christ (i.e., κηρύσσων), this emphasis would naturally fit the visits of fellow believers keenly anxious to learn more about their Christian faith from this revered apostle. What a privilege the church in Rome had with Paul there and able to carry the understanding of Christianity to new depths of truth.

**μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως.** Here the sense of παρρησία is more the idea of freedom from intimidation, but included also is the sense of confidence and assurance.<sup>682</sup> Paul spoke as an innocent man from the Jewish charges, and did so in the confidence of his innocence. Additionally, even though confined to the lodging with a Roman soldier chained to him, he could preach and teach with no fear of Jewish reprisals as had often been his lot. The Romans had no concern to stop him from advocating religious ideas that posed no threat to the Roman empire. Their presence through the soldier made it impossible for Jewish opponents to harm him in any way. Thus for two years the apostle had one of the best opportunities of his entire ministry to promote the Gospel.

**The Ending of Acts.** Although for many modern readers Luke seems to end Acts abruptly,<sup>683</sup> the reality is that in terms of standardized history writing in the first century world, this was a very appropriate place to end Acts.<sup>684</sup> To have included an account of the death of Paul, or a volume three would have severely diminished the

---

<sup>681</sup>“κηρύσσων and διδάσκων are here synonyms; Luke does not seem to be distinguishing between two different kinds of communication.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1253.]

<sup>682</sup>“With complete assurance [parrōsias] and without hindrance [akēlytēs] he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 31). That Paul speaks with parrōsia (2:29; 4:13, 29, 31) is significant. He speaks with boldness because he has a good conscience (23:1; 24:16). For example, Wis 5:1 says that the righteous man will stand with great confidence (en parrōsia) in the presence of those who have afflicted him; Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.6.7 § 131, says that Joseph's brothers spoke with assurance (parrōsia) because they were conscious of having committed no crime. Paul's boldness then has its roots in his innocence. That he preached “without hindrance” (akēlytēs) indicates that such religious issues were not a concern to Rome.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 230.]

<sup>683</sup>“Thus ends the second Lucan volume, the Acts of the Apostles. It ends abruptly and surprises the modern reader. Is it unfinished? Has it been somehow truncated in its transmission? No one knows. Various theories have been proposed to explain the ending of Acts; the main ones are the following:

“(1) Luke died before finishing his story of the sequel to the ministry of Jesus. This explanation encounters the difficulty that 28:28–30 is a summary, similar to other summaries in Acts that punctuate the account; it seems clearly to be meant as the literary ending of Acts.

“(2) The story of Paul's journey to Spain (Acta Pauli; Muratorian Fragment 38–39 [EnchBib §4; Conzelmann, Acts, xxxii]) and of his martyrdom would have followed as the sequel to his two volumes. This explanation is based on later legendary accounts and encounters the difficulty that there is no evidence in any of the Greek MSS of Acts of such a sequel. See *Beginnings*, 5.326–39.

“(3) Luke intended to write a third volume, incorporating such details as those mentioned in (2), as his own prologue to Acts may indicate (T. Zahn, “Das dritte Buch des Lukas,” NKZ 28 [1917]: 373–95; Ramsay): Acts 1:1 uses the adj. prōtos, ‘first,’ and not proterous, ‘former.’ This may imply that still another volume was projected. This explanation encounters the philological difficulty that prōtos is often used in the sense of ‘former’ (BAGD, 725; MM, 557) or ‘former (of two).’

“(4) Acts was written before Paul's Roman trial took place in the early sixties (Harnack, J.A.T. Robinson), and so Luke had no knowledge yet how it would come out. This explanation encounters the difficulty that Paul's speech in 20:18–35 is a farewell address with a conscious allusion to his coming end. Moreover, it is in conflict with what is almost certainly the later date of the composition of Acts, after A.D. 70 (see Introduction §§20–31). The Acts of the Apostles reads like a complete work, when the literary and symbolic aspects of it are rightly considered.”

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 791.]

<sup>684</sup>The proper guidelines for history writing are set forth by [Dionysius of Halicarnassus](#), the most influential court historian of the first Christian century, in his Περὶ λεκτικῆς Δημοσθένους δεινότητος, *On the Admirable Style of Demosthenes*.

value and persuasiveness of Acts to its targeted first century readers. Luke composed Acts by first century history writing standards, not by twenty-first century opinions!

Thus Luke achieved well his goal of tracing the movement called later as Christianity from its Jewish beginnings in Jerusalem to the imperial capital of the world, Rome. He makes a highly persuasive case for the legitimacy of this religious movement within the framework of first century history writing that would be very appealing especially to a non-Jewish reader familiar with ancient histories.

With this history dedicated to Theophilus along with the gospel writing (cf. Acts 1:1 and Luke 1:1-4), this non-Jewish believer, who sponsored the writing of these two documents as their patron -- and possibly also the slave Luke's owner -- and them as a major defense of the movement grounded in Jesus of Nazareth, had delivered to him writings that could be copied and distributed widely as very credible writings. They would gain the respect of every reader. These documents are literary master pieces in the first century Greek literature that contain highly persuasive arguments in behalf of Christianity.

#### **8.1.4.5 Paul's Snapshot Glimpses into Ministry at Rome, Phil. 1:12-26; 2:19-30; 4:1-3, 10-19**

What about the 'rest of the story' of Paul's life and ministry? On the assumption<sup>685</sup> that Philippians was composed during this two year period of ministry in Rome, just as was Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon during the two year imprisonment of Paul in Caesarea earlier, Paul's letter to the church at Philippi provides brief glimpses into several events that took place in Rome during Luke's 'two year' period of house arrest for Paul.

The occasion that prompted the writing of the letter was the arrival of Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30) from Philippi with a substantial love offering of funding for Paul's expenses during his imprisonment in Rome (4:10-19). Timothy is with Paul in Rome and participates in the composition of the letter as the writing secretary (1:1). Both he and Epaphroditus will carry the letter back to Philippi from Rome once it is in final form (2:19-30). The probable time frame for this activity is at some point from the summer through the winter of 61 AD. Paul has now settled into his lodging in Rome and is developing his preaching and teaching ministry that Luke describes in Acts 28:30-31. Already opposition to him has emerged even inside the Christian community (Phil. 1:12-26), but the apostle remains faithful to his calling to proclaim the Gospel of Christ Jesus. It could be an insider opposition prompted by the Jewish disagreement with his Gospel message described by Luke in Acts 28:25. The memory of Claudius' edict some fifteen years earlier that made life really difficult for Jews living in Rome because of fussing inside the Jewish community over Christ created apprehension to avoid something similar again at all costs.

Our strategy will be to examine the biographical and historical narrative pericopes in Philippians as they reflect back on Paul's situation in Rome. The issues in Philippians are important but are beyond the scope of our study here.

##### **8.1.4.5.1 Facing Opposition from within the Church, Phil. 1:12-26**

12 Γινώσκεις δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, 13 ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, 14 καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν. 15 τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουν· 16 οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κείμει, 17 οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἄγνως, οἰόμενοι θλίψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου. 18 Τί γάρ; πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι, 19 οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως καὶ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 20 κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, ὅτι ἐν οὐδενὶ αἰσχυνθήσομαι ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου. 21 Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος. 22 εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω. 23 συνέχομαι δὲ ἐκ τῶν δύο, τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῶ [γὰρ] μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον· 24 τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν [ἐν] τῇ σαρκὶ ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς. 25 καὶ τοῦτο πεποιθὼς οἶδα ὅτι μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως, 26 ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

12 I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ; 14 and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment,

<sup>685</sup>Although not universally adopted as a Pauline letter in modern scholarship, the majority do accept Pauline authorship of this letter, and the majority assign it to this two year period in Rome described by Luke in Acts 28:30. In all likelihood it comes closer to the beginning of this period than to the end but certainty at this point cannot be established.



dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear. 15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 16 These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. 20 It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. 23 I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25 Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, 26 so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

The introductory statement Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, *And you I want to know, brothers, that the things regarding me instead for the advancement of the Gospel have gone.* This overly literal translation highlights Paul's point of bringing the Philippians up to date on his situation of imprisonment in Rome. The content of τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ is spelled out in vv. 13-26 and centers on his experience in Rome.<sup>686</sup> The time period implied in this is from his arrival in Rome to the time of the composing of this letter. Unfortunately, we don't know how long that covers. What Paul describes suggests he may be at least half way through the two years that Luke mentions in Acts 28:30. But high certainty is just not possible here.

The heart of how Paul assessed these events was positive: μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν. Instead of them being negative (μᾶλλον), these events have served (ἐλήλυθεν) to advance (εἰς προκοπὴν) the cause of the Gospel (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) in the city. He then names several advancements (εἰς προκοπὴν):<sup>687</sup>

1) ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, *with the result that it has become clear among the entire imperial guard and among all the rest that my chains are because of Christ.* Here the emphasis is upon outside the Christian community while the second advance-

<sup>686</sup>“The content of what Paul wishes them to know is introduced by ὅτι and has to do with τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ, a phrase describing the apostle's personal situation. This expression was a common one in the contemporary world and was used to describe the situation of a person.<sup>3</sup> N. Turner<sup>4</sup> wants to be more specific and claims, on the basis of Acts 25:14 where τὰ κατὰ τὸν Παῦλον refers to Paul's case in the courts, that the rendering ‘my lawsuit’ may be the correct one at Phil. 1:12 and Col. 4:7. τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ is general and is variously rendered ‘the things pertaining to me’ (M. R. Vincent), ‘my circumstances’ (J. B. Lightfoot), ‘what has happened to me’ (K. Barth; cf. NIV), or ‘my affairs’ (J. H. Michael). But can we be more precise and indicate what the detailed circumstances were that Paul had in view? Most commentators contend that we cannot be more specific than the reference to his imprisonment mentioned in the next verse and its attendant circumstances.” [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 89–90.]

<sup>687</sup>“Here the adverb μᾶλλον does not mean ‘more, to a greater degree’,<sup>6</sup> but ‘rather’ in the sense of ‘instead’.<sup>7</sup> It seems that the Philippians feared that the consequences of these above-mentioned events might have been a hindrance to the gospel, and such a fear was both natural and reasonable.<sup>8</sup> Paul assures them that far from having the effect feared by them, his affairs had actually served to advance the gospel. προκοπή (‘progress, advancement, furtherance’: here; Phil. 1:25; 1 Tim. 4:15),<sup>9</sup> which occurs for the first time in the Hellenistic period, was used in everyday nonliterary Greek to denote progress and prosperity in the physical, economic, and social sphere.<sup>10</sup> Of special significance in the Hellenistic world was the technical literary use of προκοπή in Stoicism and its offshoots to denote the concept of progress, an advance ‘essentially connected with the acquisition of individual virtues to be gained or developed from man's own natural disposition (φύσις)’.<sup>11</sup> This kind of ethics of personal achievement (‘Tugendethik’) is not to be found in Paul, who speaks here of the progress of the gospel (at 1:25 the progress of the congregation is in view). Once again εὐαγγέλιον is used absolutely and without any modifiers (cf. vv. 5, 7), thus indicating that the notion of gospel was already known to the Philippians and did not need further explanation.<sup>12</sup> The whole expression εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν indicates that Paul's real concern is for the unhindered effectiveness of the word. ἐλήλυθεν εἰς ... is not found elsewhere in Paul; the verb denotes the occurrence of significant events in salvation history such as Christ's first (1 Tim. 1:15; Eph. 2:17) and second comings (1 Cor. 4:5; 11:26; 16:22; 1 Thes. 5:2), as well as Paul's coming to his churches (e.g., Rom. 15:29, 32; 1 Cor. 2:1; 4:21), a coming that always had one goal: εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (2 Cor. 2:12).<sup>13</sup> Here the expression has to do with the results of Paul's circumstances, while the perfect tense ἐλήλυθεν draws attention to the continuing effects and how the matter now stands, that is, ‘has redounded, has served’ to advance the gospel. For Paul this goal overrides all else; personal inconveniences, sufferings, and imprisonment serve this end. In fact, commentators have been quick to point out that although the apostle devotes this first main section of his letter to giving news of his own circumstances, he offers no abundance of details and his ‘miserliness’ in this regard has often caused surprise.<sup>14</sup> Paul, however, has sought to bring into relief the basic significance of the events that he has experienced in relation to the progress of the gospel. 2 Thes. 3:1 provides a parallel to this statement in Philippians, for there the word itself is personified as a runner: προσέυχεσθε ... ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται.<sup>15</sup> Paul's assertion here in Philippians shows his overriding concern for the free course of the gospel,<sup>16</sup> and it is the issues of the gospel that dominate this entire paragraph of vv. 12ff.<sup>17</sup>” [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 90–91.]



ment named in v. 14 is on the inside of the Christian community. The real reason for his imprisonment (τοὺς δεσμούς μου . . . ἐν Χριστῷ) has become widely understood among the military contingent with the responsibility of managing his imprisonment and scheduling his appearance before the emperor. Although sometimes taken differently the sense of τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι is relatively clear: the real reason for him having to appear before the emperor is not because he is a criminal, nor particularly that he is ‘chained to Christ’ in devotion to Him. Instead, the idea is that Paul is being charged with unspecified crimes due to his commitment to Christ and his preaching of

the message of salvation (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) in Christ.<sup>688</sup> The apostle had no interest in becoming the best known Christian prisoner there. Instead, his concern was that those in charge of him understand the true reason for him being held there. And in this awareness he would have repeated opportunity to explain to these soldiers what the Gospel was. This was how it would be advanced (εἰς προκοπήν). When Luke said (Acts 28:30) that Paul ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν, *was welcoming all who were coming to him*, this included every Roman soldier either assigned to guard him or who came to interview him regarding his upcoming appearance before the emperor.

The specification of those who came to Paul is ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, *among the entire imperial guard and all the rest*. The Greek πραιτώριον was a loan word for the Latin *praetorium*. This designated the imperial body guards of the Roman emperor. By the middle of the first century this division of the Roman army had posts all through the empire usually in the regional governor’s palace, although the central headquarters and administration remained in *Rome* for protecting the emperor against harm.<sup>689</sup> The leader of this unit was the *Praetorian Prefect*, who at the time of Paul’s arrival in Rome was *Sextus Afranius Burrus* (tenure, AD 50 - 62). At Paul’s arrival in February 61 AD, he may very well have been the Roman officer that Paul was turned over to by the Roman centurion who had escorted the apostle from Caesarea. At this point of time Burrus was a very influential personal advisor to the emperor Nero. The Praetorian Prefect was the official who handled all the prisoners making an appeal to the emperor as a Roman citizen.

The second specification καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν in this setting in Rome would designate other Roman officials whose duties may have included interviewing Paul on occasion in connection with his upcoming trial. It is not as clear



The Imperial Palace was located on the **Palatino**, one of the ‘seven hills of Rome.’ How far away Paul’s residence was is unknown.

<sup>688c</sup>The following expression τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι is unusual if not awkward, and has led to a variety of interpretations and consequent renderings. The key phrase ἐν Χριστῷ is not to be linked with τοὺς δεσμούς μου (= ‘my bonds-in-Christ have become manifest’; so, in effect, the AV), since the word order of the Greek rules this out.<sup>20</sup> The expression has been taken to mean ‘so that my chains in Christ have become manifest’ (joining τοὺς δεσμούς μου with ἐν Χριστῷ), but the separation of the two phrases by φανεροὺς makes this unlikely. F. Neugebauer put forward the thesis that the expression ‘in Christ’ is a circumstantial or adverbial modification that speaks of Christ’s saving activity, particularly his death and resurrection, by which one’s life is now determined. The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ can then be connected with the entire accusative and infinitive construction (τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς . . . γενέσθαι), and the whole expression understood as meaning that ‘the manifestation of [Paul’s] chains’ is really ‘in Christ’.<sup>21</sup> His imprisonment<sup>22</sup> was a demonstration or manifestation of Christ’s saving activity and therefore contributed to the spread of the gospel. But it is doubtful whether the phrase ‘in Christ’ can really bear the weight Neugebauer has put on it. Instead, it seems best to render the Greek as ‘my bonds have become manifest-in-Christ’;<sup>23</sup> note the NIV: ‘it has become clear . . . that I am in chains for Christ’ (cf. RV). However, ἐν Χριστῷ indicates not simply that Paul’s imprisonment is ‘for Christ’s sake’<sup>24</sup>—and therefore he is not a political or civil wrongdoer; rather, it is part of his sharing in Christ’s sufferings (cf. 3:10). φανερός (‘visible, clear, plainly to be seen, open, plain, evident, known’)<sup>25</sup> is not a theological technical term, although it is used in some important theological contexts. It stresses what is visible to the sight. At Mk. 3:12; 4:22; 6:14; Acts 4:16; Phil. 1:13 ‘there is the implication that God’s truth will become visible and evident in God’s good time, whether men try to hasten it or hinder it’.<sup>26</sup> The expression φανερός γίνομαι means to ‘come to light’, ‘become known’ (Mk. 6:14; Lk. 8:17; Acts 7:13; 1 Cor. 11:19; 14:25),<sup>27</sup> and on occasion particularly referred to an eschatological manifestation (1 Cor. 3:13).<sup>28</sup> [Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 91–92.]

<sup>689</sup>The nearest modern equivalent would be the US Secret Service with its headquarters in Washington, D.C., but also with agents stationed literally all over the world.





An 18th Century print by J Blundell shows the scale of Nero's Golden Palace, which, if completed, would have spanned a third of the city of Rome

The Domus Aurea still lies under the ruins of the Baths of Trajan (shown here) and the surrounding park.

a specification in Rome and it would have been elsewhere.

Outside Rome, the Praetorium Guard was almost always

located in the governor's palace and thus καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν would have designated the other officials serving in the governor's administration and based in the palace. But in Rome the guard's headquarters were not located in the emperor's palace on the [Palatine Hill](#), although it assigned soldiers to guard duty in the palace, later known as [Domus Aurea](#) (= 'Golden House') once Nero redid -- and greatly expanded -- the palace in AD 64 after the great fire. Thus in Rome whom Paul meant by καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν is not as clear.

How much headway in converting these individuals that Paul made is not spelled out. Also what Paul asserts is τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι, [my chains became clear in Christ](#). That the actual nature of his imprisonment was what became clear to these people. And it was this which provided the opportunity for him to share Christ with all who were interested.<sup>690</sup>

b) καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεπειθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως<sup>691</sup> τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν, [and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear](#). Here the emphasis is upon the inside of the Christian community in the city that was impacted by Paul's imprisonment. Paul's example in openly witnessing of his faith commitment to Christ had inspired a significant part of the Christian community to do the same thing [about their faith in Christ](#). Although as vv. 15-18 explains not all of this was good, the net impact was to get the

<sup>690</sup>When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and shut away in prison in Caesarea (Acts 23–24), one could easily imagine that this was the end of his ministry, especially as his imprisonment dragged on month after month (Acts 24:27). But in the providence of God both the place of his imprisonment, the Praetorium of Herod (Acts 23:35), and the length of his imprisonment served to thrust the gospel up into higher levels of Roman society than it had ever reached before. Roman military officers, chiliarchs, and centurions (Acts 23:24, 26), as well as Roman soldiers, heard the gospel in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Two Roman governors, Felix and Festus, along with King Herod Agrippa and their wives heard Paul speak about faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24:24–27; 25:1–26:32). One of these governors, over a span of two years, often sent for Paul to converse with him (Acts 24:26). News of this celebrated prisoner and his teaching must have spread through the Praetorium, the barracks, and out into the surrounding community. Thus, what appeared at first to be the fatal blow to the Christian mission, the arrest of Paul, turned out to be the means of its revitalization, the key to preaching the gospel before governors and kings (cf. Mark 13:9) and their staff personnel. It became evident, therefore, to those in all parts of the residence of the provincial governor of Caesarea (ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ, 'throughout the entire praetorium') and to all outside it (τοῖς λοιποῖς, 'to everyone else') that Paul was a prisoner because he was a Christian. (On the wide range of meanings of 'praetorium' see BDAG; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, AB 29A [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966] 845; Gnilka; Collange. On the location of this praetorium see Lohmeyer; contrast Reicke, "Caesarea, Rome," 283; and see the discussion in the Introduction, Place and Date of Writing.) Christianity, therefore, gained public notice because of Paul's bonds. His imprisonment produced notoriety as being for Christ (φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ, 'manifest in Christ') and provided extraordinary opportunity for bearing witness to the saving power of Christ in the gospel (Lightfoot, Vincent, Lohmeyer, Benoit, Hendriksen)." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 44.]

<sup>691</sup>The adverb περισσοτέρως is used with an elative force meaning 'especially' (2 Cor. 1:12; 2:4; 7:15), 'all the more' (1 Thes. 2:17), or, with the addition of μᾶλλον, 'even much more' (2 Cor. 7:13). Its comparative force frequently occurs: 'to a much greater degree', 'far more', 'far greater' (than Paul's opponents, 2 Cor. 11:23; than those of his own age, Gal. 1:14; cf. 2 Cor. 12:15). An intensifying force appears here at Phil. 1:14, indicating 'so much (the) more' (cf. Heb. 2:1; 13:19);<sup>48</sup> the point is not that the majority had been unduly timid before this, but that their courage had risen to new heights, when they might have been intimidated.<sup>49</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 95.]



Gospel before a lot more people in the city of Rome than had been true before Paul's arrival in the city. Several points are stressed in this statement of Paul: a) τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν, most of the brothers, but not all of them were encouraged by Paul's example. b) ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως, they found greater courage in the Lord because of Paul's chains. They saw him taking risks in openly talking about Christ to these Roman soldiers and officials. This encouraged them to take more risks in openly identifying themselves with this Christian movement. c) τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν. That is, they dared to speak the Word without fear. Clearly τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν here equals to share the Gospel with non-believers. In an atmosphere such as mid-first century Rome, which was having growing problems with Jews back in Palestine, Christians could easily have been hesitant to speak very openly about their religious commitments due to Christianity's link to Judaism.

The amplification of Paul's statements in vv. 12-14, especially in v. 14, are then given in vv. 15-18a. What Paul proceeds to describe is negative and positive motivations: 15 τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν, *on the one hand some also because of envy and rivalry, and on the other hand others also because of good will are proclaiming Christ*. At first, such seems rather incredible! Here is the elderly apostle -- by this point in time in his 60s -- as a prisoner seeking to faithfully present Christ at every opportunity to all who came to his residence to visit him. And some in the Christian community were greatly jealous of him and his effectiveness in presenting Christ. So they sought to 'out do' him in winning converts!

In order to fully understand the situation one needs to look at the complete picture described by Paul:

**Negative Response:**

**διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν,**

because of envy and rivalry

**ἐξ ἐριθείας**

out of selfish ambition

**οὐχ ἀγνῶς**

not sincerely

**οἰόμενοι θλιψὶν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου.**

intending my suffering to increase in my claims

**εἴτε προφάσει**

whether by false motives

**Positive Response:**

**δι' εὐδοκίαν**

because of good will

**ἐξ ἀγάπης,**

out of love

**εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαὶν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κεῖμαι,**

knowing that for the defense of the Gospel I am set

**Action:**

**τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν·**

Christ they are proclaiming

**τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν,**

Christ they are announcing

When the various traits are stacked up together the picture becomes clearer.

First, when Paul mentions τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν, *the majority of the brothers*, in v. 14, his terminology clearly indicates that some in the Roman church were unmoved by both his presence in the city and his success in presenting the Gospel in high government positions, in spite of a majority being moved by his example. And then his language τινὲς μὲν... τινὲς δὲ, this is then followed by the parallel οἱ μὲν... οἱ δὲ in vv. 15-17 indicates two sub-groups of the 'motivated' believers. One of these is properly motivated while the other is not. Thus Paul lays out three distinct kinds of response by those in the believing community in Rome.

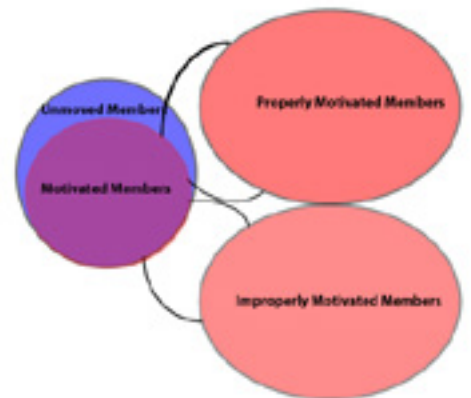
Second, among those motivated by Paul's example the general response is καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον<sup>692</sup> λαλεῖν, *and the majority of the brothers, having been encouraged in the Lord by my chains more courageously dare to speak the Word without fear*. Here Paul amplifies on his general point. The syntax of verse 14 needs explanation. The infinitive τολμᾶν, to dare, stands in parallel with γενέσθαι as the second consequence playing off the conjunction ὥστε. Just as οὐς δεσμούς μου functions as the Accusative of Reference (= infinitive subject) to γενέσθαι (so that my chains became clear), here τοὺς πλείονας, *the majority*, functions the same way with τολμᾶν, *to dare* (so that the major-

<sup>692c</sup>It must be acknowledged that, on the basis of weight and variety of external evidence, the reading λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν seems to be preferable (x A B P Ψ 33 81 629 1241 it<sup>ar</sup> vg syr<sup>p,h</sup> with \* cop<sup>sa,bo,fiay</sup> goth arm eth Clement al). Because, however, the position and wording of the genitive modifiers (τοῦ θεοῦ and κυρίου) vary, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading λόγον λαλεῖν (P<sup>46vid</sup> Dc K 614 1739 it<sup>syr</sup> Marcion Chrysostom al) as that which best explains the origin of the other readings, which have the appearance of scribal expansions." [Bruce Manning Metzger, United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 544–545.]

**Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται**

Christ is being announced

Responses To Paul's Presence in Rome  
By the Believing Community in the City  
Phl. 1:14-18



ity dare). Because the verb *τολμάω* often takes an infinitive object, here *λαλεῖν*, *to speak*, fulfills that role: *to dare to speak*. Thus the core expression is (so that) the majority are daring to speak.

Now the modifiers need to be added as the ‘pepper and salt’ seasoning to this expression: **First**, it is *τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν*. *the majority of the brothers*. Clearly this second consequence centers on the inside of the Christian community in Rome. **Second**, the adverbial causal participle phrase *ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας*, *because of having found confidence in the Lord*, indicates the reason for this renewed courage to speak out by the majority of the Christian community. The language here suggests a hesitancy to openly share their Christian faith prior to Paul’s arrive. Could it be that this timidity was one of the by-products of the edict of Claudius almost two decades earlier? The harsh response of the Roman government to Christian witnessing just inside the Jewish community may very well have struck fear in Christians openly sharing their faith. Another possibility is simply that the Christian community without an apostolic leader during its existence to this point had just not been trained or motivated to openly share their faith with non-believers. Whatever the reason for the timidity up to now, Paul’s presence in the city stimulated a large portion of them to begin sharing their faith. **Third**, the instrument used to motivate these folks was *τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου*, *my chains*. This symbol of Roman imprisonment because an encouragement rather than a discouragement. But it was not just the imprisonment. Instead, it was how Paul handled his imprisonment. He in God’s grace used it as an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to individuals who otherwise would not have had the chance to hear about God’s salvation in Christ. **Fourth**, the adverb *περισσοτέρως* from the comparative adjective *περισσότερος* means either ‘all the more’ or ‘especially so’. Most likely modifying *τολμᾶν* creating the sense of having much more courage to speak. **Fifth**, the other adverb *ἀφόβως* means ‘without fear’ and further qualifies the nature of the daring to speak by these folks. Sixth, the noun *τὸν λόγον*, *the Word*, functions as the direct object of *λαλεῖν*. The phrase *τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν*, *to speak the Word*, underscores a sharing of the Gospel, especially to non-believers.<sup>693</sup>

What Paul describes then is the power of his example to inspire others to share their faith more openly and boldly with non-believers. Some years earlier he had written to the church at Rome of his conviction, *οἶδα δὲ ὅτι ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν πληρώματι εὐλογίας Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι*, *and I know that, when I come to you, in the fulness of the blessing of Christ I will come* (Rom. 15:29). His arrival in Rome would happen in the context of the complete blessing of Christ, thus making it profitable not only for him but for the church as well. This motivation of his example was indeed part of the realization of that blessing.

Third, he then proceeds to distinguish between those properly motivated and those improperly motivated in vv. 15-18a. The [chart listing above](#) distinguishes between these two sets of motivated individuals in the church at Rome. These are two groups of the majority (*τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν*) and are set forth in contrast to one another: *τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ* versus *τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι’* (v. 15). In verse 16 the second group in v. 15 are labeled *οἱ μὲν ἐξ*, while in verse 17 the first group is *οἱ δὲ ἐξ*:

a	<i>τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ</i>	←————→	b	<i>τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι’</i>
b’	<i>οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης</i>	←————→	a’	<i>οἱ δὲ ἐξ</i>

Thus a chiasmus is created: *ab // b’ a’*. The negative motivation (= *a / a’*) is important but the primary emphasis falls on the positive motivation (= *b / b’*).

How does Paul’s example wrongly motivate some in the church to preach Christ? In verse 15a the qual-

<sup>693</sup>“The exact expression *τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν* occurs nowhere else in Paul, though it turns up at Acts 4:29, 31; 13:46; 14:25. Also in Acts the absolute use of the ‘word of God’ is already a regular periphrasis for the apostolic preaching (4:29; 6:2, 7; 8:4; 11:19; 13:5, 7, 44, 46; 16:32; 17:13; 18:11). This word of God, proclaimed by the apostles, can also be called ‘the word of the Lord’ (8:25; 12:24; 13:49; 15:35–36; 19:10, 20) or ‘the word of this salvation’ (13:26). It is for both Jews and Greeks and is that word which God himself (Acts 17:30), or Jesus Christ, the Exalted One (Acts 13:38–39; 26:23), proclaims in and through Peter and John (Acts 8:25) or Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5, 46; 14:25; 15:36; 17:13; 18:11). It is the same word of God to which Paul commends his congregation (Acts 20:32), which has proved to be powerful (Acts 19:20), and which grows and multiplies (Acts 6:7; 12:24). Paul calls the message proclaimed by him to his congregations ‘the word of God’ (1 Cor. 14:36; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2), ‘the word’ (1 Thes. 1:6; Gal. 6:6—note this early absolute use for the totality of the Christian message), ‘the word of the Lord’ (1 Thes. 1:8), or ‘the word of God which you heard from us’ (1 Thes. 2:13). That proclamation the apostle to the Gentiles describes as ‘the word of the cross’ (1 Cor. 1:18), for in it he publicly sets forth Jesus Christ as the Crucified One (Gal. 3:1; 1 Cor. 2:2), and ‘the word of reconciliation’ (2 Cor. 5:19) passed on by one who has been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (v. 18). Here at Phil. 1:14 *τὸν λόγον (τοῦ θεοῦ) λαλεῖν* is equivalent to *λαλῆσαι ... τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ* (1 Thes. 2:2)—an activity in which Paul himself was engaged—and he is grateful that the majority of these brethren, as a result of recent events, have experienced a renewal of ardour in fearlessly (*ἀφόβως*) setting forth that word.” [Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 96–97.]

ties of διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, *because of envy and strife*, are mentioned.<sup>694</sup> Thus some evidently could not tolerate the idea that this ‘outsider’ to their community was more successful reaching non-believers for Christ than they had been. And thus were motivated by his example to witness more than they had been.<sup>695</sup> In verse 17, the second set of negative traits are presented: οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἀγνῶς, οἰόμενοι θλιῖψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, *but others out of strife are announcing Christ, not sincerely, supposing to raise up afflictions upon my chains*. More details of their negative motives are given. The initial mentioning of ἔριν from ἔρις alluding to creating contention and discord is repeated with stronger emphasis using ἐριθείας from ἐριθεία stressing contention and discord driven by self-seeking egotism. Now we get more understanding of their motivation. They saw in Paul’s success an indictment of their failure and probably also a threat to their prominence inside the Christian community. If you have ever been a part of a group and when a new person comes into the group with new ideas and successful skills of some kind or another, you have witnessed the reaction of the ‘old heads’ who have been prominent in the group. And it is seldom ever a good response.

But Paul provides additional negative motivations evidently closely linked to the ἐριθείας. Their motivation is οὐχ ἀγνῶς, *not sincerely*. Thus preaching Christ, τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, which ought always to be motivated by sincere commitment to Him and a desire to present Him genuinely by every part of one’s being, is instead being done hypercritically with ‘mixed motives.’ The other negative motivation is much more serious: οἰόμενοι θλιῖψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, *supposing to raise up afflictions on my chains*. With graphic imagery, Paul sees their false motivations as lead weights being attached to his chains that will weigh him down even further and probably lead to his death. What specifically does Paul mean by this? Although one can’t define it with absolute precision, it seems that their motivation led to public ridiculing of Paul for being a prisoner of Rome. “Anybody knows that God’s blessings don’t make a ‘criminal’ out of you.” Also, their greater open promoting of Christ was intended to lead to Paul’s failure in successfully defending himself before Nero which most likely would lead to his execution. Behind this very easily could have been a Jewish Christian negative motivation to get rid of Paul in order to prevent Nero from issuing the same kind of edict on the Jewish community that Claudius had years before. It is important to note that Paul casts their motivation as οἰόμενοι which designates a belief held but not necessarily true or accurate. The implication of this οἰόμενοι is that Paul didn’t believe it would work to his detriment. God would override their evil aims of causing Paul trouble with the Romans.

In verse 18a Paul summarizes these negative motivations listed in vv. 15 and 17 by the one word προφάσει. The noun πρόφασις here in this context means ‘false motives’ in the sense that what is reflected openly is a deception and underneath are evil intentions. Outwardly they seem pious and sincere in preaching Christ, but the reality is just the opposite. It is the same accusation hurled by Jesus at the Pharisees in Mt. 23:14; Mk 12:40 and Lk. 20:47.

For Paul, the properly motivated group in the Roman church was the more significant segment. In a similar manner to the improperly motivated group, he lists the traits that encouraged them to preach Christ because of Paul’s example.

**First** in v. 15b, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι’ εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουν, *but some indeed because of good will are preaching Christ*. These preach Christ on the basis of εὐδοκίαν which references the idea of good intentions with pleasure associated with them. This broad, inclusive term stresses the positive aspects of the preaching of Christ by this group in the Roman church. **Then** in v. 16 Paul amplifies what he means with the more detailed οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κείμενοι, *and some out of love since they know that I am appointed (by God) for a defense of the Gospel*. The source of their motivation is ἀγάπη which in this context stresses first their commitment to God and then their devotion to Paul. The superior spiritual insight of this group is stressed by the participle phrase. Unlike the other group who can’t see spiritually beyond the tip of their self-centered nose, this group clearly understands how God is working through the imprisonment of Paul. The apostle is coming before the emperor not as a prisoner but as a defense attorney for the Gospel of salvation in Christ. This they understand, and thus want their actions of Gospel preaching to compliment his. One is tempted to think that conversa-

<sup>694</sup>“The word translated ‘envy’ also means ‘spite,’ which is more nearly opposite to ‘goodness’ in the latter part of the verse. ‘Strife’ implies selfish rivalry; the root reappears in v. 17 and in an absolute prohibition in 2:3. Envy and strife are anti-social vices that appear in a vice list in Gal 5:20–21 and in Rom 1:29. Both militate against the unity Paul commends to the Philippian church. The questionable motive of self-seeking also occurs in 2:21.” [Harrington Daniel J., *Philippians and Philemon*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 10, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 59.]

<sup>695</sup>For a summation of some of the strangest attempts imaginable to identify this negative group read Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 102-105.



tions between them and the apostle took place regularly in order to co-ordinate their efforts. The verb κείμαι in the figurative use here denotes one who is ‘positioned’ for some objective. Of course Paul’s defense, here stated as εἰς ἀπολογία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, would not bear virtually any resemblance to a modern ‘apologetic speech.’ In the eight uses of this term ἀπολογία in the NT -- Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; Phil. 1:7, 16; 2 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:15 -- the clear meaning of the term is to give one’s testimony of personal spiritual experience with Christ. The foundation of early Christian ἀπολογία is personal relationship with Christ, not some system of logical reasoning as is the case for the modern ἀπολογία. Persuasion from the early Christian ἀπολογία was derived from the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit, and made no attempt to appeal to reason or logical arguments.<sup>696</sup> This ‘positive’ group understood what Paul was seeking to do and joined with him in this endeavor. In Paul’s one word summary of each group in v. 18a, he characterizes the motivations and actions of the positive group as ἀληθεία. Since ἀλήθεια in the NT is not defined by Aristotle’s definition of logical consistency but rather by God and His revelation (cf. Jhn 14:6), what this group was seeking to do in preaching the Gospel matched the character and stance of God Himself revealed through Jesus Christ. They were the ones being led by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.

In verse 18a, Paul expresses his appraisal of this situation. But this opinion is from a ‘bottom line’ view. Τί γάρ; πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω. *For what? In spite of everything, because in every manner -- whether by false motives or by in the Truth -- Christ is being announced, and in this I rejoice.* What we see here is the spiritual wisdom of the apostle. The top priority of his entire ministry had been the proclamation of the Gospel to every person willing to listen. What Paul realized was that this was indeed happening in Rome and was motivated in part by his example. In this reality the apostle was rejoicing in Christ. At the lower level the motivations behind the preaching of Christ, although not unimportant, were not as important as the actions of preaching Christ. The conjunction πλὴν highlights this prioritizing of the situation.<sup>697</sup>

One should not infer from Paul’s statements here that motivation for preaching the Gospel is unimportant. Paul’s stinging condemnation of some in the Philippian church in chapter three makes just how important proper motives are for the apostle. In 3:19 he questions their very salvation.

Then in vv. 18b-26, Paul returns to his personal situation but with a focus on his concern to always to be consistent in his commitment to Christ. The punctuation in verse 18 is debated. Some have καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι with the sense of “*and in this I am rejoicing and moreover I will continue rejoicing.*”<sup>698</sup> But the inherently contrastive nature of ἀλλὰ as a conjunction rather than as an adversative adverb argues against this understanding. Then coupled with καὶ with the sense of ‘indeed’ the construction is better punctuated as per the N-A 28th ed. GNT: καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω. Ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι,... A new topic that centers on a different reason for Paul to continue rejoicing is introduced.

The causal conjunction γὰρ introduces this new reason, which has to do with Paul’s future, rather than the past experience of being in Rome. Verses 18b-26 describe this anticipation for the future.

The heart of his anticipation is οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν, *for I know that this will result in deliverance for me.* The antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτό goes back to τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, *my chains* in v. 17. But it gathers up the larger circumstance of Paul during his Roman imprisonment. Another additional likelihood is that the antecedent reaches forward as well to the means statement in διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως καὶ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *through your prayers and the assistance of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* How was God going to deliver Paul from this imprisonment? Mostly through the Philippians’ prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit.

Thus in this letter to the Philippians the apostle expresses confidence of being released from imprison-

<sup>696</sup>Interesting, the shift from the Holy Spirit to the power of reason occurred among the church fathers who came to depend upon Greek thinking and had little confidence in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, modern Christian apologetics has far more in common with these church fathers than with the apostles. But the spiritual reality is that no one has ever been ‘argued’ into the kingdom of God. Entrance into the family of God is solely derived from the convicting leadership of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>697</sup>“*except that in every manner, whether in pretense, whether in truth:* The phrase begins with an adverbial particle (plēn) used as an adversative conjunction and might also be translated ‘nevertheless.’ As in vv. 15, 16, 17, Paul’s construction is comparative, ‘on the one hand/on the other hand.’ ‘Pretense’ and ‘truth’ are used appositively. What is at issue is the motive of the preachers, not the substance of the preaching, which is Christ. Whether the preachers are ‘pretentious,’ or acting for a false reason, or are genuine is not so important as the communication of the message itself.” [Harrington Daniel J., *Philippians and Philemon*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 10, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 60.]

<sup>698</sup>“ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι, ‘Yes, and I will continue to be glad.’ καὶ coupled with ἀλλὰ makes ἀλλὰ progressive and not adversative, to be translated, ‘and what is more,’ rather than ‘but’ (see Thrall, *Greek Particles*, 11–16; BDF §448[6]).” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 48.]

ment at Rome. His use of οἶδα expresses a strong belief in his release. He repeats this confidence again in v. 25: *καὶ τοῦτο πεπειθῶς οἶδα ὅτι μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως, and having become persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue to be with with all of you for your progress and joy in faith.* Although the apostle does not give any circumstantial signals that would lead him to this confidence, clearly his already established innocence of having broken any Roman law coupled with the usual manner of Nero's handling of appeals from Roman citizens would suggest eventual release. Assuming that Burrus was one of the Praetorium Guard members whom Paul had established friendship with for sharing his faith, that should be even further encouragement for a positive outcome of his case. Further, if the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had opted not to pursue the charges against Paul by not making the long trip to Rome, this would particularly provide expectation of dismissal of the charges. Then added to this was both prayers<sup>699</sup> and the help of the Holy Spirit<sup>700</sup> working through these circumstances so that Paul had ample reason to expect a release from imprisonment.

In this context the phrase εἰς σωτηρίαν should be understood in its more basic non-religious meaning as *for deliverance*.<sup>701</sup> Some commentators take the terminology to be parallel to those of Job in 13:16 in signaling that eternal salvation is in view here by Paul.<sup>702</sup> But this ignores the far more important context here where Paul's firm conviction of being able to return to the Philippians defines the nature of his σωτηρία. Plus σωτηρία fundamentally means deliverance and this can imply a wide range of situations necessitating deliverance (cf. Lk. 1:71; Acts 7:25; 27:34; Heb. 11:7).

Verse 20 amplifies the one concern that is uppermost in Paul's mind about the future: *κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, ὅτι ἐν οὐδενὶ αἰσχυνθήσομαι ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου. It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my*

<sup>699</sup>“διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως, ‘because of your prayers.’ Paul believed that some important things would contribute to his being set free from prison. One of these was prayer (δέησις). As he prayed for the Philippians (see Comment on Phil 1:4 for the meaning of δέησις), so he now depends on them to pray in his behalf. Whenever Paul asks the church to pray for him, it is that he might be delivered from disobedient and evil people (Rom 15:30–31; 2 Thess 3:2), that he might be released from prison and brought safely again to his friends (Phlm 22), that he might remain true to God in the face of opposition (2 Cor 1:9–11; 1 Thess 5:25), and that his ministry might be effective (Col 4:3; 2 Thess 3:1–2). Paul knew that God effected changes in history through prayer, and therefore he counted heavily on his churches to carry out this ministry on his behalf.” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 50.]

<sup>700</sup>“καὶ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ‘and the help that comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.’ Another thing that Paul believed would contribute to his release is phrased in a way difficult to understand, which has been translated as ‘the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ’ (KJV). The difficulty arises from the ambiguity of the genitives Paul uses here, an ambiguity that is perpetuated in the translation of these genitives into English by the preposition of — ‘of the Spirit of Jesus Christ’ (ὁ πνεῦμα, ‘spirit,’ and its ambiguity in Paul see Osiek, 41–42). There are at least two possibilities of interpretation for the first of these genitives, τοῦ πνεύματος, ‘of the Spirit.’ On the one hand, τοῦ πνεύματος could be an objective genitive, meaning that the Spirit is the object of the action implied in the noun ἐπιχορηγίας, ‘supply’ (Fee [1995], in support, criticizes translations that substitute ‘help’ for this word). Such an interpretation leads naturally to a translation such as MOFFATT: ‘The outcome of all this . . . will be my release as I am provided with the Spirit’ (cf. NEB). On the other hand, as adopted in the Translation, τοῦ πνεύματος could be a subjective genitive. So understood, the Spirit is not that which is given but is the giver of the needed help or assistance to bring about his release. ‘The help which comes from the Spirit’ (GNB) or ‘the help given by the Spirit’ (NIV) are the logical translations from such an interpretation. This idea of the Spirit bringing assistance to Christians, especially as they bear witness to their faith when they are brought before judges, is an idea firmly anchored in early Christianity, although not particularly in Paul (Collange; except Gal 3:5; cf. Mark 13:11; Matt 10:20; Luke 12:12).” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 50–51.]

<sup>701</sup>“Several things, however, argue for the fact that when Paul spoke of σωτηρία here he had in mind his release from prison: (1) The primary meaning of σωτηρία is deliverance from impending death (BDAG). (2) Although Paul does indeed use σωτηρία regularly for the ultimate cosmic saving act of God to be completed at the turn of the ages or the end of the world, it is wrong to say he must always give this meaning to the word (cf. 2 Cor 1:6, where ‘salvation’ coupled with ‘encouragement’ seems simply to refer to the general welfare or profit of others; and the use of σωτηρία in Acts 27:34 in a speech of Paul related by Luke). (3) Paul, seeing in the Job story parallels to his own sufferings and the misunderstandings of these sufferings by others, and knowing that God saved Job out of all his troubles and vindicated him, was led to the conviction that he too would be ‘saved,’ released from prison, and vindicated in the eyes of Jews and Romans. Yet a vindication in Yahweh’s court seems also to be included, and Bockmuehl (83) appositely cites 2 Tim 4:18: ‘The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom!’ (Bockmuehl’s translation). (4) Finally, Paul repeats this same verb οἶδα, ‘I know,’ later on when he states, ‘I know that I am going to stay and remain on with all of you’ (vv 25–26). He uses an even stronger verb when he assures the Philippians that he will soon come to see them (Phil 2:24). How could this be, unless he knew that his release was certain?” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 49–50.]

<sup>702</sup>**Job. 13:16.** *καὶ τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν, οὐ γὰρ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ δόλος εἰσελεύσεται. This will be my salvation, that the godless shall not come before him.*

body, whether by life or by death. These words continue the sentence begun in v. 18b and are closely linked as modifiers to τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται, *this will turn out for me*. Paul was very confident of being released from prison and this was in large part connected to his deep confidence (τὴν ἀποκαραδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου) in being completely true to Christ as he made gave witness to Christ to others.<sup>703</sup> This confidence is defined both negatively and positively as ἐν οὐδενὶ αἰσχυνθήσομαι ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, *in no way will I be embarrassed but with full courage as always even not Christ will be magnified in my body*. The apostle was confident that he would neither say nor do anything contradictory to Christian commitment to Christ. The positive side of this was then that everything said and done in his physical life (ἐν τῷ σώματί μου) would expand others' understanding of the greatness of Christ. This had been the pattern of ministry since the beginning on the Damascus road almost thirty years earlier and he expected it to be the pattern the rest of his life.

The ultimate defining degree of that commitment to magnify Christ is εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου, *through living or through death*. Martyrdom is the ultimate expression of commitment but living consistently is the more difficult of those options to carry out. Paul's full expectation is that either of those options will mean his faithful commitment to Christ. One should note that years earlier Paul had made essentially the same statement to the church at Rome (Rom. 14:8):

ἐάν τε γὰρ ζῶμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ζῶμεν, ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκωμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκομεν. ἐάν τε οὖν ζῶμεν ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκωμεν, τοῦ κυρίου ἐσμέν.

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

What we detect here is a core principle of the Christian life upon which Paul built his entire life and ministry.<sup>704</sup> Not only is Christ the center of one's earthly life, but resurrection union with Him in death will become the defining center of heaven for Paul.

This principle prompts some amplification by Paul on the merits of each option in vv. 21-24. He begins with the foundational principle (v. 21): Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος, *for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain*. For the apostle his options were a win / win situation. The essence of τὸ ζῆν, *to continue living*, equaled Χριστὸς. What he means by this is made clear in verse 22. In a nutshell, living meant serving Christ by serving others.

Living means serving: εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω, *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer*. (v. 22). In the first class conditional sentence expression of the first main clause, Paul assumes that he will continue living in the flesh (εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί). Given that assumption, what then does this signify? The main clause, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, in abbreviated emphatic expression asserts literally, *this to me fruit from labor*. Although technically the clause could be taken to imply that continued living would be the consequence of his efforts to win his trial before the emperor, the context of vv. 23-26 make it very clear that this is not what Paul meant. Instead, his meaning is simply that continued living means the opportunity to go to work in service in a way that produces fruit for the Kingdom of God. The figurative use of καρπὸς denotes consequence or result of something, which normally is specified by a genitive case noun such as ἔργου here for action or deed. Paul's use of ἔργου rather than his more commonly used terms for his ministry stresses the action aspect of service. Even though during imprisonment the apostle continued to serve Christ and to preach the Gospel, he was not free to go where he needed to or to serve without

<sup>703</sup>κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαραδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, 'And all of this is in harmony with my [own] eager hopeful expectation.' Paul's confident conviction that he would be released from prison harmonized with (κατὰ and the accusative) his own aspirations (τὴν ἀποκαραδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, 'my [own] eager hopeful expectation'). In effect he told the Philippians, 'Things will turn out just as I expected and hoped!' The word Paul used to describe his expectation, ἀποκαραδοκία, is a rare word, perhaps coined by him and used elsewhere in the NT only in Rom 8:19. Etymologically it envisions both an outstretched head (κάρα, 'head,' and the Ionic δέκεσθαι, 'to stretch') and the averting of the eyes from (ἀπό) other objects. As it has been explained, ἀποκαραδοκία is 'the concentrated hope which ignores other interests ... and strains forward as with outstretched head' (Kennedy; see also BDF §119[1]; G. Dellling, TDNT 1:393; G. Bertram, ZNW 49 [1958] 264–70). ἐλπίς, 'hope,' although regularly used by Paul to describe the Christian's hope for the eternal future (Gnilka; R. Bultmann, TDNT 2:530–33), is here used with the lesser meaning of simple human expectation but based on the conviction of God's sovereign purpose, since he is God (cf. Rom 4:18; 1 Cor 9:10; cf. Acts 16:19). Since these two nouns are bound together with only one article (τὴν ἀποκαραδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου), it is possible to treat them as a hendiadys and translate 'my [own] eager hopeful expectation' (cf. NEB). [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 51.]

<sup>704</sup>Another even earlier version of this principle is found in 1 Thess. 5:10. τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν. *who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him*.



severe limitations being imposed on him. Continued living would clearly imply winning his case before Nero and being set free from the charges against him. As he goes on to assert further down, this would mean the opportunity to travel to Philippi again to do ministry among the Philippians.

But the second part of this sentence in v. 22 reflects some uncertainty in Paul's mind about the two options put on the table in v. 21. Indeed τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς, *to live is Christ*, is the option he assumes in the first part of v. 22, εἰ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, *since to live in the flesh*. But the other option, τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος, *to die is gain*, has some appeal to it as well. Thus Paul faces something of a dilemma over living or dying: καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω, *and what I will pick up I do not have knowledge of*. One problem here is with Paul's choice of a verb. Instead of the expected verb γινώσκω or οἶδα with the meaning of "I do not know," he rather uses γνωρίζω with the usual meaning of I make known.<sup>705</sup> Why did Paul frame his idea this way? This verb is consistently used throughout the NT with the same meaning found in the LXX usage, and that is to make something known that has not previously been known.<sup>706</sup> Kittel's Theological Dictionary also lists a second category of definition into which Phil. 1:22 would possibly fit.<sup>707</sup> But I suspect the reason for Paul's choice of this verb lies deeper than lexicographical definitions. The other verb αἰρήσομαι plays off γνωρίζω very closely and throws important light on Paul's statement. The verb αἰρήσομαι from αἰρέω is in the future tense middle voice. It has the sense of 'take' in the active voice, but 'choose' in the middle voice in the sense of taking something for oneself.<sup>708</sup> The relative clause τί αἰρήσομαι functions as the direct object of the verb γνωρίζω. Thus the more literal sense is *what I take for myself I do not make known*. Paul

---

<sup>705</sup>Although the Gingrich-Danker lexicon contains a definitional category in which γνωρίζω becomes a functional synonym of γινώσκω, only Phil. 1:22 is listed as reflecting it. Even with substantial evidence for this category, it remains somewhat questionable.

**2. to have information or be knowledgeable about someth., know** (Dio Chrys. 4, 33; Plut., Coriol. 224 [23, 4]; Herodian 2, 1, 10; Achilles Tat. 7, 14, 1 and 3; Herm. Wr. 10, 15; POxy 705, 39; 1024, 18; 1643, 8. Λόγος τέλειος: PGM 3, 602ff; Pr 3:6; 15:10; Job 4:16 Sym. ἐγνώρισα=LXX ἐπέγνω; TestAbr A 6 p. 83, 4 [Stone p. 14]; 8 p. 86, 9 [Stone p. 20]; Philo, De Jos. 165, Conf. Ling. 183; Jos., Ant. 2, 97, Vi. 420; Just., D. 3, 2 γνωρίζεις με al.; 80, 2 'share a point of view'; Ath. 3:1 'note, recognize' of animals) w. indir. question foll.: τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γ. which I shall choose I do not know **Phil 1:22**. Abs. (w. ιδεῖν) Dg 8:5.—DELG s.v. γινώσκω p. 225. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 203.]

706 "To make known." In this sense the word is common in the LXX (mostly for שׂר, hiph.) both in secular contexts (3 Βασ. 1:27; Neh. 8:12; Prv. 9:9 etc.) and in cases where it has an emotional ring.

The priest, teacher or prophet may be the subject (1 Βασ. 6:2; 10:8; 28:15; Ez. 43:11), or God Himself, who causes His power or grace to be known (→ γινώσκω, 698; cf. Jer. 16:21; ψ 15:11; 76:14; 97:2 etc.), or declares His will (ψ 24:4: τὰς ὁδοὺς σου; Ez. 20:11: τὰ δικαιώματά μου, etc.), or grants secret knowledge (Jer. 11:18; Da. 2:23, 28 ff. O etc.). The cultic declaration of the acts of Yahweh is called γνωρίζω in 1 Ch. 16:8 (ἀπ- or ἀναγγέλλειν in ψ 104:1; Is. 12:4), and also the confession of sin in ψ 31:5. In O Da. 4:3 f.; 5:8 etc. γνωρίζω is used of the interpretation of dreams and visions.

"The NT use of γνωρίζω corresponds to that of the LXX. The word often occurs in a secular sense (1 C. 12:3; 15:1; Col. 4:7, 9). Even here God is frequently the subject, making known His power and salvation (R. 9:22 f.; Ac. 2:28, quoting Ps. 16:11; Lk. 2:15). Above all, the term is used for God's declaration of His secret counsel of salvation (His μυστήριον), e.g., in Col. 1:27; Eph. 1:9; 3:5, 10; 6:19 (cf. → φανεροῦν in R. 16:25 f.; Ign. Eph., 19, 2f. and elsewhere). Even the declaration of God's acts by men (Lk. 2:17), especially through preaching (R. 16:26; 2 Pt. 1:16), can be called γνωρίζω. In John, Jesus is the subject of γνωρίζειν as the Revealer (15:15; 17:26). But the making known of our requests to God is also γνωρίζεσθαι at Phil. 4:6 (cf. γνωρίζεσθαι θεῷ in Philo Sacr. AC., 132; Det. Pot. Ins., 56; also Congr., 18; Fug., 38)."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:718.]

<sup>707</sup>2. 'To perceive,' 'to know.' This sense is common not only in the pap. but also in the LXX (Am. 3:3; Prv. 3:6; 15:10; Job 34:25; at Job 4:16 Σ has ἐγνώρισα and the LXX ἐπέγνω). The term is found in this sense in both Philo and Joseph. in both the act. and the pass. In the pass. it is hard to distinguish between the senses 'to be made known' and 'to be known.' When we turn to the NT we find this meaning only at Phil. 1:22: τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω. γνωρίζω is used of the knowledge of God in Philo (Poster. C., 167; Mut. Nom., 17); Corp. Herm., X, 15 (here of God's own knowledge); the λόγος τέλειος; 1 Dg., 8, 5; Act. Andr., 6 (p. 41, 7). It is also used of being known by God in Act. Andr., I (p. 38, 7 and 20), cf. 9 (p. 42, 3 f.). [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:718.]

<sup>708</sup>αἰρέω fut. mid. αἰρήσομαι; 2 aor. εἰλόμην and εἰλάμην 2 Th 2:13; Hs 5, 6, 6; α-forms in Tdf., W-H, M., Bov., N.; o-forms in V., t.r.; s. also ἀν-, ἐξαίρέω (Hom.+).

**1. act. take** καρπὸν αἰρῶν if you pick fruit Dg 12:8 (text uncertain; s. Bihlmeyer ad loc.).

**2. mid.** (so exclus. in NT, Tat., Ath.) **choose** (s. Nägeli 19f) w. double acc. (Hdt. 1, 96; Jos., Ant. 9, 106) Hs 5, 6, 6. τινὰ εἰς τι someone for someth. **2 Th 2:13**. W. acc. prefer (Diod S 17, 29, 3; 17, 48, 2; Jos., Bell. 6, 330) **Phil 1:22**; likew. μᾶλλον αἰ. w. inf. foll. and ἦ w. inf. (Pla., Ap. 38e; Diod S 11, 11, 1 μᾶλλον εἶλοντο τελευτᾶν ἢ ζῆν; Περὶ ὕψους 33, 5; Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 117 §491) **Hb 11:25**.—B. 743. DELG. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 28.]

is asserting that he is unable to make public his choice of one of these options. He expressed his dilemma not in terms of his not knowing what to prefer. But rather as his inability to make a preference known to his readers. Their perception of his preference was of much greater importance to him than his personal preference itself. As the adjective αἰρετός, ῥή, ὄν coming off the same root as αἰρέω with the meaning of ‘desirable’ signals, either option for Paul contained highly desirable aspects, so much so that he could not confidently make a preference for one over the other known to his readers.

And his following statement contained in the sentence in vv. 23-24 makes clear those desirable aspects of each option which made his choice of options so very difficult. The core statement of the sentence (v. 23) amplifies the second statement above in v. 22: συνέχομαι δὲ ἐκ τῶν δύο, **and I am hard pressed from the two**. The verb συνέχομαι from συνέχω expresses in the middle voice here the idea of being caught between the ‘horns of a dilemma’ with no clear sense of which option to choose. Thus the reason Paul could not make known his preference to the Philippian readers (v. 22) was because he found himself in a real dilemma about which direction he ought to take. What we are seeing here is a level of honesty and openness to his readers that one doesn’t often find among even Christian leaders in our world, much less leaders in other spheres of modern life.

The rest of the sentence fleshes out the desirable aspects of each option as participle modifiers of the verb συνέχομαι. As circumstantial participles in their adverbial function they define each side of the dilemma both from the positive perspectives.

When Paul said τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος, **to die is gain**, he had in mind what he now asserts as τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῶ [γὰρ] μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, **having the desire to depart and to be with Christ -- for this is exceedingly better**. By the time of his Roman imprisonment Paul had conquered all fear of dying because of his religious devotion to Christ. When the apostle speaks of death as κρεῖσσον with a pair of intensifying modifiers stack up on this word -- πολλῶ and μᾶλλον -- he is not thinking about entering ‘the pearly gates’ nor his ‘mansion in the sky.’ Throughout all of his writings he gives almost no attention to any details regarding heaven or what it is like. Instead, everything regarding eternity is wrapped up in one of his often used phrases, **ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ**.<sup>709</sup>

<sup>709c</sup>Are there close parallels that suggest that Paul derived the expression [“to be with Christ”] from outside sources? By way of response one must assert that his usage is truly distinctive. In its precise formulation there seems to be no exact parallel. The LXX preferred μετά with the genitive when rendering the biblical promise of God, ‘I am with you’, while the reverse statement, ‘We with God’, is seldom used.<sup>1</sup> There is no corresponding expression to Paul’s in the rabbinic literature, and while σὺν θεῷ (‘with God’) or σὺν θεοῖς (‘with the gods’) was a constantly recurring phrase among the Greeks, being found in all epochs of Greek literature, and denoted ‘the conviction that man’s life, word, counsel and acts stand under the good-pleasure and helpful co-operation of the deity’,<sup>2</sup> it is not the basis of the apostle’s thought since it does not appear in eschatological contexts like those of the Pauline letters. If his usage is truly distinctive, then ‘it can be regarded as presenting us with a fully deliberate feature of Pauline thought and sensibility’.<sup>3</sup>

“Nevertheless it is right to probe further and examine the general background of the expression if not its precise formulation. According to Grundmann,<sup>4</sup> the point with which to begin is the Psalter, where several references to fellowship with God seem to look beyond cultic fellowship in life on earth to that which vanquishes death (LXX Pss. 139:14; 20:7; 138:18, the last of which appears to mean, ‘I will be awakened to fellowship with God’). Later Judaism<sup>5</sup> also speaks of eternal fellowship with God, and in this it seems to be building on the OT promise ‘I will be with you’, even though its statements do not directly lead on to the expression σὺν Χριστῷ. Ps. 16 shows that fellowship with God conquers death and may well have been a theological component in Paul’s statements.

“But before any further conclusions can be reached about the general background of the σὺν Χριστῷ phrase a further significant factor needs to be taken into account. The expression ‘to be with Christ’ (Phil. 1:23) or its equivalents (1 Thes. 4:17; 2 Cor. 4:14; [13:4?]) looks forward to the future when the destiny of Christians, after death or after the parousia, is in view. At the same time, by means of some of his συν- compounds the apostle indicates that this intimate personal union with Christ is already a present reality.<sup>6</sup> The believer has already been united with Christ in his death and resurrection: he was united with him in his death (Rom. 6:5) and buried with him in baptism (6:4; Col. 2:12), so that the old self was crucified with him (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), yet made alive together with Christ (Col. 2:12) or raised with him (3:1), and as a result the believer’s life is hidden with Christ in God (3:3). So in the Pauline texts this communion with the risen Lord is established at the time of the believer’s participation in Christ’s death and resurrection on the one hand, yet may be expected in the future, at death or at the parousia, on the other hand.

“As a refinement, then, the origins of the two groups of references, distinguished in this way, are to be examined. J.-F. Collange<sup>7</sup> concludes, on the basis of recent studies from which a number of convergent traits may be extracted, that the ‘eschatological σὺν’ ought to be associated with Jewish apocalyptic (notably with Dt. 33:2 and Zc. 14:5),<sup>8</sup> and the ‘σὺν past and present’ with Hellenism and the mystery religions.<sup>9</sup> According to Collange, the unity or intermingling of these two currents, which in their origins were almost opposites, is to be found in the Christ event itself. It is this unity which lies at the heart of the Pauline teaching.

“But is the background to these two groups of references really to be explained, with Collange, in this hybrid fashion? The influence of the mystery religions, in the light of G. Wagner’s researches,<sup>10</sup> is to be rejected. Meanwhile, R. Schnackenburg, O. Kuss, and W. Kramer,<sup>11</sup> in examining the two sets of σύν-statements, have given greater importance to the so-called sacramental assertions, that is, those which speak of being with Christ in the past and present. So Kramer can claim that the sacramental σύν is the presupposition of the eschatological. A. Deissmann<sup>12</sup> had previously argued that σὺν Χριστῷ and ἐν Χριστῷ stood over against each other. The statements

The phrase used here *σὺν Χριστῷ* is virtually synonymous with *ἐν Χριστῷ*.<sup>710</sup> As he will elaborate in chapter three, the absolute center of the Christian life is spiritual union with Christ from the moment of conversion throughout eternity. He saw death -- and the subsequent resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15) -- as only deepening and enhancing that union with Christ. This unquestionably made death far more preferable to living on the earth, because it activated a level of union with Christ impossible to experience on earth. No believer with devotion to Christ would disagree with Paul on this point. Some eight or nine years earlier when he wrote to the Corinthians from Macedonia about 56 AD, he mentioned having gone through periods of despairing of life itself (2 Cor. 1:8-11), but God had led him through all of that and after the numerous brushes with martyrdom especially leading up to his arrest in Jerusalem and the subsequent events from then until arriving in Rome, his confidence strengthened and brought him complete peace with the possibility of dying prior to the return of Christ.

But when Paul said *τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς*, *to live is Christ*, and then *εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί*, *and since to live in the flesh*, he now expands these into *τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν [ἐν] τῇ σαρκί ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς*, *but to remain in the flesh is more necessary because of you*. Here the key term is the comparative adjective *ἀναγκαιότερον*, *more necessary*, from *ἀναγκαῖος*, -α, -ον, *necessary*. Paul sensed that in God's plan for his life the higher priority was for him to continue living rather than suffering martyrdom. But staying alive was not the goal. It was more important for Paul to continue living *δι' ὑμᾶς*, that is, for the sake and benefit of the Philippians. Thus *ἀναγκαιότερον* here corresponds to *κρεῖσσον*, *better*, in v. 23. Even though death is better, continued living is more necessary.

Latter in 2:4, he admonishes the Philippians *μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι*, *let each one of you be focusing on not on his own affairs but indeed on the affairs of others*. His own example of opting for the possibility of continuing to live was not for his own benefit, but rather for that of the Philippian church. But this was not a new unselfish focus of the imprisoned Paul. Almost a decade earlier he had written to the Corinthians, *χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν*, *apart from other concerns daily is pressure on me, that is my care for all the churches* (2 Cor. 11:28).

Thus in the final sentence of this pericope in vv. 25-26, Paul elaborates more on what continued living meant for him in relationship to the Philippians: *καὶ τοῦτο πεποιθῶς οἶδα ὅτι μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως, ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς*, *and being convinced of this, I know that I will remain and I will continue to remain with all of you for your advancement and joy in faith, in order that your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus because of me through my coming again to you*. At this point Paul's sense of continuing to live is described as *τοῦτο πεποιθῶς*, *having been convinced of this*.<sup>711</sup> Although hesitant to express his preference initially (*τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω*),

about being with Christ were to be understood only in an eschatological sense, that is, they spoke of fellowship with him at death or at the parousia. According to Deissmann, one could say that *σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι* is the purpose of *ἐν Χριστῷ εἶναι*.<sup>13</sup> P. Hoffmann,<sup>14</sup> by contrast, claims that both sets of statements were originally Pauline and that the expression *σὺν Χριστῷ* had its source in statements about the death of Christ, such as the phrase *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* ('for us'). This is especially clear at 1 Thes. 5:10, where the eschatological *σὺν*-statement is tied in with Christ's death for us (*τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἵνα ... ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν*). At the same time it is obvious that the assertions that speak of being with Christ in the past and present focus on the believer's incorporation into that same climactic event.<sup>15</sup> From a morphological point of view the expression 'with Christ' must not be separated from the whole range of phrases using the prepositions *ὑπὲρ*, *ἐν*, *διὰ*, etc., in order to give account of the reality of salvation. Eschatology is rooted in the events of the cross and resurrection, and although fellowship with Christ as expressed by the future *σὺν*-statements effectively transcends death, it nevertheless bears the stamp of death.<sup>1677</sup>

[Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 133–135.]

<sup>710</sup>“The expression ‘to be with Christ’ (*σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι*) appears only at Phil. 1:23 in the NT, although on a number of other occasions the apostle employs the preposition *σὺν* (‘with’) to indicate fellowship with the Lord, with Christ, or with Jesus: the closest parallels are ‘we shall be with the Lord’ (*σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα*, 1 Thes. 4:17) and ‘we shall live together with him’ (*σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν*, 5:10). Nine further expressions occur (if we include four from Colossians): ‘he [God] will bring with him [Jesus]’ (*σὺν αὐτῷ*, 1 Thes. 4:14), ‘he will raise us with Jesus’ (*σὺν Ἰησοῦ*, 2 Cor. 4:14), ‘we will live with him’ (*σὺν αὐτῷ*, 13:4), ‘since we died with Christ’ (*σὺν Χριστῷ*, Rom. 6:8), ‘how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?’ (*σὺν αὐτῷ*, 8:32), ‘he [God] made you alive with him [Christ]’ (*σὺν αὐτῷ*, Col. 2:13), ‘since you died with Christ’ (*σὺν Χριστῷ*, 2:20), ‘your life is hidden with Christ’ (*σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ*, 3:3), ‘you will appear with him (*σὺν αὐτῷ*) in glory’ (3:4). A brief glance at these references shows that no single expression completely agrees with any other, but that the preposition *σὺν* (‘with’) was suited to express intimate personal union with Christ, the Lord, Jesus, or him in various contexts (rather than *μετά*, ‘with’, which was more suited to indicate close association or attendant circumstances, e.g., 1 Thes. 3:13).<sup>1</sup> Because of this variety several writers have argued that it is incorrect to speak of the phrase ‘with Christ’ (*σὺν Χριστῷ*) as a fixed formula.<sup>2</sup> Rather, it is a motif or theme that can be expressed in a number of different ways.<sup>377</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 132.]

<sup>711</sup>“M. Dibelius contrasted the theoretical possibility (v. 20) with the concrete plans Paul was making in v. 25. But does this



he now does so with conviction that the τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, *to live in the flesh*, option is what will prevail because of God's will. His initial reluctance to state a preference for one of the two options signals his own inward uncertainty over the better merits of one option over the other. But now he reflects a conviction that God will make the choice and that it will be to continue living since there is yet work for Paul to do on earth.

This sense of certainty is also underscored with his use of οἶδα over against γινώσκω. Outward circumstances were signaling the likelihood of his release from imprisonment and thus giving him confidence. The double use of μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ,<sup>712</sup> both future tense active voice verbs, stresses first Paul's continued living (μενῶ) but a living in connection to others (παραμενῶ) that is defined by πᾶσιν ὑμῖν, *with all of you* (Philippians). The future tense stresses certainty over against the alternative use of the subjunctive mood with an expression of less confidence. This would be at least the fourth time for Paul to be in Philippi (cf. Acts 16:12-40; 20:1-2, 3-6), with three of the visits on the second and third missionary journeys beginning in the early 50s.

The objective of Paul's continued living is εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως, *for your advancement and joy in faith*. His life on earth as an apostle was always directed toward winning and disciplining believers in their Christian commitment. In God granting him some more years of unencumbered ministry after release from imprisonment his ambition was to resume fulfilling this divine calling for his ministry. Upon being able to travel once more to Philippi he would spend as much time and effort as possible encouraging and training the believers there on going deeper (προκοπὴν) in their commitment to Christ (τῆς πίστεως) that would produce deeper satisfaction and fulfillment (χαρὰν) in Christian service. The idea of τῆς πίστεως here is not teaching them more doctrine, but rather helping them develop their commitment to Christ. Understanding more about that commitment is a part of the need, but central is training on how to surrender more of themselves daily to Christ.

In addition to this more immediate objective (expressed by the preposition εἰς) is the larger objective (expressed by the conjunction ἵνα), ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *in order that your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus due to me through my coming again to you*. Their χαρὰ would develop in to καύχημα due to Paul's being set free and returning to Philippi to be with the church. Neither χαρὰ nor καύχημα center on emotional feelings. Rather, both, and especially καύχημα, focus on a profoundly deep sense of serenity and contentment down inside due to some outward circumstance. Paul sensed that for the Philippians his being released from prison and then traveling again to Philippi would greatly enhance their appreciation and devotion to Christ as the all powerful God who could move in marvelous ways in the life of His servant Paul. He sensed that God intended to use his coming again to them as a wonderful expression of His sovereign actions in behalf of His people. Such an action would deepen the Philippians' faith commitment profoundly.<sup>713</sup>

Thus as Paul composes this letter to the Philippians somewhat early in the two year house arrest in Rome he brings them up to date on his personal circumstance in the city. But what could have been a 'woe is me' report instead was an uplifting and encouraging report that ended with expressed confidence in being released from prison and then traveling once more to Philippi to spend time with the church there.

The remaining biographical narratives will stress plans for Paul's associates, encouragement to the Philippians to solve some problems in their congregation, and finally acknowledgement of gratitude for the most really explain the strong note of assurance struck by the words πεποιθώς οἶδα? J. A. Bengel<sup>2</sup> thought that while Paul was writing to the Philippians he had a 'prophetic suggestion' regarding his continuance with them. This line of interpretation was taken up by E. Lohmeyer,<sup>3</sup> who argued that the sure ground of Paul's knowledge was that of prophetic revelation, and that this insight was tied in with 'the grace of martyrdom'! Most interpreters have rejected this view.<sup>4</sup> However, the majority of commentators think of a kind of inward dialogue that begins at v. 20 and reaches its climax here in a statement of optimistic faith: P. Bonnard represents the apostle as meditating while writing and arriving at a firm conviction at this point of the letter,<sup>5</sup> while P. Hoffmann<sup>6</sup> considers this new-found assurance of Paul, which is a probability not a certainty, to be based on his realization that to remain and fulfil his pastoral tasks was a 'necessary feature of salvation history'. But if this is so, why didn't Paul arrive at an understanding of this prior to the struggles mentioned in vv. 20–26? Or why did he not correct his impressions of vv. 20–26 if he subsequently thought that they were incorrect? Further, how does one explain 2:17 with its suggestion of martyrdom? E. Haupt<sup>7</sup> and W. Michaelis are right in suggesting that these interpretations do violence to the plain meaning of the text." [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 138–139.]

<sup>712</sup>The wordplay of the synonyms μένειν / παραμένειν is preserved in NRSV: 'remain and continue.' For similar wordplays see Rom 1:20; 5:19; 2 Cor 4:8; 5:4; Phil 3:2–3; 2 Thess 3:11." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 62.]

<sup>713</sup>This interpretive perspective best explains why Paul does not arbitrarily break off his emphasis with v. 26 and shift to an unrelated moral emphasis in vv. 27-30. There is no break at all. This ethical emphasis is a natural expansion of his goal of helping them deepen their faith commitment to Christ. Deepened faith to Christ means more consistent obedience to Christ. The two dynamics are inseparably linked in Christian living. One doesn't grow in faith without increasing his obedience to Christ!

generous financial contribution of the church to Paul's expenses while under house arrest in Rome.

#### 8.1.4.5.2 Plans for Timothy and Epaphroditus, Phil. 2:19-30

19 Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα κἀγὼ εὐψυχῶ γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν. 20 οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω ἰσόψυχον, ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει· 21 οἱ πάντες γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 22 τὴν δὲ δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ γινώσκετε, ὅτι ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. 23 τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἔλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς· 24 πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι .

25 Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἠγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 26 ἐπειδὴ ἐπιποθῶν ἦν πάντας ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀδημονῶν, διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν. 27 καὶ γὰρ ἠσθένησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτῳ· ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς ἤλεησεν αὐτόν, οὐκ αὐτὸν δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἵνα μὴ λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην σχῶ. 28 σπουδαιότερως οὖν ἔπεμψα αὐτόν, ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτὸν πάλιν χαρῆτε κἀγὼ ἀλυπότερος ᾶ. 29 προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε, 30 ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἠγγισεν παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, ἵνα ἀναπληρῶσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας.

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. 20 I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; 24 and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.

25 Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus — my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need; 26 for he has been longing for all of you, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. 29 Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people, 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

With this pericope Paul stresses his plans for two of his helpers, [Timothy](#) and [Epaphroditus](#), in regard to their coming to the church at Philippi from Rome.<sup>714</sup> Some commentators have additionally noted substantial parallels between 2:19-30 and the christological confession of 2:5-11.<sup>715</sup> Thus the inclusion of the travel plans for these two associates of Paul comes as a continuation of emphasis on Paul's emphasis on Christians following Christ's example of unselfish focus on the interests of others (cf. 2:4). His sending of Timothy and Epaphroditus to Philippi is intended to illustrate how that example of Christ should be implemented.

**Timothy's planned trip, vv. 19-24.** Of the two, Timothy has been with Paul longer, having joined the apos-

---

<sup>714</sup>This passage, along with several others, have received intensive treatment from a literary genre standpoint as a part of an "apostolic parousia" type writing in which Paul extends his presence with a congregation through sending one or more of his associates to it as his representative. "R. W. Funk, *Language*, 264–274, and in *Christian History*, 249–268. Regular features of this that appear in Phil. 2:19–24 are (a) the sending of an emissary with his name, credentials, and purpose, (b) the benefit to Paul from sending a colleague, and (c) the announcement of a personal visit. Cf. F. F. Bruce, 68–69." [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991).]

"References to the apostle's future 'presence' have been the subject of detailed epistolary study<sup>3</sup> in recent times. It has been suggested that this feature, often at the close of an epistle and called a 'travelogue', is no courtesy remark but a deliberately phrased convention, known from letter forms in the Graeco-Roman world. R. W. Funk has examined this travelogue form in some detail (notably Rom. 15:14–33; 1 Cor. 4:14–21; Phil. 2:19–30; 1 Thes. 2:17–3:13; Phm. 21, 22) and understands it as one element of the 'apostolic parousia' in which Paul seeks to convey to the readers the presence of his apostolic authority and power.<sup>4</sup> T. Y. Mullins, however, has argued convincingly that these references to forthcoming visits by Paul denote a theme at the conclusion of his letters rather than a fixed formula.<sup>5</sup>"

[Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 314.]

<sup>715c</sup>A further significant factor, relevant to the inclusion of a travelogue at this point in the letter, needs to be noted. There are striking verbal parallels between 2:19–30 and the christological confession of 2:5–11 with its related exhortations.<sup>10</sup> The apostle has been troubled because the Philippians have been too concerned about their own interests (τὰ ἑαυτῶν) and not enough about the interests of others (τὰ ἑτέρων, 2:4). First and foremost, Christ's example of lowly service (2:5–11) has been set forth as a powerful corrective to this attitude. Subsequently, Paul has referred to the possibility of his own life being poured out as a libation for others (2:17). He now presents Timothy, who has slaved selflessly in the gospel (2:22; cf. 1:1, 7) and has a genuine concern for the interests of the Philippians (τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, 2:20), and Epaphroditus, who almost died in the service of Christ (2:30), as godly examples of the way the Philippians should imitate Christ.<sup>11</sup> Thus, 2:19–30 does not simply inform the Philippians about the apostle's plans for Timothy and Epaphroditus; the section also has a paraenetic purpose by pointing to them as models of a selfless attitude that Paul wants the community to follow."

[Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 315.]

tle's traveling group on the second missionary journey from his home in Lystra (cf. Acts 16:1-5). But [Epaphroditus](#) represents the church at Philippi, having brought the financial offering from the church to Paul in Rome (cf. Phil. 4:10-20).

When [Timothy](#) left his mother at Lystra in Galatia in the early 50s to become a part of the Pauline mission, he had no idea of how God would weave his life together with that of Paul. Here they are together in Rome about a decade later with the apostle under house arrest. They have traveled together through both the second and third missionary journeys, as well as Paul's ordeal beginning with his arrest in Jerusalem and now culminating in Rome. The 50s of the first century were chaotic and dangerous times for Jews, not only in Palestine but in the Diaspora as well with unrest and flashes of Jewish revolt against the Romans popping up with increasing frequency across the eastern empire. But Timothy faithfully stood by Paul's side through all the ups and downs of this era in proclaiming the Gospel to a lost world. [Timothy](#) was very active in Macedonia during the third missionary journey, having made several trips to Philippi to represent Paul. And it is against this background that the apostle will pay tribute to Timothy's τὴν δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ, [proven character](#) (v. 22).<sup>716</sup>

Paul begins with expressing the anticipation of sending Timothy from Rome to Philippi: 19 Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα κάγω εὐψυχῶ γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν. 19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. Through using Ἐλπίζω Paul affirms full expectation of being able to send Timothy. Compare the use of ἐλπίζω in numerous travel plans of Paul: Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:7; Phlm. 22. But ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ couches this expectation inside the will of Christ.<sup>717</sup> How did Paul plan for the future? This statement provides important insight. Everything was planned out always inside the framework of the leadership of Christ Jesus. Paul's actions both present and future were calculated to fall within this parameter.

What Paul expected to be able to do was Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, [Timothy quickly to send to you](#). In typical Greek grammar fashion Τιμόθεον as direct object of the infinitive πέμψαι is placed at the beginning of this infinitive phrase that together functions as the complementary object of Ἐλπίζω. The sending of Timothy is more significant than just the sending. This was true for both Paul and for the Philippian church who knew Timothy well and held him in high regard. Very likely ταχέως, quickly, meant 'as soon as we finish composing this letter.' The *Praescriptio* includes Timothy as one of the 'senders' of the letters, which normally meant in Paul's situation that this second 'sender' was the actual writer of the letter dictated to him by Paul. In verse 24 Paul additionally expresses the optimism that he also will come to Philippi ταχέως. And this is expressed emphatically through the use of the intensive pronoun αὐτὸς with the first person singular verb ἐλεύσομαι.

The stated objective for Timothy in making this trip to Philippi is ἵνα κάγω εὐψυχῶ γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, [in order that I also may be cheered up by having learned the things concerning you](#). Paul the prisoner is somewhat apprehensive about the Philippians.<sup>718</sup> He doesn't know the last update on their situation. Perhaps this includes

<sup>716</sup>δοκιμή, ἦς, ἡ (s. δοκιμάζω, δοκίμιον, δόκιμο; several mss. of Diosc., Mater. Med. 4, 184 Wellm. II p. 333, 9 n.; Achmes 24, 9; Cat. Cod. Astr. X 67, 7; Ps 67:31 Sym.—B-D-F §110, 2; Mlt-H. 352).

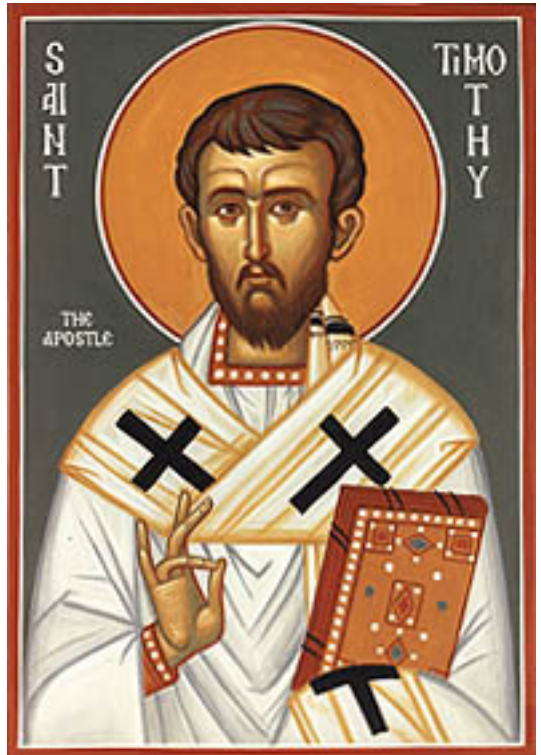
1. a testing process, test, ordeal (Sextus 7a δ. πίστεως) ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως in a great ordeal of affliction 2 Cor 8:2.

2. the experience of going through a test with special ref. to the result, standing a test, character Ro 5:4 (a pregnant constr.: ὑπομονή as a process of enduring something amounts to a test that promotes and validates the character of the one undergoing it. This success in turn promotes ἐλπίζει). γινώσκειν τὴν δ. τινοῦς make determination of someone's attitude 2 Cor 2:9; make proof of someone's character or value Phil 2:22. δ. τῆς διακονίας the approved character of your service 2 Cor 9:13.—δ. ζητεῖν desire proof or evidence 13:3.—M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 256.]

<sup>717</sup>“The sphere or element in which his hope moves. (Comp. 1:8, 14, 3:1; Rom. 9:1, 14:14; 1 Cor. 1:31, 7:39, etc.)” [Marvin Richardson Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 73.]

<sup>718</sup>This single NT use of the verb εὐψυχέω stresses 'having one's life dynamic renewed' and is very similar to εὐθυμέω with the sense of 'having a renewing fire kindled' inside one's life. Both verbs are a part of a large number of ancient Greek verbs, nouns,





some of the tension in the congregation alluded to in chapter four. What he hopes will come out of this trip is that Timothy will discover the details of how the church is doing and then quickly return to Rome with encouraging news. Of course as Timothy carries the letter from Paul to the Philippian church they will likewise find encouragement about Paul's situation. So Timothy's trip should be a win - win situation! The ingressive aorist participle γνοῦς defines the means by which Paul expects to be uplifted from Timothy's trip. The antecedent action of the participle signals that the apostle fully expects to be encouraged once Timothy has returned and filled him in with the details of the church at Philippi (γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν).

Although most in the church already knew how Paul felt about Timothy, it had been some years since the last visit of Paul and Timothy to the church at the end of the third missionary journey in 56 AD. Many new members were now a part of the cluster of house churches that made up the congregation. Thus the apostle felt the need to give a set of reasons (γὰρ 2x) for sending Timothy on this mission.<sup>719</sup>

The first stated reason comes in v. 20: οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω ἰσόψυχον, ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει, for I have no one like-minded who cares so genuinely for your welfare. Central to Paul's praise of Timothy is the adjective ἰσόψυχον.<sup>720</sup> From ἰσόψυχος, -ον, this single NT usage word literally means to be of 'equal spirit.' Most likely the sense here is that Timothy cares for the Philippians at the same level that Paul does. What Paul wrote in 2:4 μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι. each one not focusing on his own things but indeed on the things of others, is being lived out with Timothy. The adverb γνησίως stresses the sincerity of Timothy's concern for the Philippians. Timothy has a deep love for them that is his own and not a duplication of someone else's care, even that of Paul. The verb μεριμνήσει emphasizes caring interest and compassion.<sup>721</sup> Thus Paul is

---

and adjectives that suggest the idea of something or someone bringing renewed excitement and confidence about life. See Low-Nida lexicon topics 25.146-25.156 for a complete listing. Most play off of some figurative expression in a manner that the English figurative expression 'to lift one's spirits' would suggest. In the first century Greco-Roman world the ability to remain optimistic and encouraged about life was an ongoing challenge. Outside of the very limited aristocratic circles, it was not a 'fun world' to live in for the vast majority of people.

<sup>719c</sup>The question has been raised as to why Paul has to justify his decision to send Timothy and commend him so strongly to people who should have already known him well. J.-F. Collange gratuitously claimed that the sending of Timothy with Paul's commendation (in what has been called 'a form of recommendation letter')<sup>24</sup> attests to the gravity of the situation at Philippi (which was 'full of menace to the Pauline mission')<sup>25</sup> and 'the somewhat spineless character of Timothy!'<sup>26</sup> Variations on this are that the apostle needed to prevent a misunderstanding, namely he had hesitated in sending Timothy because he no longer trusted him, or that the Philippians would question his being sent because of their negative attitude towards Paul's colleague. But a more positive reason can be given for Paul's commendatory words even if the precise details are not known to us.<sup>27</sup> The issue here is not whether Paul wants to send Timothy; it is, rather, that he cannot send him now. There were factors in Paul's immediate circumstances that necessitated Timothy's presence with the apostle. Vv. 20–22 emphasize his great value to Paul: he is like-minded, has a genuine concern for the Philippians' welfare, and is the ideal person to help resolve the tensions in the congregation. Paul will send him as soon as he can, and his arrival will be well worth waiting for.<sup>28</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 320.]

<sup>720c</sup>The key word in this clause is ἰσόψυχον,<sup>12</sup> one of several terms in the letter that are cognate with ψυχή. It is similar to σύμψυχοι of v. 2 (where the Philippians are exhorted to be 'together in soul'), and there is clearly a wordplay with the cognate εὐψυχῶ of v. 19. ἰσόψυχος, a rare poetic word that is found nowhere else in the NT and only once in the LXX (Ps. 54:14 [E.T. 55:13]), means 'of like soul or mind'. But what is the implied object in the comparison? Is Paul saying: 'I have no one like him [Τιμοθέω],<sup>13</sup> that is, with qualities like Timothy among those who are with me in Rome (or Ephesus)?' Or, 'I have no one who is so in sympathy with your [ὑμῶν]<sup>14</sup> outlook?' Or, 'I have no one who is like-minded with me [μοί],<sup>15</sup> that is, who shares my concerns? The paucity of occurrences of ἰσόψυχος makes it difficult to be certain as to the implied object, and each of the three possibilities can be read consistently with the following relative clause (ὅστις κτλ.). On balance, however, we prefer the third option, that is, Timothy is like-minded with Paul, especially in his genuine concern for the Philippians, for two reasons: (1) the following relative sentence fits neatly with this interpretation, and (2) the father-son relationship (v. 22) supports it. Of those available to the apostle in Rome (there is a limitation in the ἔχω, 'I have',<sup>16</sup> not 'I know'), Timothy had proven his worth in concrete ways,<sup>17</sup> and Paul could thus say: 'I have no one who is so close to me'. As the following words make plain, it is not so much the spiritual gifts of Timothy that the apostle has in view, though their presence is not denied, but his genuine concern for the Philippians' well-being (v. 20b), his commitment to the gospel (v. 22), and his seeking the things of Christ (v. 21).'' [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 318–319.]

<sup>721c</sup>ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει. The preceding statement, that no one has qualities like him, is explained by the fact that 'he will have a genuine concern for your welfare'. The relative pronoun ὅστις, which often takes the place of the simple relative ὅς,<sup>18</sup> here introduces a 'qualitative consecutive' clause<sup>19</sup> that describes a consequence resulting from Timothy's being ἰσόψυχος. μεριμνάω (as well as its cognate noun μέριμνα)<sup>20</sup> was used in classical Greek literature, the LXX, and the NT in the negative sense of being anxious or worried, the natural reaction of a person to the poverty, hunger, and other troubles that befell him in his daily life. This is how the verb is used at chap. 4:6, where the Philippians are exhorted: μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, 'stop worrying about anything'.<sup>21</sup> But μεριμνάω is also found with a positive connotation, to describe the active caring for or being concerned about someone's welfare (so 1 Cor. 7:32–34; 12:25),

sending his most trusted assistant to the church at Philippi. Turning loose of someone like this with few others to turn to was not an easy matter.

The second stated reason (γάρ) in v. 21 reinforces the first reason: 21 οἱ πάντες γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *for all seek their own affairs, not the things of Jesus Christ*. What does Paul imply by this seemingly harsh statement? Different answers have been given.<sup>722</sup> Is Paul leveling such a criticism at Luke or Aristarchus who at least had been with Paul in Rome for some of the time, if not all of it. Clearly he didn't mean Epaphroditus who will travel with Timothy (cf. vv. 25-30). Some have suggested that this refers back to the two groups mentioned in 1:12-18. But this is highly unlikely. The key concept in this statement is τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, *they seek their own interests*. The idea is to put first priority on themselves. The idea is very similar in the reverse perspective to μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες, *each one not focusing on themselves*, in 2:4a. Then his positive admonition in 2:4b σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καί] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι, *but each one focusing on the needs of others*, stands behind his οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *not on the things of Jesus Christ*, in 2:21. For whatever the reason others around Paul in Rome at this point in time could not -- or would not -- turn loose of their own interests in order to make this trip to Philippi to help the church. Given the level of virtually total selflessness that characterized Paul's ministry, it was difficult for him to accept anything less. But careful analysis detects more sadness than anger in Paul's words here.

In verse 22 Paul returns to the praise of Timothy with τὴν δὲ δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ γινώσκετε, ὅτι ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, *But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel*. The idea of δοκιμὴν from δοκιμή is that of proven character that has undergone tests and thus has established itself as genuine. The history of Timothy's faithful service to Christ through the 50s as he worked with Paul meant that he had come through Philippi several times. Paul correctly indicated that out of first hand experience the Philippians knew (γινώσκετε) the character of Timothy. It was not that they had only heard of his fine reputation.

Very significant to this proven character of Timothy was the close relationship he enjoyed with the apostle Paul. It was characterized ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον, a father - child, relationship. This type of spiritual relationship will be stated about Timothy elsewhere as well; cf. 1 Cor. 4:17 and 2 Tim. 1:2. Also Titus (cf. Tit. 1:4) will be identified in the same way by Paul. In the Jewish background this image is often used of a teacher / student relationship.<sup>723</sup> Beyond Paul's most likely having led Timothy to personal faith commitment to Christ years before at Lystra, the expression underscores their shared common commitment to Christ and service to Him as is reflected in the use of σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, *together with me he has served in the Gospel*.<sup>724</sup>

and it is this care for the Philippians' well-being which Paul has in view here. The future tense (μεριμνήσει) strictly refers to the practical assistance Timothy will give<sup>22</sup> the Philippians when he visits them, though to avoid misunderstanding it is best to translate the expression as a present ('who really cares about you'). γνησίως, which means 'sincerely or genuinely',<sup>23</sup> is an adverb describing the manner in which Timothy will show his concern for the readers. But no specific details are provided as to how he will actually help." [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 319-320.]

<sup>722</sup>This indictment of the apostle seems to be sweeping and severe. It has been interpreted as: (1) 'emotional hyperbole'<sup>32</sup> or an exaggeration<sup>33</sup> intended to enhance the authority of Timothy;<sup>34</sup> (2) evidence of Paul's annoyance and feelings of hostility towards Christians generally in Rome (cf. 1:14-17); (3) indicative of his loneliness and feelings of isolation as he awaits the outcome of his trial; (4) a general remark describing the world of selfishness around him (cf. Mt. 6:32); or (5) a comment applied to every gospel worker who was currently in any way associated with Paul.<sup>35</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 321.]

<sup>723</sup>In speaking of Timothy being like (ὡς) a τέκνον and himself as a πατήρ, Paul is using the imagery of spiritual parenthood<sup>57</sup> that he employed elsewhere and that had its counterpart in Judaism, ultimately deriving from the OT. So he calls himself the father of an entire Christian community, the Corinthians whom he had begotten 'in Christ Jesus through the gospel' (1 Cor. 4:15; cf. Gal. 4:19), while he describes Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2) and Titus (Tit. 1:4) as his children.<sup>58</sup> In 1 Pet. 1:3 God himself is spoken of as begetting Christians (cf. 1 Pet. 2:2), and in Jas. 1:18 of giving birth to them. The terms 'father' and 'son' with reference to a master and his disciple appear as early as 2 Ki. 2:12 (of Elijah and Elisha respectively), while at the time of Jesus it was customary for a rabbi to call his pupil 'my son'. This did not imply the thought of begetting, but the notion is present in the statement of the Babylonian Talmud: 'When a man teaches the son of another the Torah, the Scripture treats him as if he had begotten him'.<sup>59</sup> In addition, it was believed that the Jew who won another to his faith (and this was an achievement of great magnitude, being compared with the creative work of God himself) satisfied in an ideal manner the injunction to be fruitful and multiply, which according to the rabbis was laid on all male Jews as a supreme command.<sup>60</sup> Although the terminology in the mystery religions was somewhat similar (the mystagogue was regarded as the father of the initiate), the ideas were different. Paul's act of begetting and his fatherhood were 'through the gospel' (1 Cor. 4:15)." [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 324.]

<sup>724</sup>The root of the verb 'served' is the noun for 'slave' that appeared in 1:1 as Paul announced to the Philippians that he and

Thus Paul repeats his expectation in verse 23: τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἐλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς. *I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.* Here we get Paul's definition of ταχέως, *quickly*, in v. 19. Quickly means ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς. Paul intends to wait on sending Timothy until he has a better sense of how his case before the emperor is going to turn out. He has been in Rome long enough for the legal process to have gotten underway with the proper papers etc. on file with Byrrus, the captain of the Praetorian Guard who handled all such legal matters. But he doesn't yet have a full sense that the case is going to either be dismissed or else that he will be declared innocent. Depending on that, he may delay Timothy's trip or perhaps cancel it, although this would have been unlikely since Timothy was to take the letter to Philippi. More likely he implies here that he wants them to have a clearer sense of what is going to happen to him in Rome before Timothy leaves for Philippi.

But Paul's optimism wins out with his statement in v. 24: πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι, *and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.* This expectation of coming to Philippi by Paul continues a string of similar expressions beginning at 1:8, and including 1:27 and 2:27. Timothy's trip to Philippi in no way would prevent Paul from making the same trip, should circumstances become favorable. And Paul expected them to become so: πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ, *And I am persuaded in the Lord.* One is tempted to conclude from these statements that information flowing to him from the headquarters of the Praetorian Guard periodically while under guard at the private home was taken as a signal that God was working in Paul's behalf through these Roman leaders to effect his release from the legal charges.

**Epaphroditus' planned trip, vv. 25-30.** While we understand a great deal about Timothy, Epaphroditus is somewhat different. Although the name Ἐπαφρόδιτος was very common in the first century world,<sup>725</sup> he is only mentioned twice in the entire NT, and both times in Philippians: 2:25 and 4:18.<sup>726</sup> One note of importance: Epaphroditus (Philippi) should not be confused with Epaphras (Colossae; Col. 1:7; 4:12; Philm 23), as was done a few times in the church fathers.<sup>727</sup>

In the beginning sentence of vv. 25-26, the core expression is Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον . . . πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *and I consider it necessary Epaphroditus . . . to send to you.* This stands somewhat in contrast to Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, *and I expect in the Lord Jesus Timothy quickly to send to you (v. 19).* At what point did both Timothy and Epaphroditus make the trip from Rome to Philippi? Did they go together, or separately? The use of the past time aorist verb form ἡγησάμην reflects a pattern of usage not possible in English. Modern Greek grammars label this an 'epistolary aorist' function. Quite often mostly in ancient letter writing, the composer of the letter, while referring to himself, would put himself in the future time frame of the readers, rather than the anterior time frame of the composition of the letter. In ancient Greek the aorist time could be used for doing that. It was a literary device intended to enhance the connection between letter writer and readers. This is precisely what Paul is doing here in his referencing of sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi.

Thus in regard to both Timothy and Epaphroditus serious consideration at the time of writing of this letter

---

Timothy were 'slaves of Christ Jesus.' The two served together. There is no hierarchy of teacher/student or apostle/lesser believer; together the two men are slaves of the same Master, working together for the same end, the Gospel, which is here a metaphor for the mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ. (Compare 2:25 and 4:3 for other instances of working side by side.)" [Harrington Daniel J., *Philippians and Philemon*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 10, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 101.]

<sup>725</sup>The name Epaphroditus, rather common in the 1st century, suggests that his family may have been followers of the cult of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and fertility. It is interesting to note that after being converted from paganism to Christianity, Epaphroditus was not required to change his name in spite of its association with this cult." [John Gillman, "Epaphroditus (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 533.]

<sup>726</sup>W. H. Ollrog has claimed that in a number of places in his letters Paul describes his coworkers in terms of the following: (1) their work 'in Christ'; (2) their esteem or honour in the concrete situation; (3) their close relationship to Paul himself; and (4) their significance for the churches.<sup>2</sup> These four elements feature at Rom. 16:3-4 with reference to Prisca and Aquila, while at Phil. 2:25-30, with perhaps rather less emphasis on (3), the same points are made in connection with Epaphroditus. When Paul praises coworkers such as these, he does not mention everything that might be said about them but only those points that are relevant to the epistolary situation of the congregation. Somewhat more questionably, however, Ollrog asserts that Paul makes no personal judgments; he speaks only from the point of view of the work, and thus his praise of his colleagues has an official character to it." [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 329.]

<sup>727</sup>Some legitimacy to this confusion about names is present since in the ancient world Ἐπαφρόδιτος was on occasion abbreviated as Ἐπαφρᾶς.

"Epaphras (prob. short form of Ἐπαφρόδιτος q.v.; s. W-S. §16, 9; B-D-F §125, 1; Mlt-H. 119; 314)" [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 360.]



is being given to sending them both to Philippi. Most commentators ‘assume’ that Epaphroditus was sent first and Timothy afterwards separately. But in searching for legitimate reasons for such an assumption, one comes up empty. Most seem to play off of Ἐλπίζω in regard to Timothy, and ἡγησάμην concerning Epaphroditus. But ἐλπίζω connotes certainty, not uncertainty as its common English translation, *I hope*, conveys. As v. 23 suggests, Timothy will be sent just as soon as Paul has a sense of the outcome of his trial before the emperor. Thus he can bring news about this to the Philippians, -- interestingly something many commentators attribute to Epaphroditus rather than Timothy. Just how quickly Paul would know this is the only variable in the situation. The different ways of expressing Paul’s intention for sending both to Philippi grows out of the situation for each of the two, particularly the nature of each’s connection to the Philippian church. Timothy was a visiting missionary on different occasions, while Epaphroditus was a hometown member of the church who represented them to Paul (cf. 4:18) and now was being sent back home as Paul’s representative.

The expansion of the core Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον . . . πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, the . . ., contains a series of affirmations of Epaphroditus, each underscoring a relationship with Paul first and then with the Philippian church: τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιῶτην μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, *my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, but your missionary and minister to my need*. Note the brackets of τὸν and μου, along with ὑμῶν and μου. This divides out the series of traits nicely into two groups.

First in terms of Epaphroditus’ personal relationship to Paul: ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιῶτην. Paul considered Epaphroditus, whose name literally designated a devotee of [Aphrodite](#) (Ἐπ + αφρόδιτος [= Ἀφροδίτη, *Aphrodite*]), as a full spiritual brother in Christ. Although not known to us, the story of his conversion to Christ must have been quite interesting, with him coming from a family committed to the pagan goddess of Aphrodite. But he also was συνεργὸν, a fellow-worker / co-worker of Paul. This adjective from συνεργός, -όν was a common way for Paul to designate many of those who labored in the Gospel along side him.<sup>728</sup> Clement is among several individuals at Philippi for whom Paul uses this term (cf. 4:3). The third label that Paul uses for Epaphroditus is συστρατιῶτην, *fellow soldier*. In the NT the noun from συστρατιώτης is only used here of Epaphroditus and in Philm. 2 of Archippus.<sup>729</sup> This military image seems to be reserved especially for those who have struggled with danger and have risked their own lives for the Gospel along side Paul. We don’t know the particular circumstance alluded to by this image, and it may have grown out of the almost terminal illness of Epaphroditus mentioned in v. 27.

Second, in terms of Epaphroditus’ relationship to the church at Philippi: ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, *but your missionary and minister to my need*. Here Paul uses ἀπόστολος in its none technical meaning that is based on its root meaning of ‘one sent.’ That is, Epaphroditus had been commissioned by the church in Philippi to travel to Rome as its representative to the apostle Paul during his time of imprisonment. This meaning follows the pattern in 2 Cor. 8:23 where Titus and others are called ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, *messengers of the churches*. Central to this label will be the insight in 4:10-20 (see below) that indicates the role of Epaphroditus as bringing the very generous love offering from the Philippian church to Paul in Rome. But not only is Epaphroditus an ἀπόστολον, but Paul also calls him a λειτουργὸν. The noun λειτουργός is closely connected in the Greco-Roman culture to the delivering of services to the people and has strong links to providing a religious service. In the Judeo-Christian heritage it is linked to providing services comparable to those provided by the priests in the temple in Jerusalem for the worshippers. Thus Paul through this label identifies Epaphroditus as providing genuine religious service on behalf of the Philippian church which met Paul’s very real needs (τῆς χρείας μου) while in Rome. Both these labels are intensely honorific and complementary of Epaphroditus.

Next Paul provides a couple of reasons for feeling a strong need to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi: ἐπειδὴ ἐπιποθῶν ἦν πάντας ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀδημονῶν, διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν, *since he has been longing for all of you and has been distressed*. The verb ἐπιποθέω, here in the present participle form of ἐπιποθῶν, denotes very intense longing for something, in its nine NT uses is overwhelmingly a Pauline word. What Paul indicates here is that Epaphroditus had a deep desire to return to Philippi. Nothing was problematic about his being in Rome

---

<sup>728</sup>“Coworker’ is one of Paul’s favorite terms for a fellow laborer. He uses it again in this letter for Euodia and Syntyche at 4:3 (and see Rom 16:3; 9:2; 2 Cor 1:24; 8:23; Philm 1, 24, and Rom 16:21 and 1 Thess 3:2 where it is used of Timothy). The term also occurs in Pauline enjoinders to ‘work together’ (1 Cor 16:16; 2 Cor 6:1).” [Harrington Daniel J., *Philippians and Philemon*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 10, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 102.]

<sup>729</sup>“**ARCHIPPUS** *är-kip’as* [GK. Archippos] (Col. 4:17; Philem. 2). Probably a member of Philemon’s family circle who held some official position in the church. He is addressed by Paul as ‘our fellow soldier’ (Philem. 2). The tradition that he was one of the seventy disciples, became bishop of Laodicea, and later became a martyr, seems to have little historical foundation.” [Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., “Archippus,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 284.]

with Paul, but Philippi was home and his trip to Rome had not been intended as severing ties with the believers back home in Philippi. To characterize the ἐπιποθία of Epaphroditus for Philippi as ‘homesickness’ is to mischaracterize his feelings (contra Hawthorne, WBC, p. 159). Other Greek expressions get at this English idiom more accurately.<sup>730</sup> The longing of Epaphroditus here imitates the same longing of Paul for the Philippians that he expressed in 1:8, μάρτυς γάρ μου ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, for God is my witness how I long for all of you in the compassion of Christ Jesus. The special verb construction here ἐπιποθῶν ἦν is labeled a periphrastic imperfect form of the verb and stresses continuous verbal action over an extended period of time that continues into present time. Thus the English translation “he has been longing.”

But this special verb construction extends to include ἀδημονῶν as well, and produces the resulting idea of “he has been longing and distressed.” The only other two uses of this verb ἀδημονέω inside the NT is in regard to the inner agitation that Jesus experienced in His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:37 // Mk. 14:33). In these two texts ἀδημονέω is linked either to λυπεῖσθαι, to be grieved (Mt. 26:37) or to ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, to be agitated (Mk. 14:33).



The [Via Egnatia](#) would have been the route from Philippi to Rome

The motivation for this inner turmoil in Epaphroditus is given by Paul as διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν, because you heard that he was ill (v. 26). One should read Paul’s words carefully so as to not misunderstand them. Epaphroditus wasn’t distressed because he had been sick. Even though in that first century world with exceedingly limited [medical services](#) for the vast majority of people, illness of most every kind posed severe danger and risk to one’s life. But Epaphroditus was concerned that the Philippians had received word of his illness in Rome

<sup>730</sup>See Louw-Nida lexicon, topics 25.1-32 for the numerous ways to depict various types and levels of desire.



and would thus have been unduly worried for his health. He was worried that they would be worrying about him! This reflects important insight into the character of Epaphroditus. We have no way of knowing how this message reached Philippi from Rome. But given the amount of continuous commercial activity taking place between the two cities, it is not difficult to image a message making its way to Philippi. Plus, since Philippi was a major military base of operations for the Roman army, constant traveling back and forth between members of the military would have been taking place as well.

Paul then amplifies on the situation in vv. 27-28.

First, *καὶ γὰρ ἤσθενησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτῳ· ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς ἠλέησεν αὐτόν, οὐκ αὐτὸν δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἵνα μὴ λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην σχῶ*, *for indeed he was ill almost to death, but God showed him mercy, and not only him but also me so that I might not have grief stacked upon grief*. Unfortunately Paul doesn't satisfy our curiosity about just what illness he had. Rather, it just indicates that it was a very serious illness that brought Epaphroditus close to dying. The adjective *παραπλήσιος*, -ία, -ιον means to get close to something or someone. Most likely this happened to him after his arrival in Rome from Philippi, although some slight possibility exists that he got sick during the trip to Rome.<sup>731</sup>

Paul indicates that God had mercy on both Epaphroditus and Paul by sparing him of death. Here we see reflected the standard early Christian view that all healing ultimately goes back to God Himself. The use of doctors and medical services was not avoided when available. But particularly for those of a Jewish background like Paul the tendency would have been to turn to God more than to doctors.<sup>732</sup> For Paul to have a seriously ill assistant under his responsibility in Rome was an additional burden that he really didn't need. And should Epaphroditus have died under his care, this would have put an enormous burden on the apostle that he vividly describes as *λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην*, *grief upon grief*. But here Paul is rejoicing that God spared Epaphroditus so that he recovered from his illness and could complete his mission to help Paul in Rome.

Second, in light of this experience with Epaphroditus' illness (*οὖν*), Paul indicates with another epistolary aorist verb form *ἔπεμψα* that he is sending Epaphroditus to the Philippians in order to relieve them of concern about this member of their congregation (v. 28): *σπουδαιότερως οὖν ἔπεμψα αὐτόν, ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτόν πάλιν χαρῆτε κάγῳ ἀλυπτότερος ᾶ*, *I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious*. Although *σπουδαίως* is often taken to mean 'hastily' the contextual meaning here is more closely connected to its base meaning of 'eagerly.' It stresses the sincerity of Paul's desire to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi, not that he was in a rush to get him going on the trip. Paul was primarily concerned that the Philippians not continue worrying about their representative because of no news on his condition. The interesting way of expressing this is with the comparative form of *ἄλυπος*, -ον which with the alpha privative means the opposite of *λύπη*. The literal meaning is "*none of more grief*" which is usually expressed more naturally in English as "*less anxious*." Knowing that the church in Philippi would *χαρῆτε*, *rejoice*, upon seeing Epaphroditus again (*ἰδόντες αὐτόν πάλιν*), would go a long way toward reducing Paul's anxiety. This is what motivated Paul to make plans for Epaphroditus to return to Philippi. To be certain, the apostle did not want to lose the valuable assistance of this trusted servant of Christ, but other concerns were more important at the moment.

Third, Paul then (*οὖν*) encourages the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus back home: 29 *προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτόν ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ τοὺς τοιούτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε*, 30 *ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισεν παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας*. 29 *Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people*, 30 *because he came close to death for the work of*

---

<sup>731</sup>Did Epaphroditus fall sick on the journey or only after he had reached the place where Paul was? The usual answer is that he became ill<sup>37</sup> after his arrival.<sup>38</sup> But it is at least possible that Epaphroditus was stricken on the way to Paul's place of imprisonment, and that he nearly died because of his determination to complete the journey and discharge the commission he had received.<sup>39</sup> suggests that if Epaphroditus was travelling west from Philippi to Rome on the Egnatian Way and became ill, then perhaps 'he was able to send a message back to them by someone travelling in the opposite direction'.<sup>40</sup> There is no indication that Paul had informed the Philippians of the illness in any prior correspondence.<sup>41</sup> And Epaphroditus would not need to have received a letter from his friends at Philippi to know that they were anxious over the state of his health.<sup>42</sup> So because of his distress Paul judged that the sooner Epaphroditus returned to Philippi, the better for him and his friends. He therefore sends him back, at the same time taking the responsibility himself for this speedy return.<sup>7</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 334–335.]

<sup>732</sup>One must not forget that doctors and medical services in the ancient middle east were easily the worst that existed in the Roman empire. And the reputation of Jewish medicine was one of the worst of any of the cultures in the eastern empire. If one served in the Roman military or in some other government office, he had access to the best medical services possible in that world that the government provided. Also this would be true for the very wealthy as well. Yet, the very best medical services in that world were the Egyptian but they were not widely practiced outside Eypgt. The Romans were heavily influenced by the Greeks and had shifted the emphasis mostly to preventative medicine more than prescriptive medicine.



Christ, *e risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me*. This lengthy sentence contains a main clause (v. 29) and a subordinate causal clause (v. 30) in the semantic structure of admonition with a reason. Their welcoming of Epaphroditus back home was not to take place in mere human terms of welcoming a beloved person back home. Instead, it was to be done ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς, *in the Lord with full joy*. Every believer who has had friends and even family members be away, especially on some religious mission, and then return home, knows what Paul is getting at here. There is always a special tone and meaning to a ‘welcome home’ celebration in such situations. It centers in rejoicing in the Lord for God’s blessings and goodness.

Additionally Paul’s admonition reaches beyond just welcoming Epaphroditus back home. It includes καὶ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε, *and show honor to all such individuals*. Paul over his ministry had traveled to many different cities preaching the Gospel. In the majority of them he was given ‘dishonor’ by the Jewish synagogue before being in each city for very long. But when he had returned back to Antioch after the first two missionary journeys, the church there showed him proper honor and recognition for his labors. That was important, not as an ego boost, but as an affirmation by others for doing the Lord’s work. When others recognize that God is working through your ministry, there comes tremendous encouragement and affirmation. Paul wanted this for Epaphroditus upon his return to Philippi. But others such as Timothy would also be visiting the church in behalf of Paul and the apostle sought a similar affirmation for them as well.

The fundamental basis for Paul’s admonition to the Philippian church to welcome Epaphroditus back home is the quality of his ministry to Christ in behalf of the church: ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισεν παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας, *because on the basis of the work of Christ he came near to death by risking his life so that he could complete the ministry that you could not for me*. Paul again provides a bit more insight into the illness of Epaphroditus by characterizing it as παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, *risking his life*.<sup>733</sup> The ancient gambling image in the background of παραβολεῖσθαι underscores that Epaphroditus ‘gambled with his life’ in order to complete the mission of getting the Philippians’ love offering to Paul in Rome. This is central to τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ, *the work of Christ*, mentioned here, and elaborated in 4:10-20. The additional insight gleaned here about the illness he suffered is that it was something contracted because of being in Rome. Had he not have made the trip, he would not have gotten sick with this illness. What Paul alludes to in the ἵνα clause is that Epaphroditus was able to complete (ἀναπληρώσῃ) what the Philippians could not do in person (τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα) as ministry to Paul (τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας). It expands somewhat the λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, *minister to my need*, in v. 25. And it anticipates the much larger explanation in 4:10-20. The central point made here in vv. 29-30 is that completing this ministry was the goal of Epaphroditus and he was so committed to it that he risked his life in the process.

What emerges here is a beautiful picture of a lesser known Christian servant inside the NT who exemplifies idealistic traits of devoted service to Christ through carrying out an assignment given him by his home congregation. The Philippian congregation could have hardly made a better choice than commissioning Epaphroditus to travel to Rome to present their love offering to the imprisoned apostle. He received acknowledgment for his devotion from Paul in this letter, but he does not stand as one of the well known Christian servants in early Christianity. Mentioned only twice in this letter, Epaphroditus is one of the largely unknown servants of Christ in that world. But when one considers him and several other similar individuals inside the NT, it becomes clear that the spread of the Gospel depended in the first century on such people as much as it did on the ‘stars’ such as the apostles. Such individuals were faithful day in and day out, usually in their home churches, for getting the work of the Gospel done. Often it was these people who were responsible for the spread of the Gospel into the neighboring towns and cities to where they lived. And they served faithfully, not for the praise of men but out of devotion to Christ and His people.

#### 8.1.4.5.3 Ministry to the Philippians from Rome, Phil. 4:1-3

4.1 Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου, οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ, ἀγαπητοί.

2 Εὐδοκίαν παρακαλῶ καὶ Συντύχην παρακαλῶ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ. 3 ναὶ ἐρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε, συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς, αἵτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθησαν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς.

4.1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in

<sup>733</sup>The use of ψυχῇ for life is entirely natural for the Greek. The ψυχή of a person is the very core life dynamic that is the center of a person’s being alive. The modern idea of ‘soul’ almost as a detached part of a person has no basis in the biblical understanding of the NT. The modern language of ‘get your soul saved’ is completely unbiblical and shares in common the heresy of second century Gnosticism which the NT condemns.

this way, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

All the way from Rome, the apostle sought to use his letter as a 'substitute presence' in order to help the church at Philippi resolve one of its problems. Contextually, 4:1 brings to a climax the discussion in 3:17-21 with a concluding exhortation to the church at Philippi to stand firm in their commitment to Christ.

In this conclusion statement of 4:1, we see again the heart of Paul in his love for the Philippians. He calls them ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, *my brothers beloved and longed for*.<sup>734</sup> They are objects of both his and God's love as ἀγαπητοὶ and he asserts this both here and in 2:12. Note also how he repeats this at the end of the sentence signaling that his other terms of endearment are wrapped inside ἀγαπητοὶ. And also they are ἐπιπόθητοι, *longed for*. Although the adjective ἐπιπόθητος, -ον is only used here in the entire NT, Paul uses the verb form ἐπιποθέω in 1:8 and 2:26 to express his deep longing ἰδεῖν, *to see*, the Philippians once again. Being in Rome and unable to travel to Philippi at that time only served to intensify his feelings for the congregation there. Both of these adjectives are attached to the noun of endearment ἀδελφοί, brothers, which he uses seven times in this short letter: 1:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8, 21.

He also calls them χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου, *my joy and crown*. The theme of χαρὰ, *joy*, is significant to the entire letter with five uses of the noun strategically placed throughout the letter. Combine this with the verb χαίρω in its five uses throughout the letter and this theme plays an important role. Both the noun χαρὰ and the verb χαίρω stress more the English language idea of gladness. Inside the NT, χαρὰ is never a shallow emotional feeling. Instead it is a sense of well being deep inside the person.<sup>735</sup> It touches emotions but is not to be equated with them. For Paul the spirituality of the Philippian community of believers gave him the most profound sense of gladness that his work had indeed accomplished something of eternal value. He took special delight in this congregation. He also speaks of them as his στέφανός μου, *my crown*. The στέφανός was the victory wreath given to victorious athletes at the Olympic games as a symbol of successful winning of one of the games. It was not the

<sup>734</sup>But before the apostle begins his commands, he first commends. He does so with an extraordinary, long series of appellatives designed to express powerfully to the Philippians his feeling of closeness to them and his great affection for them: (1) ἀδελφοί, lit. 'brothers' (cf. also Phil 1:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:8, 21 — a feature in Hellenistic letters of friendship), reminds them that they and he belong to the same divine family and hold equal status in relation to God as Father (see Comment on 1:12). (2) ἀγαπητοί, lit. 'beloved,' is a verbal adjective with passive force (BDF §112), and appearing in this context twice over, it focuses attention on the Philippians as the object of Paul's love. It is his humble way of saying 'I love you,' but it is not less powerful for being so humbly expressed. (3) ἐπιπόθητοι, lit. 'longed for,' like ἀγαπητοί, 'beloved,' is also a verbal adjective with passive force, but unlike ἀγαπητοί, 'beloved,' this word occurs nowhere else in the NT. Its rarity perhaps adds intensity to the emotion of 'homesick tenderness,' especially to the pain of separation that Paul feels and expresses here (cf. 1:8 where Paul uses the cognate verb ἐπιποθεῖν, 'to long for,' and see the Comment there; cf. also 2:26). (4) χαρὰ, 'joy,' is a word that belongs to the special vocabulary of Philippians (1:4, 25; 2:2; cf. also 1:18; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:7; 4:4, 10) and gives expression to a fundamental Christian emotion. But what is worth noting here is that the Philippians are Paul's joy, which is a striking way of saying that they are his source or cause of joy. People, not things—these friends, his children in the faith, even with all their failings — are what stimulate within him this great gladness. (5) στέφανος, 'crown,' as Paul uses it here, is not to be thought of as the diadem (διάδημα) worn by a king (cf. Rev 19:12; and see Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 315) or the martyr's crown (Lohmeyer), but as either the garland placed on the head of a guest at a banquet (Aristophanes, *Ach.* 636; Plato, *Symp.* 212; see Vincent) or a victor's wreath presented by the judges to the winner in the Olympian games (Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 104–6), or both at the same time. With this single word, then, Paul may be reinforcing the idea that the Philippians are a cause for his festal-like joy, on the one hand, and informing them that they are also a source of great honor for him, on the other. There is no need to push this idea of "crowning" exclusively into the eschatological period, as though the continued fidelity of the Philippian church would only then result in a reward, a crown, being given Paul for the success of his pastoral work (Collange; Martin [1976]; W. Grundmann, *TDNT* 7:615–36; Bockmuehl, 237, who notes the eschatological setting in 1 Thess 2:19, another Macedonian congregation, and that the connective ὥστε, 'well, then,' links with 3:20–21 and places the greeting in the frame of the future). The Philippians already are a cause of Paul's boasting and honor. They are his crown. Yet, like the Corinthians, who are both called 'saints' (1 Cor 1:2) and in serious danger of falling short of this calling, Paul's people are in constant need of both praise and blame." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 239–240.]

<sup>735</sup>Note the wide range of words inside the NT built off the root stem: χαίρω, χαρὰ, συγχαίρω, χάρις, χαρίζομαι, χαριτώω, ἀχάριστος, χάρισμα, εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:359]. The full range of diversified terms in the NT is seen in the listing of the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon in topics 25.116–25.134.

In the Greek philosophical background χαρὰ is a product of reflection and acquiring knowledge. Emotional expressions of χαρὰ were frowned upon because the primary enemy of understanding was θυμός, *desire*. Desire for pleasure, for example, was the ruin of a virtuous life and thus of a successful, productive life. θυμός had a penchant for controlling a person and thus would ruin his thinking and thus his life. Philosophers -- both Greek and Roman -- often pointed to the 'barbarians' as examples and proof of their teaching.

crown worn in the middle east by monarchs as a symbol of their power and authority. In his letters Paul will speak of both the Philippians and the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:19) as his στέφανός. By this he meant his success in helping these churches come into being, grow, and also thrive in the Gospel. He saw in them the victory of the Gospel that he proclaimed.

All of these terms of endearment toward the Philippians surround his simple admonition οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ, [thusly be standing in the Lord](#). The antecedent of the adverb of manner οὕτως reaches back in particular to the previous discussion in 3:17-21 and extends to the larger discussion in 3:1b-16 of his personal approach to the Christian life as a model for the Philippians. Christianity, in Paul's view, is a 'commonwealth,' τὸ πολίτευμα, where every believer in the local congregations is to live by high religious and ethical standards. All the while the individual believer looks forward to the glorious day of transformation when we take up permanent residence in our heavenly home, which is the ultimate τὸ πολίτευμα. Thus the emphasis here is on taking a stand, as either the soldier standing firm at a duty post or as athletic runners racing unwaveringly toward the goal post.<sup>736</sup>

Thus implicit in such a stance is the overcoming of all differences and tensions with one another inside the community of believers. This Paul addresses in vv. 2-3. The introductory statement in v. 2 sets up the situation: Εὐοδίαν παρακαλῶ καὶ Συντύχην παρακαλῶ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ, [Euodia I urge and Syntyche I urge to be like minded in the Lord](#). Clearly by the gender of both nouns these are two women in the church at Philippi with some kind of quarrel going on between them. That they were women is further confirmed by the use of feminine gender pronouns in reference to them, αὐταῖς, αἴτινες, in v. 3.<sup>737</sup>

Our dilemma is in not knowing much about the circumstance that Paul alludes to and which needs repairing.<sup>738</sup> Paul is some distance away in Rome but feels that his friendship with both ladies can be useful in helping them solve whatever tensions existed between them. And also he implores others in the church to also become involved in the healing process. There are some lessons to be learned here in solving conflicts in church life.

Let's examine the few details given by Paul in order to see what direction they point to regarding the problem. His encouragement to both is framed with παρακαλῶ set up in parallel manner of direct object + verb. Although παρακαλῶ is a commonly used Pauline verb, it is only used in Philippians here. It expresses the urging of a friend, not the commands of a boss. Paul did not assume any ecclesiastical authority over them.

The content of his urging is summed up in the infinitive phrase object τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ. The key here is φρονεῖν from φρονέω with the basic meaning of possessing an opinion about some issue or point. The verb is common in Philippians: 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2, 10. Plus the phrase τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν shows up in 2:2, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονήτε, which is clearly defined in 2:2b-4 as τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονούντες,

<sup>736c</sup>Now, after so powerfully expressing his affection for them, Paul asks the Philippians to stand firm. By this word, στήκετε, "stand firm," he describes them as soldiers (Krentz, "Military Language") who are to stand at their post irrespective of the pressures to abandon it (cf. Phil 1:16) or as runners who must adhere without deviation to the course marked out by the gospel. With it he calls upon them to live thoroughly Christian lives (cf. 1:27)." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 240.]

<sup>737c</sup>The names appear quite frequently in inscriptions, always in the feminine form (BDAG), and Paul refers to them in v 3 with feminine forms of the pronouns, αὐταῖς, 'them [fem.],' and αἴτινες, 'who [fem.].' There are thus no grounds for taking one or both of these names as names of men, as did Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. A.D. 350–428). He claimed to have heard that Syntyche should be spelled Syntyches, a man's name, and that Syntyches was in fact the Philippian jailer of Acts 16, the husband of Euodia. But this is an admitted rumor and is totally without support in fact (Michael, Vincent). Nor is there any support for the fanciful view of the Tübingen School that saw Euodia and Syntyche not as two individuals but as symbols for the Jewish Christians, on the one hand, and the Gentile Christians, on the other, and the σύζυγε, 'yokefellow,' of v 3 (Syzygos = 'the Unifier') as the apostle Peter, who was charged with mediating between these two factions within the church and with bringing them together (cf. Barth)." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 241.]

<sup>738c</sup>According to the accounts in the book of Acts women played a notable role in the founding of the Macedonian churches (16:14, 40; 17:4, 12); the initial evangelism at Philippi refers to the transformation the gospel made to the lives of two women: Lydia and the slave girl.<sup>11</sup> Several recent scholars<sup>12</sup> have argued that when the apostle had earlier called upon the congregation to take a united stand against opponents (1:27–30) and to demonstrate unity through humility (2:1–4), he had this concrete dispute between Euodia and Syntyche before his eyes. Going a step further, D. E. Garland claims that up to this point Paul had covertly addressed 'the dissension that had sundered the unity of the church'. Now he brings the issues out into the open, and with an impassioned summons he seeks to 'defuse the dispute between these two women that was having disastrous repercussions for the unity of the church'.<sup>13</sup> But this seems to infer too much. That the letter was meant to be read to the church suggests that the disagreement was serious enough. But it is by no means clear that the dispute was as widespread as Garland and others suggest. Since only two members are singled out by name, this personal discord may have been exceptional in the congregation.<sup>14</sup> Certainly Paul considers the church mature enough to receive his admonition, while his warm and encouraging remarks about the readers elsewhere in the letter do not seem to fit this reconstruction.<sup>15</sup>" [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 478–479.]



3 μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἠγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, 4 μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καί] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι. possessing a common love, being like 'souled,' focused on one central thing, not possessing selfish strife nor big headedness but in humility considered one another as being a higher priority than oneself, not looking after one's own affairs but each one focused on the situations of others. Paul then points in vv. 5-11 as the model with the admonition Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, set your focus on this: what was the focus of Christ Jesus. He comes back in 3:15 to repeat the emphasis Ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν· καὶ εἴ τι ἐτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει, Therefore as many as are mature believers, set you minds on this; and if anyone is otherwise minded God will also reveal this to you. The τοῦτο which Paul is talking about goes back to 3:2-14 with the focus being on v. 12: Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ], not as that I had already received everything or was already complete, but I press on if I can lay hold of that for which I have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. From just this background of Paul's similar language elsewhere in this letter, the picture emerges of these two women having lost their focus on Christ and on His church. Whatever it was that they each were advocating came out of a selfish concern rather than out of genuine good for the church and out of their devotion to Christ. It is doubtful that such went to the extremes of Paul's use of this same language in 3:19, ὣν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὣν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, **οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες**, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, **these who are setting their minds on earthly things**. Here he describes false teachers, who although inside the church officially are non-believers doomed for eternal damnation. No hint whatsoever is given that these two women in the church were connected to the false teachers.

To the contrary, Paul uses several endearing terms in reference to them. αἰτίνες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησάν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, ὣν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς, who have struggled with me in the Gospel, and also along with Clement and the rest are co-workers with me, whose names are in the book of life.<sup>739</sup> The language here clearly points to leadership roles in the church for these two women. But this should not be surprising since the church at Philippi was formed out of a group of women under the leadership of Lydia (cf. Acts 16:11-40).<sup>740</sup> Perhaps they were house church leaders either of two separate groups or else shared leadership of a single group. At some point they adopted a differing mind-set over some issue and broke fellowship with each other. When Paul was at the church on the various visits in past days, he worked readily with the two ladies and Clement and others for the advancement of the Gospel in the city.<sup>741</sup> They were faithful and consistent (συνήθλησάν μοι) in such work, and thus Paul came to hold them in high regard. The sincerity of their faith commitment to Christ is not in doubt at all, as ὣν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς asserts.

In referencing this situation Paul appeals to another individual in the church to intervene to help them: καὶ

---

<sup>739</sup>Notice the similar language again in **1:27-30**. 27 Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε, ἵνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε ἀπὼν ἀκούω τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθροῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου 28 καὶ μὴ πτυρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων, ἧτις ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἔνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ· 29 ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεῦειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν, 30 τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, οἷον εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί.

27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well — 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

<sup>740</sup>“We do not know who Euodia and Syntyche were. Clearly they were women leaders in the church in Philippi, a church that was founded among women (see Acts 16) and that, historically, had prominent women leaders. (See the section on women in Philippi in the Introduction, and Tarn's Hellenistic Civilization.) The meaning of their names is intriguing. ‘Euodia’ means ‘good journey’ or ‘pleasant.’ (Some have made the omicron an omega, euōdia, and thus ‘sweet smelling’ as per 4:18.) ‘Syntyche’ has as its root *tychē*, Greek for the Latin Fortuna, the goddess of good luck. The name (like that of Epaphroditus) may mean its bearer was formerly a pagan. The prefix *syn* meaning ‘with’ implies unity (see the Note on 3:3). Both are attested names. By repeating the verb with each name Paul gives the women equal prominence, declining to take sides linguistically in their disagreement, and thus intensifies his entreaty.” [Harrington Daniel J., *Philippians and Philemon*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 10, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 140.]

<sup>741</sup>“μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου. ‘Together with Clement and my other fellow workers’. This phrase should be joined to συνήθλησάν μοι (‘contended with me’),<sup>33</sup> not συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς (‘help them’).<sup>34</sup> ‘Clement’ is otherwise unknown to us. His name is Latin, and he may well have been a Philippian Christian who was well known within the church, since Paul does not need to identify him.<sup>35</sup> As Paul remembers Euodia, Syntyche, and Clement, he is reminded of other συνεργοί (‘coworkers’), perhaps too many to name, who laboured with him in the cause of the gospel. They may have been Philippian Christians, but their identity is also unknown to us.” [Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 482.]

ἔρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε, συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς, *Yes and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women.* Who was this person?<sup>742</sup> He is addressed as γνήσιε σύζυγε. Is this a personal name? Or, more likely, a character trait? Clearly γνήσιε is an adjective from γνήσιος, -α, -ον with the meaning of being a true member of the spiritual family at Philippi. What is less certain is whether σύζυγε from σύζυγος, -ov is a proper name or just a adjective character trait reference.<sup>743</sup> Probably it had a similar meaning as the Latin *commilito*, *fellow soldier*, and was a term of flattery. Thus the translation of ‘*true comrade*’ is often suggested as the best rendering of the term. In light the almost endless and largely useless speculation about the identity of this person, it seems more likely to me that Paul here addresses an unnamed leader over the entire congregation whose ‘nickname’ of σύζυγε would have been recognized by the entire congregation as the letter was read in the various house church groups over the city. The important aspect is that Paul sees this leader as being capable of intervening in the situation of the two women and thus helping them to resolve their problems. Perhaps Epaphroditus had described the situation to Paul upon arrive in Rome and had indicated some hesitancy by this leader to get involved in the quarrel between the two women. Now Paul urges him to function as a spiritual leader in helping resolve their problem.

What can we learn from this episode? Several points stand out in my mind. First, Paul had to deal with church problems long distance and this was far from ideal. He felt that his strong relationship with these two women provided a foundation to appeal to them to resolve their problems. But he affirms them in numerous positive ways as sincere Christian leaders and does not castigate their character in any way. Whatever their problem, it had nothing to do with their character nor their zeal in commitment to Christ.

But Paul also realized that he could not provide them with the spiritual help they needed from so far away as Rome. Thus he appeals to one of the general leaders of the congregation to intervene personally in helping them. He graciously does not put the leader on the spot by naming him directly, but by this probably ‘nickname’ reference as γνήσιε σύζυγε, this leader would know that Paul was talking to him. But mention of Clement and others brought to mind with the reading of this letter to the congregation other leaders who could help resolve the problem as well.

*How can tensions inside a modern church be resolved?* The relevance of this episode at Philippi provides some clues. For one thing, the modern tension should not be an issue of character or of theological soundness

<sup>742</sup>Paul was a realist. He understood how difficult it would be for Euodia and Syntyche to reach agreement on their own. Hence he solicits the help of a third party, whom he addresses simply as γνήσιε σύζυγε, ‘true yokefellow’ (RSV). But who was this mysterious person, and why did Paul suddenly address a single individual in a letter otherwise addressed to a whole church (Phil 1:1)? These questions have given rise to almost endless and sometimes absurd answers: (1) Paul’s wife (Clement of Alexandria), who Renan (Saint Paul, 148) conjectured was Lydia; (2) the husband or brother of Euodia or Syntyche (Chrysostom); (3) Epaphroditus (Lightfoot); (4) Timothy, of whom it was said that he γνήσιως, ‘genuinely’ (2:20), cared for the Philippians (Collange); (5) Silas (G. Dellinger, TDNT 7:749–50); (6) Luke (Manson, BJRL 23 [1939] 199; Hájek, CV 7 [1964] 261–62; Fee [1995], 393–94); (7) the chief bishop at Philippi (Ellicott); (8) Christ, with the *vaí*, ‘yes,’ introducing a prayer to the one who joins people together (Wieseler, Chronologie); or (9) a person named Σύζυγος, ‘Syzygos’ (Michael, J. J. Müller; cf. JB: ‘I ask you, Syzygus, to be truly a ‘companion’ ’). See the discussion in Bockmuehl (241). But the simplest, and perhaps the best, answer is to say that Paul sees the entire Philippian church as a unit, as a single individual, who shares with him the burden of his apostolic work, and he addresses them so (Fee [1995], 393–94, however, challenges this, stressing the singular vocative form of the term). He sees the Philippian church yoked together with him as two oxen teamed up to accomplish an important task (Houlden). Paul places subtle, though nonetheless powerful, stress on the importance of community effort by using five words compounded with the preposition σύν, ‘with,’ within the space of two verses (vv 2–3). Thus he asks (ἔρωτῶ, ‘I ask’) them to cooperate with him now by resisting division and by effectively working to restore harmony.” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 241–242.]

<sup>743</sup>σύζυγος, *ov* (Sappho, Fgm. 213 [L-P.]; Aeschyl. et al.; Ezk 23:21 Aq.). The corresp. subst. *σύζυγος, ου, ó* has not yet been found as a proper name (AFick2/FBechtel, Die griech. Personennamen 1894, 132), but only as a compound common noun (=‘brother’ Eur., Tro. 1001;=‘comrade, companion’ Eur., Iph. T. 250; Aristoph., Plut. 945; Anth. 8, 145; Magnet. Graffiti ed. Kern 321; 328 [I.A.D.] σύζυγοι Βαίβιος Κάλλιπος; Herm. Wr. 6, 1b. In the same sense as Lat. *commilito* [‘fellow-soldier’], a term of flattery used by Julius Caesar and the emperors, and perh. esp. evocative in its Gk. equivalent in a letter addressed to residents of a Rom. colony. The Gk. term is also used of gladiators, each one of whom is his opponent’s σύζυγος: RHerzog, Koische Forschungen u. Funde 1899 no. 133; CIG 4175; Kaibel 318, 2.—Thieme 32) γνήσιε σύζυγε *true comrade*, lit. ‘yoke-fellow’ **Phil 4:3**. It is no longer possible to determine w. certainty just whom the apostle has in mind (MDibelius; FTillmann.—Epaphroditus has been conjectured by some fr. Victorinus to Lghtf. and Zahn. JJeremias, NT Essays [TWManson mem. vol.] ’59, 136–43, esp. 140 [Silas]). Since ἡ σύζυγος=‘wife’ (Eur., Alc. 314; 342; Anth. 8, 161, 6; 164, 2; Syntipas p. 16, 9; 18, 6; Test Reub 4:1), some have thought that Paul’s wife is meant (since Clem. Alex., Strom. 3, 53, 1; Origen, Comm. in Ep. ad **Rom. 1, 1**). Lohmeyer considers it to mean a ‘brother in suffering’ who is sharing Paul’s imprisonment. Finally, the idea that σ. is a proper name has received considerable support (RLipsius, EHaupt, PEwald, KBarth et al. W-H. mg.).—DELG s.v. ζεύγνυμι IV. M-M. s.v. σύνζυγος. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 954.]

of either individual involved. It should revolve around honest differences over other kinds of issues that arise in modern church life. In such a scenario one has a similar situation comparable to this one at Philippi. Once that is established this text provides some very helpful guidelines. The basing of admonitions grows out of solid friendships and relationships with the parties involved. Paul knew both ladies. Also ultimate solution must be a ‘hands on’ matter by the local leaders in the church. Outsiders who are well known and respected can help, but the local church leaders must assume a leadership role in helping resolve problems. Finally, the solutions must grow out of respect for the integrity of the parties involved. And they should come at the problem from the same neutral stance reflected in Paul’s words to the Philippian individuals. In such an approach, the Holy Spirit has a much better opportunity to lead everyone to the τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ that he encouraged Euodia and Syntyche to adopt.

#### 8.1.4.5.4 Acknowledgement of the Philippians’ support, Phil. 4:10-20

10 Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ’ ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε, ἡκαιρεῖσθε δέ. 11 οὐχ ὅτι καθ’ ὑστέρησιν λέγω, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι. 12 οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν· ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι, καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι· 13 πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με. 14 πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει. 15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖσι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρείαν μοι ἐπέμψατε. 17 οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλ’ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν. 18 ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω· πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτου τὰ παρ’ ὑμῶν, ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ. 19 ὁ δὲ θεὸς μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 20 τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. 11 Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me. 14 In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress. 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. 18 I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The final glimpse into Paul’s experience during the two years at Rome is provided by this description of the love offering contribution sent to Paul in Rome by the church at Philippi. Some modern scholars, thinking in twentieth century terms rather than first century terms, see this ‘thank you note’ in vv. 10-20 almost as a post-script to the letter. A few propose that it was sent immediately as a separate note and then later attached to the letter. But absolutely no text variations even hint at such. Thus no legitimate evidence to support such a conjecture can be brought to bear. Consequently such a view should be completely rejected! The demonstrated close connection between 4:10-20 and 1:1:3-5ff. establishes this as an integral part of the letter.<sup>744</sup>

Paul begins with a rather common topical sentence in v. 10: Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ’ ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε, ἡκαιρεῖσθε δέ, I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. The main clause Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως asserts Paul’s gladness. The aorist passive voice Ἐχάρην, contrary to some modern commentators who take this as an epistolary aorist,<sup>745</sup> is the simply constative aorist of past time that

<sup>744c</sup>At the very end of the epistle Paul finally concludes the ‘thank you note’ he apparently began as early as 1:3–5, which some commentators think is the primary reason for the letter. Paul acknowledges the gift brought by Epaphroditus (2:25–30). Several scholars have noted many parallels between 1:3–11 and 4:10–20 (see, for example, Gerald W. Peterman, Paul’s Gift from Philippi) and suggest the two passages form an inclusion around the body of the letter. But it is an odd ‘thank you’ insofar as the words are never explicitly spoken, although gratitude is implied at both 1:3–7 and 2:25 (a very different interpretation of this passage from the one suggested here is given by Jerome Murphy-O’Connor in Paul: A Critical Life).” [Harrington Daniel J., *Philippians and Philemon*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 10, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 156.]

<sup>745c</sup>A great number of translators, however, take the verb as a so-called ‘epistolary aorist.’ The apostle experiences the joy as he writes, but it will be something in the past by the time the letter is read by the believers in Philippi. In English such a verb is rendered in the present tense (NEB JB ‘it is a great joy to me’; Bruce ‘it gives me great joy’). The verb ‘I rejoice’ and the adverb ‘greatly’ occur in an emphatic position in the Greek text. To bring out the proper force of this clause, it is possible to restructure it as an exclamatory



points to the arrival of Epaphroditus at Rome with both news and the love offering of the Philippians. The use of the passive voice rather than the active voice points to the occasion of his arrival as the motivation for Paul's gladness. The modifying phrase ἐν κυρίῳ locates the basis and context of Paul's gladness.<sup>746</sup> It is a spiritually based gladness that is expressed and enjoyed in the context of spiritual union with Christ. The adverb μέγਾਲως reflects both manner and degree. Only found here in the entire NT, μέγਾਲως denotes an intense level of gladness that Epaphroditus' arrival in Rome brought to Paul.

What I find very interesting is how Paul frames the ὅτι clause subject of the verb Ἐχάρην. He doesn't mention the size of the offering, as would tend to be our response. Rather his gladness centers on ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλατε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε, ἡκαιρεῖσθε δέ, now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. The adverb ἤδη marks the completion of the past tense verb action in present time.<sup>747</sup> How long that completion required is marked by ποτὲ as being some period of time. Most likely Paul is noting that the Philippians had not had opportunity to help him since the time of his being in the church at the end of the third missionary journey in about 57 AD (cf. Acts 20:6) and now it was somewhere around 61 AD. The verb / object combination ἀνεθάλατε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ φρονεῖν can be translated a variety of ways.<sup>748</sup> The agricultural background of ἀναθάλλω meaning to sprout out new buds lends picturesque meaning here to Paul's statement. Their τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ φρονεῖν sprouted out like new buds in the springtime.

But what was τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ φρονεῖν? Literally it says "the thing in my behalf to mind." The use of φρονέω continues the frequent use of this verb throughout the letter: 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2, 10. The core idea is to set one's mind on something in a focused expression of some sort. From the context the τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ that the Philippians focused on was to help Paul in a time of need in his ministry. This focused attention on Paul took the form of a love offering as the context makes clear.

In the highly abbreviated statement that follows, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε, ἡκαιρεῖσθε δέ, Paul amplifies his initial statement to indicate that this was not the first time such assistance had been given to him by the Philippians: ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε. Their focused attention on Paul had continued unbroken since the founding of the church on the second missionary journey well over a decade before. But for an unspecified period of time, ἤδη ποτὲ, they

---

statement, 'How great is the joy I have ...'." [I-Jin Loh and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 138.]

<sup>746</sup>Thus Chr., οὐ κοσμικῶς ἐχάρην, φησὶν, οὐδὲ βιωτικῶς: "I rejoice, he says, not in a worldly fashion, nor as over a matter of common life." [[Marvin Richardson Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 142.]

<sup>747</sup>Ἡδη marks a present as related to a past during which something has been in process of completion which is now completed, or something has been expected which is now realised. Ποτὲ indicates indefinitely the interval of delay. With ἤδη the writer puts himself at the point where the interval indicated by ποτὲ terminates.

Others, as Weiss, render 'already once'; which would be a mere reference to something past and now repeated. This is precluded by the connection, and especially by the latter part of vs. 10.

[Marvin Richardson Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 142.

<sup>748</sup>You once more had the chance of showing translates a single verb in Greek, rendered in a number of translations as 'revived.' This is a rare word, appearing only here in the New Testament. It suggests the picture of a bush or tree putting out fresh shoots or flowers in the springtime. This imagery is kept in some translations (NEB 'has now blossomed afresh'; Brc 'has flowered again'; NAB 'bore fruit once more'). You once more had the chance may be appropriately expressed in a number of languages as 'it was once more possible for you,' 'you once more had the opportunity,' or even 'you once more could.'

"That you care for me is an infinitive phrase in Greek. It can be taken as an accusative of reference, meaning 'you revived regarding the thinking for me,' but it is probably best taken as an accusative governed by the verb 'you revived,' meaning 'you revived your thinking for me.' The word care (literally, 'think') is again (as in 1:7) to be taken in the positive sense of 'concern' or 'active interest' (Phps 'interest in my welfare'). The chance of showing that you care for me may be expressed as 'the possibility of showing me how much you care for me,' '... how much you are concerned about me,' or even '... how much you want to help me'."

"In order to avoid any hint of blame, Paul adds some words of explanation—literally, 'on which indeed you were thinking.' It is probably permissible to take 'on which' to mean 'for' with an explanatory force, but it is perhaps better to take it in the sense of 'with regard to which.' The antecedent would be the infinitive phrase immediately preceding, namely, 'your thinking for me.' The imperfect tense of the verb suggests that it has the force of 'all along' or 'all the time.' The clause can be rendered as 'you have indeed thought much about me all the time' (GeCL). Since this is an added explanation to avoid misunderstanding, one can bring the sense out explicitly as 'I mean ...' or 'I know ...' (cf. Bruce Brc) One can also turn the positive statement into a negative one, I don't mean that you had stopped caring for me (cf. Phps 'I don't mean that you had forgotten me.') I don't mean may be appropriately rendered in some languages as 'my words do not mean,' or 'do not let my words cause you to think'."

[I-Jin Loh and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 139.]

did not have opportunity to demonstrate that focused attention in a tangible manner until now: ἠκαιρέισθε δέ. For Paul it wasn't the finances they provided him that mattered. Rather it was what the finances represented: a genuine interest in the welfare and ministry of the apostle.

Here Paul sets a high standard for us in our church giving today. Why we give is more important than what we give! Both have importance but the motivation behind giving is the more important issue. The opportunity for God to bless giving rests on motivation and not on amounts given.

In verse eleven Paul begins an amplification of his foundational statement in verse ten. This moves in several points. 1) vv. 11-13, Paul's own personal sense of adequacy; 2) vv. 14-16, thankfulness to the Philippians; 3) vv. 17-20, the spiritual benefit of giving.

**Person adequacy, vv. 11-13.** Out of Paul's training as a Pharisee to be "by-vocational" in ministry,<sup>749</sup> his first priority was to support himself in ministry without being dependent upon others.<sup>750</sup> But when help was offered the apostle did not refuse it, but rather graciously accepted it as an expression of blessing from God. The sense of full reliance upon God is the central point being emphasized in these verses here.

Verse eleven begins with a personal rejection of 'begging for money' by Paul: οὐχ ὅτι καθ' ὑστέρησιν λέγω, **not that I speak out of necessity.** That Paul could use the financial support from the Philippians is without question, but he never asked the Philippians for their support financially.<sup>751</sup> The basis for Paul's assertion is ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι, **for I have learned to be content in the things I am.** When it came to physical needs of food, clothes etc. the apostle indicates that he had discovered that αὐτάρκεια (the source of the adjective αὐτάρκης), contentment, was the best response.

The fluctuations of life are affirmed in verse twelve: οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν, **I know**

---

<sup>749</sup>Though some Pharisees were part of the governing class, most Pharisees were subordinate officials, bureaucrats, judges, and educators. They are best understood as retainers, that is, literate servants of the governing class, who had a program for Jewish society and influence with both the people and their patrons. When the opportunity arose, they sought power over society. This means that their organizations cannot be viewed as a monastic-like community or withdrawn sect which demands primary and total commitment from every member. It is most likely that Pharisees were active in a number of occupations and roles in society and were bound together by certain beliefs and practices and by endeavors to influence social change." [Anthony J. Saldarini, "Pharisees," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 302.]

<sup>750</sup>**1 Cor. 9:3-7, 15-18.** 3 Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν ἐστὶν αὕτη. 4 μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν; 5 μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς; 6 ἢ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι; 7 Τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίοις ὀψωνίοις ποτέ; τίς φυτεύει ἀμπελῶνα καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει; ἢ τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην καὶ ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποίμνης οὐκ ἐσθίει;

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 Do we not have the right to our food and drink? 5 Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? 7 Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk?

15 Ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων. Οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί· καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ — τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει. 16 ἂν γὰρ εὐαγγελίζωμαι, οὐκ ἐστὶν μοι καύχημα· ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται· οὐαὶ γάρ μοι ἐστὶν ἂν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι. 17 εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω, μισθὸν ἔχω· εἰ δὲ ἄκων, οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι· 18 τίς οὖν μου ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός; ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θῆσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that — no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! 16 If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

<sup>751</sup>But having praised the Philippians to this extent, Paul immediately begins a disclaimer. As Beet (Expositor, 3d ser., 10 [1889] 174–89) translates: 'my gratitude is not a beggar's thanks for charity' (cited by Jones, 72). οὐχ ὅτι, 'not that,' with which this sentence begins, is a distinctively NT expression. It usually appears without a verb of 'saying,' which must be supplied by the reader (cf. John 6:46; 7:22; 2 Cor 1:24; 3:5; 2 Thess 3:9), but Paul chooses to include it here (λέγω, 'I am saying'; cf. BDF §480[5]). The prepositional phrase καθ' ὑστέρησιν, lit. 'in accordance with need,' merges the idea of norm or standard with that of reason (cf. Rom 2:7; 8:28; 11:5; 16:26; cf. Eph 1:11; 3:3; 1 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:3), and thus is more properly to be translated 'because of any need I had' (BDAG, κατά, II.5δ). The noun ὑστέρησις is another of those rare words that show up regularly in this carefully phrased section. Used only here and in Mark 12:44, it denotes 'need, lack, or poverty.' Thus, Paul is making very clear that his joy at the gift from the Philippians was not on account of his being in dire straits at the time it arrived (apparently he either did not need or did not want their money), but because he saw in this act of generosity a truly Christian deed of sacrificial self-giving love (cf. 2 Cor 8:5). He says in effect, 'I am glad that you assisted me, yes, but I do not say this because I lacked anything or needed your help.' How is it that Paul was able to say this? Was it because he had become heir to family property that enabled him to pay all his expenses, including those involved in a costly appeal to Caesar, and thus had no need for outside assistance (cf. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, 310–13)? Possibly, but that is not the answer that he himself gives." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 263.]

both to be humbled and I know also to abound. The ends of this spectrum are not poverty and riches, but inadequate provisions<sup>752</sup> and abundant provisions for our basic physical needs. Over the years of missionary service Paul had learned contentment in every circumstance. The second part of v. 12 defines these boundary limits: ἐν παντί καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι, καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι, in any and in every thing I have discovered the secret of eating plenty and of being hungry and of having abundance and of being in need.

What Paul describes up to this point is reflected with a lot of the same terminology in Stoic philosophy of the first Christian century.<sup>753</sup> In that philosophical system one of the greatest virtues a person could possess was αὐτάρκεια no matter what his lot in life was. Of course their focus tended to be that one's station in life fell somewhere between these extremes and remained constant throughout his life. Did Paul borrow their terminology and thinking here? Probably not, because the basis of his αὐτάρκεια is utterly different than that asserted in Stoicism.<sup>754</sup> His sense of contentment came from God through Christ: πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με, I am strong for all things in the One who has empowered me. Note that πάντα, all things, is by the context of v. 12 defined ταπεινοῦσθαι, to be humbled, καὶ περισσεύειν, and to abound. This is then further defined as eating well, χορτάζεσθαι / being hungry, πεινᾶν; then by abounding, περισσεύειν, and being in need, ὑστερεῖσθαι.<sup>755</sup> The achieving of αὐτάρκεια in Stoicism was through disciplined training and self control. But Paul's αὐτάρκεια was grounded in Christ and out of his relationship with the resurrected Christ came his αὐτάρκεια.

**Thankfulness, vv. 14-16.** In verse 14, perhaps to be taken as a climax to vv. 10-13, but also as setting up the next emphasis in vv. 15-16, Paul says his "Thank You" to the Philippians for their contribution to his ministry: πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει, Nevertheless, you did well in having partnered with me in this affliction. The contrastive particle πλὴν underscores that, in spite of his contentment (vv. 11-13), he is very appreciative of what the Philippians have done for him. It returns the focus back to the theme in v. 10 of him rejoicing at the arrival in Rome of the offering from Philippi. With the idiom καλῶς ἐποιήσατε, Paul generously expresses his appreciation to them for their give.<sup>756</sup> He describes his current situation in Roma as τῇ θλίψει, an

<sup>752</sup>E.g., **1 Cor. 4:11-12a**, 11 ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινώμεν καὶ διψῶμεν καὶ γυμνιτεύομεν καὶ κολαφιζόμεθα καὶ ἀστατοῦμεν 12 καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν

11 To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, 12 and we grow weary from the work of our own hands.

<sup>753</sup>What he had learnt is specified in the following: ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι. αὐτάρκης ('content, satisfied')<sup>42</sup> appears only here in the NT, although the cognate αὐτάρκεια is found twice in Paul's letters: at 2 Cor. 9:8 God is able to make all grace abound to the Corinthians so that 'in all things they will always have a full sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια)', and at 1 Tim. 6:6 'contentment' when linked with godliness is said to be 'great gain'.<sup>43</sup> In Stoic (and Cynic)<sup>44</sup> ethics αὐτάρκεια was regarded as the essence of all virtues. It described the cultivated attitude of the wise person who had become independent of all things and all people, relying on himself, because of his innate resources, or on the lot given to him by the gods. This Stoic doctrine was 'that man should be sufficient unto himself for all things, and able, by the power of his own will, to resist the force of circumstances'.<sup>45</sup> Seneca's remark describes such a person: 'the happy man is content with his present lot, no matter what it is, and is reconciled to his circumstances'.<sup>46</sup> It is not certain, however, that Paul borrowed the term αὐτάρκης from this Cynic and Stoic source, even if he was aware of its use, for it had a wider currency in everyday life.<sup>47</sup> Further, if the apostle did borrow the term, he quickly transforms it, for his understanding of contentment is very different: αὐτάρκης expresses his independence of external circumstances, but only because he was totally dependent on God. 'He was not so much self-sufficient as "God-sufficient"'.<sup>48</sup> If Socrates is held up by Stoics as the prime example of self-sufficiency, the person who faces life and death with equanimity because of his own inner resources,<sup>49</sup> then Paul's contentment is of a different kind:<sup>50</sup> it comes from God and is related to Christ,<sup>51</sup> who alone strengthens him to be able to do all things (v. 13). ἐν οἷς εἰμι specifies the sphere in which he is content and is translated literally 'in the situation in which I find myself'.<sup>52</sup> But in the light of the immediate context it seems appropriate to broaden the reference to mean 'in whatever circumstances I find myself'.<sup>53</sup> Paul's freedom thus releases him from dependence on human resources: 'An apostle is not an employee of the church' (E. Peterson).<sup>54</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 520-522.]

<sup>754</sup>An eloquent description of what it means to learn contentment in every situation follows as Paul, using the 'I'-style of a personal confession, amplifies in detail the meaning of v. 11b. Although there are no conjunctions linking vv. 12 and 13 with the preceding, it is clear that the significant elements in this clause, that is, ἔμαθον, αὐτάρκης εἶναι, and ἐν οἷς εἰμι, have their counterparts in vv. 12 and 13 that fill out and explain their meaning. So, for example: (1) three additional finite verbs belonging to the same semantic range as ἔμαθον (i.e., οἶδα, οἶδα, and μεμύημαι) describe the apostle's learning process; (2) the content of what is learnt, spoken of as αὐτάρκης εἶναι in v. 11, is qualified in v. 13 by πάντα ἰσχύω κτλ.; while (3) the sphere of the apostle's contentment, which is ἐν οἷς εἰμι at v. 11, is amplified by ἐν παντί καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν (v. 12) and πάντα (v. 13). [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 522.]

<sup>755</sup>Verse thirteen has to rank among the top ten candidates for "The Most Misquoted Verse in the Bible." Paul never intended his statement here about approaching life to be lifted out of the context of the discussion on contentment in vv. 11-13.

<sup>756</sup>In the idiomatic expression καλῶς ἐποιήσατε<sup>90</sup> Paul gives positive and generous praise<sup>91</sup> to his readers, and probably comes closest here in the letter to saying, 'Thank you'.<sup>92</sup> At Acts 10:33, where the same phrase appears, Cornelius says to Peter: 'it was good of you (καλῶς ἐποίησας) to come' (cf. 2 Pet. 1:19), while in Mk. 7:37 the people, who were overwhelmed with amazement because



affliction. Here the reference is to Paul's imprisonment and the hardships which this produced on him in providing for his material needs.<sup>757</sup> Perhaps the most inspiring part of his depiction is his characterization of their gift as συγκοινωνήσαντές μου, *having partnered with me*. Not just sending the gift but also in Epaphroditus bringing it and staying to help Paul for a time did the Philippian church contribute to the apostle's work.

It is this beautiful image of partnership with Paul that prompts the praise of the church for its repeated involvement in spreading the Gospel by helping the apostle, vv. 15-16, which is a single sentence in the Greek. He reminds them of something they already know: οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι..., *and you Philippians also know that...* He feels it important to complement them on their past involvement in his ministry. The Philippians had taken a leadership role in assisting Paul from the early days of their existence as a church on Paul's second missionary journey: ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου,<sup>758</sup> ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, *in the beginning of the Gospel when I departed from Macedonia, not one church partnered with me in the Word in the matter<sup>759</sup> of giving and receiving except for you alone*. This era of Paul's ministry is described in Acts 16:10-40 (establishment of church in Philippi); 17:1-9 (Thessalonica); 17:10-15 (Beroea). These were in Macedonia; Paul then moved to Achaia first at Athens (17:16-33) and then at Corinth (18:1-17). His letters to three of these churches contain isolated references to this initial ministry: 1 - 2 Thessalonians; Philippians; 1-2 Corinthians. The Philippians sought to help Paul during this time.

And in v. 16 he notes one instance as an example: ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε, *because also in Thessalonica both once and twice you supplied me in my need*. An interesting question Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak, respond with the words: 'he has done all things well (καλῶς πάντα πεποιήκεν)'. Paul's statement is no mere acknowledgement that they had simply done their duty.<sup>93</sup> Rather, it is a generous commendation for their noble<sup>94</sup> and praiseworthy action." [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 527-528.]

<sup>757</sup>The word θλίψις, 'hardship,' although on occasion used of the disaster that is to come on the world at the end of the age (Matt 24:29; Mark 13:19; 2 Thess 1:6), is used here in the nontechnical sense of severe hardships, afflictions, and burdens, which is the sense in which Paul most frequently uses this word (cf. Phil 1:17; 2 Cor 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 1 Thess 1:6). Thus, it seems strained (so also Fee [1995], 438 n. 9) to argue that the apostle, in praising the Philippians, may have chosen this word in order to commend them for their support of him "as 'eschatological apostle,' destined to promote God's purposes in the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles and so prepare the way for the dénouement of history" (Martin [1976], 164, following Fridrichsen, *Apostle*, and Munck, *Paul*, 36-68). Rather, by the practical sympathy of the Philippians in providing material help for Paul and in sending Epaphroditus to him, they had indeed become partners with him in his imprisonment and sufferings, although they were many miles removed from him. They had taken some of his burden upon themselves in their genuine and deep sense of concern that expressed itself in constructive action on behalf of the apostle and therefore on behalf of the gospel (Phil 1:12-17; see Seesemann, *Begriff KOINΩNIA*, 33-34; Glombitza, *NovT* 7 [1964-65] 135-41; Collange, 151). And it was exactly this sympathy and companionship that the apostle valued far more than any financial relief that came to him as a result (cf. Lightfoot). On the grammatical point of the dative τῇ θλίψει, 'in [my] hardships,' Fee ([1995], 439) comments: "Paul puts θλίψις in the dative as his way of emphasizing the 'togetherness' inherent in the σύν ['with' in συγκοινωνήσαντες, 'having become partners with']." Note too how μου, "my," is brought into prominence to stress the close relationship of Paul: "to become partners with me in my hardships."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 267-268.]

<sup>758</sup>The craziness of many commentators is reflected in their struggle with the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου taken to mean the ascension of Jesus or the conversion of Paul. Clearly from the context it means the beginning of the Gospel on Paul's second missionary journey in Macedonia and Achaia in the early 50s as described by Luke in Acts 16-18. Many commentators center on individual words and ignore the surrounding context as a major source for defining meaning in words and phrases.

<sup>759</sup>Paul tells the Philippians that they were uniquely his partners in his missionary endeavors. Once again there is evidence that Paul deliberately tempers his thanks to the Philippians in the fact that he employs so many financial terms when he refers here to the assistance that they gave him (cf. Kennedy, *ExpTim* 12 [1900-1901] 43-44). It is almost as though he viewed the entire matter as a strictly business affair: the Philippians had entered into a partnership (ἐκοινωνήσεν) with him (cf. Seesemann, *Begriff KOINΩNIA*, 33). And this partnership involved a strict accounting (εἰς λόγον, "in an accounting") of all transactions between them (see Lightfoot for references to this meaning of λόγος). All expenditures and receipts (δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως) were carefully recorded. δόσις, 'giving,' and λήμψις, 'receiving,' are words that belong to the commercial vocabulary of the ancient world and refer to the debit and credit sides of the ledger. They invariably refer to financial transactions (see MM, and the examples from the papyri texts collected by Lohmeyer; but cf. also Str-B 3:624). So it is unlikely that Chrysostom and those many commentators who follow him can be right in saying that this expression means that the Philippians gave (δόσις) material goods and in turn received (λήμψις) spiritual goods from Paul (cf. 1 Cor 9:11; Rom 15:27; Martin [1976]), because this mixes two different things, material and spiritual, and thus alters the normal meaning of δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως, 'expenditures and receipts.' More likely, then, these words refer to the financial gift of the Philippians, on the one hand, and the receipt they received back from the apostle acknowledging its safe arrival, on the other hand. (Note in this connection the word ἀπέχειν, 'to receive in full,' in Phil 4:18, a technical term meaning to receive a sum in full and give a receipt for it [BDAG].) Paul will use still more of these commercial terms as he continues. Recent studies (Sampley, *Pauline Partnership*; Stowers, "Friends and Enemies"; Malherbe, "Paul's Self-Sufficiency"; Witherington) have shown that these terms are also signs of friendship uniting Paul and the Philippians." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 270.]

arises from Paul's statement here in comparison to 1 Thess. 2:9 and 2 Thess. 3:8 along with Acts 17:1-9.<sup>760</sup> Luke's depiction of Paul's time spent in the city seems to be relatively brief and limited to about three weeks. But Paul's three references seem to suggest a substantially longer period of time in the city. It is very likely that we in concluding a brief period from Acts are not coming to the right conclusion. The Philippians, Paul says here, sent him assistance at least twice during his time in Thessalonica. In the two Thessalonian letters the apostle indicates his working at a job for some time (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας / νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας) in order to support himself during his stay in the city.

But Paul's point in the Philippian letter is to complement the church for its consistency in supporting him with their contributions. Even though it did not evidently cover all of Paul's needs while there, as per his statements to the Thessalonians, it did help relieve him of the physical burden so that he could devote more time and energy to the preaching of the Gospel in Thessalonica. And for that Paul is deeply grateful.

**Spiritual benefit, vv. 17-20.** Paul repeats in v. 17 the rarely used οὐχ ὅτι, *not that*, which also begins verse 11.<sup>761</sup> Both signal a focus away from the central point of gratitude for the Philippians' gift to him. In v. 11, Paul disavows the "beggar attitude" toward their gift with an assertion of his sufficiency from Christ. In v. 17, he disavows seeking their gift. The theme is somewhat similar to vv. 11-13 but has a different thrust. Paul is not in the habit of seeking money from the churches (οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα), and he clearly did not ask the Philip-

<sup>760</sup>1 Thess. 2:9. 9 Μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

9 You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

2 Thess. 3:7-9. 7 Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν 8 οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐράγομεν παρά τινος, ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινα ὑμῶν· 9 οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δώμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, 8 and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. 9 This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate.

Acts 17:1-9. 17 Διοδεύσαντες δὲ τὴν Ἀμφίπολιν καὶ τὴν Ἀπολλωνίαν ἦλθον εἰς Θεσσαλονικὴν ὅπου ἦν συναγωγὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. 2 κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς τῷ Παύλῳ εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, 3 διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος ὅτι τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὃν ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. 4 καὶ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπέισθησαν καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ, τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος πολὺ, γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι. 5 Ζηλώσαντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ προσλαβόμενοι τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς καὶ ὀχλοποιήσαντες ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐπιστάντες τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος ἐζήτουν αὐτοὺς προαγαγεῖν εἰς τὸν δῆμον· 6 μὴ εὐρόντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔσυρον Ἰάσονα καὶ τινὰς ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας βοῶντες ὅτι οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες οὗτοι καὶ ἐνθάδε πάρεισιν, 7 οὓς ὑποδέδεκται Ἰάσων· καὶ οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος πράσσουσιν βασιλεῖα ἕτερον λέγοντες εἶναι Ἰησοῦν. 8 ἐτάραξαν δὲ τὸν ὄχλον καὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας ἀκούοντας ταῦτα, 9 καὶ λαβόντες τὸ ἱκανὸν παρὰ τοῦ Ἰάσονος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς.

17 After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." 4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. 5 But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house. 6 When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus." 8 The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, 9 and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

<sup>761</sup>W. Schenk<sup>156</sup> has drawn attention to a number of important linguistic and syntactical features common to vv. 11 and 17 where the οὐχ ὅτι-construction appears: (1) in each passage Paul recognizes that his preceding words were open to possible misunderstanding; he therefore corrects this with a strong denial, expressed by οὐχ ὅτι ('I do not mean to say that').<sup>157</sup> (2) The content of each denial is similar: Paul does not speak out of need (v. 11), nor does he have his heart set on the Philippians' gift (v. 17). (3) The clauses following each denial spell out the positive corrective: in v. 11, by means of a causal γάρ ('because'), Paul asserts that he has learned to be content, while in v. 17, where the positive statement is introduced by the strong adversative ἀλλά (cf. 2 Cor. 1:24; 3:5; 2 Thes. 3:9), he states: 'I do have my heart set on the interest that accrues to your account'. (4) These two affirmations describe either a determinative condition (v. 11) or a significant aim (v. 17) of the apostle. (5) Each of the positive correctives contains a term cognate with a key expression in the preceding denial: so ὑπερεῖσθαι (v. 12), which amplifies the meaning of 'I have learned to be content' (v. 11), is cognate with καθ' ὑστέρησιν (v. 11), while ἐπιζητῶ appears in both the denial and the affirmation of v. 17. (6) Finally, each explanatory passage concludes with a climactic participial expression that focusses on the gracious activity of God, namely ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με (v. 13) and τὸν πλεονάζοντα (v. 17).<sup>158</sup> [Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 536–537.]

pians for this donation. Instead (ἀλλ'), he seeks the spiritual benefit for the church that comes from generously contributing to the work of the Gospel: ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν. He continues the heavily use of financial terminology present in the larger discussion, vv. 10-20, with the assertion that his interest is the accumulation of spiritual blessings from God to the church because of its generosity.<sup>762</sup> The τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν in the commercial language alludes to [the credit which accrues to your account](#). In spiritual language it is divine blessings upon the church because of its generosity. Luther's comment in his *Table Talks* that every man needs two conversions, one of his soul and the other of his pocketbook, has some relevancy here. Interestingly here, Paul uses commercial language to communicate to the Philippians the spiritual value of their partnership with him in spreading the Gospel.

Continuing his commercial image in v. 18 the apostle asserts that their gift has been totally helpful and satisfactory to him: ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω, [I am paid in full and even more](#). In the manner Paul complements the Philippians for their generosity. But Paul the preacher does not stick with the commercial image for long here. He moves into temple sacrificial religious imagery: πεπληρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτου τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν, ὄσμην εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, [I am full after having received from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet smelling fragrance, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God](#). Here we sense the ultimate significance of the financial contribution of the Philippians. It constitutes a spiritual offering presented up to God that meets all the criteria demanded of offerings presented in the Jerusalem temple by Jews: ὄσμην εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν. As such God is pleased to receive the sacrifice from the worshipper: εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ. Thus money turns into a spiritual offering accepted by God through being presented to one of his servants, Paul, in order to further the spread of the Gospel. Remember the background of the beginning of the church over a decade earlier in the early 50s. The very successful business woman Lydia was a key convert to Christ (Acts 16:11-15, 40) would not only have appreciated the commercial image used by Paul but as a part of the God-fearer women in the initial group of converts in the city she would have appreciated the Jewish temple imagery equally as well. My personal conviction is that Lydia and the other women who formed the nucleus of the church played an important role in shaping this congregation into its intense missions orientation that Paul alludes to.

With their offering as a sacrifice εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, how will God respond to what the church has done in helping Paul? Verse 19 answers that in a marvelous way: ὁ δὲ θεὸς μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, [and my God will fulfill your every need to the limits of His riches in glory in Christ Jesus](#). Note the presence of πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν, [your every need](#). Paul did not promise the Philippians that God would make them as rich as He is. Not indeed! Rather, the promise is that out of His immense resources through His Presence (ἐν δόξῃ) which is reflected in Christ Jesus (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), God would generously take care of their every need (πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν). This is a 'spiritual' Gospel being promised, not a 'prosperity gospel' here. Just as Paul had learned αὐτάρκεια, [contentment](#), in the ups and downs of life, God would supply the same skill to the Philippians as well.

No wonder then that Paul concludes this Thank You note with a doxological praise of God (v. 20): τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν, [And to God even our Father be praise for ever and ever. Amen!](#) God is the object; praise is the vehicle; forever is the time limit.<sup>763</sup> What a joyous note on which to end

<sup>762</sup>By way of emphasis Paul repeats the verb ἐπιζητῶ, 'I certainly do have my heart set on.' The real object of his intense desire Paul now expresses in a phrase filled once more with commercial terms. The first of these is καρπὸν, which literally means 'fruit' (cf. KJV, RSV) in the sense of the 'produce' of the land generally. But in light of the meaning of its cognates καρπεῖαι, 'profits,' and καρπίζεσθαι, 'to reap the return,' and the present context in which it appears, καρπός must be understood in the sense of 'profit' or 'credit' (see MM, 321). And the participle that modifies it, πλεονάζοντα, lit. 'increasing,' although it does not appear elsewhere as a technical word belonging to the vocabulary of commerce (against Martin [1976], <sup>167</sup>, who says that it is 'a regular banking term for financial growth'), nevertheless appears to have a commercial meaning thrust upon it by the business words and phrases that surround it. The prepositional phrase εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν that immediately follows is one of these, meaning "to your account." Paul therefore views this gift to him as a spiritual investment entered as a credit to the account of the Philippians, an investment that will increasingly pay them rich dividends (Hendriksen). This, then, is what Paul really had his heart set on. And although he could do without the gift and would prefer to do so, he is nevertheless jealous for the welfare of his friends at Philippi. For this reason, namely, that he knows that such an attitude of liberality pays great dividends in the lives of those who give (cf. 2 Cor 9:8-11), he accepts their generosity." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 271.

<sup>763</sup>Doxologies<sup>234</sup> that are short, spontaneous ascriptions of praise to God frequently appear as concluding formulas to prayers, hymnic expressions, and sections of letters. Their basic structure is threefold: first, the person to whom praise is ascribed is mentioned (usually in the dative case: τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν). Then follows the word of praise, usually δόξα (or an equivalent), and finally, the doxology concludes with a temporal description, normally an eternity formula (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων). In most cases the doxology is followed by 'Amen'. The first element in these NT ascriptions of praise is the most variable: the one to whom glory is given may be expressed by a relative pronoun (Gal. 1:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18, etc.), a participial expression (Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 3:20-21;



the body proper of this letter.

What we hopefully have gleaned in this comparison of Acts 28 and the relevant passages in Philippians is a clearer picture of Paul's ministry during the two years that Luke mentions at the end of Acts. It was not an easy time for Paul for he characterizes it as my affliction (τῆ θλίψει) in Phil. 4:14. But on the other hand it was a marvelous time of preaching and teaching the Gospel (κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως, Acts 28:31). For Paul imprisonment μάλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, *rather turned into an advancement of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:12). Roman officials heard a Christian witness from the apostle (Phil. 1:13) and many inside the Roman church found renewed inspiration to share the Gospel with non-believers (Phil. 1:14). Through his writing ministry during these two years Paul and Timothy put together the Letter to the Philippians, that has blessed countless millions of Christians over the centuries. Indeed God worked through all this for His glory and for blessing to Paul and those serving with him.

### 8.1.5 Release from Imprisonment and Resumption of Ministry (AD 61-63),<sup>764</sup> 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Titus 1:5, 3:12-13.

Several times (1:25-26; 2:26) in the letter to the Philippians Paul expresses confidence in being released from the charges against him. Acts ends with Paul still under those charges and house arrest, and Philippians was written sometime in the middle of this two year period from 61-63 AD. What happened to Paul?

Two sources of information point toward a successful conclusion to his case before the Roman emperor Nero: the pastoral epistles and several early church traditions. In Philippians 2:26 Paul indicated his intention to travel to Philippi as one of the first places to go upon being released by the Roman authorities. Earlier in Rom. 15:28-29, Paul indicated his plan to come through Rome on his way to Spain.<sup>765</sup> Of course, these are opposite directions from Rome and are stated as expectations rather than as historical accomplishment. The pastoral epistles of 1-2 Timothy and Titus work chronologically only if produced in the period from Paul's release from Roman imprisonment to his martyrdom a few years later back in Rome. Timothy to whom the first two letters are addressed is now situated in Ephesus in Asia Minor after Paul dropped him off there (1 Tim. 1:3) on his way to Macedonia, and Titus is on Crete after Paul left him there (Titus 1:5). In the composition of First Timothy, Paul hopes to travel soon to Ephesus where Timothy is (1 Tim. 3:14-15). He is at Nicopolis when Titus is composed

Jude 24, 25), a simple noun (Phil. 4:19; 1 Tim. 1:17), or a pronoun (Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 5:11; 2 Pet. 3:18). Here as Paul breaks out into a doxology he ascribes glory τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν. It is possible to regard the conjunction καὶ in an explanatory sense, 'to God, that is, our Father', with the latter term defining the former (cf. JB, 'to God our Father'), but since both nouns share one article the pronoun ἡμῶν should probably be taken with both: 'to our God and Father'. At v. 19 Paul used the intensely personal expression ὁ θεός μου to assure the Philippians that his God will act on his behalf to fulfil all their needs. Now he changes to the plural ἡμῶν as he unites himself with his converts in this ascription of praise.

"The second element of the doxology is δόξα,<sup>235</sup> which here as elsewhere has the definite article ἡ.<sup>236</sup> ἡ δόξα speaks of 'that glory' which properly belongs to God and is rightly ascribed to him. The δόξα of the God of Israel in the OT was primarily the brightness or radiance of his presence. When 'glory' is ascribed to him 'it denotes the transcendent praise and worship of which he is worthy'<sup>237</sup> (cf. Pss. 29:2; 96:8, 'Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name'). To give God glory is not to add something that is not already present; it is rather an active acknowledgement or extolling of what he is or has already done.<sup>238</sup> So, although this and many other doxologies contain no verb, the indicative ἐστιν ('is' or 'belongs') is presupposed, rather than the optative εἴη ('be' or 'may it be').<sup>239</sup>

"The third feature of Paul's doxology is the temporal expression εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (lit. 'to the ages of the ages'). This eternity formula, which is unique to the NT,<sup>240</sup> is a more emphatic variation of the common LXX expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, which means 'for all eternity' in an unlimited sense (cf. Ps. 84:5 [LXX 83:4]). In the doxology the whole period is viewed as a succession of cycles. Paul's ascription of glory to God is not restricted to 'this age' but belongs to 'the age to come' as well; indeed, his expression indicates that it is forever and ever.<sup>241</sup> The spontaneous endorsement of this doxology is uttered in the ἀμήν ('amen, truly, so let it be') that follows. 'Amen' was said on solemn occasions in the OT to confirm a curse or adjuration, to accept a blessing, or to associate oneself with a doxology.<sup>242</sup> Each of the doxologies that concludes the first four books of the OT psalter (Pss. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48) ends with an ἀμήν, while prayers and doxologies in the NT are strengthened and endorsed by it.<sup>243</sup> This 'Amen' makes it clear that Paul's ascription of praise is not simply a matter of the lips or of the 'pen', but is the spontaneous response of his whole being.<sup>244</sup> Elsewhere he strikingly connects believers' response of ἀμήν to the faithfulness of God, who has said 'Yes' to all his promises in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20)."

[Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 549-550.]

<sup>764</sup>1 Timothy and Titus written during this period.

<sup>765</sup>**Rom. 15:28-29.** 28 τοῦτο οὖν ἐπιτέλεσας καὶ σφραγισάμενος αὐτοῖς τὸν καρπὸν τοῦτον, ἀπελεύσομαι δι' ὑμῶν εἰς Σπανίαν· 29 οἶδα δὲ ὅτι ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν πληρώματι εὐλογίας Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι.

28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

(3:12), but evidently somewhere in Macedonia when First Timothy is composed, perhaps at Philippi.

The more challenging task is evaluating the historical value of the church traditions about this period of time in Paul's life. The church traditions fall into two categories: a) church fathers, and b) NT Apocrypha. The almost universal consensus of this material in the post-apostolic era is that Paul was released from the first Roman imprisonment, resumed ministry for a period of time, and then was re-arrested and suffered martyrdom by Nero in the mid-60s. The point of variance is primarily over the location of this later post-imprisonment ministry. Was it limited to the east in the region of the Aegean Sea? Or, did it go west to Rome? Or, both?

Also of a lesser significance is the locating of the time of Paul's martyrdom. Generally both ancient and modern commentators will agree on the label 'mid-60s' during Nero's reign. But more precise dating ranges from 63 to 68 AD.

Part of this is connected to whether it took place as a part of Nero's persecution in relation to the [great fire of Rome](#), which is dated beginning on July 18/19 of 64 AD and burned for over a week before being brought under control.<sup>766</sup> Fourteen of the eighteen districts of the city were completely destroyed. But the Greek and Latin historians of the time do not attach much significance to the fire and tend not to blame Nero for starting it, although Suetonius and Cassius Dio do favor 'the rumor' that he was responsible.<sup>767</sup> According to Tacitus, Nero was in Antium and not in the city at the time of the fire. The general consensus from these historians of the time is that Nero quickly returned to the city to lead efforts to rescue victims and even opened up the royal palace to victims left homeless.

Christians suffered persecution during this time, but only Tacitus<sup>768</sup> of the secular sources indicates that

---

<sup>766</sup>Because fires were so common in Rome during this period, two other major fires are reported in 68 and 69 AD in the city as well.

<sup>767</sup>“The varying historical accounts of the event come from three secondary sources — Cassius Dio, Suetonius and Tacitus. The primary accounts, which possibly included histories written by Fabius Rusticus, Cluvius Rufus and Pliny the Elder, did not survive. These primary accounts are described as contradictory and gross exaggerations.<sup>[2]</sup> At least five separate stories circulated regarding Nero and the fire:

- \* Motivated by a desire to destroy the city, Nero secretly sent out men pretending to be drunk to set fire to the city. Nero watched from his palace on the Palatine Hill singing and playing the lyre.<sup>[3]</sup>

- \* Motivated by an insane whim, Nero quite openly sent out men to set fire to the city. Nero watched from the Tower of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill singing and playing the lyre.<sup>[4]</sup>

- \* Nero sent out men to set fire to the city. Nero sang and played his lyre from a private stage.<sup>[5]:XV.38–44</sup>

- \* The fire was an accident. Nero was in Antium.<sup>[5]:XV.38–9</sup>

- \* The fire was caused by Christians.<sup>[5]:XV.44</sup>

[“Great Fire of Rome,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)]

<sup>768</sup>“A disaster followed, whether accidental or treacherously contrived by the emperor, is uncertain, as authors have given both accounts, worse, however, and more dreadful than any which have ever happened to this city by the violence of fire. It had its beginning in that part of the circus which adjoins the Palatine and Caelian hills, where, amid the shops containing inflammable wares, the conflagration both broke out and instantly became so fierce and so rapid from the wind that it seized in its grasp the entire length of the circus. For here there were no houses fenced in by solid masonry, or temples surrounded by walls, or any other obstacle to interpose delay. The blaze in its fury ran first through the level portions of the city, then rising to the hills, while it again devastated every place below them, it outstripped all preventive measures; so rapid was the mischief and so completely at its mercy the city, with those narrow winding passages and irregular streets, which characterised old Rome. Added to this were the wailings of terror-stricken women, the feebleness of age, the helpless inexperience of childhood, the crowds who sought to save themselves or others, dragging out the infirm or waiting for them, and by their hurry in the one case, by their delay in the other, aggravating the confusion. Often, while they looked behind them, they were intercepted by flames on their side or in their face. Or if they reached a refuge close at hand, when this too was seized by the fire, they found that, even places, which they had imagined to be remote, were involved in the same calamity. At last, doubting what they should avoid or whither betake themselves, they crowded the streets or flung themselves down in the fields, while some who had lost their all, even their very daily bread, and others out of love for their kinsfolk, whom they had been unable to rescue, perished, though escape was open to them. And no one dared to stop the mischief, because of incessant menaces from a number of persons who forbade the extinguishing of the flames, because again others openly hurled brands, and kept shouting that there was one who gave them authority, either seeking to plunder more freely, or obeying orders.

“Nero at this time was at Antium, and did not return to Rome until the fire approached his house, which he had built to connect the palace with the gardens of Maecenas. It could not, however, be stopped from devouring the palace, the house, and everything around it. However, to relieve the people, driven out homeless as they were, he threw open to them the Campus Martius and the public buildings of Agrippa, and even his own gardens, and raised temporary structures to receive the destitute multitude. Supplies of food were brought up from Ostia and the neighbouring towns, and the price of corn was reduced to three sesterces a peck. These acts, though popular, produced no effect, since a rumour had gone forth everywhere that, at the very time when the city was in flames, the emperor appeared on a private stage and sang of the destruction of Troy, comparing present misfortunes with the calamities of antiquity.

“At last, after five days, an end was put to the conflagration at the foot of the Esquiline hill, by the destruction of all buildings

Nero blamed them for it in order to use them as a scapegoat to avoid accusations that he started it.<sup>769</sup> Interestingly none of the church fathers link Paul's martyrdom to the fire in Rome in 64. Eusebius, who provides more detail, links Nero's persecution of Christians to a broad based dislike of them and fear because of their rapid growth in the imperial provinces. One should note that in the second half of the first century most of the emperors became very suspicious of all new religions coming out of the eastern empire, and this especially included the so-called mystery religions. That Christianity should be caught up in this then is no surprise. It is not until Domitian at the end of the first century that serious persecution of Christians broke out, and is heavily documented in both the secular and early Christian sources. The modern popularity of Neronian persecution of Christians is mainly due to the exaggerated imagination of the Puritan John Foxe in his *Book of Martyrs*. In chapter one he gives a legendary account of fictitious persecution of Christians by Nero with little historical basis and not critical analysis of the primary sources. But with the enormous popularity of this book in Protestant circles it has been taken as 'historical gospel' in many circles, and has contributed mightily to the erroneous views of the mid 60s among Christians.

What will be concluded in this study will be based upon careful and critical analysis of the primary sources both Christian and secular that relate to this period of the apostle's life and ministry leading up to his death.

### **8.1.5.1 The Challenges in Understanding This Phase of Paul's Life**

Here one enters into much more challenging waters in the effort to sort out the details of Paul's earthly ministry. The challenge lays in the area of sources. The database of information possible to collect from the highly limited resources provide on a fraction of the information needed to compose a precise and fully trustworthy synopsis of this period of time for Paul. Add to that the controversial nature of the Pastoral Epistles, which are the canonical sources, where authorship is challenged extensively, reliability of information is questioned, and vagueness of data is more typical than not. Another level of potential information here is the extra-canonical literature both from the New Testament Apocrypha and the church fathers. But the tendency to mix indiscriminately both history and legend with one another in both of these set of materials raises all kinds of caution flags about how much reliable historical information can be gleaned.

Our approach will be to first survey the data from the Pastoral Epistles in order to fill out the picture as far as possible.<sup>770</sup> Then this limited picture will be supplemented from the relevant NT Apocrypha and Church Fathers sources that are judged to be reliable historically. Some interaction with modern reconstructions of this period will be included as well.

The goal is to put on the table the most plausible overview of what Paul did and where he traveled after being released from prison in Rome at the end of the two year period in Acts beginning in late 61 AD until his martyrdom in the mid-60s back in Rome.

### **8.1.5.2 Paul's Snapshot Glimpses into Ministry, 1 Tim. 1:3-4 et als; Titus 1:5; 3:12-13, plus church traditions**

The first item on the agenda is to examine carefully the very small amounts of data that can be gleaned from the Pastoral Epistles in the Pauline letters of the New Testament. These are First and Second Timothy and Titus.

In modern times their authenticity as letters of Paul has been hotly debated in scholarly circles. Unfortunately the earlier debates in the late 1800s and early 1900s were largely based on a now highly questionable methodology of style and grammar comparisons, usually to the so-called 'solid' Pauline letters of 1-2 Corinthians, Romans and Galatians. These four documents stood at the fountain head of emerging Lutheranism in European

on a vast space, so that the violence of the fire was met by clear ground and an open sky. But before people had laid aside their fears, the flames returned, with no less fury this second time, and especially in the spacious districts of the city. Consequently, though there was less loss of life, the temples of the gods, and the porticoes which were devoted to enjoyment, fell in a yet more widespread ruin. And to this conflagration there attached the greater infamy because it broke out on the Aemilian property of Tigellinus, and it seemed that Nero was aiming at the glory of founding a new city and calling it by his name. Rome, indeed, is divided into fourteen districts, four of which remained uninjured, three were levelled to the ground, while in the other seven were left only a few shattered, half-burnt relics of houses.

[Tacitus, *Annals*, 11.15]

<sup>769</sup>Interestingly, he indicates that persecution flaired up for a very short period in the city and then evaporated. No further mention of such persecution is contained in his account.

<sup>770</sup>The working assumption here is first that all three Pastoral Letters are authentically Pauline in origin. Second, the sequencing of the composition of the letters is 1 Timothy, followed by Titus which are produced during period of active ministry in the early 60s. 2 Timothy is Paul's final letter and was produced sometime prior to his execution by Nero while in Rome during the mid-60s. .



circles due to the influence of Martin Luther, and thus were 'safe guarded' as the basis for Luther's teachings. The Reform Church movement that developed in Europe in parallel to Lutheranism accepted these documents as unquestionably Pauline, but more readily included additional segments of the Pauline collection in the NT as authentically Pauline. Yet a big question mark remained over the Pastoral Epistles. Other concerns seemed to support the stylistic arguments against the stylistic arguments, not the least of which was a powerful anti-catholic bias that vigorously opposed the seeming support for a supposed emerging liturgical orientation to the Christian faith in the pastorals. In RC perspectives the Pastoral Epistles provide an important bridge from the early Pauline letters into the developing Roman Catholicism of the second century. Conceptualizations of topics in the pastorals such as faith and the church were seen to stand as a transition into early Catholicism. Added to this was the usual out of hand dismissal of the early church traditions about a release from imprisonment, resumption of ministry, and subsequent re-imprisonment by Paul. That left the impossible task of correlating the few biographical references in the pastorals containing place and time markers into the book of Acts. When added up, in the rational delusional assumption of scientific based exegesis, the Pastoral Epistles were fictitious and written in the early second century by a latter student of Paul or a Pauline school in order to falsely justify their emerging belief system in the name of the apostle Paul.

The above viewpoint with minor individualized variations reigned supremely in European scholarly circles through most of the 1800s and well into the 1900s. But in 1921, the British scholar P. N. Harrison published through Oxford University Press, [The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles](#). In this publication Harrison proposed a compromise solution among the supporters and deniers of Pauline authorship of these three NT documents. Certain core aspects of the pastorals are authentically Pauline but these documents have been heavily re-worked by second century Pauline students to 'update' the theology of these documents to suit their second century needs. Thus the document is a mixture of genuine and pseudonymous materials. In the English speaking world this view point found considerable support in scholarly circles. But the other two views continued to dominate the conversation. In the second half of the twentieth century supporters of Pauline authenticity began chipping away at the cracks in the seams of the older European denial of Pauline authenticity. This took place on both sides of the Atlantic well respected scholars such as Prof. Bo Reicke at Basel, numerous British scholars especially among British evangelical ranks,<sup>771</sup> and particularly in the United States, e.g., Dr. Earle Ellis. This process is still underway and the traditional view of Pauline authorship of the pastorals is gaining increased support steadily in western cultural circles.<sup>772</sup> It stands as a text book example of how carefully formulated, highly scholarly based analysis can gain a strong hearing for its viewpoint.

The stance adopted in this study is on the side of Pauline authenticity for the pastorals. And the assumptions are that First Timothy was written fairly soon after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment in 63 AD and that Titus followed it within a reasonably short period of time. Second Timothy, on the other hand, comes during the second Roman imprisonment and toward the end of it just prior to Paul's martyrdom at the hands of Nero in the mid 60s. A more precise dating of Paul's death will be explored below, but is very difficult to establish with any certainty.

### 1 Tim. 1:3-4

3 Καθὼς παρεκάλεσά σε προσμεῖναι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ πορευόμενος εἰς Μακεδονίαν, ἵνα παραγγείλης πιστὶν μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν 4 μὴδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις, αἵτινες ἐκζητήσεις παρέχουσιν μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει.

3 I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, 4 and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith.

The first part of this statement of Paul to Timothy assumes a historical moment in which both were travel-

---

<sup>771</sup>One should be cautious in the meaning of terms, however. For example, to equate British Evangelicalism and American Evangelicalism is to say that a German Shepherd and a Poodle are the same kind of dog. These are two very different forms of evangelism with different histories, leaders, and often different viewpoints.

<sup>772</sup>“A significant number of commentaries in English in the last twenty years hold to Pauline authorship (“authenticity”), and scholarship in general is changing in its opinions. At the 1996 national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, symposiums were held in which Pauline authorship was entertained as a possibility, an event that arguably would not have occurred ten years previously. Commentators such as L. T. Johnson are raising again the possibility of Pauline authorship while other specific studies are addressing questions of methodology. It is within this new atmosphere of openness that I offer this introduction to the PE.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), xlviii.]

ing to Macedonia together.<sup>773</sup> In light of Paul's intense desire to return to Philippi in Macedonia upon his anticipated release from Roman imprisonment, it is only natural to assume that the above reference in First Timothy alludes to that trip from Rome to Philippi sometime in 63 AD. Clearly this reference will not fit into any conceivable situation depicted in the book of Acts.<sup>774</sup> What Paul alludes to in the church at Ephesus is the scenario he predicted in his farewell address to the leaders of the church at Miletus (cf. Acts 20:29-30). Some believe that παρεκάλεσά σε προσμείναι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, *I encouraged you to remain in Ephesus*, assumes that both Paul and Timothy were in Ephesus and that Paul then traveled on to Macedonia, πορευόμενος εἰς Μακεδονίαν.<sup>775</sup> But such an assumption is entirely unlikely and clearly not



required by the Greek statement. It is motivated by a desire to 'force fit' this statement into Acts 20:1, but such doesn't work when the circumstances of Ephesus in Acts 20 are examined closely.

The scenario of Paul and Timothy excitedly making their way from Rome to Philippi after the apostle's release from imprisonment provides an excellent background for discussing this situation. Although the apostle had, some years earlier around 57 AD, expressed apprehension that false teachers would invade the Christian

<sup>773</sup>Mounce in the WBC takes the position that Paul met up with Timothy while the apostle was on his way to Macedonia. If this is correct -- and I'm rather skeptical of it -- then Timothy was on his way back to Rome from Macedonia and the delivery of the Letter to the Philippians as alluded to in Phil. 2:19-24. .

There are five major events: (1) We know that Timothy was with Paul during the Roman imprisonment. Either before the trial or after the trial, Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to deal with the Ephesian heresy, which by now was in full force (1 Tim 1:3-7). (2) It is possible that Paul went west to Spain as he had intended according to his letter to the Romans and as is indicated in the church traditions noted above. (3) Paul and Titus took a missionary journey to Crete (Titus 1:5-16). (4) Paul also wanted to go east, especially to Ephesus to help Timothy (1 Tim 3:14-15; 4:13). (5) *Timothy met Paul somewhere while Paul was on his way to Macedonia*, and Timothy returned to Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). This verse does not say that Paul was in Ephesus during this meeting, and in light of 1 Tim 3:14 it seems doubtful that he was. This may also have been the tearful parting mentioned in 2 Tim 1:4. Timothy returned to Ephesus, and the first epistle is an encouragement for him to stay and contend with the situation there.

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lvi-lvii.]

<sup>774</sup>There is no time period in Acts into which this verse fits (contra Roloff, 62-63, who pictures Timothy staying behind [Acts 19:21], as he often did, to help stabilize the church). In Acts 20:1 Paul is leaving Ephesus for Macedonia, but he had just spent three years in Ephesus, and it is unlikely that the theological problems recorded in the PE could have arisen during this time. On his subsequent trip back through Macedonia, Timothy went ahead to Troas (Acts 20:5) but left after seven days. There is a hint, though, that trouble would eventually come after Paul's third missionary journey; in Paul's prophecy to the Ephesian elders he says that 'after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you' (Acts 20:29-30), suggesting that the problems recorded in the PE occurred after Acts. All this becomes one of the important arguments for dating the PE after Acts 28 (cf. Introduction, "Historical Reconstruction from Acts"). [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 17.]

<sup>775</sup>Paul says he was πορευόμενος εἰς Μακεδονίαν, 'traveling to Macedonia,' when he originally urged Timothy to stay on at Ephesus. Were Paul and Timothy together in Ephesus while Paul was preparing to go to Macedonia, or was Paul going to Macedonia from some other location? Dibelius-Conzelmann (15) say that 'every unprejudiced reader' must think that Paul was in Ephesus (cf. also Kümmel, Introduction, 375), but the text does not say this. (1) Kelly argues that the epistle shows firsthand knowledge of the problem, which would necessitate Paul's having been in Ephesus. But Paul had been in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31). This, plus communiqués, could have kept him in touch with the church. The excommunication of the two elders (1 Tim 1:20) need not have been in person; the similar act in 1 Cor 5:5 was not in person. (2) If Paul had been in Ephesus, the emphasis on authority throughout the letter would most likely have been unnecessary. Paul would have dealt with that issue when he was present. (3) 1 Tim 3:14 shows that Paul wants to come soon, which would not make sense if he had just been there. (4) In 1 Tim 3:14 Paul says that he hopes to "come," not to "return," to Ephesus, implying that he had not been with Timothy in Ephesus during this period. It seems that the best historical reconstruction does not see the encounter occurring in Ephesus, primarily on the force of 1 Tim 3:14. Timothy had been sent to Ephesus and later traveled to meet Paul, who was on his way to Macedonia (after the Roman imprisonment and on his way to Spain or Crete?). Timothy returned to Ephesus; Paul wrote the letter in support of Timothy's task in Ephesus and planned to come himself when he could (see Introduction, "Historical Reconstruction from the PE"). There is no theological significance attached to this conclusion, but merely historical curiosity. If Paul were in Ephesus when he encountered Timothy, there would be a theological problem in that he earlier prophesied that the Ephesian elders would never again see him (Acts 20:25). However, this prophecy evidently did not present a problem for Paul since he was planning to see the Ephesians again (1 Tim 3:14). Perhaps Acts 20:25 refers only to the Ephesian elders at that time and not to the church as a whole." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 17.]

community at Ephesus,<sup>776</sup> evidently news had come to him while still in Rome, or just after leaving Rome, of the deterioration of the situation in Ephesus.<sup>777</sup> In light of this, Paul decided to send Timothy on to Ephesus, which logistically would have come after their arrival in Philippi. In their discussions about this, Paul indicates in this statement that he encouraged Timothy to plan on spending considerable time in Ephesus: παρεκάλεσά σε προσμεῖναι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.<sup>778</sup> Timothy agreed with the plan and traveled on to Ephesus in order to help the church combat the false teachings making headway inside the community of believers.

At some point relatively soon after their discussion, First Timothy was written to help ‘credentialize’ Timothy in his work at Ephesus, as well as to encourage him to remain faithful to the commitment to help the church. The situation in the Christian community at Ephesus as portrayed in First Timothy suggests first that Paul’s earlier fears about the church had largely come to pass. Now after being in place for almost two decades the church was experiencing problems with inadequate leadership and tolerance of false teachers corrupting the apostolic Gospel the church had been founded upon years earlier.<sup>779</sup> First Timothy seeks to address those issues: ἴνα

---

<sup>776</sup>**Acts 20:29-30.** 29 ἐγὼ οἶδα ὅτι εἰσελεύσονται μετὰ τὴν ἄφιξίν μου λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς μὴ φειδόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου, 30 καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἀναστήσονται ἄνδρες λαλοῦντες διεστραμμένα τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν.

29 I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them.

<sup>777</sup>“There are so many hints in this passage [Acts 29:18b-35] concerning the later Ephesian situation reflected in the PE that either Paul was prophetic or the PE were written in light of Acts (or vice versa): (1) Paul’s defense of his personal conduct and ministry suggests the coming attack on his authority (1 Tim 1:1, 12–17). (2) Paul’s earlier trials were caused by the Jews, and the heresy mentioned in the PE is one of ‘Jewish myths’ (Titus 1:14). (3) Paul’s teaching was in public from house church to house church; Timothy’s opponents worked in the privacy of homes and upset entire house churches (2 Tim 3:6). (4) Paul proclaimed the gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike, behavior expected of the apostle to the Gentiles, whom the opponents were excluding from their prayers (1 Tim 2:1–7). (5) Paul was aware that as he went to Jerusalem he would be greeted by afflictions, just as he calls Timothy to embrace suffering as a servant of Jesus Christ (2 Tim 1:8). (6) Rather than be troubled by the coming afflictions, Paul’s only concern was to accomplish the task given to him by the Lord, which was to testify to the gospel of grace (1 Tim 1:12–17), and not to count his own life as precious. 2 Tim 4:6–8 contains Paul’s summation that he has been faithful to this charge, and his life is now to be poured out as an offering as he waits for his crown of righteousness. (7) The overseers were to care for the ‘church of God,’ a theme throughout the PE (especially 1 Tim 1:4; 3:1–7, 15). (8) There is an emphasis on the atonement of Jesus, as opposed to the role of the law (1 Tim 2:5–6; cf. 1:8–11). (9) Paul prophesied that dissension would arise from within the church, not from outside the church (as was often the case for Paul), and that the dissenters would be partially successful. It is especially significant that this prophecy was made within the context of Paul’s charge to the overseers since in the PE the problem stems from heretical teaching by some overseers and the inability of other overseers to teach truth and refute the error (see Comment on 1 Tim 3:2). The prophecy that they will teach ‘perverse’ things and not just error leads into Paul’s condemnation of the perversity of the Ephesian opponents in the PE and their teaching of demonic doctrines (1 Tim 4:1), which were successful in upsetting entire house churches (Titus 1:11). (10) Paul spent more time in the Ephesian church than perhaps anywhere else in his ministry. It became an established church, and many of the problems that later developed were typical not of new churches but of established churches, accounting for the unique nature of the Ephesian problem and Paul’s solutions (e.g., 1 Tim 5:19–20). (11) Paul affirmed that the ‘word of his grace’ was able to ‘build you up,’ and Paul’s encouragement to Timothy is to immerse himself in the gospel, which will save both himself and his hearers (1 Tim 4:16). (12) Paul’s final citation of Jesus’ commendation on giving stands in contrast to the later Ephesian opponents, who teach for greed and profit (1 Tim 6:5). (13) The one statement that is somewhat problematic is that the Ephesians will not see him again (vv 21, 18), in light of Paul’s later desire to visit Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim 3:14; but see Comment on this verse). There is too much overlap between this passage in Acts and the situation in the PE, however, not to see some connection.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lii–liii.]

<sup>778</sup>“Paul had previously ‘urged’ (παρακαλεῖν) Timothy to keep working in Ephesus. παρακαλεῖν has a range of meanings extending from ‘to summon, ask’ to ‘to comfort, encourage, request, urge’ (BAGD 617) as seen in its use in military language (Spicq, 1:321). It is frequently used in pastoral and missionary admonition (K. Grayston, “A Problem of Translation: The Meaning of parakaleo, paraklesis in the New Testament,” *ScrB* 11 [1980] 27–31; O. Schmitz and G. Stählin, *TDNT* 5:773–99; G. Braumann, *NIDNTT* 1:569–71; *MM*, 484; cf. παρατίθεσθαι, “to entrust,” in v 18). It does not mean ‘to command’ as does παραγγέλλειν in v 3b. The word occurs elsewhere in the PE eight times. It is found in summary statements of Paul’s charge, combined with ‘teach’ (διδάσκειν; 1 Tim 6:2) and ‘convict’ (ἐλέγχειν; 2 Tim 4:2; Titus 2:5). Bishops must be able to teach, urge, and convict (Titus 1:9). Paul urges Timothy to make sure prayers are said for all people (1 Tim 2:1). Titus is to encourage younger men to control themselves (Titus 2:6). Most significantly, Timothy is not to ‘rebuke’ (ἐπιπλήσσειν) the older men but to ‘encourage’ them (παρακαλεῖν; 1 Tim 5:1). There is a difference between how Timothy and Titus should deal with the opponents and how they should deal with others in the church. In dealing with the opposition they are to command, to speak with the authority given by God through Paul (1 Tim 1:1), but with the others they are to be gentle, urging and encouraging proper belief and conduct (cf. Introduction, “The Response to the Heresy”). παρακαλεῖν is repeated in 1:5 and 2:1, stylistically tying the larger unit together.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 17–18.]

<sup>779</sup>“There is much in this reconstruction that helps us understand the occasion and purpose of the first epistle to Timothy.

“(1) Paul’s prophecy had come true. People from within the congregation had risen up in opposition to Paul and the gospel (Acts 20:30). Their teaching was loosely based on Jewish mythical reinterpretation of the law and its genealogies, with probably a strong



---

influence of Hellenistic thought and possibly proto-gnostic error. They had divorced doctrine from behavior, paving the way for licentiousness and greed. They had succumbed to the teaching of demons. While the teaching appears to have some similarities to what was happening in nearby Colossae, it does appear to be unusual. It is natural to assume that in this situation Paul's vocabulary, and perhaps even his method of argumentation, can be expected to be different from other situations such as those caused by Judaizers coming from outside the church as in Galatia. (See below for a detailed discussion of the heresy.)

“(2) The issues were not of the type expected of a new church. Like the church in Corinth, the Ephesian church had the benefit of Paul's extended ministry and teaching. It had time to develop a structure of overseers and deacons. Yet, despite all of Paul's teaching, the overseers had not sufficiently learned the gospel to refute the heresy. Like Timothy, they would have known Paul's theology; but more than simply knowing theology is important, and that was the focus of what Paul would tell them. It is why he told Timothy to demand that the false teachers simply stop what they were doing. By now they should have known better.

“(3) Timothy was not a pastor, or elder, or bishop of the Ephesian church. He was an itinerant apostolic ‘delegate’ (Jeremias, 1-2), doing what he had often done for Paul. He was sent into a difficult situation where true teaching and loyalty to Paul were needed (cf. Mitchell, JBL 111 [1992] 641–42). He stood outside the church structure described in 1 Tim 3 and 5 and had no title (cf. Brox, BZ 13 [1969] 87–88; Kümmel, Introduction, 381). Spicq (1:65–66) sees the beginning of a formal hierarchy, in which Paul's apostolic office (given by Christ) was extended as he delegated some of his authority to Timothy and Titus, who in turn delegated their authority to subordinate ministries. This seems, however, to be anachronistic. Timothy and Titus came with Paul's authority and were to appoint leaders of good moral character who would be faithful to the gospel message. These appointees did not stand above the church but were part of it.

“(4) Timothy was a long-time friend and trusted coworker of Paul's. He was repeatedly sent into difficult situations, sometimes alone, to teach people and to maintain a loyalty to Paul and the gospel. This fact has significant implications. (a) Timothy knew Paul's theology and did not need to be taught. Much, if not all, of the teaching in the PE is directed toward the church. (b) Even though the bulk of 1 Timothy is intended for the Ephesian church, it is still a personal letter in style. As is expected of any personal letter, the vocabulary, style, and subject matter are different from more formal letters written to churches as a whole (so also Hort, Christian Ecclesia, 171–72; Lightfoot, “Additional Note,” 413). Even Dibelius-Conzelmann caution against ‘drawing conclusions as to authenticity or imitation’ because ‘there are no other Pauline letters addressed to a single person (in Phlm we find the plural ‘to you’ [ὐμῖν])’ (14). This is why 1 Timothy starts on a note of authority, why there is no greeting as expected, why Paul discusses topics that may sound unusual when writing to a friend (e.g., 1 Tim 1:12–17; 2:7), and why he ends with a greeting to ‘you’ (plural). This makes 1 Timothy essentially different from 2 Timothy and to a lesser degree from Titus.

“The often-painted picture of Timothy as a weak, timid person is not supported by the evidence. He was Paul's ‘first lieutenant,’ someone Paul felt comfortable sending into difficult situations, as he did repeatedly throughout Acts (see above). Paul's exhortation is not to be seen as a castigation of Timothy for some supposed failure but as encouragement in an extremely difficult situation, and also as a statement of authority to be understood by the Ephesian church (see especially Comment on 2 Tim 1:6–7; also 1 Tim 1:18; 4:6, 12–16; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:1, 7).

“(5) The first letter to Timothy is not a manual written to an anonymous church situation (contra the position of scholars like Kümmel, Introduction, 367, 384). When Paul writes about how to conduct oneself in the house of God, it is the Ephesian house of God with which he is immediately concerned. This letter is an ad hoc document addressing specific issues. If certain themes common elsewhere in Paul are absent in the PE, it means nothing more than that they were not relevant to the situations addressed. Quinn has argued that the addressees of the PE are types: “Titus and Timothy in the PE are less historical individuals than paradigmatic persons, models with which the new public is expected to identify” (8; cf. 9, 14, 15, 19, 21). However, Quinn does not give enough attention to the frequent use of personal comments and historical references in the text, evidence that supports the conclusion that the PE are authentic, historical documents. As a hermeneutical point, however, it may be emphasized that ad hoc letters, though written to specific circumstances to deal with specific issues, can incorporate lasting principles (cf. G. W. Knight, III, “The Scriptures Were Written for Our Instruction,” JETS 39 [1996] 3–13).

“While issues of church governance do play a significant and visible role in 1 Timothy (2:11–3:13; 5:17–25), these are found in only 27 out of 113 verses. There are many other topics Paul covers that are relevant to the specific historical situation: law and grace, the scope of the offer of salvation, personal encouragement to Timothy, widows (which is not a leadership or structural issue), slaves, false teaching, and the rich. This is also true of Paul's letter to Titus. Only 5 verses (Titus 1:5–9) out of 46 deal with church leadership. In the second letter to Timothy only 2:2 deals with leadership. That means only 33 verses out of 242 in the PE deal specifically with church structure (13.6%), and almost all of them are in 1 Timothy. But even these 33 verses are ad hoc in that they are addressing specific historical issues stemming from poor leadership. As Fee says (7), the specific problems in Ephesus are both the “occasion and the purpose,” not just the occasion for writing.

“In the relatively few verses that speak of overseers and deacons, Paul's emphasis is not on church structure. There are not even any duties assigned (with only a few implied—teaching, oversight, service). The emphasis is on the person's character, conduct, understanding of the gospel, and ability to explain and defend the true gospel. As Fee points out, many different forms of church governance claim support from the PE: ‘If the Pastor intended with these letters to set the church in order, he seems not altogether to have succeeded’ (21).

“(6) There are therefore several reasons that Paul wrote the first epistle to Timothy: (a) to encourage Timothy to stay on at Ephesus and deal with the significant and difficult issues that had arisen; (b) to provide authoritative instruction on how the household of God was to conduct itself in case Paul delayed in coming; and (c) to combat directly the opponents and their teaching and to remind Timothy of how he was to conduct himself and what he was to teach. The underlying purpose was then to encourage Timothy in his work but also to transfer Paul's authority to Timothy in his fight against the opponents.”

παραγγείλης τισὶν μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν 4 μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις, αἵτινες ἐκζητήσεις παρέχουσιν μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει, *in order that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known in faith* (1 Tim. 1:3b-4). The contents of the letter additionally provide Timothy direct validation from Paul to the congregation in his difficult task of dealing with the various issues. Since every source both inside and outside the NT affirms that Luke remained with Paul during his imprisonments and intervening ministry, it is reasonable to conclude that Luke functioned as the writing secretary for all three pastoral letters.<sup>780</sup> Whether Paul was in Philippi or somewhere else in Macedonia when First Timothy was composed is unclear. A close dating of the letter depends in large part whether Paul first went west to Spain upon release from the first imprisonment or whether he immediately traveled east. If east, then First Timothy comes very quickly after his release from imprisonment in late winter to early spring of 63 AD.

### 1 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:13

3.14 Ταῦτά σοι γράφω ἐλπίζων ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σὲ ἐν τάχει· 15 ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνω, ἵνα εἰδῆς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἐδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, 15 if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

4.13 ἕως ἔρχομαι πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ.

13 Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching.

These two very brief historical references provide some additional insight in the situation of Paul at the time of the composition of First Timothy.<sup>781</sup> The context of 3:14-15 is the guidelines for addressing inadequate leadership in the Ephesian church in 3:1-13. What follows in 3:16 is a confession of faith that is followed by assertions of immoral and ungodly conduct being advocated by false teachers in 4:1-5.

Paul indicates that he is writing Ταῦτά, these things, to Timothy to help him. The Ταῦτά reaches back the contents of the first three chapters, and most likely anticipates at least 4:1-5.<sup>782</sup> The above NRSV translation really twists Paul's words and is highly questionable. Literally Paul says, *these things to you I am writing, while expecting to come to you shortly*. The apostle clearly expected to make a trip from Macedonia to Ephesus. The participle ἐλπίζων denotes no uncertainty but full confidence. The trip was a certainty. What was uncertain in this statement by Paul was ἐν τάχει. The second half of the sentence in highly abbreviated form makes this clear. Just how quickly he comes will be determined by whether or not he experiences some kind of delay: ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνω. The third class protasis with the subjunctive verb sets up a possible but not an inevitable scenario of delay. This is very close to what Paul told the Corinthians years before from Ephesus: ἐλεύσομαι δὲ ταχέως πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ, *And I will come quickly to you, if the Lord wishes* (1 Cor. 4:19). All of Paul's plans for the future were couched inside ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ and not based purely on human reasoning. Not mention is made of what might delay Paul's trip to Ephesus, but it would have been connected to ministry demands elsewhere since now he was free of Roman governmental control of his movements.

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lvii–lix.]

<sup>780</sup>Especially significant is the statement that only Luke was with Paul (2 Tim 4:11). If the 'we' sections in Acts are accepted as historical (Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:6; also Col 4:14; Phlm 24), Paul had been spending more and more time with Luke, which may have affected Paul's communication style (cf. Knight, 50–51). If Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor 12:7) was encroaching blindness, he was becoming more dependent on others, a dependency that would be heightened by a severe imprisonment. Paul had used an amanuensis for his other writings, and, given Luke's writing ability (if his authorship of the third Gospel and Acts is accepted), it is hard to imagine someone else writing for Paul. Regardless of how much freedom Paul would have given to another amanuensis, Paul's serious predicament and Luke's friendship suggest that Paul would have given Luke more freedom as an amanuensis than he would have given to others.

"Paul could have used another amanuensis for 1 Timothy and Titus since the historical situation for each is different. But since Luke was with Paul during his final journey to Rome and subsequent imprisonments and the style of all three epistles is consistent, it is possible that Luke was Paul's amanuensis for all three letters and was given considerable freedom in writing to two men who, most likely, were also Luke's friends. While there are stylistic reasons that suggest that Luke was the amanuensis (discussed below), the historical scenario argues forcefully for this position."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lxiv.]

<sup>781</sup>Mounce, WBC, considers 3:14-16 to be the very heart of the entire letter to Timothy.

<sup>782</sup>"The word ταῦτα, 'these things,' therefore refers to chaps. 1–3 and looks forward to 1 Tim 4:1–5. Using ταῦτα to summarize previous comments is common throughout the PE (1 Tim 4:6, 11, 15; 5:7, 21; 6:2, 11; 2 Tim 1:12; 2:2, 14; Titus 2:15; 3:8) and throughout Paul in general." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 219.]

The second half of the sentence in vv. 14-15 is highly abbreviated but remains very clear as to what Paul is trying to say. The mere repetition of the core verb in v. 14 into the statement in v. 15 clarifies the sentence completely: ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνω, (γράφω) ἵνα εἰδῆς..., *but if delayed (I am writing) so that you may know...* This represents extremely common abbreviation patterns in ancient Greek. The intention of First Timothy is set forth by the ἵνα clause that is linked to γράφω.

What was Paul's intention with this letter? The core intention is εἰδῆς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, *that you may know how it is mandated to behave oneself in the household of God*. Overtly it was so that Timothy might know, but ultimately in the reading of this letter to the various house church groups it really was so that they might know. Timothy had worked with Paul for many years and clearly understood these principles. But the Ephesian believers either were forgetting or had not yet been taught since clearly they suffered from incompetent leadership among the various groups in the community, as 3:1-13 makes clear. The impersonal verb δεῖ references inside the NT usage something required by God Himself.<sup>783</sup> What God mandates is labeled ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, *to behave oneself in the household of God*. Such an emphasis on patterns of moral and religious conduct easily cover the instructions in the contents of this letter. What Paul asserts is that the guidelines laid down by Paul for Timothy to teach to the church come ultimately from God, not from some human source, even that of an apostle. Interestingly the church is defined first as οἴκῳ θεοῦ, *God's household*. Then the reference is expanded via the relative clause ἣτις ἐστίν, *which is*. Added to οἴκῳ θεοῦ are ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζώντος, στῦλος καὶ ἑδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας, *church of living God, the pillar and bulwark of the Truth*. Beyond being God's family, the church is the gathered people of God called out of the world into commitment to Him (ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζώντος). With God as the very essence of truth, then these called out people are to be the ones whose life and belief so reflect God in the world that they become the basis (ἑδραῖωμα) and the upholders (στῦλος) of God as truth to a darkened world. This eloquent characterization of the Christian community prompts the confession of faith in v. 16 concerning Christ. Timothy was provided written credentials from Paul to advocate this understanding to the believers at Ephesus. They needed to remember who they are in Christ and thus that God demands high standards of conduct from them. The advocacy of sinful conduct by the false teachers demeaned this marvelous view of who the church of God is and pulled followers into the sewer of living by this world's standards rather than by God's (4:1-5).

The other historical reference in 4:13 calls upon Timothy to give certain leadership patterns to the leaders of the various house church groups: ἕως ἔρχομαι πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, *until I come devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching*. The reference picks up on Paul's expressed plan to come to Ephesus (3:14-15) and underscores some responsibilities for Timothy between the writing of this letter and Paul's arrival in the city. The distance from Rome to Philippi was at minimum some 700 miles requiring at least a month of travel time.<sup>784</sup> But the travel time between Philippi and Ephesus was about a week or slightly over. If Paul were in Philippi at the writing of First Timothy and left the city for Ephesus soon after the letter was sent on ahead to Timothy in Ephesus, then the time between the writing and Paul's arrival in the city would not have been more than a few months at most. Even if he were elsewhere in Macedonia, not much more time would be implicit in this scenario. The primary variable in this is whether Paul was delayed in leaving Macedonia as he mentions in 3:14-15.

---

<sup>783</sup>“δεῖ, ‘it is necessary,’ is an important word in the PE. Of its nine occurrences, four of them are used to say that church leaders must be a certain type of person (see 3:2 for a discussion). Its occurrence here in 3:14 carries the strongest meaning of all nine passages. Paul is not saying that the behavior he is describing is optional; it is mandated because the church is the house of the living God, a protector of the truth, and it is therefore absolutely essential that its integrity be maintained. What is more problematic is the question of who or what is the implied subject of δεῖ. Some suggest that it is Timothy, who is the subject of the finite verb εἰδῆς, ‘you know,’ and his behavior is important. However, the instructions in chaps. 2 and 3 are addressed to the church and not to him personally. It is therefore more likely that the subject is the indefinite ‘one’ or perhaps ‘people.’ Paul has been spelling out how the church as a whole should behave, specifically in its prayer life, worship, and leadership; now he tells them why this is important.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 220.]

<sup>784</sup>“Estimates range from 700 to 1,200 miles depending on the route taken. Travel times varied significantly depending whether one travelled by sea or land and the weather at a given time of the year. Further variables included the pace at which one walked or whether one was able to use a horse or other animals. All such factors make it difficult to categorically state how long a trip between Philippi and Rome might take.<sup>[6]</sup> Perhaps the shortest route would have been to take the *Via Egnatia* (which passed through Philippi) west to Epidamnos/Dyrrhachium on the coast of Macedonia (about 350 miles) and make the 80 mile sea voyage across the Adriatic Sea to Brundisium. From there one could take the *Via Appia* some 350 miles to Rome. In the best conditions such a trip could be made by foot in about six weeks. In less favorable circumstances, it could take three months.” [“Fridays in Philippians -- Paul's Circumstances,” [matthewsharmon.com](http://matthewsharmon.com)]





ΤΙΤΟΣ | 13 of 13

**2 Co 2:13** but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said farewell to them and went on to Macedonia.

**2 Co 7:6** But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus,

**2 Co 7:13** In this we find comfort. In addition to our own consolation, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by all of you.

**2 Co 7:14** For if I have been somewhat boastful about you to him, I was not disgraced; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved true as well.

**2 Co 8:6** so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.

**2 Co 8:16** But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have.

**2 Co 8:23** As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

**2 Co 12:18** I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

**Ga 2:1** Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

**Ga 2:3** But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

**2 Ti 4:10** for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

**Tt 1:4** To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

What Paul specifically calls upon Timothy to do is referenced as τῆ ἀναγνώσει, τῆ παρακλήσει, τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ. In the two other instances of ἀνάγνωσις in the NT -- Acts 13:15, 2 Cor. 3:14 -- the idea is a public reading of the OT scriptures. This is the meaning here in 1 Tim. 4:13 as well. The verb πρόσεχε from προσέχω defines a devoting of oneself to something. Thus Paul stresses to Timothy that an important avenue to correcting the problems at the church in Ephesus was insisting upon the sacred scriptures being read at every meeting of each house church. Christianity is a religious commitment based upon and framed by sacred scripture. The public reading of this text is under no circumstances to be neglected.

Then growing out of the sacred text comes τῆ παρακλήσει, and τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ. The central authority of scripture provides the solid basis for exhorting and encouraging God's people to obey God fully in their daily living. Additionally, it provides the foundation for teaching that reflects God's will for His people, not human speculation that the Ephesians had gotten mixed up in as defined in 4:1-5, 7.

One must also consider the larger context of 4:14-15 which is vv. 11-16. In this larger pericope Paul stresses to Timothy the importance of setting a good example to the believers at Ephesus. Thus he underscored the critical significance of combining example with scripture based exhortation and teaching. If Timothy implemented all this during this interim period prior to Paul's arrival in the city, many of the church's problem would be well on their way to solution.

### Titus 1:5

5 Τοῦτου χάριν ἀπέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ, ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ καὶ καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διεταξάμην,

5 I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you:

The letter of Paul to Titus adds another significant, and difficult, dimension to the picture of Paul's ministry between the first and second Roman imprisonments. The two historical references in chapters two and three present a picture of Paul having traveled to Crete prior to the writing of this letter, but by

the writing of the letter he is now in Nicopolis, a city on the western coast of Macedonia. Or, at least on his way to Nicopolis.

**Titus** shows up inside the NT primarily inside Second Corinthians with eight of the twelve references to his name.<sup>785</sup> He played an important role in Paul's ministry to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the mid 50s. He first surfaces in the NT in Gal. 2:1, 3 on Paul's trip to Jerusalem at the end of the first missionary journey from Antioch in the late 40s. Now he re-surfaces in the 60s in the letter to him and then later in 2 Tim. 4:10 where Paul indicates he has gone to Dalmatia. This was sometime after his work in Crete. Dalmatia was further up the western coast from Nicopolis which is where Paul planned to spend the winter.

We don't know much about Titus' background, not nearly as much as we do about Timothy.<sup>786</sup> In Gal. 2:3, Paul indicates his non-Jewish background, "Ἕλλην ὄν, **being Greek**. In spite of pressure from the Pharisee elements in the Jerusalem church, Paul stood his ground and would not allow Titus to be circumcised as they demanded (Gal. 2:4). Additionally, Titus had joined Barnabas and Paul during the first missionary journey as some unnamed point (Gal. 2:3) in the middle to late 40s. Perhaps it was as John Mark's replacement when he abandoned the group on the mainland after Cyprus. Thus Titus' home was somewhere in Galatia and he met Paul during that first missionary journey of the apostle and Barnabas.

The next time Titus surfaces in the pages of the New Testament is toward the end of the third missionary journey at Ephesus in the middle 50s. Sometime prior to Paul's departure from Ephesus at the end of the two plus year ministry there, Paul had sent Titus ahead to Corinth in order to work out a conflict between the apostle and the church, as well as to arrange for the Corinthian contribution to the relief offering being collected for believers in Judea (2 Cor. 7:13). They had agreed to meet at Troas in order to determine the best next steps. But when Titus didn't show up, Paul journeyed on into Macedonia where they met up (7:13). Titus has good news about the situation in Corinth (2 Cor. 7:6, 13), which prompts the writing of Second Corinthians around 56 AD from Macedonia. Titus then takes the letter on a return trip back to Corinth with Paul coming behind him as the passing of some time. Another unnamed brother accompanies Titus to Corinth (2 Cor. 12:18).

The third time Titus surfaces inside the New Testament is with the above reference together with Titus 1:4. He has been traveling with Paul again during this resumption of ministry after Paul's release from Roman imprisonment.

The final time we see reference to Titus inside the New Testament is in 2 Tim. 4:10 where Paul mentions that Titus after rejoining the apostle upon completion of his work on Crete he has now traveled on to Dalmatia on the western coast of Greece.

The character of Titus is described in limited fashion in some of the Second Corinthians references, especially in chapters seven and eight. But these are not limited to Second Corinthians. A listing of these character

---

<sup>785</sup>Titus is not mentioned in Acts, but he does play a prominent role in 2 Corinthians. According to the traditional theory, Paul paid a 'painful visit' to the Corinthian church (2 Cor 2:1) and wrote a painful letter (2 Cor 2:4), which Titus carried to the church (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:6). Paul left Ephesus for Troas, hoping to find Titus there. When he did not, he continued on to Macedonia, where he found Titus, who brought an encouraging word about the church's repentance (2 Cor 7:13-15):

And besides our own comfort we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by you all. For if I have expressed to him some pride in you, I was not put to shame; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting before Titus has proved true. And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, and the fear and trembling with which you received him.

"Titus had been involved in collecting the offering for the Jerusalem church (8:6) and was to return to the Corinthians to complete the task (2 Cor 8:16-17, 23):

But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord.... As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker in your service.

"Titus was a trusted member of Paul's inner circle. 2 Cor 12:17-18 mentions a visit by Titus to Corinth, but it is difficult to identify the precise event (cf. 2 Cor 8:6, 16-24; Martin, 2 Corinthians, 447-48):

Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

"The only other references to Titus are in Paul's letter to him and in 2 Tim 4:10. Paul asks Titus to leave Crete and meet him in Nicopolis for the winter (Titus 3:12). Possibly Titus arrived and either went on to Dalmatia before winter set in or stayed for winter and spring and then went on to Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10; see below)."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), li.]

<sup>786</sup>Titus was a gentile Christian (Gal 2:3) and one of Paul's chosen travel companions (Gal 2:1) and fellow workers (2 Cor 8:23). He was also Paul's trusted emissary for the Corinthian community (2 Cor 12:18) and one who assisted with the collection for the church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:6). In addition, Titus is the intended recipient of the NT pastoral letter bearing his name (Titus 1:4)." [John Gillman, "Titus (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 581.]

traits is as follows:

**Titus 1:4**, Τίτω γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινήν πίστιν, *To Titus a genuine child in the common faith*. This letter *Adscriptio* naming Titus as the recipient of the letter pays tribute to the character of Titus as one who was authentically committed to the apostolic Gospel.<sup>787</sup> γνησίῳ τέκνῳ may imply that he was a convert of Paul, but the phrase is not sufficiently specific here to be certain. Although some erroneously define κοινήν πίστιν as a commonly held orthodoxy, the natural meaning of a common surrender commitment to Christ makes clearer sense contextually and stands in continuity with the Pauline usage of faith throughout his letters.

**2 Cor. 2:13**, Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, *Titus my brother*. When Titus did not show up at Troas on the third missionary journey after Paul left Ephesus to meet him there, the apostle traveled on to Macedonia where the two were able to make contact. Titus had been in Corinth in order to help work things out with the church in advance of Paul's arrival there. Here Paul speaks of him as a brother in the faith, thus affirming a deep love for him and respect of his service for Christ.

**2 Cor. 7:14**, ὅτι εἶπὶ αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθην, ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλάλησαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη, *For if I have been somewhat boastful about you to him, I was not disgraced; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved true as well*. In his mentioning of Titus and his ministry to the Corinthians Paul affirms to them that his pride in the integrity and sincerity of Titus in seeking to help the Corinthians proved to be true once Titus arrived in Corinth and began seeking to help them. When Titus made contact with Paul in Macedonia he was very joyful about the Corinthians to the apostle (v. 13b) which in turn gave Paul confidence and joy toward the Corinthians (vv. 15-16).

**2 Cor. 8:23**, εἶτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός· εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ, *As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ*. Paul here identifies Titus as both κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός, *my partner and fellow worker for you*. Again the high regard of the apostle for Titus comes to the forefront with these two designations. In Paul's commitment to minister to the Corinthians, so also did Titus share that commitment and put it into concrete actions with his advanced trip to the city to help the church. Titus is then included in a reference to unnamed Christians as *brothers* (ἀδελφοί) and *missionaries* (ἀπόστολοι) reaching out to the Corinthians with the message of the Gospel and its implications for Christian commitment.

**2 Cor. 12:18**, παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν; *I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?* Here the impeccable integrity of Titus while ministering to the Corinthians is alluded to by Paul. He followed the same guidelines of the apostle in his ministry to the Corinthians. Neither of them asked for money from the Corinthians for themselves. Neither of them conducted themselves in questionable ways during their first hand ministry to the Corinthians.

What comes out of this portrait of Titus from the apostle Paul is a young missionary of the highest caliber who lived and served Christ with the highest standards of conduct. It is no wonder then that by the 60s Paul felt entirely comfortable leaving Titus on Crete in order to straighten out the many issues plaguing the believing communities on the island.

Thus in Titus 1:5 Paul can indicate his confidence in Titus by leaving him on the island as they passed through this region revisiting the churches established earlier. The core clause Τοῦτου χάριν ἀπέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ, *for this reason I left you on Crete*, signals the basic point of Paul. Clearly from this statement Paul and Titus traveled to the island of Crete to visit the churches on the island. While there the apostle uncovered numerous problems among the house church groups in the towns and cities on the island. For some unexplained reason

<sup>787</sup>“Τίτω γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινήν πίστιν, ‘To Titus, a true son in a common faith.’ In the second part of the salutation, Paul greets Titus in language similar to his address of Timothy, his γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, ‘true spiritual son’ (1 Tim 1:2), his ἀγαπητῷ τέκνῳ, ‘beloved son’ (2 Tim 1:2). See Comment on 1 Tim 1:2 for discussion. γνήσιος means ‘legitimate,’ carrying the notions of intimacy and authority. It could be that Titus was converted by Paul (Jeremias; Kelly; cf. Gal 2:1–3; Introduction, “The PE within the Framework of Paul’s Life, Historical Reconstruction from Acts”), but it cannot be known for sure. κοινήν, ‘common,’ suggests to some that πίστιν, ‘faith,’ is used here in the sense of orthodoxy (cf. ‘common salvation’ in Jude 3). But to others it has the usual Pauline sense of a believing response that binds Paul the Jew and Titus the Gentile together, a significant point in light of the Jewish nature of the heresy being taught in Crete (cf. 1:10, 14; on πίστις, ‘faith,’ cf. Introduction, “Themes in the PE”). It also shows that while Titus may have been Paul’s spiritual son, they were both on equal footing in the arena of faith (so Chrysostom, “Homily 1”; NPNF 13:521–22). While Paul expected this letter to be read by the church as well (cf. especially 3:15), the salutation clearly designates the recipient as an individual, and the epistle asks to be interpreted primarily within that context.”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 381–382.]



he did not have time or opportunity to spend in order to straighten out the many problems. But Titus did and thus Paul leaves him there to tackle the problems. Although the chronological sequence of the visits of Paul during this short period between his first and second imprisonments (appx. 63 to 65 AD) is very difficult to reconstruct with certainty, it is clear that Paul and Titus made a trip to Crete.<sup>788</sup> And probably Paul was anxious to get on to Ephesus to check on Timothy who had been there for some time working with the Christian community (cf. 1 Timothy).



Interestingly Crete is not mentioned in the NT as a place of missionary activity by Paul: Acts 27:7, 12, 13, 21 (4 of the 5 NT uses).<sup>789</sup> In the centuries of the OT, Crete shows up in the Old Testament as one of the sources of the Philistines who tormented the Israelites.<sup>790</sup> For several centuries a large Jewish population flourished on the island and exerted considerable influence over daily life.<sup>791</sup> But the standards of living that dominated the island did not reflect traditional Jewish religious values at all.<sup>792</sup> For Christianity to make an impact on the people of the island a high level of Christian commitment was required that ran very counter to the drift of society in general. Although the beginning of Christianity on the island is unknown with certainty, there were Cretans present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost who converted to Christianity (Acts 2:11).<sup>793</sup> By the time Paul and Titus arrived on the island in the 60s -- some 30 plus years later -- an established Christianity was present, although not well organized and reflecting the surrounding culture more than the Gospel. Titus' task was to change this.

The reason for leaving Titus on Crete is anticipated by *Τούτου χάριν, because of this*. This causal prepositional phrase then anticipates *ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ καὶ καταστήσῃ κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγώ*

*ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ καὶ καταστήσῃ κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγώ*

<sup>788</sup>If Paul was able to make a trip to Spain (1 Clement 5:5-7; Muratorian Canon; Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.22.7-8, et als.), it seems as though he went there first after release from the first Roman imprisonment. Subsequent to that he traveled east mostly in the Aegean Sea region before being re-arrested and brought back to Rome.

<sup>789</sup>Κρήτη Κρέτῃ; gen. Κρέτῆς, fem. proper noun. Crete, a large Greek island in the Mediterranean Sea, midway between Syria and Italy. It is about 140 miles long by thirty-five miles wide. The people were proverbially said to be liars (Titus 1:12). Paul was shipwrecked near the island. He left Titus there as the first pastor and superintendent who was to 'ordain elders in every city' of the island (Titus 1:5; see Acts 27:7, 12, 13, 21). It was said to have one hundred cities, from which it was known as hekatópolis." [Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).]

<sup>790</sup>"Biblical references to Caphtor or Crete are few. The Israelites, who played no active role at all on the Mediterranean Sea, knew the remote island chiefly as the home of the Philistines (Deut. 2:23; Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7; see also Gen. 10:14; 1 Chron. 1:12), part of the great movement of the 'Sea Peoples.' Among these Philistine immigrants were the Cherethites and Pelethites, who formed an important part of David's army (2 Sam. 8:18; 15:18; 20:23)." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 194.]

<sup>791</sup>"By the 2d century B.C. a formidable Jewish constituency appeared on the island of Crete (Tac. Hist. 5. 2) which was centered in the area of Gortyna, lying in Crete's Messara plain. When the Cretans began oppressing the Jews, the latter secured Roman patronage (141 B.C.) and the Romans considered them to be loyal subjects (1 Macc 15:23). From this time through the New Testament era the Cretan Jews continued to flourish. Paul commissioned Titus to oversee the ministry on Crete, and to counteract Judaizing tendencies (Titus 1:5-14). In 67 B.C., Rome finally annexed Crete and Cyrene (Libya); they remained a joint Roman province until Constantine separated them." [Jerry A. Pattengale, "Crete (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1206.]

<sup>792</sup>"The Cretan poet Epimenides (ca. 600 B.C.) describes all Cretans as 'liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons' (quoted both in Titus 1:12 and Acts 17:28). This characterization is found in several ancient sources, e.g., Livy Epit. Per. 44:45; Callimachus Jov. 8; and Plutarch Aem 23. Evidently, after several generations of living in the turbulence of Cretan culture, these characteristics became manifest in the Cretan Jews as well (Titus 3:1)." [Jerry A. Pattengale, "Crete (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1206.]

<sup>793</sup>"It is not known how Crete was first evangelized. Cretan Jews and proselytes were present at the first Christian Pentecost, and some of them may well have been among the 3000 converts (Ac 2:11, 41). It is hardly likely that St. Paul was idle while he was perforce spending 'much time' (ἰκανοῦ χρόνου) near the city of Lasea (27:8, 9). The Epistle to Titus, though perhaps not Pauline, reflects a credible tradition which links the name of Titus with Cretan Christianity. The need of the churches of which he had the oversight was organization (Tit 1:5). 'The natural inference is that up to this time the Christians of Crete had gone on without any kind of responsible government, and that this anarchic condition was one considerable cause of the evidently low moral condition to which they had sunk. Accordingly, the appointment of elders was a necessary first step towards raising the standard of Christian life generally' (F. J. A. Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, 1897, p. 176)." [James Strahan, "Crete, Cretans," ed. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (2 Vols.) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916-1918), 265.]

σοι διαταξάμην, so that the things lacking might be set straight and so that you might establish in each city elders just as I have given you detailed instructions. Thus a twofold assignment was given to Titus in helping the churches on the island. First Titus was to τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθῶσθαι, set straight the deficiencies. What this meant specifically is spelled out in Titus 1: 10-3:11. A careful reading of this material reflects problems more in the area of moral behavior than with twisted doctrine, although some of this was present (cf. 3:9-11). The life changing power of the Gospel needed to take hold in the churches and turn around the life style of the believers. They needed to reflect Christ to the pagan society around them, rather than allow that pagan society to corrupt their values.

Critical to such a transformation was to get the house church groups across the island under the leadership of genuinely qualified leadership. This was the second task of Titus while on the island. Titus 1:6-9 spells out in very general terms the necessary qualities of leadership for each of the house church groups.<sup>794</sup> Paul indicated that already he had discussed in greater detail what this meant than is contained in the letter: καταστήσης κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διαταξάμην (1:5b). Paul recognized that a community of believers will never rise above the spirituality of its leaders. Such a leader must exhibit moral traits along with spiritual maturity and understanding of the Gospel so that he provides τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ, health producing teaching, to the community (1:9b). Additionally he must be able to recognize teaching that ruins the spiritual health of the community and then refute it aggressively (καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν; 1:9c).

Did Titus assume ecclesiastical authority over the churches on the island in carrying out this assignment? Many down through the centuries have interpreted καταστήσης to imply such. But this is a distortion based on a centuries later model being pushed down upon the apostolic era!<sup>795</sup> The idea of καθίστημι is to 'put in place' but in no way assumes an authoritative role for Titus in doing such.<sup>796</sup> Instead he functioned as a leadership catalyst helping the churches make sound choices for leaders in their individual groups. The guidelines laid out in 1:6-9 served to assist the churches in making those decisions with the help and encouragement of Titus. As more and more of the Christian communities moved this direction, they would have solid, spiritual leaders who could help the communities flush out the corruption of the surrounding culture and replace this with sound Christian values. Where leaders were already in place, these guidelines served to challenge them to either measure up or else get out of a leadership role in the church. Such was essential if the Gospel were to make substantial headway in transforming the lives of the people on the island. But given the rotten nature of life there, Titus indeed had a big task in front of him in helping the churches move this direction.

Paul in leaving Titus on the island with such an assignment reflects not only deep confidence in Titus' leadership role as a missionary, but also a great concern for the quality of the spiritual life of the Christian communities on the island. Very likely he had been aware to some extent of the corrupting influences of pagan culture on the Jewish communities and during his visit discovered first hand just how extensive it was. This prompted renewed efforts to make sure the Christian communities did not lose their witness to Christ through a similar corrupting influence. In later Christian history Crete does not surface in the discussions of the church fathers. From scant references later on it is clear that Christianity gradually came to dominate the island, especially during the Byzantine era of the Roman empire. Later on Muslim influence came to dominate the island.<sup>797</sup> Today [Crete](#) is

---

<sup>794</sup>It is important to recognize the interchangeable use of πρεσβυτέρους and ἐπίσκοπον as referring to the same person for a leader of a house church group. Efforts to distance these into two separate roles are here established as completely false. The terms πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος simply stress leadership responsibilities with wisdom and with pastoral care. The English terms 'elder' and 'bishop' that are often used to translate these terms carry a huge amount of theological baggage accumulated centuries later through misinterpretation of the text.

<sup>795</sup>The tendency of many church fathers to interpret καθίστημι in this authoritative manner grew out of their adoption of Hellenistic patterns of authoritative structures into church life and then to read those structures back into the beginnings of Christianity during the apostolic era. Note the RCC in its adoption of the Roman emperor and senate as the key organizing structure of western Christianity. The Jewish model of the synagogue served the beginning of Christianity as the exemplary model of church organization where volunteer service as a leader of the religious community was the rule. But beginning in the second century when 'things Jewish' became increasingly despised in Christianity churches began seeking their models from the surrounding culture in a growing abandonment of the models set by the apostles. The experience of persecution with church leaders often the primary target helped foster this departure from the example of the Pauline churches of the first century.

<sup>796</sup>"From the basic sense of 'to set down,' 'to put in place,' there derive the following meanings which are significant in the NT." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:444.]

<sup>797</sup>"Because of its location and its relative fertility, Crete has been a prize of war and of commerce. The island was conquered by Rome in 67 BC and became a separate province. The inhabitants prospered under the Romans and later under the Greek Christians (Byzantines). The Saracens (Muslims) occupied the island for over a century (AD 823-960). After centuries of Christian leadership,

one of thirteen administrative districts of the country of Greece and is dominantly Greek Orthodox Christian. Thus we can know that eventually Christianity grew on the island, but whether or not Titus was successful in bringing it back into an apostolic framework we have no record.

### Titus 3:12-13

12 Ὅταν πέμψω Ἀρτεμᾶν πρὸς σὲ ἢ Τύχικον, σπουδάσον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ κέκρικα παραχειμάσαι. 13 Ζηνᾶν τὸν νομικὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν σπουδαίως πρόπεμψον, ἵνα μηδὲν αὐτοῖς λείπη.

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing.

With this second reference to a historical location for Paul, we find more insight as well as challenges. These statements come as a part of the *Conclusio* of the letter (3:12-15). Verses 12-13 constitute the *Travel Plans* section of the *Conclusio* with other typical letter elements for a *Conclusio* following in verses 14 and 15.

This section provides one of the few clues as to where Paul was when the letter was composed. The adverb of place ἐκεῖ, *there*, signals that he was not yet in [Nicopolis](#) and that the letter was composed during the fall of the year.<sup>798</sup> Was Paul in Ephesus at the time of the writing? It is certainly a possibility, but his intention was to not stay too long there and to make his way across to the western coast of Greece to spend the winter at Nicopolis. Another possibility held by several commentators is that the letter was written from Corinth while Paul was working his way north to Nicopolis.<sup>799</sup> Evidently Zenas and Apollos (Tit. 3:13) carried the letter to Titus at Crete. Also [2 Tim. 4:10-12](#)



contains a number of references to the travel destinations of several of Paul's assistants later on, including Titus who would be with Paul in Rome but then would go on to Dalmatia,<sup>800</sup> a region not too far north of Nicopolis.<sup>801</sup> In this later assignment to gospelize very barbaric and rebellious people who hated the Romans, Titus may have begun to think that the cultural pollution of Crete looked fairly simple in comparison.<sup>802</sup>

The city of Nicopolis lay on the western coast of Greece and would have provided a suitable place to it was conquered by the Turkish sultan, and civilization languished (1669–1898). In the 20th century Crete has been a part of Greece, except for a period of German occupancy during World War II.” [Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 333.]

<sup>798</sup>A subscript at the end of Titus in the Codex Alexandrinus contains a note that the letter Titus was sent from Nicopolis to Crete. But Titus 3:12 rules this out as a possibility.

<sup>799</sup>“It is widely held that after traveling through Miletus and Corinth, Paul made his way to Nicopolis, where he was arrested and returned to Rome in a second Roman imprisonment.” [Robert W. Smith, “Nicopolis (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1108.]

<sup>800</sup>“**DALMATIA (PLACE)** [Gk Dalmatia (Δαλαματία)]. A region along the modern Yugoslav coast of the Adriatic Sea which in apostolic times was the SW part of Illyricum. This ill-defined mountainous district was a nemesis to Rome. By the time of Paul’s epistle to Timothy (ca. A.D. 67) the name denoted at least the region between the Macedonian frontier to the S and the river Titius (Kerka) and oftentimes the entire province of Illyricum (2 Tim 4:10). The broader definition was definitely used during the Flavian era. Main Dalmatian cities included Salona, Scodra, and Delminium—the capital.” [Jerry A. Pattengale, “Dalmatia (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4.]

<sup>801</sup>“**Νικόπολις, εως, ἢ Nicopolis**; of the many cities bearing this name (Stephan. Byz. names three of them, in Epirus, Bithynia, and Armenia Minor), the one mentioned **Tit 3:12** and in the subscr. of **1 Ti** and **Tit** is usu. taken to be the N. in Epirus (mod. Smyrtoula) and founded by Octavian as monument to his victory over Mark Antony 31 B.C. at Actium. (Cass. Dio 50, 13; 51, 1; Strabo 7, 7, 5; 10, 2, 2).—Pauly-W. XVII 511–39; Kl. Pauly IV 123–26; MDibelius, Hdb. exc. at Tit 3:14; PECS 625f.—DELG s.v. νίκη.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 673.]

<sup>802</sup>Evidently Christianity had begun making inroads into Dalmatia by the mid 50s since Paul mentions Illyricum as the western boundary of his preaching of the Gospel in Rom. 15:19. Illyricum was often used interchangeably with Dalmatia in the first century: κύκλω μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ.



spend the winter.<sup>803</sup> Whether Paul was seeking to establish a church there or to help out an existing congregation is not known because of the limited data. But he wanted Titus to leave Crete and join him at Nicopolis in order to help him during his stay in the city: σπούδασον ἔλθειν πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, *endeavor to come to me at Nicopolis*. How long Titus had been on Crete prior to the arrival of the letter with these instructions is unknown. Also, Titus was to turn over his leadership role to either Artemas or Tychicus upon their arrival in the city: Ὅταν πέμψω Ἀρτεμᾶν πρὸς σέ ἢ Τύχικον, *whenever I send Artemas to you, or Tychius*. At the time of writing Paul is undecided about which one to send to Crete. 2 Tim. 4:12 indicates that at least later Tychicus<sup>804</sup> was sent from Rome to Ephesus to relieve Timothy so that Timothy could join Paul in Rome. This would possibly suggest that Artemas<sup>805</sup> ended up being sent to Crete to relieve Titus, but such is not certain.

Wherever Paul was at the writing of Titus -- either Ephesus or Corinth -- many with the apostle sent their greetings to Titus on Crete: Ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες, *All those with me are sending greetings to you* (Tit. 3:15a).<sup>806</sup> This probably includes both fellow workers with Paul and members of the Christian community where

---

<sup>803c</sup>The most likely site for the meeting was the Nicopolis in Epirus; this same Nicopolis is also known as Nicopolis of Achaia. This variance has resulted because Tacitus (Ann. 2.53) described it as an Achaian town, whereas Ptolemy (Geog. 3.13) ascribed it to Epirus. The two terms are designations for large portions of what is today modern Greece. It was located on the W side of the Greek peninsula across the sea from the S end of the Italian peninsula (39°02'N; 20°44'E). The city was built on the isthmus of the Bay of Actium. Augustus founded the city in commemoration of the important naval victory over Mark Anthony in 31 B.C. which took place in the bay. The undisputed Princeps established the city as a Roman colony. The show piece of Nicopolis was a memorial dedicated in 29 B.C. to Neptune and Mars. The monument was decorated with a number of rams from the front of ships captured during the naval conflict. The city dominated the trade of the region and was the venue for a quadrennial festival which rivaled the Olympic games. Herod the Great, in his typical flair for promoting his own position with Augustus, made generous donations toward the construction of a temple there, as well as for numerous other public buildings (Josephus, Ant 16.5.3 § 147). The city became the home of the exiled philosopher Epictetus in A.D. 89 (Aulus Gellius Attic Nights 15.11.5). The site is occupied today by the modern village of Smyrtoula." [Robert W. Smith, "Nicopolis (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1108.]

<sup>804c</sup>**TYCHICUS (PERSON)** [Gk Tychikos (Τυχικός)]. A Christian from Asia Minor who traveled with Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4) and who was later sent to the Colossians (Col 4:7–9) and Ephesians (Eph 6:21–22). In the context of the third missionary journey, Tychicus is mentioned with Trophimus, along with several others who accompanied Paul as he returned from Corinth to Macedonia (Acts 20:4). From there, Tychicus and the others went ahead and waited for Paul to catch up with them at Troas, where Paul then spent seven days (20:6). Some commentators have suggested that Tychicus was delegated by one or more of the churches to carry the collection from them to Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:3–4) (Lightfoot 1879: 233–34; Bruce *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians* NICNT, 176). However, while Acts relates that Trophimus went on with Paul to Jerusalem (cf. 21:6), it is not clear whether Tychicus did also.

"Tychicus (assumably the same person) is described by 'Paul' in Colossians as 'a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord' (Col 4:7) who is being sent to the Colossians along with Onesimus. In Ephesians, Tychicus is sent alone, and is portrayed in the same way, although without the characterization of 'fellow servant' (Eph 6:21). Each of these letters reports verbatim that Tychicus was sent to the readers so 'that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts' (Col 4:8; Eph 6:22). If Ephesians is dependent on Colossians, as many think probable, then the Ephesian reference to Tychicus is a literary borrowing. Whatever the case, Tychicus' twofold task is to relay pertinent information about Paul not expressed in the letters, and to provide encouragement to the community. A well-attested variant reading for Col 4:8 gives as Tychicus' first assignment: "that he may learn your news," implying that he was to report this news back to Paul. Because of his mission to relay information, the inference has often been made that Tychicus delivered both Colossians and Ephesians, and possibly the letter to the Laodiceans as well (Col 4:17).

"Since Tychicus is identified as one of the 'Asians' (Gk *Asianoî*; Acts 20:4), it is possible that he was already known to the communities he was to visit. However, since Colossians specifies Onesimus as 'one of yourselves' (4:9), without saying the same of Tychicus, one concludes that Tychicus was probably not from that city.

"Tychicus is also mentioned twice in the Pastorals. According to 2 Tim 4:12, 'Paul' says he sent Tychicus to Ephesus. Was he to take over Timothy's responsibilities there? In Titus 3:12, 'Paul' intended to send either Tychicus or Artemas to Crete, evidently to replace Titus, thus freeing him to meet Paul in Nicopolis where he planned to spend the winter. On the basis of 2 Tim 4:12, which would place Tychicus in Ephesus, it has been conjectured that Artemas and not Tychicus was the person eventually sent to Crete."

[John Gillman, "Tychicus (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 682.]

<sup>805c</sup>**ARTEMAS (PERSON)** [Gk Artemas (Ἀρτεμας)]. A companion of Paul in the later years of Paul's career (Tit 3:12). It is never mentioned, however, where Artemas and Paul met. The letter to Titus portrays Paul as planning to send either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete, presumably to take Titus' place temporarily as the leader of the church there. Thus freed, Titus would be able to meet Paul at Nicopolis where he had decided to spend the winter. Of the several cities named Nicopolis, most commentators judge the reference in Tit 3:12 to be Nicopolis in Epirus on the W coast of Greece. Since there is a tradition preserved in 2 Tim 3:10 that Titus went to Dalmatia, to the north of Nicopolis, it is probable that he visited Paul along the way in Nicopolis and that Artemas (or Tychicus), if Paul followed through with his plan, spent time in Crete serving the church while Titus was away." [Florence Morgan Gillman, "Artemas (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 464.]

<sup>806</sup>The insights from 2 Timothy will be treated below under topic **8.1.6.2 Paul's Snapshot Glimpses of the Last Days**,

the letter was composed. Titus was well known and beloved by many inside the larger Christian world of that day.

### Church Fathers:

With the post-biblical materials treated below a slightly different analysis will be followed. Some introductory background about the nature and chronological setting of the source will be provided in order to better understand the perspective taken about Paul in the quotation. Then an examination of the relevant parts of the text will be given to be sure that understanding of what the author said and how it fits into the setting of the era of its composition.

One point of importance about the image of Paul from the second century onward is helpful. The thinking of Paul in his letters was not nearly as influential in the second century as was his courageous example of faithfulness to Christ.<sup>807</sup> A major reason for this stems from what is said about Paul in 2 Peter 3:15-16.<sup>808</sup> The difficulty of understanding what he said puzzled many of the later readers. It led some to 'daisy pick' his writings in order to justify their preconceived notions. Often they end up making Paul say just the opposite of what he wrote in his letters. Out of the canonical sources of understanding of the life of Paul emerge a wide variety of pictures of Paul.<sup>809</sup> Not much, however, is said in these later sources about the resumption of ministry after release from the first imprisonment in Rome. It is assumed, but the interest is much more in how Paul died and left a worthy example of martyrdom.

What is the difference between the [church fathers](#) and the [NT Apocrypha](#)? The labels themselves betray signals of meaning. In both eastern and western Christianity, the church fathers comprise the 'continuation' of apostolic tradition and authority, thus providing sources of 'orthodox' understanding of Christianity.<sup>810</sup> This view remains in place among Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox views still today, although it is interpreted differently. The negative oriented label Apocrypha specifies the writings of the heretics who opposed orthodox views of Christianity. Among modern Protestants the sharp lines between heresy and orthodoxy are not drawn as intensely as among Catholics and Eastern Orthodox groups. But generally among Protestants, the levels of knowledge of both sets of writings are not understood as deeply nor studied as much. Although not limited to Gnostic beliefs, the majority of the NT Apocrypha writings do reflect this radically different understanding of Christianity found in the Gnostic writings. For both traditions, Paul stood as an important Christian example, although very different perspectives develop regarding the details of each.

### 1 Clement, Letter to the Corinthians, 5

1 Ἄλλ' ἴνα τῶν ἀρχαίων ὑποδειγμάτων παυσώμεθα, ἔλθωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα γενομένους ἀθλητάς·

<sup>807</sup>“Thus the story of Paul in early church tradition begins with the so-called Apostolic Fathers. Here it is evident that Paul’s life and personality made a stronger impact on the next few generations than did his ideas.” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 692.]

<sup>808</sup>**2 Pet. 3:15b-16.** καθὼς καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸς Παῦλος κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν, 16 ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς λαλῶν ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τούτων, ἐν αἷς ἐστὶν δυσνόητά τινα, ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλώσουσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν.

So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures.

<sup>809</sup>“This means that the traditions we are examining are based on a very complex figure. The data include the Paul who speaks in the unquestionably genuine letters, the Paul of the disputed letters and the Paul of the book of Acts (see Paul in Acts and Letters). These diverse images of Paul have shaped the even more diverse images to be found in the ancient church. Even in the NT itself there is evidence that Paul’s views were subject to conflicting interpretations, and that a correct understanding of Paul’s teaching was already being seen by some writers as a matter of life and death (cf. 2 Pet 3:15–16, where those who distort Paul’s writings are said to do so ‘to their own destruction’).

1. The Apostolic Fathers
2. The Marcionite and Ebionite Paul
3. The Ascetic and Gnostic Paul
4. The Orthodox Paul”

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 692.]

<sup>810</sup>To be certain, the interpretive trends among the church fathers quickly begin moving away from understanding Paul in the context of his Jewishness and more in the assumption of his Hellenism as a diaspora Jew. The contemporary influence of the culture surrounding the fathers then plays an increasingly dominating role in how Paul was understood. This sometimes is not much less ‘heretical’ than that of the heretics who were condemned by many of the church fathers. Mostly the issue is a matter of how extensive the contemporary cultural influences were upon the interpreters of Paul. And also, what those cultural influences were.

λάβωμεν τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν τὰ γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα. 2 διὰ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον οἱ μέγιστοι καὶ δικαιοτάτοι στύλοι ἐδιώχθησαν καὶ ἕως θανάτου ἤθλησαν. 3 λάβωμεν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀποστόλους· 4 Πέτρον, ὃς διὰ ζῆλον ἄδικον οὐχ ἓνα οὐδὲ δύο, ἀλλὰ πλείονας ὑπήνεγκεν πόνους καὶ οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη· εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης. 5 διὰ ζῆλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, 6 ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, φυγαδευθεὶς, λιθασθεὶς, κήρυξ γενόμενος ἔν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν, 7 δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη· τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἀνελήμφθη,<sup>1</sup> ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός.<sup>811</sup>

1 But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. 2 Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. 3 Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. 4 Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. 5 Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, 6 after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, 7 having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.<sup>812</sup>

[Clement of Rome](#) is the acknowledged source of this material. Who was he? One thing is clear: he is not the Clement mentioned by Paul in Phil. 4:3 at Philippi. This is true even though this linkage was commonly made by many church fathers beginning in the third century.<sup>813</sup> This Clement was a spiritual leader of the Christian community at Rome during the last decade of the first century. Very little is known with certainty about him beyond that he is listed as the third or fourth successor to Peter by Roman Catholics (ca. 92-99 AD). Due to substantial fictitious writings attributed to him later on it seems that he was well known and liked inside the Christian communities. Typically he is considered to be the first of the group of [Apostolic Fathers](#) who follow the apostles in the second century. He gives some insight into the persecution of Christianity by Domitian in the last years of the first century, and himself became a victim of it by being tied to an anchor and dropped into the sea. His life is celebrated annually still today in Roman Catholic -- and a few Protestant churches -- on November 23, and by Orthodox Christianity on November 24/25.

Clement of Rome, writing about 96 AD, reflects on the life of Paul particularly after his release from imprisonment in Rome about 63 AD.<sup>814</sup> First Clement is a letter from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth at

<sup>811</sup>Pope Clement I et al., "The Apostolic Fathers," ed. Pope Clement I et al., *The Loeb Classical Library* (London; New York: Heinemann; Macmillan, 1912–1913), 16.

<sup>812</sup>Clement of Rome, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 6.

<sup>813</sup>"Tradition from the ancient church, specifically Origen (Jo. 6.36), has identified this Clement from Philippi with Clement of Rome, the author of 1 Clem. (ca. 96), a view then transmitted by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. 3.4.9) and taken up by later writers. Irenaeus, writing before Origen, had said that Clement of Rome, whom he lists as the third in the list of Peter's successors, was a disciple of the Apostles (Haer. 3.3.3), but he did not link him explicitly with the Philippian Clement. Nor did Tertullian, who wrote that Clement of Rome was consecrated by Peter (De praescr. haeret. 32), mention any connection between Clement and Paul. It is generally judged, in spite of Origen's statement, that an identification of the Philippian Clement with the Clement of Rome is unlikely because of the geographical and chronological distance that separates these two (Lightfoot 1888: 168–71). Also, Clement was a common name in the 1st century." [John Gillman, "Clement (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1055.]

<sup>814</sup>"Clement was bishop of Rome, the traditional location of Paul's death under Nero, thirty years after Paul's death, and he shows awareness of details in Paul's life not recorded in Acts (1 Clem. 5:5–7 [LCL tr.]).

Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance; seven times he was in bonds, he was exiled, he was stoned, he was a herald both in the East and in the West [ἐν τῇ δύσει], he gained the noble fame of his faith, he taught righteousness to all the world, and when he had reached the limits of the West [καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν] he gave his testimony before the rulers, and thus passed from the world and was taken up into the Holy Place, —the greatest example of endurance.

"Clement's position in Rome makes this tradition significant; his church could still have had members who witnessed Paul's final imprisonment and death. 'Limits of the West' most likely is Spain (James, *Genuineness*, 32; Zahn, *Introduction* 2:68–73; J. Weiss, *History*, 390; Holtz, 18; Brox, 30). It could also be Rome from the standpoint of someone in the east (Harrison, *Problem*, 107), but this is unlikely since Clement is writing from Rome. Lightfoot argues, 'It is incredible that a writer living in the metropolis and centre of power and civilization could speak of it [i.e., Rome] as 'the extreme west,' and this at a time when many eminent Latin authors and statesmen were or had been natives of Spain, and when the commercial and passenger traffic with Gades was intimate and constant' (*Apostolic Fathers*, part 1, vol. 2, p. 31; also Harnack, *Geschichte*, "Note 46," 2:240n). Ellis ("Traditions") says that, as far as he can tell, no contemporary Roman writing ever refers to Rome as "the West," citing Josephus (Ag. Ap. 1.67), Tacitus (Hist. 4.3), and Strabo (Geog. 1.1.8;



the end of the first century, and Clement is responsible for its composition.

In verses 5-7, Clement touches briefly on the activity of Paul in assuming a release from imprisonment in Rome. The general theme of Clement in these early chapters of First Clement is the damage to the Christian faith and to churches that envy can create. Thus Paul's martyrdom becomes one of several example of this point: Διὰ ζήλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, *Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance*. Thus Clement's major concern is to highlight Paul's martyrdom, rather than his ministry activities during the period of the 60s after release from the first Roman imprisonment.

But in the process of stressing this he gives a listing of Paul's activities leading up to his martyrdom (vv. 6-7:

- 1) ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, *seven times he was in bonds*.
- 2) φυγαδευθείς, *he was exiled*,
- 3) λιθασθείς, *he was stoned*,
- 4) κήρυξ γενόμενος ἔν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, *he was a herald both in the East and in the West*
- 5) τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν, *he gained the noble fame of his faith*,
- 6) δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, *he taught righteousness to all the world*,
- 7) καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν, *and when he had reached the limits of the West*
- 8) καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἐπορεύθη, ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός, *he gave his testimony before the rulers, and thus passed from the world and was taken up into the Holy Place, — the greatest example of endurance*.

In terms of ministry actions in our concern, points 4) and 7) become important. The twofold reference to the 'west' (καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει and καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν) are generally taken to refer to Spain. To Clement -- as was true generally in the ancient world -- 'world' meant the Mediterranean world. Thus the limits of the West would have naturally been Spain, since nothing but ocean lay beyond Spain. Clearly this is how later church fathers either quoting or alluding to this passage took the text to mean. Whether this is based on Paul's anticipation in Rom. 15:23-24<sup>815</sup> as a fictitious realization or whether a historical realization is very difficult to determine. Clearly Paul's framing of this wish as ὡς ἂν πορεύωμαι εἰς τὴν Σπανίαν in using the subjunctive mood verb with ἂν signals a tentativeness in his thinking rather than a firm plan. It may well have been God's will for Paul to continue on "in the east" rather than traveling west of Rome as far as Spain. To be sure, however, Clement seems certain of this western ministry of Paul prior to his martyrdom. And writing from Rome some thirty years or less after this would have taken place, his understanding cannot be dismissed lightly. It is interesting that Clement references Paul's death after μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη, *and suffered martyrdom under the prefects*. Thus Paul's death is possibly attributed to Roman governors, rather than to the emperor Nero. This is different from most of the other church fathers.

If Clement is accurate in asserting a ministry to Spain, then when did it take place? Before or after the ministry in the Aegean Sea region established in First Timothy and Titus? Most reconstructions would assume prior to this Aegean Sea ministry. Yet, some questions are raised about Paul's rather intense desire from Rome to visit the Philippians immediately upon being released from prison (cf. Phil. 2:24, πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι, *and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon*). The natural assumption would be that the first place Paul visited upon being released from Roman imprisonment would have been Philippi. This would argue for the Aegean Sea ministry before any trip west to Spain. But few commentators -- either modern or ancient -- seem to understand the sequence this way. Because we know so very little about the circumstances of his release from the first Roman imprisonment it is very difficult to come to firm conclusions on this point of

1.2.1; 1.4.6; 2.1.1; 2.4.4; 3.1.2). Lightfoot continues by summarizing different translations of the phrase and concludes, 'Such attempts are a strong testimony to the plain inference which follows from the passage simply interpreted.'

"Based on the work of Lightfoot, it is generally acknowledged that the most natural meaning of τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, 'the limits of the West,' is as a reference to the pillars of Hercules at the Straits of Gibraltar, based on references in Strabo (2.1.4; 3.1.5) and Velleius Paterculus (1.2; citations in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 1, vol. 2, p. 30; cf. also E. Dubowy, *Klemens von Rom über die Reise Pauli nach Spanien*, BibS (F) 19.3 [Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1914]). But even if the reference to Spain is disputed, the tradition is a strong witness to Paul's release after the events in Acts 28."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lv.]

<sup>815</sup>**Rom. 15:23-24.** 23 νυνὶ δὲ μηκέτι τόπον ἔχων ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τούτοις, ἐπιποθίαν δὲ ἔχων τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν, 24 ὡς ἂν πορεύωμαι εἰς τὴν Σπανίαν · ἐλπίζω γὰρ διαπορευόμενος θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι ἐκεῖ ἐὰν ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπὸ μέρους ἐμπλησθῶ.

23 But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you 24 *when I go to Spain*. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while.

sequence.

Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 12<sup>816</sup>

1 Οἶδα, τίς εἰμι καὶ τίσιν γράφω. ἐγὼ κατάκριτος, ὑμεῖς ἠλεημένοι· ἐγὼ ὑπὸ κίνδυνον, ὑμεῖς ἐστηριγμένοι·  
2 πάροδος ἐστε τῶν εἰς θεὸν ἀναιρουμένων, Παύλου συμμύσται τοῦ ἡγιασμένου, τοῦ μεμαρτυρημένου,  
ἀξιομακαρίστου, οὗ γένοιτό μοι ὑπὸ τὰ ἴχνη· εὐρεθῆναι, ὅταν θεοῦ ἐπιτύχω, ὃς ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ μνημονεύει  
ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.<sup>817</sup>

1 I KNOW who I am and to whom I write. I am condemned, you have obtained mercy; I am in danger, you are established in safety; 2 you are the passage for those who are being slain for the sake of God, fellow-initiates with Paul, who was sanctified, who gained a good report, who was right blessed, in whose footsteps may I be found when I shall attain to God, who in every Epistle makes mention of you in Christ Jesus.<sup>818</sup>

[Ignatius of Antioch](#) was Ignatius Theophors and served as a spiritual leader of the Christian community in Antioch of Syria beginning in the late 60s as far as can be determined from the available evidence. According to tradition he was a student of the apostle John, but this is not proven. From all indications he was taken prisoner by the Romans right at the end of the first century. While being taken from Syria to Rome mostly by land he composed a series of six letters to churches (Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans) and one to a Christian leader (Polycarp at Smyrna). Since he was martyred in Rome around 115 AD during the reign of [Emperor Trajan](#) (28 January 98 – 9 August 117 AD), these letters come sometime prior to that date in the early second century.<sup>819</sup> Thus they were written in most unusual circumstances by a Christian prisoner of Rome on his way to execution.<sup>820</sup> These seven letters underwent substantial changes and modifications over time creating the result of serious questions about how much of the contents actually go back to Ignatius. For the last three hundred years or so, three basic versions of these letters have been in print circulation and available for study.<sup>821</sup>

---

<sup>816</sup>In the now existing texts two forms are available, the so-called shorter and longer recensions. Used in our study is the shorter/middle text but the longer version is as follows:

I know both who I am, and to whom I write. I am the very insignificant Ignatius, who have my lot with<sup>4</sup> those who are exposed to danger and condemnation. But ye have been the objects of mercy, and are established in Christ. I am one delivered over [to death], but the least of all those that have been cut off for the sake of Christ, “from the blood of righteous Abel”<sup>5</sup> to the blood of Ignatius. Ye are initiated into the mysteries of the Gospel with Paul, the holy, the martyred, inasmuch as he was “a chosen vessel;”<sup>6</sup> at whose feet may I be found, and at the feet of the rest of the saints, when I shall attain to Jesus Christ, who is always mindful of you in His prayers.

[Ignatius of Antioch, “The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 55.]

<sup>817</sup>Pope Clement I et al., “The Apostolic Fathers,” ed. Pope Clement I et al., *The Loeb Classical Library* (London; New York: Heinemann; Macmillan, 1912–1913), 186.

<sup>818</sup>Pope Clement I et al., *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Pope Clement I et al., vol. 1, *The Loeb Classical Library* (London; New York: Heinemann; Macmillan, 1912–1913), 187.

<sup>819</sup>“There has long been a virtually unanimous consensus that Ignatius was martyred during the time of Trajan (A.D. 98–117). The Eusebian date of c. 107–8 is accepted by some, while many place it somewhere in the second half of Trajan’s reign, c. 110–17. Attempts to fix the year more precisely have not been persuasive; if anything, the tendency is to enlarge the possible time frame in the direction of Hadrian’s reign (A.D. 117–38; Schoedel 1993, 347–48; Munier, 380). The original collection of the letters was apparently compiled by Polycarp not long after Ignatius’s death (cf. Pol. Phil. 13.2).” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).]

<sup>820</sup>“The letters were written in extraordinarily stressful and difficult circumstances. After his arrest (it is not known why and in what circumstances he was arrested) in Syria, which left the church in Antioch leaderless and vulnerable, Ignatius was sent to Rome in the custody of ten soldiers (the ‘leopards’ of Ign. Rom. 5.1) to be executed. As he traveled, he met with Christians in communities along the way, including Philadelphia. At Smyrna he was enthusiastically received by Polycarp, the local bishop, as well as delegations from Tralles, Magnesia and Ephesus (who had been informed in advance of Ignatius’s route). Ignatius responded to this show of support (perhaps deliberately orchestrated; Schoedel 1985, 12) by sending a letter to each of the three churches, and he also sent one ahead to the church in Rome, alerting them to his impending arrival there and attempting to forestall any interference with his plans. At Troas, Ignatius’s received the news that ‘peace’ had been restored to the church at Antioch (cf. Ign. Phld. 10.1; Ign. Smyrn. 11.2; Ign. Pol. 7.1), about which he apparently had been quite worried, and he sent letters back to the two churches he had visited, Philadelphia and Smyrna, and to Polycarp. At Philippi, where he was warmly welcomed by the church (cf. Pol. Phil. 1.1), he disappeared from view; presumably he was taken on to Rome and thrown to the lions in the Coliseum. While it is not absolutely certain that he died a martyr’s death (later accounts of his martyrdom being historically worthless), there is no reason to think otherwise.” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).]

<sup>821</sup>“The letters exist in three basic forms. The ‘long’ recension is an expanded fourth-century version of the seven original letters to which six spurious letters have been added (some of these came to be associated with the ‘middle’ recension as well); the ‘short’ is a Syriac abridgment of the letters to the Ephesians, Romans and Polycarp; the “middle” (known to Eusebius) preserves the original

Much of the emphasis in these letters, and especially in the Letter to the Romans, centers on martyrdom. The later spurious [Martyrdom of Ignatius](#) is so packed with fantasy and legend that it is worthless as a document detailing what happened to Ignatius in Rome. But from other sources it does seem that he was killed by the lions in the coliseum in Rome about 115 AD. His remains were later taken back to Antioch where he was buried. The supposed relics of Ignatius are now located in the *Basilica di San Clemente* in Rome.

His preoccupation with martyrdom pushed him to develop a theology of martyrdom that went way beyond the teachings of the New Testament. This is expressed especially in the [Letter to the Romans](#) 4-5:

#### **IgnRom. 4**

I write to all the churches, and I bid all men know, that of my own free will I die for God unless Ye should hinder me. I exhort you, be ye not an unseasonable kindness to me. Let me be given to the wild beasts, for through them I can attain unto God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread [of Christ].

Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my sepulchre and may leave no part of my body behind, so that I may not, when I am fallen asleep, be burdensome to any one. Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not so much as see my body. Supplicate the Lord for me, that through these instruments I may be found a sacrifice to God.

I do not enjoin you, as Peter and Paul did. They were Apostles, I am a convict; they were free, but I am a slave to this very hour. Yet if I shall suffer, then am I a freed-man of Jesus Christ, and I shall rise free in Him. Now I am learning in my bonds to put away every desire.

#### **IgnRom. 5**

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea, by night and by day, being bound amidst ten leopards, even a company of soldiers, who only wax worse when they are kindly treated. Howbeit through their wrong doings I become more completely a disciple; yet am I not hereby justified.

May I have joy of the beasts that have been prepared for me; and I pray that I may find them prompt; nay I will entice them that they may devour me promptly, not as they have done to some, refusing to touch them through fear. Yea though of themselves they should not be willing while I am ready, I myself will force them to it.

Bear with me. I know what is expedient for me. Now am I beginning to be a disciple. May naught of things visible and things invisible envy me; that I may attain unto Jesus Christ. Come fire and cross and grapplings with wild beasts, [cuttings and manglings,] wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushings of my whole body, come cruel tortures of the devil to assail me. Only be it mine to attain unto Jesus Christ.

Ignatius carries the idea of martyrdom into the realm of something one should seek and even provoke from his enemies. It becomes a quick ticket to heaven and thus highly desirable.<sup>822</sup> Unfortunately this unbiblical thinking became very influential among Christians during the second through fourth centuries.

The point of the quote from his [Letter to the Ephesians](#) (above) is to illustrate the adoption of Clement's assertion of the martyrdom of Paul in the 60s of the first century. In chapter twelve, Ignatius sees himself following in the footsteps of Paul into martyrdom. The so-called longer version enhances his thinking considerably about following Paul's example into martyrdom.<sup>823</sup>

---

form of the letters.

“During the Renaissance and Reformation periods both the ‘long’ and ‘middle’ recensions became known in both Greek and Latin, although it was not until 1646 that the Greek text of the ‘middle’ recension was published. This multiplicity of forms, together with the admixture of varying numbers of later spurious letters, created considerable confusion and debate about the authenticity of the letters. Progress in resolving the question was not helped by the fact that the discussion came to be heavily influenced by dogmatic concerns (generally Catholic vs. Protestant) extraneous to the issue.

“A consensus favoring the ‘middle’ recension eventually prevailed following the publication of Pearson's *Vindiciae Ignatianae* (1672), but the publication of the ‘short’ recension in 1845 re-opened the question. Not until the independent work of T. Zahn (1873) and J. B. Lightfoot (1885) was general recognition of the authenticity of the seven letters comprising the ‘middle’ recension attained, a situation which recent challenges (Joly; also Weijenborg, Rius-Camps) have not altered (Schoedel 1980, 1993, 345–46; Munier, 379–80).”

[Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).]

<sup>822</sup>“Ignatius also goes beyond the NT in his development of a theology of martyrdom. His imagery of martyrdom, especially in Rom. 4–5, advances far beyond anything in the NT and points toward the theology of martyrdom that will motivate Christians through the next two centuries of Roman persecution. He himself genuinely longs for martyrdom, which he sees as true discipleship and a means to “attain to God” (Rom. 4.1). Ignatius received his wish in Rome toward the end of the reign of Trajan.” [J. Christian Wilson, “Ignatius of Antioch,” ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 628.]

<sup>823</sup>Ignatius of Antioch, “The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, Page 764



Ye are initiated into the mysteries of the Gospel with Paul, the holy, the martyred, inasmuch as he was “a chosen vessel;”<sup>6</sup> at whose feet may I be found, and at the feet of the rest of the saints, when I shall attain to Jesus Christ, who is always mindful of you in His prayers.

Unfortunately nothing is said about Paul’s ministry, since in reality Ignatius had little interest in the particulars of this work of Paul. He will use a few references to Paul’s letters in the seven letters, but these center mostly on commitment that leads to martyrdom. A couple of notable points about Ignatius. From all indication he is the first Christian writer to use the term ‘catholic church’ meaning the church universal. Implicit in it was a sense of inner connectedness both in belief and in congregational delegations meeting periodically to work out issues.<sup>824</sup> Additionally he reflects the growing anti-Semitism in Christianity with his contention that believers must abandon all Jewish practices, even if Jews.<sup>825</sup>

### Muratorian Canon<sup>826</sup>

[23] ἀλλ’ ἀποστόλων \ πράξεις ἀπάντων βιβλίον ὑφ’ ἐν γεγραμμένας \ [24] Λουκᾶς κρατίστῳ Θεοφίλῳ συλλαμβάνει, \ αὐτοῦ παρόντος ὡς ἕκαστ’ ἐπράττετο \ [25] ὡς καὶ μακρὰν [ἢ ἀπόντος ἢ σιγῆ] πάθος \ Πέτρου προφαίνει [26] κὰκ πόλεως δ’ εἰς Σπανίαν \ Παύλου πορείαν ἐκπορευομένου σαφῶς.

[23] Acta autem omnium apostolorum sub uno libro scripta sunt. [24] Lucas “optimo Theophilo” comprehendit, quae sub praesentia eius singula gerebantur, [25] sicut et remote passionem Petri evidenter declarat, [26] sed et profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis.

[23] The Acts of all the Apostles, however, were written in one volume. [24] Luke described briefly “for” most excellent Theophilus particular [things], which happened in his presence, [25] as he also evidently relates the death of Peter (?) [26] and also Paul’s departure from the city as he was proceeding to Spain.

This document, referred to as either the [Muratorian Canon](#) or the [Muratorian Fragment](#), comes from the latter part of the second century, some greater time away from Paul’s lifetime. The usual date is given about 170 AD, but the dating could extend well into the third century AD. All that remains of this listing of authoritative documents for use in the Christian churches in the region of the author, all of which is uncertain, is some 85 lines from a 7th century Latin text copy.<sup>827</sup> The original text in Greek is thought by many to reach back to about 170 AD. It does contain a reference to Pius I who was a leader in Rome 142 to 157 AD.

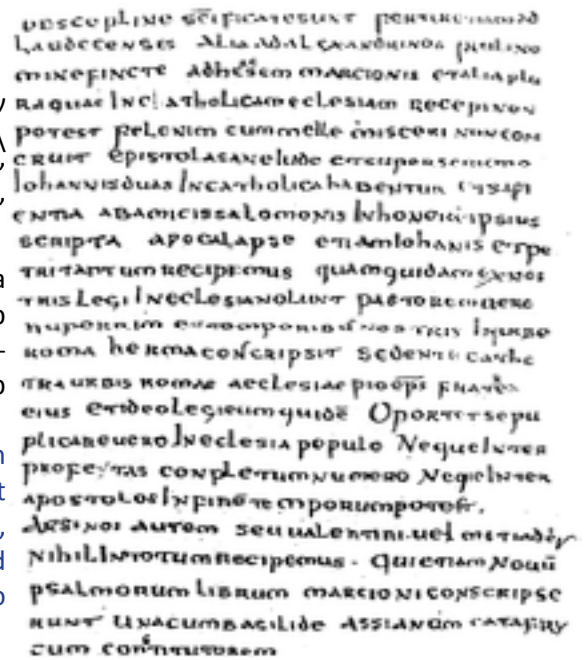
For our concern the reference in verse 26 is important: κὰκ πόλεως δ’ εἰς Σπανίαν \ Παύλου πορείαν ἐκπορευομένου σαφῶς. sed et profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis. and also Paul’s departure from the ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 55.

<sup>824</sup>“Ignatius is the first writer to use the term ‘catholic’ (universal) to describe the church. His use of the term implied a connec-tional church with a unity in faith toward Christ and with delegations to express concerns between the churches.” [Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 626.]

<sup>825</sup>“He opposed the Ebionite heresy, which demanded the keeping of the Jewish regulations as the way of salvation. According to Ignatius, in order to affirm Christ the believer must reject Jewish practices. The Christian must worship on the Lord’s Day, the day of his resurrection, rather than observe the Jewish sabbaths. Yet he did view the church as the continuation of the OT people of God and the prophets as disciples who looked forward to Christ.” [Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 626.]

<sup>826</sup>“The Muratorian Canon,” *Early Christian Writings* @ <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/muratorian-latin.html>

<sup>827</sup>“An early, incomplete listing of NT books, the Muratorian Fragment occupies a prominent place in any discussion of the history of the Christian canon of scripture. Its relative importance in such discussions depends, in large part, on the date and provenance assigned to the Fragment. Until quite recently, Roman provenance and a late 2d or early 3d century date (180–200 C.E.) were taken for granted. It was assumed that the Fragment represented the earliest datable canon list. Those assumptions have now largely eroded, and a new consensus appears to be emerging, one which sees the Muratorian Fragment as a 4th-century, Eastern (either Syria or Palestine) list. If that is the case, the earliest datable NT list would be that of Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History* 3.25, and the Muratorian Fragment should be read in relation to it, as another, albeit important, witness to the canonization process in its final stage.” [Gregory Allen Rob-bins, “Muratorian Fragment,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 928–929.]



last page of the Canon Muratori,  
as published by Tregelles 1868

city as he was proceeding to Spain. Here is reflected the tradition, adopted in this document, of Paul departing from Rome headed to Spain. The perspective here is that upon release from imprisonment Paul immediately traveled west rather than east on his way to Spain. Thus the emerging church tradition first seen in First Clement finds later confirmation of acceptance. And if -- as many are convinced -- that the document was produced in Rome, it would represent a tradition adopted in the city emerging as a eader of western Christianity. Unfortunately, nothing is said in detail about what Paul did in this assumed trip to Spain.

### **Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.25.1-7**

XXV. [1] Κραταιουμένης δ' ἤδη τῷ Νέρωνι τῆς ἀρχῆς, εἰς ἀνοσίους ὀκειλάς ἐπιτηδεύσεις, κατ' αὐτῆς ὠπλίζετο τῆς εἰς τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν εὐσεβείας. γράφειν μὲν οὖν οἷός τις οὗτος γεγένηται τὴν μοχθηρίαν, οὐ τῆς παρούσης γένοιτ' ἂν σχολῆς· [2] πολλῶν γε μὴν τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ἀκριβεστάταις παραδεδωκότων διηγήσεσιν, πάρεστιν ὄτω φίλον, ἐξ αὐτῶν τὴν σκαιότητα τῆς τάνδρός ἐκτόπου καταθεωρῆσαι μανίας, καθ' ἣν οὐ μετὰ λογισμοῦ μυρίων ὄσων ἀπωλείας διεξελθῶν, ἐπὶ τοσαύτην ἤλασε μαιφονίαν, ὡς μηδὲ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων τε καὶ φιλάτων ἐπισχεῖν, μητέρα δὲ ὁμοίως καὶ ἀδελφούς καὶ γυναῖκα σὺν καὶ ἄλλοις μυρίοις τῷ γένει προσήκουσιν τρόπον ἐχθρῶν καὶ πολεμίων ποικίλαις θανάτων ιδέαις διαχρήσασθαι. [3] ἐνέδει δ' ἄρα τοῖς πᾶσι καὶ τοῦτ' ἐπιγραφῆναι αὐτῷ, ὡς ἂν πρῶτος αὐτοκράτορων τῆς εἰς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβείας πολέμιος ἀναδειχθεῖη. [4] τούτου πάλιν ὁ Ῥωμαῖος Τερτυλλιανὸς ὧδέ πως λέγων μνημονεύει\* “ἐντύχετε τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν ὑμῶν, ἐκεῖ εὐρήσετε πρῶτον Νέρωνα τοῦτο τὸ δόγμα, ἠνίκα μάλιστα ἐν Ῥώμῃ, τὴν ἀνατολὴν πᾶσαν ὑποτάξας, ὡμὸς ἦν εἰς πάντας, διώξαντα. τοιοῦτω τῆς κολάσεως ἡμῶν ἀρχηγῷ καυχώμεθα. ὁ γὰρ εἰδὼς ἐκεῖνον νοῆσαι δύναται ὡς οὐκ ἂν, εἰ μὴ μέγα τι ἀγαθὸν ἦν, ὑπὸ Νέρωνος κατακριθῆναι.”

[5] Ταύτη γοῦν οὗτος, θεομάχος ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα πρῶτος ἀνακηρυχθεὶς, ἐπὶ τὰς κατὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐπήρθη σφαγὰς. Παῦλος δὴ οὖν ἐπ' αὐτῆς Ῥώμης τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτμηθῆναι καὶ Πέτρος ὡσαύτως ἀνασκολοπισθῆναι κατ' αὐτὸν ἱστοροῦνται, καὶ πιστοῦται γε τὴν ἱστορίαν ἢ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου εἰς δεῦρο κρατήσασα ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτόθι κοιμητηρίων πρόσρησις, [6] οὐδὲν δὲ ἦττον καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς ἀνὴρ, Γάιος ὄνομα, κατὰ Ζεφυρίνον Ῥωμαίων γερονῶς ἐπίσκοπον· ὃς δὴ Πρόκλῳ τῆς κατὰ Φρύγας προῖσταμένῳ γνώμης ἐγγράφως διαλεχθεὶς, αὐτὰ δὴ ταῦτα περὶ τῶν τόπων, ἔνθα τῶν εἰρημένων ἀποστόλων τὰ ἱερά σκηνώματα κατατέθειται, [7] φησὶν· “ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ τρόπαια τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔχω δεῖξαι. ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσῃς ἀπελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸν Βασικανὸν ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν Ὡστίαν, εὐρήσεις τὰ τρόπαια τῶν ταύτην ἰδρυσασμένων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.”<sup>828</sup>

XXV. [1] When the rule of Nero was now gathering strength for unholy objects he began to take up arms against the worship of the God of the universe. [2] It is not part of the present work to describe his depravity: many indeed have related his story in accurate narrative, and from them he who wishes can study the perversity of his degenerate madness, which made him compass the unreasonable destruction of so many thousands, until he reached that final guilt of sparing neither his nearest nor dearest, so that in various ways he did to death alike his mother, brothers, and wife, with thousands of others attached to his family, as though they were enemies and foes. But with all this there was still lacking to him this—that it should be attributed to him that he was the first of the emperors to be pointed out as a foe of divine religion. [3] This again the Latin writer Tertullian mentions in one place as follows:\* “Look at your records: there you will find that Nero was the first to persecute this belief when, having overcome the whole East, he was specially cruel in Rome against all.<sup>1</sup> [4] We boast that such a man was the author of our chastisement; for he who knows him can understand that nothing would have been condemned by Nero had it not been great and good.”

[5] In this way then was he the first to be heralded as above all a fighter against God, and raised up to slaughter against the Apostles. It is related that in his time Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the title of “Peter and Paul,” which is still given to the cemeteries there, confirms the story, no less than does a writer of the Church named Caius, who lived when Zephyrinus was Bishop of Rome. [6] Caius in a written discussion with Proclus, the leader of the Montanists,<sup>1</sup> speaks as follows of the places where the sacred relics of the Apostles in question are deposited: “But I can point out the trophies of the Apostles, for if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church.”<sup>2</sup> [7] And that they both were martyred at the same time Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, affirms in this passage of his correspondence with the Romans: “By so great an admonition you bound together the foundations of the Romans and Corinthians by Peter and Paul, for both of them taught together in our Corinth and were our founders, and together also taught in Italy in the same place and were martyred at the same time.” [8] And this may serve to confirm still further the

<sup>828</sup>Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*: Greek Text, ed. T. E. Page et al., vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam's Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 178–182.

facts narrated.<sup>829</sup>

The primary source that most turn to for information about ancient Christian history is [Eusebius of Caesarea](#).<sup>830</sup> His *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Church History) is considered the main source of information about Christianity during the first three centuries. He provides greater detail about Paul's imprisonment and ministry ([CH, 22.124-125](#)):

1. Festus<sup>469</sup> was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome.<sup>470</sup> Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow-prisoner.<sup>471</sup> And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>472</sup> brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two whole years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint.<sup>473</sup>

2. Thus after he had made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching,<sup>474</sup> and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom.<sup>475</sup> In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy,<sup>476</sup> in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.

3. But hear his testimony on these matters: 'At my first answer,' he says, 'no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.'<sup>477</sup>

4. He plainly indicates in these words that on the former occasion, in order that the preaching might be fulfilled by him, he was rescued from the mouth of the lion, referring, in this expression, to Nero, as is probable on account of the latter's cruelty. He did not therefore afterward add the similar statement, 'He will rescue me from the mouth of the lion'; for he saw in the spirit that his end would not be long delayed.

5. Wherefore he adds to the words, 'And he delivered me from the mouth of the lion,' this sentence: 'The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom,'<sup>478</sup> indicating his speedy martyrdom; which he also foretells still more clearly in the same epistle, when he writes, 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.'<sup>479</sup>

6. In his second epistle to Timothy, moreover, he indicates that Luke was with him when he wrote,<sup>480</sup> but at his first defense not even he.<sup>481</sup> Whence it is probable that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles at that time, continuing his history down to the period when he was with Paul.<sup>482</sup>

7. But these things have been adduced by us to show that Paul's martyrdom did not take place at the time of that Roman sojourn which Luke records.

8. It is probable indeed that as Nero was more disposed to mildness in the beginning, Paul's defense of his doctrine was more easily received; but that when he had advanced to the commission of lawless deeds of daring, he made the apostles as well as others the subjects of his attacks.<sup>483</sup>

Here Eusebius sets up a framework for Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment, resumption of ministry, and subsequent re-imprisonment and martyrdom.<sup>831</sup> But Eusebius does not indicate that Paul went to Spain.

<sup>829</sup>Lake Kirsopp, *The Ecclesiastical History*: English Translation, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam's Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 179–183

<sup>830</sup>“Late 3d/early 4th-century Christian historian, biblical scholar, and theologian; the ‘Father of Church History.’ Born ca. A.D. 260, he was bishop of Caesarea, the administrative capital of Roman Palestine, from ca. 313 until his death, May 30, 339. Regarded by his contemporaries as the greatest Christian scholar of his time, he wrote a history of Christianity covering the first three centuries (his *Historia Ecclesiastica* or Church History) and a Life of Constantine celebrating the Christianization of the Roman Empire; compiled in a Chronicle a detailed comparative chronology of biblical, ANE, Greek, and Roman history; made the most successful early systematic study of gospel parallels (the Evangelical or Eusebian Canons); and wrote other works on biblical geography (Onomasticon), the pagan divine man motif (Contra Hieroclem), the interpretation of Scripture (Prophetic Eclogues, Demonstratio Evangelica, Commentary on Isaiah, Commentary on the Psalms, Gospel Questions and Solutions), martyrology (Martyrs of Palestine), various theological issues (Praeparatio Evangelica, Theophany, Contra Marcellum, De Ecclesiastica Theologia, On Easter), and other topics (the Panegyric to Constantine and Treatise on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, important to the history of church-state relations, are contained in chaps. 1–10 and 11–18 respectively of his *De laudibus Constantini*.)” [Glenn F. Chesnut, “Eusebius of Caesarea (Person),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 673.]

<sup>831</sup>“Eusebius is the first writer to record the release of Paul from a first, and his martyrdom during a second Roman imprisonment. He introduces the statement with the formula *λόγος ἄχει*, which indicates probably that he has only an oral tradition as his authority, and his efforts to establish the fact by exegetical arguments show how weak the tradition was. Many maintain that Eusebius follows no tradition here, but records simply his own conclusion formed from a study of the Pastoral Epistles, which apparently necessitate a second imprisonment. But were this the case, he would hardly have used the formula *λόγος ἄχει*. The report may have arisen solely upon exegetical grounds, but it can hardly have originated with Eusebius himself. In accordance with this tradition, Eusebius, in his *Chron.*, gives the date of Paul's death as 67 a.d. Jerome (*de vir. ill.* 5) and other later writers follow Eusebius (though Jerome gives the



Rather he focuses on the Pastoral Epistles as having originated during this period of ministry and this centers on a ministry east of Rome, rather than west to Spain. Whether Eusebius was aware of the Spain tradition or not is unclear. If he was, he must have rejected it for some reason. He did not view the *Acts of Peter*, composed a century earlier, positively and this may have played some role in not including any account in his history.

When taken collectively the picture from the church fathers is mixed. A tradition that Paul traveled to Spain clearly was in place from early in the second century. But not all of the fathers, and especially Eusebius, did not seem to accept it. None of the accounts in the church father provides any details regarding the supposed trip to Spain.

## NT Apocrypha

The primary sources for a trip to Spain by Paul come out of the apocryphal Acts documents. This adds substantial question marks to the historical reliability of the accounts since most of these materials are Gnostic in nature and look to legends much more quickly than to history for sources of their belief system. The broad category, New Testament Apocrypha, covers a rather fluid range of documents claiming apostolic authority but considered spurious and false down through the centuries.<sup>832</sup> They are often grouped by literary genre following the categories of the canonical New Testament. Within the category of Acts, different documents are listed. M.R. James,<sup>833</sup> one of the primary scholars in this field in the English speaking world, groups these documents into primary Acts (John, Paul, Peter, Andrew, Thomas as compiled by the Manichaeans) and secondary Acts (Philip, Andrew and Matthias, Peter and Andrew, Martyrdom of Matthew, Apostolic History of Abdias). Added to this second category are further documents under the sub-category of "Notices of Minor Acts": Acts of John by Prochorus, Acts of Barnabas, James the Great, Thomas, Acts and Passions of Peter and Paul, Acts of Thaddaeus, Acts of the Disciples of the Apostles, the Oriental Acts in Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic, Acts of Andrew and Paul, Fragmentary Story of Andrew, Slavonic Acts of Peter.

date as 68 instead of 67), and the tradition soon became firmly established (see below, chap. 25, note 5). Scholars are greatly divided as to the fact of a second imprisonment. Nearly all that defend the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles assume a second imprisonment, though some (e.g. Wieseler, Ebrard, Reuss and others) defend the epistles while assuming only one imprisonment; but this is very difficult. On the other hand, most opponents of the epistles (e.g. the Tübingen critics and the majority of the new critical school) deny the second imprisonment. As to the place where Paul spent the interval—supposing him to have been released—there is again a difference of opinion. The Pastoral Epistles, if assumed to be genuine, seem to necessitate another visit to the Orient. But for such a visit there is no ancient tradition, although Paul himself, in the Epistle to the Philippians, expresses his expectation of making such a visit. On the other hand, there is an old tradition that he visited Spain (which must of course have been during this interval, as he did not reach it before the first imprisonment). The Muratorian Fragment (from the end of the second century) records this tradition in a way to imply that it was universally known. Clement of Rome (Epistle to the Corinthians, c. 5.) is also claimed as a witness for such a visit, but the interpretation of his words is doubtful, so that little weight can be laid upon his statement. In later times the tradition of this visit to Spain dropped out of the Church. The strongest argument against the visit is the absence of any trace of it in Spain itself. If any church there could have claimed the great apostle to the Gentiles as its founder, it seems that it must have asserted its claim and the tradition have been preserved at least in that church. This appears to the writer a fatal argument against a journey to Spain. On the other hand, the absence of all tradition of another journey to the Orient does not militate against such a visit, for tradition at any place might easily preserve the fact of a visit of the apostle, without preserving an accurate account of the number of his visits if more than one were made. Of the defenders of the Pastoral Epistles, that accept a second imprisonment, some assume simply a journey to the Orient, others assume also the journey to Spain. Between the spring of 63 a.d., the time when he was probably released, if released, and the date of his death (at the earliest the summer of 64), there is time enough, but barely so, for both journeys. If the date of Paul's death be put later with Eusebius and Jerome (as many modern critics put it), the time is of course quite sufficient. Compare the various Lives of Paul, Commentaries, etc., and especially, among recent works, Schaff's Church Hist. I. p. 231 sqq.; Weiss' Einleitung in das N. T. p. 283 sqq.; Holtzmann's Einleitung, p. 295 sqq.; and Weizsäcker's Apostolisches Zeitalter, p. 453 sqq. [footnote 474 from the above text]

<sup>832-4</sup>In general, the term 'New Testament Apocrypha' has come to refer to that corpus of early Christian literature that shares with the writings of the NT proper — with respect either to form and content, or to similar claims to apostolic derivation — a common self-consciousness in laying claim to the authority that derives from the age of Christian origins. Like the books of the NT, the apocryphal NT writings derive from various early Christian communities and from various time periods. But unlike the books that have come down to us as the canonical NT, the apocryphal writings generally did not achieve the level of widespread ecclesiastical use that would have prompted their inclusion in most of the early Christian canonical lists." [Stephen J. Patterson, "Apocrypha: New Testament Apocrypha," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 294.]

<sup>833</sup>James, Montague Rhodes, ed. *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.

Other well recognized scholars in this field include *New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2: Writings Relating to the Apostles Apocalypses and Related Subjects* by [Wihelm Schneemelcher](#) both in the German original and in English translation. Also *Apokryphe Apokalypsen* by Edgar Hennecke is another major source. Schneemelcher revised the earlier work of Hennecke, and R. McL. Wilson translated this work into English. Today it is generally regarded as the standard edition both translating and commenting on these ancient documents.

The various Acts reflect varying degrees of Gnostic influence and date from the middle to late second century all the way to the fourth century AD. One important issue relates to the circulation of a collection of five of these documents (Peter, Paul, John, Andrew, Thomas) together and known as the *Leucius Acts*. This was due to the assumed authorship of all five of these documents by a Leucius.<sup>834</sup> Church legends sought to identify Leucius as a disciple of the apostle John. But gradually these documents came into discredit and later church fathers seriously questioned the Leucian origin of them, except for possibly the *Acts of John*. Of course, it didn't help the cause when the heretical Manichaeans used these five documents instead of the canonical Acts of the Apostles as their authoritative documents.<sup>835</sup> Eusebius in his *Church History* (3.25.6 et al.) labels these documents among those used by heretics and this as a wide spread view of the Christianity of his day in the early 300s. The barriers to establishing any historical reliability to the contents of these documents are enormous. What mostly can be learned is the viewpoints of various groups on the fringe of Christianity in the second through fourth centuries.

The *Acts of Paul* intended to "fill in the gaps" after the two years of initial Roman imprisonment to Paul's martyrdom. Major problems exist, however, with the contents of this document. No original copy exists and huge variations in content surface among various translations.<sup>836</sup> Plus, the unity of the document is seriously questioned. Bits and pieces of different manuscripts, often in different languages, continue to be discovered from time to time, usually hidden away in the deep archives of libraries around the Mediterranean world. But large gaps in the text remain and without any real understanding of what they may have contained. Thus [translations](#) of the existing texts will contain numerous gaps, and have to be drawn from many different ancient translations.

---

<sup>834</sup>“The most important of the Apocryphal Acts are the five (Peter, Paul, John, Andrew, Thomas) which sometimes are referred to as ‘the Leucian Acts,’ because they are supposed to have been composed by a certain Leucius. Before they can be discussed separately, it is therefore necessary to deal with the problem of the Leucian corpus, and inquire whether such a collection existed in early times, what was its nature, and how far the name of ‘Leucian’ may be applied to it. The direct source of the later tradition that there was a Leucian corpus is no doubt a statement of Photius (Bibliotheca, cod. 114):

ἀνεγνώσθη βιβλίον, αἱ λεγόμεναι τῶν ἀποστόλων περίοδοι, ἐν αἷς περιείχοντο πράξεις Πέτρου, Ἰωάννου, Ἀνδρέου, Θωμᾶ, Παύλου· γράφει δὲ αὐτὰς, ὡς δηλοῖ τὸ αὐτὸ βιβλίον, Λεύκιος Χαρίνος.

“From this it is plain that Photius had seen a corpus of Acts, and interpreted some passage in the text to mean that the five Acts were all written by Leucius Charinus. It is therefore desirable to examine earlier literature for (1) mention of Leucius, (2) mention of the five Acts of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas, and Paul, either as a corpus or as separate writings.”

[Kirsopp Lake and J. de Zwaan, “Acts of the Apostles (Apocryphal),” ed. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (2 Vols.) (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916–1918), 29.]

<sup>835</sup>“From this evidence, which is given with a full and clear discussion in his *Alte Petrusakten* (cf. also his *Acta Pauli*, 112f.), C. Schmidt draws the following conclusion: (a) The Manichæans had formed a corpus of the five Acts, but were not themselves the authors of any of them. They used this corpus instead of the canonical Acts, and the Priscillianists used it in addition to the Canon. (b) In the course of the struggle between the Manichæans and the Church the view was adopted that the corpus was the work of a certain heretical Leucius. (c) The name of Leucius originally belonged to the Acts of John alone, and was erroneously attributed to the other books. (d) In this way the Acts of Paul, which was originally recognized as orthodox if not canonical, came to be regarded as heretical.” [Kirsopp Lake and J. de Zwaan, “Acts of the Apostles (Apocryphal),” ed. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (2 Vols.) (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916–1918), 32.]

<sup>836</sup>“This book, Tertullian tells us, was composed shortly before his time in honour of Paul by a presbyter of Asia, who was convicted of the imposture and degraded from his office. The date of it may therefore be about A.D. 160. The author was an orthodox Christian.

“Our authorities for it are:

1. The sadly mutilated Coptic MS. at Heidelberg, of the sixth century at latest.
2. The Acts of Paul and Thecla, a single episode which has been preserved complete in Greek and many versions: parts of it exist in the Coptic.
3. The correspondence with the Corinthians, partly preserved in the Coptic, and current separately in Armenian and Latin.
4. The Martyrdom, the concluding episode of the Acts, preserved separately (as in the case of John and others) in Greek and other versions.
5. Detached fragments or quotations.

“The length of the whole book is given as 3,600 lines (Stichometry of Nicephorus), or 3,560 (Stichometry of the Codex Claromontanus): the Canonical Acts are given by the same two authorities respectively as 2,800 and 2,600. We have, perhaps, 1,800 lines of the Acts of Paul.

“The text of the Coptic MS. is miserably defective, and the restoration of it, in the episodes which are preserved in it alone, is a most difficult process: Professor Carl Schmidt has done practically all that can be expected, with infinite labour and great acuteness. In treating the defective episodes I shall follow him closely, but shall not attempt to represent all the broken lines.”

[Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 270–271.]

## Acts of Paul<sup>837</sup>

The existing fragments seek to describe spectacular miracles done by Paul in various places of ministry, but these were intended to ‘fill in’ more details of Paul’s activities in the narrative by Luke in the *Acts of the Apostles*, rather than describe activities during a resumption of ministry before his martyrdom. But the highly fictitious account of his martyrdom provides a fanciful account of Paul ‘putting one’ over on Nero at his beheading. Because of its fragmentary -- and somewhat detached -- nature, we do not have any account of activities leading up to his beheading at the hands of Nero. This we will consider in detail below under the martyrdom of Paul section.

## Acts of Peter 1.3<sup>838</sup>

### THE VERCELLI ACTS<sup>839</sup>

I. At the time when Paul was sojourning in Rome and confirming many in the faith, it came also to pass that one by name Candida, the wife of Quartus that was over the prisons, heard Paul and paid heed to his words and believed. And when she had instructed her husband also and he believed, Quartus suffered Paul to go whither he would away from the city: to whom Paul said: If it be the will of God, he will reveal it unto me. And after Paul had fasted three days and asked of the Lord that which should be profitable for him, he saw a vision, even the Lord saying unto him: Arise, Paul, and become a physician in thy body (i.e. by going thither in person) to them that are in Spain.

He therefore, having related to the brethren what God had commanded, nothing doubting, prepared himself to set forth from the city. But when Paul was about to depart, there was great weeping throughout all the brotherhood, because they thought that they should see Paul no more, so that they even rent their clothes. For they had

---

<sup>837c</sup>“A 2d-century Christian writing recounting the missionary career and death of the apostle Paul and classed among the NT Apocrypha. In this work Paul is pictured traveling from city to city, converting gentiles and proclaiming the need for a life of sexual abstinence and other encratite practices. Though ancient evidence suggests that the Acts of Paul was a relatively lengthy work (3600 lines according to the Stichometry of Nicephorus), only about two-thirds of that amount still survives. Individual sections were transmitted separately by the medieval manuscript tradition (Lipsius 1891), most importantly the Acts of Paul and Thekla and the Martyrdom of Paul, both extant in the original Greek and several ancient translations. Manuscript discoveries in the last century have added considerable additional material. The most important of these include a Greek papyrus of the late 3d century, now at Hamburg (10 pages), a Coptic papyrus of the 4th or 5th century, now at Heidelberg (about 80 pages), and a Greek papyrus of correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians (3 Corinthians = Testuz 1959), now at Geneva. These finds have confirmed that the Thekla cycle and story of Paul’s martyrdom were originally part of the larger Acts of Paul (details in Bovon 1981 or NTApocr.)” [Philip Sellew, “Paul, Acts Of,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 202.]

<sup>838c</sup>“Written, probably by a resident in Asia Minor (he does not know much about Rome), not later than A. D. 200, in Greek. The author has read the Acts of John very carefully, and modelled his language upon them. However, he was not so unorthodox as Leucius, though his language about the Person of our Lord (ch. xx) has rather suspicious resemblances to that of the Acts of John.

“The length of the book as given by the Stichometry of Nicephorus was 2,750 lines—fifty lines less than the canonical Acts. The portions we have may be about the length of St. Mark’s Gospel; and about 1,000 lines may be wanting. Such is Zahn’s estimate.

“We have:

1. A short episode in Coptic.

2. A large portion in Latin preserved in a single manuscript of the seventh century at Vercelli: often called the Vercelli Acts. It includes the martyrdom.

3. The martyrdom, preserved separately, in two good Greek copies, in Latin, and in many versions—Coptic, Slavonic, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Ethiopic.

“Also:

One or two important quotations from lost portions; a small fragment of the original in a papyrus; certain passages—speeches of Peter—transferred by an unscrupulous writer to the Life of St. Abercius of Hierapolis.<sup>1</sup>

A Latin paraphrase of the martyrdom, attributed to Linus, Peter’s successor in the bishopric of Rome, was made from the Greek, and is occasionally useful.”

[Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 300.]

<sup>839</sup>The label *Vercelli Acts* designates the surviving Latin text for most of the *Acts of Peter*. The story of the modern discovery and early publications and analyses of the Vercelli Acts during the late 1800s is told by Matthew C. Baldwin in *Whose Acts of Peter?: Text and Historical Context of the Actus Vercellenses*, pp 138-140 (published in 2005 by [Mohr Siebeck](#) as volume XVI in the WUNT II series). The Lipsius Latin text is the one most often used in translations into modern western languages. The M.R. James translation used here is essentially based on this Latin text.

An online pdf downloadable copy of the *Actus Vercellenses* in the Lipsius edition is available at [XII. The Text of the Actus Vercellenses](#). This document contains only chapter 12 of Baldwin’s book that discusses background and history of interpretation issues. But these are helpful in understanding the nature of the Vercelli Acts text.



in mind also how that Paul had oftentimes contended with the doctors of the Jews and confuted them, saying: Christ, upon whom your fathers laid hands, abolished their sabbaths and fasts and holy-days and circumcision, and the doctrines of men and the rest of the traditions he did abolish. But the brethren lamented (and adjured) Paul by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he should not be absent above a year, saying: We know thy love for thy brethren; forget not us when thou art come thither, neither begin to forsake us, as little children without a mother. And when they besought him long with tears, there came a sound from heaven, and a great voice saying: Paul the servant of God is chosen to minister all the days of his life: by the hands of Nero the ungodly and wicked man shall he be perfected before your eyes. And a very great fear fell upon the brethren because of the voice which came from heaven: and they were confirmed yet more in the faith.

II. Now they brought unto Paul bread and water for the sacrifice, that he might make prayer and distribute it to every one. Among whom it befell that a woman named Rufina desired, she also, to receive the Eucharist at the hands of Paul: to whom Paul, filled with the spirit of God, said as she drew near: Rufina, thou comest not worthily unto the altar of God, arising from beside one that is not thine husband but an adulterer, and assayest to receive the Eucharist of God. For behold Satan shall trouble thine heart and cast thee down in the sight of all them that believe in the Lord, that they which see and believe may know that they have believed in the living God, the searcher of hearts. But if thou repent of thine act, he is faithful that is able to blot out thy sin and set thee free from this sin: but if thou repent not, while thou art yet in the body, devouring fire and outer darkness shall receive thee for ever. And immediately Rufina fell down, being stricken with palsy (?) from her head unto the nails of her feet, and she had no power to speak (given her) for her tongue was bound. And when both they that believed (in the faith) and the neophytes saw it, they beat their breasts, remembering their old sins, and mourned and said: We know not if God will forgive the former sins which we have committed. Then Paul called for silence and said: Men and brethren which now have begun to believe on Christ, if ye continue not in your former works of the tradition of your fathers, and keep yourselves from all guile and wrath and fierceness and adultery and defilement, and from pride and envy and contempt and enmity, Jesus the living God will forgive you that ye did in ignorance. Wherefore, ye servants of God, arm yourselves every one in your inner man with peace, patience, gentleness, faith, charity, knowledge, wisdom, love of the brethren, hospitality, mercy, abstinence, chastity, kindness, justice: then shall ye have for your guide everlastingly the first-begotten of all creation, and shall have strength in peace with our Lord. And when they had heard these things of Paul, they besought him to pray for them. And Paul lifted up his voice and said: O eternal God, God of the heavens, God of unspeakable majesty (divinity), who hast stablished all things by thy word, who hast bound upon all the world the chain of thy grace, Father of thine holy Son Jesus Christ, we together pray thee through thy Son Jesus Christ, strengthen the souls which were before unbelieving but now are faithful. Once I was a blasphemer, now I am blasphemed; once I was a persecutor, now do I suffer persecution of others; once I was the enemy of Christ, now I pray that I may be his friend: for I trust in his promise and in his mercy; I account myself faithful and that I have received forgiveness of my former sins. Wherefore I exhort you also, brethren, to believe in the Lord the Father Almighty, and to put all your trust in our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, believing in him, and no man shall be able to uproot you from his promise. Bow your knees therefore together and commend me unto the Lord, who am about to set forth unto another nation, that his grace may go before me and dispose my journey aright, that he may receive his vessels holy and believing, that they, giving thanks for my preaching of the word of the Lord, may be well grounded in the faith. But the brethren wept long and prayed unto the Lord with Paul, saying: Be thou, Lord Jesus Christ, with Paul and restore him unto us whole: for we know our weakness which is in us even to this day.

III. And a great multitude of women were kneeling and praying and beseeching Paul; and they kissed his feet and accompanied him unto the harbour. But Dionysius and Balbus, of Asia, knights of Rome, and illustrious men, and a senator by name Demetrius abode by Paul on his right hand and said: Paul, I would desire to leave the city if I were not a magistrate, that I might not depart from thee. Also from Caesar's house Cleobius and Iphitus and Lysimachus and Aristaeus and two matrons Berenice and Philostrate, with Narcissus the presbyter [after they had] accompanied him to the harbour: but whereas a storm of the sea came on, he (Narcissus?) sent the brethren back to Rome, that if any would, he might come down and hear Paul until he set sail: and hearing that, the brethren went up unto the city. And when they told the brethren that had remained in the city, and the report was spread abroad, some on beasts, and some on foot, and others by way of the Tiber came down to the harbour, and were confirmed in the faith for three days, and on the fourth day until the fifth hour, praying together with Paul, and making the offering: and they put all that was needful on the ship and delivered him two young men, believers, to sail with him, and bade him farewell in the Lord and returned to Rome.

Chapter three of this document is the exclusive source of any depiction of a supposed ministry of Paul in Spain. But the three chapters quoted above are very controversial as to origin and accuracy.<sup>840</sup> Given the ambiguity of this account about the specific point when Paul was in Rome, the historical accuracy of the account is severely questionable. But the account does merit some comment and analysis, if for no other reason to highlight the alternative accounts of Paul's activities in connection to his time in Rome.

The setting for the narrative is given as *At the time when Paul was sojourning in Rome and confirming many in the faith*. One would assume that this was the first visit when Paul was a prisoner of Rome. But clearly it presents a different perspective than the one found in Acts 28. Here Paul is paying a "pastoral visit" to the city much in the manner of later bishops. Although the episode with Candida takes place inside the Roman jail system, it does not present Paul as a prisoner of the Roman government. But, at any rate, this wife of a high government official by the name of Quartus<sup>841</sup> is impressed with what she hears Paul say while speaking to prisoners. From her hearing the Gospel preached by Paul Candia becomes a Christian, and then her husband follows her under her influence. Evidently out of concern for Paul's safety Quartus asks Paul to leave the city. Paul agrees to do so after a three day fast -- something never mentioned about Paul doing in the canonical NT -- and in a vision the Lord instructs him to go to Spain. The writer of this text evidently knew of the tradition of Paul going to Spain either from First Clement or some other source, and perhaps had read Romans 15 where Paul mentions his desire to travel there.

But as Paul is preparing himself to make this journey west to Spain, he encounters opposition to the trip from the Christian community at Rome: *But when Paul was about to depart, there was great weeping throughout all the brotherhood, because they thought that they should see Paul no more, so that they even rent their clothes*. The basis for their opposition is the previous pattern of Paul's ministry refuting the Jewish leaders, i.e., "doctors," claim to the validity of Jewish laws about the sabbath etc. The early expressions of anti-Semitism come to the surface here in a portrayal of Paul abolishing virtually everything Jewish in his preaching. Their pleas did not stop until a theophany occurs with the "voice of God" speaks directly to the group confirming the eventual death of Paul by Nero "before your eyes."

Paragraph 2 relays the legend of Paul's encounter with the adulteress Rufina whose coming under the curse of palsy in the presence of a gathering of believers prompts an outburst of repentance from many in the crowd. Both the depiction of the 'miracle' and the egocentric nature of Paul's prayer are dramatically 'out of character' with the tones found in the canonical New Testament documents. They reflect the growing influence of the Greco-Roman 'god man' tradition with a strong emphasis on ego centered actions including miracles. The request for the Eucharist administered by Paul reflects the growing tradition about the Lord's Supper at the end of the second century. The setting of this event again is in the city of Rome.

Paragraph 3 relays what at first appears to be Paul's spectacular departure from Rome to Spain. But the final statement seems at first glance to reverse this: *and bade him farewell in the Lord and returned to Rome*. The narrative perspective here reflects a departure from possibly somewhere in Spain on a return trip to Rome. That is, unless the subject of *returned to Rome* is the crowd of people gathered at the harbor to see Paul off are returning back home to the city. James' translation assumes this to be the case. This would allow for a setting in Rome for this episode.

The depiction of the gathering of enthusiastic crowds to see Paul off to Spain has the same tones of the *theios anr* cultural tradition. Every important figure must have a spectacular 'send off' on any trip he makes. And

---

<sup>840</sup>There has been great dispute about these three chapters, whether they are not an excerpt from the Acts of Paul, or whether they are an addition made by the writer of the Greek original of the Vercelli Acts. If they are from the Acts of Paul, it means that in those Acts Paul was represented as visiting Rome twice, and going to Spain between the visits. Evidently, if this was so, he did not return straight from Spain to Rome: at least the Coptic gives no indication that the prophecies of Cleobias and Myrte were uttered in Spain.

"The question is a difficult one. All allow that the writer of the Acts of Peter knew and used the Acts of Paul: but there is strong opposition to the idea that Paul related two visits to Rome. The writer of Paul obviously knew the canonical Acts very well and obviously took great liberties with them. Did he go so far, one wonders, as to suppress and ignore the whole story of the trial before Felix and the shipwreck? If he told of but one visit to Rome -the final one- it appears that he did: for the conditions described in the Martyrdom -Paul quite free and martyred very shortly after his arrival- are totally irreconcilable with Luke (Paul arriving in custody and living two years at least in the city)." [M.R. James, "The Acts of Peter," The Apocryphal New Testament]

<sup>841</sup>The only Quartus in the NT is a Christian brother living in Corinth who sent greetings to the believers in Rome as a part of Paul's letter to the Romans in Rom. 16:23. Although he has several legendary traditions about him, none ever link him to the city of Rome. Such indiscriminate use of existing names in the canonical NT writings is rather common place in the apocryphal literature. Factual history was of no interest to these writers.

included in such is significant ‘name dropping’ of important and powerful individuals<sup>842</sup> included in the crowd of well wishers. The writer evidently took elements of Paul’s departure at Miletus in Acts 20:36-38<sup>843</sup> and recast them in the cultural “God man” format in order to give the account the ‘spectacular’ tone demanded by this genre.

Paragraph 4 in the text unexpectedly returns to a glorified account of Peter with the Jewish magician Simon in Samaria that comes early on in Luke’s *Acts of the Apostles*.

This legendary account of Paul’s departure to Spain in chapters 1-3 of the Vercelli Acts tells us nothing of what Paul supposedly did upon arriving in Spain. Unfortunately neither do any of the other ancient documents. We are left completely in the dark about any ministry of Paul in the western Mediterranean. And given all the intensely questionable aspects about this account in the *Vercelli Acts*, one cannot put any confidence at all in the historical reliability of this material.

But it does speak to the growing cultural influences at the end of the second century AD that profoundly shaped the telling of the story of Christian beginnings in the apostolic era. Increasingly Christianity was surrendering its distinctive culture confronting message for one shaped by the contemporary culture as a man-made account in serious conflict with the inspired writings of the apostles. Perhaps the thinking was that this was the best way to reach a pagan world, although I suspect most of it was done sub-consciously without any awareness of what was happening.

### 8.1.5.3 Reconstruction of Ministry

The evaluation of the available sources pushes us to the conclusion that indeed Paul was released from imprisonment in Rome around 63 AD. Further it is clear that he was able to resume ministry for at least a brief time of a few years before coming into a second imprisonment in Rome that led to his death. This much stands clear from both the Pastoral Letters and from the Church Fathers who mention this period of Paul’s life.

The problems begin with efforts to describe in detail where Paul traveled and what he did during the short term ministry, which some have labeled the “fourth missionary journey” of Paul. From the Pastoral Letters, especially First Timothy and Titus, we learn of ministry activities in the Aegean Sea region east of Rome. But these center on Crete and Ephesus with the focus on instructions given to his coworkers Titus and Timothy. Not much of Paul’s activity is recorded in these sources. Thus we are left largely in the dark about what Paul did in this region. This Aegean Sea ministry of Paul is affirmed by Eusebius in his Church History. But he adds nothing but commentary insight into select verses from First Timothy and Titus regarding Paul’s activities.

The huge question mark is whether Paul traveled west as far as Spain when he was released from Roman prison. First Clement, Ignatius, and the Muratorian Canon all affirm a trip to Spain from the Church Fathers, but provide absolutely no details beyond saying he made this trip. But the most important Church Father source, Eusebius, makes no mention of such a trip and does not even mention the tradition. He seemingly does not accept this tradition of a trip to Spain by Paul.

The only source for such an understanding comes from the NT Apocrypha. And it is found exclusively in the *Actus Vercellenes* section of the Acts of Peter. The three chapters of this segment has a hugely controversial history behind it, evidently beginning as a part of the larger *Acts of Paul* document at the end of the second century, but then mostly being copied as a separate document and ending up as an insertion in the *Acts of Peter*. The content of the text, existing only in translation beginning with an old Latin text but now existing in fragments in several other languages, has enormous issues connected to major parts of its wording when compared across the various language translations. Most all English translations today are based on the highly edited Latin text of Richard A. Lipsius in his monumental work *Apokryphe Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden: Ein Beitrag zur altchristlichen Literaturgeschichte*, published in two volumes in 1883-1884. The accompanying Text Apparatus illustrates the large numbers of difficulties in understanding the earlier old Latin text.

Again problems surface not only because of the highly legendary nature of the existing text, but even

---

<sup>842</sup>The Dionysius mentioned in Acts 17:34 is called an Areopagite indicating his close connection to Athen Greece where he lived at his conversion. Thus no connection to *Dionysius and Balbus, of Asia, knights of Rome*, is possible.

<sup>843</sup> . 36 Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν θείσ τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ σὺν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς προσηύξατο. 37 ἰκανὸς δὲ κλαυθμὸς ἐγένετο πάντων καὶ ἐπιπεσόντες ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τοῦ Παύλου κατεφίλουσ αὐτόν, 38 ὀδυνώμενοι μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ ᾧ εἰρήκει, ὅτι οὐκέτι μέλλουσιν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ θεωρεῖν. προέπεμπον δὲ αὐτόν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον.

36 When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed. 37 There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.



more because the text only describes a supposed 'send off' celebration of Paul at the harbor outside the city of Rome. Nothing is given beyond this point about anything that happened to Paul on his way to Spain, while at Spain, or on his way back to Rome.

Otto F. A. Meinardus in an article "Paul's Missionary Journey to Spain: Tradition and Folklore," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, (41, no. 2, Jun. 1978), 61-63. briefly describes two Spanish traditions connected first to the port city of [Tarragona](#) (= Colonia Julia Victrix Triumphalis Tarraco). An eight century Spanish tradition asserts that "during his mission to the Catalans the Apostle Paul consecrated Prosperus first bishop of Tarragona" (p. 62). But with intense persecution Prosperus fled to Regium Lepidum where he immediately was accepted as bishop of the city. The Catholic community of Tarragona still commemorates the preaching of Paul in the city as a part of their annual religious calendar. Additionally in



View of Tarragona

[Tortosa](#), a Roman colony some 55 kilometers southwest of Tarragona on the River Ebro, local tradition claims that Paul preached the Gospel in their town on this trip. Additionally in the province of Seville at Ecija (= ancient Astigis) contend that Paul sailed from Ostia to Cadix and made his way to the Roman colony of Astigis where to consecrate Achaia as bishop of the city, who was converted on a trip to Athens by Paul while he was in the city. None of these traditions date back beyond the 8th century AD and some of them only back to the 14th century. Thus little reliable historical information can be gleaned from them.

Consequently, the conclusion must be reached that Paul did have an Aegean Sea ministry after release from Roman imprisonment about 63 AD. Two of the three Pastoral Letters emerge as a part of this ministry. But it remains highly doubtful that he traveled to Spain as a part of the resumption of ministry during this period.

#### 8.1.6 Subsequent Arrest and Execution (AD 64-68),<sup>844</sup> 2 Tim. 1:8, 15-18; 4:7-21.

The length of this resumption of ministry remains elusive to determine, mostly because of the uncertainty connected to Paul's death, which in turn is linked to [Emperor Nero's](#) death. From numerous Roman documents, Nero's death can be dated with certainty on June 9, 68 AD. This forms the outer limit of Paul's martyrdom at the hands of Nero. The inner limit of Paul's martyrdom stands as July 18-19, 64 AD which is the dating of the beginning of the [great fire in Rome](#) during Nero's reign. Just where Paul's martyrdom falls between July 64 and June 68 AD depends on whether it was related to Nero's persecution of Christians under the false charges of having started the fire. Although many modern perspectives do link his death to this persecution, such a connection was not made among the church fathers. If his martyrdom is not linked to the great fire, then it could have happened anywhere between 64 and 68 AD. If so linked, then it must have happened within a year or so of this fire.

##### 8.1.6.1 Evaluating the Sources for Paul's Martyrdom

Because accounts of his martyrdom are not found inside the canonical New Testament we are left with a series of mostly brief references among the church fathers asserting that he was martyred at the hands of Nero. These traditions are generally unified in claiming his martyrdom, although details when given do vary. Once again the major sources for his martyrdom, particularly in detailed narratives, come from the New Testament Apocrypha. Central to these is the most detailed narrative called the Martyrdom of Paul, which began as a part of the Acts of Paul but later on was copied and distributed as a separate document. As is normally the situation with these kinds of documents, one must exercise extreme caution in sorting out history from legend. Most of the contents fall into the legendary side and very little on the reliable history side.

<sup>844</sup>2 Timothy written during this period.

The final writing of Paul, Second Timothy, provides the closest source possible leading up to the death of the apostle inside the New Testament. These will be examined first for possible insight into the final days of Paul on this earth. Then we will take a look at the major church father sources and then conclude with the apocryphal sources.

### 8.1.6.2 Paul's Snapshot Glimpses of the Last Days,

In the final letter of Paul shortly before his martyrdom in Rome sometime between 65 and 68 AD, the apostle writes a second letter to Timothy who is still helping the church at Ephesus. This more reflective composition reveals the apostle preparing to end life on planet earth and to go to be with Christ in heaven.

#### 2 Timothy 1:3-5.

3 Χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, ᾧ λατρεύω ἀπὸ προγόνων ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, ὡς ἀδιάλειπτον ἔχω τὴν περὶ σοῦ μείαν ἐν ταῖς δεήσεσίν μου νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, 4 ἐπιποθῶν σε ἰδεῖν, μεμνημένος σου τῶν δακρύων, ἵνα χαρᾶς πληρωθῶ, 5 ὑπόμνησιν λαβὼν τῆς ἐν σοὶ ἀνυποκρίτου πίστεως, ἣτις ἐνώκησεν πρῶτον ἐν τῇ μάμμῃ σου Λωῖδι καὶ τῇ μητρὶ σου Εὐνίκη, πέπεισμαι δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐν σοί.

3 I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

This text comes as the traditional letter [Proem](#) where Paul expresses prayerful thanksgiving to God at the beginning of the letter.<sup>845</sup> The very reflective tone here in vv. 3-5 especially signal the writing of a man approaching the end of his life and now reflecting back over his life. Coming in the [Proem](#), this will set much of the one for the contents of the body proper of the letter in 1:6-4:18.<sup>846</sup>

<sup>845</sup>For a comparison of the contents in Greek of the Proema in all of the letters of Paul see [my listing](http://cranfordville.com/G496CLess02ProemList.pdf) at <http://cranfordville.com/G496CLess02ProemList.pdf>.

<sup>846</sup>*Inferences from 2 Timothy*. This scenario helps to understand much about the second epistle to Timothy: (1) 2 Timothy is almost totally unlike the other two letters in the corpus. While it does share a literary style, in almost every other way it is different: it is a personal letter; it is replete with encouragement and personal comments; and reference to false teachers is virtually nonexistent, except for two places (2 Tim 2:14–18; 2:23–3:9).

“(2) Timothy continues to be an apostolic delegate, Paul’s close personal friend, who is to find Ephesian Christians to help in the task of the gospel’s proclamation (along with Tychicus) and then come to Rome so that Paul can see him one more time. Paul wants to encourage Timothy in the face of suffering and in face of his spiritual father’s imminent death. Timothy knows Scripture is true and worthy of obedience.

“(3) The historical situation is unique. Paul was at the end of his life and knew his work was done. Years of Roman imprisonment, interaction with his guard and people in the city, could easily have had an affect on both his thought and expression (e.g., the Latinisms in the PE; cf. Hitchcock, *ExpTim* 39 [1927–28] 347–52). Paul was writing to an individual (who was a good friend), not to teach but to encourage, recalling earlier times (2 Tim 3:10–11) and appealing for personal loyalty and loyalty to the gospel (1:6–14; 2:1–13; 3:10–4:5) in the face of suffering (1:8, 16; 2:3; 3:12; 4:5). He had spent years proclaiming the gospel and was confident that it would continue after he was gone. He was in prison and knew he would soon die. These are all formative events that could greatly affect the way any person would think and write.

“(4) Especially significant is the statement that only Luke was with Paul (2 Tim 4:11). If the ‘we’ sections in Acts are accepted as historical (Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:6; also Col 4:14; Phlm 24), Paul had been spending more and more time with Luke, which may have affected Paul’s communication style (cf. Knight, 50–51). If Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’ (2 Cor 12:7) was encroaching blindness, he was becoming more dependent on others, a dependency that would be heightened by a severe imprisonment. Paul had used an amanuensis for his other writings, and, given Luke’s writing ability (if his authorship of the third Gospel and Acts is accepted), it is hard to imagine someone else writing for Paul. Regardless of how much freedom Paul would have given to another amanuensis, Paul’s serious predicament and Luke’s friendship suggest that Paul would have given Luke more freedom as an amanuensis than he would have given to others.

“Paul could have used another amanuensis for 1 Timothy and Titus since the historical situation for each is different. But since Luke was with Paul during his final journey to Rome and subsequent imprisonments and the style of all three epistles is consistent, it is possible that Luke was Paul’s amanuensis for all three letters and was given considerable freedom in writing to two men who, most likely, were also Luke’s friends. While there are stylistic reasons that suggest that Luke was the amanuensis (discussed below), the historical scenario argues forcefully for this position.

“For those not accepting Pauline authorship, dates of writing vary from shortly after Paul’s death (Harrison, Problem; Easton; Dornier), to the 80s through the 100s (Roloff), the Domitian persecution (A.D. 100–115; Hanson [1983]), and even the time of Marcion (A.D. 135–50; Gealy).

“Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy for several reasons: (1) He wanted Timothy to finish up a few details in Ephesus and come to see him in Rome before he died. (2) In light of the fierceness of the opposition in Ephesus, he encouraged Timothy to remain

Reconstructing the situation described in 2 Timothy is not easy because of limited data provided in the letter. There is a fair amount of historical material in the contents of the letter but they do not provide a clearly defined historical depiction of events in Paul's life.<sup>847</sup> Most of the movements of Paul surface through references to his fellow workers which are scattered through the letter and especially found in the Conclusio. But other materials reveals the mind and attitudes of Paul at this point in his life also.

In 1:3-5, we find a grateful Paul for the blessings of God upon his ministry. To be sure the lead statement of Χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, *I have praise to God*, begins the Proem differently than in Paul's other letters -- except for First Timothy, which is identical to here.<sup>848</sup> Most commonly the **lead statement** is Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ.... *I give thanks to God*. But the ideas are virtually identical. Here at the end of his life gratitude to God still dominated the apostle's thinking.

In the lengthy expansion of this opening statement, which covers vv. 3b-5, he elaborates on various aspects of his gratitude to God. **First**, there is ὃν λατρεύω ἀπὸ προγόνων ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, *whom I serve*

true to him and to the gospel message, to willingly suffer for the gospel. (3) Paul also wanted to bring Timothy up to date on the activities and whereabouts of his coworkers.”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lxiii–lxiv.]

<sup>847</sup>References are made to Rome, Thessalonica, Galatia, Dalmatia, Ephesus, Troas, Corinth, and Miletus, suggesting travels in Macedonia and on the western coast of Asia Minor. The following is a possible scenario. It is possible that Paul never reached Nicopolis. He may have been arrested en route and taken to Rome. Instead of staying in Nicopolis, Titus continued on to Dalmatia. It was late summer, and Paul wanted Timothy to come quickly. If there does not seem to be sufficient time for all this to have occurred, then it is possible that Paul did reach Nicopolis for the winter, and Titus spent the winter with him, departing for Dalmatia in the spring. Paul, delayed by the winter, still desired to visit Timothy and Ephesus and got as far as Miletus before being arrested. The name Alexander is Ephesian, and he may have instigated the arrest as a personal vendetta because Paul had excommunicated him (1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 4:14). Trophimus became ill before or after the arrest and stayed behind at Miletus. Paul saying ‘I left’ (2 Tim 4:20) shows that he was in Miletus with Trophimus. (Most likely not much time had elapsed between Trophimus's illness and the writing of 2 Timothy. Timothy and Trophimus were at least associates and perhaps friends, Timothy was in obvious need of support, Miletus was only thirty-five miles from Ephesus, and yet it appears from 2 Tim 4:20 that Timothy did not know of Trophimus's illness.) They would have traveled north through Troas, and there Paul left his cloak, books, and parchments. (It is possible that Paul was arrested in Troas, and a short-term arrest would explain why he left these items; but then it is difficult to place the visit to Miletus since it seems doubtful that they would have traveled from Troas south to Miletus on their way to Rome if they were traveling on foot.)

“Erastus accompanied Paul as far as Corinth (‘remained’ [2 Tim 4:20] may suggest Paul was with him until that point), but he stayed there for some reason. Paul was taken to Rome (as would be expected of the leader of the Christian mission to the Gentiles), but this imprisonment was unlike the one recorded in Acts 28. It was much more severe. Onesiphorus had to search diligently before finding Paul (2 Tim 1:17), who was imprisoned as a serious criminal (2 Tim 2:9). His lack of shame at Paul's chains, Paul's encouragement to Timothy that he too not be ashamed, all the Asian Christians abandoning Paul, and the abandonment of Demas, one of Paul's inner circle, all suggest the seriousness of the imprisonment. The presence of Luke, a physician, and Paul's desire for a warm cloak may also point to a difficult imprisonment (although Luke was also a friend and winter was coming). Paul's eulogy and his admission of impending death (2 Tim 4:6–8, 18) show that he knew he would not be released.

“Paul had already made his initial defense before the Roman court. Although he was abandoned by his friends, it appears that the court's initial ruling was positive; Paul proclaimed the gospel to all the Gentiles and was ‘rescued from the mouth of a lion’ (2 Tim 4:17). Even though Timothy's work was not done in Ephesus, Paul saw that Timothy had time to come to Rome if he left Ephesus immediately. He was to appoint people to continue the truthful proclamation of the gospel (2:2), bring Mark (who may have been in Ephesus), stop in Troas to get the cloak, books, and parchments from Carpus, and arrive in Rome before winter, all along being wary of Alexander. While the courts had given Paul an initial reprieve, he knew that eventually they would condemn him. Paul also wanted to let Timothy know where his friends were.

“We do not know if Timothy arrived in time. Church tradition reports (1 Clem. 5:7; Dionysius, bishop of Corinth [A.D. 170], in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 2.25.8; Origen, in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 2.22.2, 7; 3.1, cited above; Bruce, *New Testament History*, 367) that while in Rome Paul was executed under the Neronian persecution (which began in A.D. 65). According to tradition (Gaius of Rome, A.D. 200, in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 2.25.7), Paul was beheaded (Tertullian *De praescr.* 36) at Aquae Salviae (currently named Tre Fontane) near the third milestone on the Ostian Way (Bruce, *Paul*, 450–51). Eusebius dates Paul's death in Nero's thirteenth year (A.D. 67; *Chronicle, Year of Abraham* 2083); Jerome places it one year later in his translation of Eusebius (*Chronicon Eusebii Caesariensis*). It is noteworthy that no tradition contradicts Eusebius, no other location is claimed to be the location of Paul's death (cf. Bruce, *Paul*, 451–54), and this tradition comes from Rome (Bernard, xxxiii).”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lxii–lxiii.]

<sup>848</sup>“χάριν ἔχω, ‘I thank’ (also in Lk. 17:9; Acts 2:47; 2 Cor. 1:15; Heb. 12:28), is used here (and in 1 Tim. 1:12) in place of the more usual εὐχαριστέω (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 Thes. 1:2; 2 Thes. 1:3; Phm. 4) or the less usual εὐλογητός (2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3). The phrase is found in the literature of the day, including the papyri (see BAGD s.v. χάρις 5), and is comparable to the Latin expression *gratiam habere* (Simpson). Paul expresses his thanksgiving ‘to God’ (τῷ θεῷ) here as he does in all his thanksgiving sections.” [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 366.]



with a clear conscience from the time of my ancestors. The verb λατρεύω stresses the giving of religious service to God, something like a priest in the Jerusalem temple did. The manner of this service is defined as ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, with a clean conscience. Paul's lifetime of service to God has always been within the framework of the will of God as he understood it at the time. He has not deviated from his convictions. The other prepositional phrase ἀπὸ προγόνων stresses the framework of that religious devotion. The adjective πρόγονος, -ον here used as a noun in the genitive plural form, defines those born before Paul. It especially stresses the religious heritage his parents gave him, which sets up a comparison with Timothy's mother and grandmother deeper into the sentence. Paul underscores the value of a religious heritage passed down from parents to children, and even going back further in the lineage. For what they gave Paul he is grateful to God, along with the opportunity to live out that heritage consistently over the years.

**Second**, his gratitude shifts to Timothy: ὡς ἀδιάλειπτον ἔχω τὴν περὶ σοῦ μνηϊαν ἐν ταῖς δεήσεσίν μου νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, as unceasingly I have recollection of you in my prayers night and day. Thus every time Paul engages in prayer he remember Timothy up to God and does so with deep gratitude. The twin temporal adverbs ἀδιάλειπτον and νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας do not define non-stop praying.<sup>849</sup> Rather, in the pattern of Paul's regular praying Timothy is included in his intercession to God (ἐν ταῖς δεήσεσίν μου) and is done so with gratitude to God for Timothy.

**Third**, comes some of the motivation of the apostle for praying for Timothy: ἐπιποθῶν σε ἰδεῖν, longing to see you. His longing to see Timothy prompts him to be grateful to God for Timothy. The aged apostle now in his 60s and facing death just around the corner yearns to see his friend and fellow servant Timothy one more time before departing this world. Now in the mid 60s of the first century Paul remembers the beginning time when Timothy joined he and Silas on the second missionary journey in the early 50s (see part of the story beginning in Acts 16 and onward). Over this period of more than a decade, they were not apart from one another very much, and mostly because of Paul giving Timothy various assignments to minister to different churches in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Paul prayed for Timothy in all of these assignments that God would protect him, give him strength, and bless his service to the churches. And bring him safely back to the apostle's side.

**Fourth**, there is μεμνημένος σου τῶν δακρῶν, remembering you tears. This points to a tearful parting between Paul and Timothy. Paul recognized this devotion from Timothy and was grateful to God for it. Although not named specifically it most likely alludes to when Paul left Timothy behind at Ephesus on his way to Macedonia a year or more earlier: Καθὼς παρεκάλεσά σε προσμεῖναι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ πορευόμενος εἰς Μακεδονίαν, Just as I urged you to remain behind in Ephesus as I was traveling to Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3a). Timothy's devotion to Paul, especially in the advancing age of the apostle, meant that every parting between them was tough and tearful for Timothy. Such was Timothy's love of the apostle who stood as a spiritual father to him over these years.

**Fifth**, ἵνα χαρᾶς πληρωθῶ, so that I may be filled with joy. This purpose statement pulls together the other modifiers (above list) of Χάριν ἔχω into an expression of anticipated joy. Gratefulness to God for Timothy flows into longing to see him and that flows into anticipated great joy over the expectation of seeing this reunion happen. When in ministry for extensive time and God brings into your path young people who blossom in ministry, getting to see them from time to time is indeed a joyful experience and prompts even greater gratefulness to God for them.

**Sixth**, ὑπόμνησιν λαβῶν τῆς ἐν σοὶ ἀνυποκρίτου πίστεως, taking remembrance of the sincere faith in you.<sup>850</sup> Another quality that prompts gratitude to God for Timothy is the quality of his faith commitment to Christ. It

<sup>849c</sup>His thanks to God comes specifically during his regular prayer times. As a Pharisee, Paul would have followed a regular prayer schedule, and the habit probably carried over to his Christian walk. ἀδιάλειπος, 'unceasing' (a neuter adjective used adverbially; see Rom 9:2 and the adverb ἀδιαλείπτως, "unceasingly," in Rom 1:9; 1 Thess 1:3, 1–3; 5:17), does not refer to nonstop prayer; rather it indicates that every time he prays, he remembers Timothy (cf. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 56). ἔχω τὴν περὶ σοῦ μνηϊαν, 'I have remembrance concerning you,' is an usual way for Paul to refer to prayer (Rom 1:9; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2 [but not 3:6]; Phlm 4). δέησις, 'prayer,' refers specifically to prayer that expresses a need (cf. 1 Tim 2:1). νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, 'night and day,' was the normal Hebraic way of viewing time, the new day starting at sunset (cf. 1 Tim 5:5). Some punctuate so that νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας goes with the following ἐπιποθῶν σε, 'longing to see you' (cf. RV, Bernard, Moffatt's tr., RSV ['as I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you']). However, it more naturally goes with the topic of prayer as it does elsewhere (1 Thess 3:10; cf. Luke 2:37), and Kelly (156) argues that it is 'unnatural' to think of Paul longing night and day to see Timothy." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 469.]

<sup>850c</sup>V 5 completes the thought begun in v 3: 'I continually thank God ... because I remember your sincere faith.' The NIV unfortunately starts v 5 as a new sentence, breaking the relationship between v 3 and v 5. Remembrance of the recipients' faith often occasions this same statement from Paul (Col 1:3–4, εὐχαριστοῦμεν ... ἀκούσαντες, 'we give thanks ... having heard'; 2 Thess 1:3, εὐχαριστοῦν ... ὅτι, 'to give thanks ... because'; Phlm 4–5, εὐχαριστῶ ... ἀκούων, 'I give thanks ... hearing'; cf. Rom 1:8; Eph 1:15). In light of the

is described two ways: ἐν σοὶ and ἀνυποκρίτου. Although Paul will continue on to attribute much influence upon Timothy from his mother Lois and grandmother Eunice, he knows that Timothy's unconditional commitment to Christ in faith is his own. Timothy has made it so and proven it to be so time and time again in service to Christ. The unusual phrase ὑπόμνησιν λαβῶν, *receiving remembrance*, is Paul's way of saying that various things happening to him caused him to remember Timothy and his genuine faith in Christ. Some of this may very have been the inconsistency and shakiness of the faith commitment of some of those around Paul in Rome at this point: Δημᾶς γάρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην, Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν; *Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia* (2 Tim. 4:10). Timothy was one of those associates whom Paul knew he could count on. In contrast Timothy's faith was ἀνυποκρίτου, *unhypocritical*. That is, it contained no phoniness or deception. This is a way of affirming a pure motivation of Timothy to serve Christ. Few higher complements could be given to a Christian.

**Seventh**, ἥτις ἐνώκησεν πρῶτον ἐν τῇ μάμμῃ σου Λωΐδι καὶ τῇ μητρὶ σου Εὐνίκη, πέπεισμαι δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐν σοί. *which lived first in your mother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that it also is in you*. This relative clause stresses the powerful role of quality family life in transmitting a religious heritage.<sup>851</sup> The impact of Timothy's non-Jewish father (Acts 16:1, πατὴρ δὲ Ἕλληνας) is never spelled out inside the New Testament. But Paul will repeat several times in 2 Timothy aspects of the influence of his mother Lois upon his life spiritually. According to Acts 16:1, she was already a Jewish believer when Paul and Silas arrived at Lystra on the second missionary journey in the early 50s. And Timothy was as well, and had established a very positive reputation among believers in the region of Galatia by that point in time: ὃς ἐμαρτυρεῖτο ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Λύστροις καὶ Ἰκονίῳ ἀδελφῶν, *who was well spoken of by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium* (Acts 16:2). No one could have anticipated how all of that would turn out when Timothy agreed to join Paul and Silas on their missionary travels.

The reader of Second Timothy encounters a reflective Paul at the very beginning of this letter to his dear friend Timothy. The aged apostle is encouraging but is realistically facing his immanent death as well. What we can learn from the close friendship between Paul and Timothy is substantial. How a believer prepares himself for death is an equally important lesson from this letter.

## 2 Timothy 1:8-12.

8 μὴ οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῆς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μηδὲ ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ,

9 τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς  
καὶ καλέσαντος κλήσει ἁγία,  
οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν  
ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν,  
τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ  
πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων,

10 φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν  
διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,  
καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον

φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου  
11 εἰς ὃ ἐτέθη ἐγὼ κήρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος καὶ διδάσκαλος, 12 δι' ἣν αἰτίαν καὶ ταῦτα πάσχω· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπαισχύνομαι, οἶδα γὰρ ὃ πεπίστευκα καὶ πέπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατός ἐστιν τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν.

8 *Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God,*

9 *who saved us  
and called us with a holy calling,*

desertions of those Paul considered brothers, both Demas (4:10) and others (4:16; cf. 1:15), people whose faith was evidently insincere, it is joyous for Paul to remember Timothy's sincere faith." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 470.]

<sup>851</sup>"Paul elaborates on Timothy's faith by reminding him of his spiritual heritage, a heritage that has carried over into Timothy's own life. By reminding Timothy of this and by implicitly comparing it to his own spiritual heritage (cf. 1:3), Paul begins his encouragement of Timothy, which becomes the dominant note throughout the first half of the epistle. The theme plays a major role in 3:14-15 in Paul's discussion of the trustworthiness of Scripture: Timothy learned Scripture not only from Paul but also from his mother and grandmother ("from childhood")." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 471.]

not according to our works  
but according to his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus  
before the ages began,

10 but it has now been revealed  
through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,  
who abolished death  
and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

11 For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.

Paul gives encouragement to Timothy regarding his imprisonment again in Rome. The lead admonition, *μη οὖν ἐπαισχυθηῖς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μηδὲ ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ*, *Do not therefore be ashamed of the witness of our Lord neither of me, his prisoner*. The inferential conjunction οὖν links this admonition as implicit in the recollections of vv. 5-7. Timothy's mother and grandmother spent their lives in commitment to Jesus Christ. In light of that Paul calls on Timothy to not waver in that same faith commitment with any sense of shame about being a Christian living in the same faith commitment as they did. The present circumstance of the mid 60s was bringing ever increasing pressure on Christians to renounce their faith commitment to Christ and to disassociate themselves from those who remained steadfast in that commitment. Over the years Paul had observed Peter and Barnabas fail Christ in crucial moments of pressure (Gal. 2:11-14). He was seeing the inconsistency of some of his associates in their faith commitment at the time of the writing of this letter (2 Tim. 4:9-13). Various opponents to Christianity were working hard against the Gospel such as Alexander the coppersmith at Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:14-15). Timothy faced countless pressures as he sought to help straighten out the problems in the house churches at Ephesus -- a task virtually no modern preacher or missionary would want to have given to them.

One should not infer from this admonition that Timothy was weak or was seriously tempted toward a sense of shame<sup>852</sup> because of his Christian commitment. To be sure in the 60s of the first century Christianity was looked down upon by most in the Greco-Roman culture as a woefully inferior teaching that functioned outside the law and thus was subject to Roman oppression. Its connection to Judaism did not help it since Judaism was

---

<sup>852</sup>The idea of shame is covered by a large number of words in Koine Greek: *αἰσχύνω*, *ἐπαισχύνομαι*, *καταισχύνομαι*, *αἰσχύνη*, *αἰσχροῦς*, *αἰσχροπότης* (→ *αἰδώς*). [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:189.]

In contrast to → *αἰδώς* and *αἰδεῖσθαι*, *αἰσχύνη* and *αἰσχύνω* (or *αἰσχύνομαι*) remained in common use even in the lower strata of Greek, and must often have replaced the less usual terms. As in all the literature of Hellenistic Judaism, they are thus common in the LXX (mostly in translation of *בִּיבוּ* and *בִּשְׁתָּ*). Nor are they used in a special sense, except that there is a one-sided application which gives them a certain nuance.

The verb *αἰσχύνω*, fully interchangeable with *ἐπ-* and *esp. καταισχύνομαι*, is often found act. in the sense of “to shame” or “to bring to shame” (mostly for *בִּיבוּ*). Most frequently God is the subject, and the shame to which He brings is His judgment (*ψ* 43:9, v.l. *ἐξουθενώω*; 118:31, 116). The mid. is relatively uncommon, and has the common Greek sense of “being ashamed” (i.e., of doing something, 2 Esr. 8:22 etc., or of having done something, 2 Ch. 12:6). Mostly *αἰσχύνεσθαι* denotes experience of the judgment of God; and it is usually difficult to decide whether the form is mid. or pass., i.e., “to be shamed or confounded,” or “to be ashamed” in the sense of “having to be ashamed.” What is in view is not so much the state of soul of the *αἰσχυνομένοις* but the situation into which he is brought and in which he is exposed to shame and has thus to be ashamed. That the thought is primarily of one's own despair rather than the *δόξα* of others is shown by the fact that → *ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι* and *εὐφραίνεσθαι* are the most common opposites (*ψ* 34:26 f.; 69:3–5 etc.); indeed, when *δοξάζεσθαι* (→ *δόξα*) and → *καυχᾶσθαι* are the opposites (Is. 45:24 f.; *ψ* 96:7 etc.), they do not have their Greek sense, but indicate pride rather than good repute. Characteristic are the combinations and parallelisms of *αἰσχυνοῦμαι* with *ἐντραπῆναι*, *ταραχθῆναι*, *ἀτιμωθῆναι*, *ὀνειδισθῆναι*, *καταγελασθῆναι*, *ἐπιστραφῆναι*, *ἀποστραφῆναι* εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, *ἐκλείπειν*, *ἠττᾶσθαι*, *ματαιωθῆναι*, *ἀπολέσθαι*, *συντριβῆναι* etc., which illustrate the breadth of meaning. Since the reference is mostly to the *αἰσχυνοῦμαι* of those who are full of proud confidence and expectancy, or to the fact that those who trust in Yahweh will not be confounded, *αἰσχυνοῦμαι* often has almost the meaning of “being disillusioned” (e.g., Jer. 2:36).

Accordingly, the subst. *αἰσχύνη* is very seldom used for the “feeling of shame.”<sup>1</sup> It mostly denotes “disgrace,” though sometimes with an emphasis on the fact that this also means being ashamed. Its primary reference is to the shame brought by the divine judgment. Here, too, the range of meaning is shown by the combinations with *ἐντροπή*, *ὀνειδισμός*, *ἀτιμία*, etc. It is also characteristic that *αἰσχύνη* is used for *בְּעַל* or for the equivalent *בְּשִׁב*.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:189.]



considered one of the most inferior religious teachings found in the empire.<sup>853</sup> With Paul in the custody of Rome for a second time and now being treated much more harshly than during the first imprisonment, anyone associated with him would surely come under heavy suspicion and would also be subject to arrest as well. All of this made it risky to identify with Paul and evidently caused many to distance themselves from Paul.

The theme of not being ashamed<sup>854</sup> is significant inside Second Timothy. Paul is not ashamed (1:12); and Onesiphorus is with Paul in Rome and is not ashamed to associate with him (1:16). Sociologically the importance of honor / shame in that world was substantial.<sup>855</sup> Paul, along with Jesus and the other apostles, turned this on its head with shame in this world becoming something of a badge of honor that would be conferred in the world to come.<sup>856</sup> Now at the end of his earthly life, Paul took a certain pride in being disgraced because of being a

---

<sup>853</sup>Paul at 1 Cor 1:18–2:10 declares the paradox of the cross as an expression of divine wisdom and power and the basis of true boasting in the face of the human calculation of shame and folly. The Greco-Roman society of honor/shame would encourage avoiding situations that could compromise one's honor. Paul rises above the shame of imprisonment by looking at the advance of the Gospel (Phil 1:20) and the example of Jesus (Phil 2:1–11). Jesus exchanged his honorable status of sovereign for the shameful condition of a slave and went further to accept the ultimate shame of crucifixion. Second Timothy here recalls the same situation and offers a parallel restoration of honor in the life to come, where Jesus Christ is already in glory. The witness is the historical Jesus Christ's saving mediation wherein he gave himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim 2:5–6) and in the process gave testimony before Pontius Pilate (1 Tim 6:13). This is the kernel of the Gospel proclamation (1 Tim 6:13), which Timothy made at his ordination and about which he now is warned not to be ashamed. A convicted revolutionary associated with outlandish claims to save all people by his execution hardly constitutes an honorable religious leader and creed of belief. Lucian, *Peregr.* 13, and Tacitus, *Annales* XV.44, indicate the ridicule to which Christian belief was exposed. The title 'Our Lord' (*ho kyrios hēmōn*) counters the dishonorable aura surrounding Jesus' death (see 1 Tim 1:2). [Daniel J. Harrington, "Editor's Preface," in *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 12, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 137.]

<sup>854</sup>**SHAME** [ἡσῶν *bosheth*; κατησχύνοντο *katēschynonto*, ἐντροπήν *entropēn*]. Shame constitutes the flip side of the pivotal Mediterranean value, HONOR, significantly contrasting with modern Northwestern concept of 'guilt' (Plevnik). Women are specifically vulnerable to shame — their own and their menfolks'. Men will do everything to avoid shame, the loss of honor, or its increase (a gain being open to men only). The founders of this 'Mediterranean' analysis themselves insisted that shame seems to be universal, and guilt is simply internalized shame (Peristiany). In the Bible, fathers and mothers are to be honored, as is the 'good wife' (Prov 31:10–31), as are all Christians by one another (Rom 12:10). Being shamed does matter (2 Sam 13:12; Ps 35:26; Isa 61:7; Luke 14:9; 1 Cor 11:6, 14) but not above all other considerations. Thus, with little regard for shame a patriarch may surrender his wife to safeguard his life (Gen 12:13; 20:2; 26:7), and David plays the imbecile (1 Sam 21:13). Jesus' followers are expected to welcome shameful treatment (Luke 6:22), just as Jesus himself disregarded shame (Heb 12:2). It was in fact entirely possible to be 'shameless,' unconcerned for honor or dishonor, as Cynics claimed to be, and in which Paul joined them (1 Cor 4:10; 2 Cor 6:8). [F. Gerald Downing, "Shame," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 212.]

<sup>855</sup>**ἐπαισχύνεσθαι**, 'to be ashamed,' occurs elsewhere in the PE where Paul says that he is not ashamed because he knows Christ can guard him and the gospel (2 Tim 1:12) and also where Paul points out that Onesiphorus is not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment (1:16). It is the same sentiment seen in Paul's affirmation that he is not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16; cf. Rom 6:21; cf. Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Heb 2:11; 11:16; and cognates in Luke 16:3; 2 Cor 10:8; Phil 1:20; 1 Pet 4:16; 1 John 2:28; A. Horstmann, *EDNT* 1:42; H. C. Kee, "The Linguistic Background of 'Shame,'" 133–47). [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 479.]

<sup>856</sup>The mark of honor is laid out clearly by [Lucian, \*De Morte Peregrini\*](#), 13, which is the philosopher's satirical account of the death of Peregrinus Proteus, a Cynic philosopher turned Christian in the second century AD. He mocks Peregrinus' sense of honor which Lucian considers false and contrary to contemporary standards of honor in the second century Roman world.

[13] καὶ μὴν καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἀσίᾳ πόλεων ἔστιν ὧν ἤκόν τινες, τῶν Χριστιανῶν στελλόντων ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ, βοηθήσοντες καὶ συναγορεύσοντες καὶ παραμυθησόμενοι τὸν ἄνδρα. ἀμήχανον δὲ τι τὸ τάχος ἐπιδείκνυνται, ἐπειδὴν τι τοιοῦτον γένηται δημόσιον ἐν βραχεῖ γὰρ ἀφειδοῦσι πάντων. καὶ δὴ καὶ τῷ Περειγρίνῳ πολλὰ τότε ἤκεν χρήματα παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπὶ προφάσει τῶν δεσμῶν, καὶ πρόσδοτον οὐ μικρὰν ταύτην ἐποίησατο. πεπείκασι γὰρ αὐτοὺς οἱ κακοδαίμονες τὸ μὲν ὄλον ἀθάνατοι ἔσεσθαι καὶ βιώσεσθαι τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον, παρ' ὃ καὶ καταφρονοῦσιν τοῦ θανάτου καὶ ἐκόντες αὐτοὺς ἐπιδιδόασιν οἱ πολλοί. ἔπειτα δὲ ὁ νομοθέτης ὁ πρῶτος ἔπεισεν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἀδελφοὶ πάντες εἶεν ἀλλήλων, ἐπειδὴν ἅπαξ παραβάντες θεοὺς μὲν τοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς ἀπαρνήσονται, τὸν δὲ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκείνον σοφιστὴν αὐτὸν προσκυνῶσιν καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ἐκείνου νόμους βιώσιν. καταφρονοῦσιν οὖν ἀπάντων ἐξ ἴσης καὶ κοινὰ ἡγοῦνται, ἀνευ τινὸς ἀκριβοῦς πίστεως τὰ τοιαῦτα παραδεξάμενοι. ἦν τοίνυν παρέλθῃ τις εἰς αὐτοὺς γόης καὶ τεχνίτης ἄνθρωπος καὶ πράγμασιν χρῆσθαι δυνάμενος, αὐτίκα μάλᾳ πλούσιος ἐν βραχεῖ ἐγένετο ἰδιώταις ἀνθρώποις ἐγγανών. [Lucian, *Works*, ed. A. M. Harmon, vol. 5 (Medford, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 12–14.]

13 In some of the Asiatic cities, too, the Christian communities put themselves to the expense of sending deputations, with offers of sympathy, assistance, and legal advice. The activity of these people, in dealing with any matter that affects their community, is something extraordinary; they spare no trouble, no expense. Peregrine, all this time, was making quite an income on the strength of his bondage; money came pouring in. You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite

follower of Jesus Christ and looked forward to the day of honor that his death would be. He is anxious for Timothy to adopt the same understanding. Those who had deserted the apostle (cf. 1:15) had unfortunately let the surrounding world define shame / honor rather than adopting the Christian perspective. Only Onesiphorus had remained consistent to the Christian understanding (1:16-18).

The twin predicate objects τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μηδὲ ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ, *the testimony of our Lord nor me His prisoner*, underscore both the apostolic Gospel and Paul as its proclaimer. In previous times of imprisonment Paul expressed similar feelings of a lack of shame over his being in chains: Philm. 9 and Phil. 1:20.

The counterpoint to ἐπαισχυνθῆς is συγκακοπάθησον as defined by the conjunction ἀλλὰ. The other side of this dual admonition is a call to Timothy to suffer (1:8 & 2:3): ἀλλὰ συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ, *but suffer with me for the Gospel relying on the power of God*.<sup>857</sup> The root idea of συγκακοπαθέω is clear from its component parts: συγ + κακο + παθέω, together + evil + experience. Experience persecution for one's faith in Christ is to be a shared experience; we never go through it alone because other believers will be experiencing what we are. The heart of this is experiencing evil from other people who are not believers. There is no justice; we are victims and often helpless victims. We have no recourse in human institutions but only in the justice of God to be experienced in heaven rather than on earth. It is something we experience; its not theoretical nor simply verbal abuse. Instead, it entails physical abuse at some level all the way to execution.

That was a significant call to Timothy. He had seen Paul go through an amazing variety of such persecutions over the time they served the Lord together.<sup>858</sup> The biblical text never indicates whether Timothy had gotten caught up in any of the persecutions. But Timothy, just out of watching Paul, knew that the possibility of persecution was very real for him. Nothing in this letter indicates any unwillingness to suffer persecution for his faith commitment to Christ.

Paul's last point was κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ, *according to the power of God*. Timothy was not called upon to suffer persecution within the reserves of his own determination and strength. Instead, persecution was to be endured within the power of God.<sup>859</sup> When it comes -- and it will according to 3:12 -- believers are to face it within the resources provided them by God.

The mention of τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, the Gospel, in connection to θεοῦ, of God, prompts the use of a performed Christian tradition either from a confession of faith or perhaps a piece of an early Christian hymn in vv. 9-10.<sup>860</sup>

---

on trust, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property. Now an adroit, unscrupulous fellow, who has seen the world, has only to get among these simple souls, and his fortune is pretty soon made; he plays with them.

<sup>857c</sup>The suffering Timothy is to shoulder with Paul ultimately benefits the Gospel (see 1:12). Paul is entrusted with the task of spreading the Gospel (1 Tim 1:1, 11–12; 2:7; 2 Tim 1:1, 11; 2:8; Titus 1:1–3), and Timothy receives other exhortations to engage in the struggle for the Gospel (1 Tim 1:18; 4:10; 2 Tim 2:3). ‘Suffering’ associates the Christian sufferers with the suffering of Christ and the life won for them by it (see 2:11–12). If all Christians are to suffer (3:12), then Paul’s suffering contributes to making him the model Christian, as does Timothy’s and, at the head of the chain of models, Jesus’. Being able to suffer stems from God’s power, not from the believer’s own endurance. Since all have the same gift, they can likewise bear the suffering.” [Daniel J. Harrington, *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 12, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 138.]

<sup>858c</sup>This must be understood in light of Paul’s past life of suffering (2 Cor 4:7–15; Phil 1:12–14, 29; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:4), his current situation as a prisoner (2 Tim 1:12; 2:9; 3:10–13; 4:6–8), the call on Timothy’s life (2 Tim 2:3; 4:5; cf. Heb 13:23; cf. 1 Clem. 5:4–7; cf. F. F. Bruce, ANRW 25.4 [1987] 3501 n. 43), and the fact that all believers share in suffering (2 Tim 3:12; Rom 8:17). Just as Timothy’s call to ministry is based not on his innate abilities but on a gift from God (1:6), just as the power in Timothy’s life is given by God (1:7), and just as Timothy is to draw his strength daily not from within himself but from God’s grace (2:1), so also the call to suffering is based not on a natural ability but on God’s power. Any teaching that denies the necessity of suffering is in direct opposition to Paul’s gospel, which embraces suffering as a necessary part of the Christian experience.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 480–481.]

<sup>859c</sup>Timothy is not called to suffer on his own, but his suffering is in accordance with the power of God (κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ). On κατά, “according to,” see BAGD 406–7 (5), and 2 Tim 1:9. The power of God (cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 24; 2:5; 2 Cor 6:7; 13:4) is the same power given to Timothy (vv 6–7). Paul does not address the ‘why’ of suffering until 3:12 where he says that everyone desiring to live a godly life will be persecuted. A clear presentation of the gospel places one in direct conflict with the world.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 481.]

<sup>860c</sup>As Paul has been encouraging Timothy to share in the sufferings (v 8), mention of the gospel leads Paul to discuss it in more detail. The aspects of the gospel that are enumerated in vv 9–10—the sovereign call of God on Timothy’s life based on God’s purpose and grace, a salvation made available through Christ, God who has control over death and immortality—all serve as an encouragement to Timothy. As Lock notes, ‘Every word emphasizes the power which has been given to Christians: a power which has done what man could not do of himself, which has acted out of love for man, which has destroyed his chief enemy and given him life, which therefore

But whatever Paul's source used here, the apostle thoroughly re-works it with his own vocabulary and thought content, while retaining the poetical structure of his source.<sup>861</sup>

θεοῦ,

9 τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς  
καὶ καλέσαντος κλήσει ἁγία,  
οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν  
ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἴδιαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν,  
τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν  
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ  
πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνιων,  
10 φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ  
νῦν  
διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας  
τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,  
καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον  
φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν  
διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

God,

9 who saved us  
and called us with a holy calling,  
not according to our works  
but according to his own purpose and grace.  
This grace was given to us  
in Christ Jesus  
before the ages began,  
10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing  
of our Savior Christ Jesus,  
who abolished death  
and brought life and immortality to light  
through the gospel.

The boundary markers τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (v. 8) and τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (v. 10) set this off as a Pauline depiction of the Gospel message he had proclaimed all of his ministry. The role of God, θεοῦ, as the One saving and calling merges into πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν, *prior intention and grace*, although put in place prior to the creation of the world because realized in the coming of *Christ Jesus, our Savior*, σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. In His work of saving means abolishing death and making available life and immortality to believers. This is a powerful summation of the apostolic Gospel that stands at the very heart of Christianity.<sup>862</sup> This is *the testimony of our Lord*, τὸ μαρτύριον calls for some return and gives strength to face suffering and death” (86; see also Chrysostom, “Homily 2”; NPNF 13:480). Whereas much of the PE concentrates on proper conduct, vv 9–10 give a solid theological foundation for righteous living.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 481.]

<sup>861c</sup>The structure is intricate. Parallelism and head — tail links are decisive. The main structure is given by three sets of balancing participles, each attached to the preceding ‘tail’. God is described by two participles in synonymous parallelism. The second of these is qualified by two prepositional phrases in antithetic parallelism. The latter of these then becomes the bearer of a second set of parallel participial phrases which are not so much synonymous or antithetical but rather ‘additive’, describing two phrases in the history of salvation. Within this contrast between the giving and the revealing of grace we have a further parallel structure with two sets of phrases arranged chiasmically giving the time of the action and the christological locus of it. Finally, the mention of Christ Jesus provides the bearer for a description of what he has done, again expressed by two contrasting participial phrases which describe the negative and positive effects of his appearing. With a final mention of the gospel, the link is provided for a reference to Paul’s own place in its proclamation; he has to suffer but he is not ashamed of it because of his firm trust in God/Christ.” [I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 701.]

<sup>862c</sup>In Paul’s description of the gospel is a reminder of the suffering and persecution Timothy is facing in Ephesus. Contrary to the opponents’ myths and devotion to the law, it is the gospel that clearly shows the message of salvation and sanctification, based not on works (such as obedience to the law) but on God’s grace, revealed not through the law but through Christ Jesus. Regardless of what was being taught in Ephesus, death was defeated only through Christ, who alone brings life and incorruptibility. It is this gospel to which Paul was called, and yet he knows that his suffering is not a defeat of the gospel. Because he fully trusts God who can guard his life, he is not ashamed. Implied in all this is the need for Timothy, like Paul, not to be ashamed but rather to suffer for the gospel, to join Paul in



τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, that Paul alluded to in v. 8a. It is the belief structure at the heart of a faith commitment to Christ, upon which the moral value system taught in Second Timothy rests. Growing out of one's commitment to Christ, which is informed inside this framework, must come a way of living to honors God and can be enabled by the presence of God's Spirit in the life of the committed believer.<sup>863</sup> This summation of understanding of the Gospel, couched in an easily memorizable structure, provided the conceptual basis for Timothy's challenging of the false teachers whose perverted manner of living and teaching came off a twisted gospel version in contradiction to the apostolic Gospel. Correct thinking about God, Christ, and salvation stand as the only spiritually healthy foundation for Christian living and service!

## 2 Timothy 1:15-18.

15 Οἶδας τοῦτο, ὅτι ἀπεστράφησάν με πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ὧν ἐστὶν Φύγελος καὶ Ἑρμογένης. 16 δὴ ἔλεος ὁ κύριος τῶ Ὀνησιφόρου οἴκῳ, ὅτι πολλάκις με ἀνέψυξεν καὶ τὴν ἄλυσίν μου οὐκ ἐπαισχύνθη, 17 ἀλλὰ γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ σπουδαίως ἐζήτησέν με καὶ εὔρεν· 18 δὴ αὐτῶ ὁ κύριος εὐρεῖν ἔλεος παρὰ κυρίου ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. καὶ ὅσα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ διηκόνησεν, βέλτιον σὺ γινώσκεις.

15 You are aware that all who are in Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me 18 —may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus.

In this pericope Paul laments the lack of dependability by several Christian leaders who had worked along side him in the Gospel. He begins by reminding Timothy that this is not new information he is passing on: Οἶδας τοῦτο, *You know this...* Timothy was serving ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, *in Asia*, at Ephesus and thus knew first hand (Οἶδας τοῦτο) what had happened. This quick glance is but the first of several that strongly suggest a much greater severity for this imprisonment than was true of the first one.<sup>864</sup> Timothy's work in Ephesus, although boosted by the encouragements in First Timothy, was becoming increasingly difficult with the abandonment of various individuals in their loyalty to the apostle Paul. Here Paul singles out several in the province of Asia: ἀπεστράφησάν με πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ὧν ἐστὶν Φύγελος καὶ Ἑρμογένης, *all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes*. Several interpretive suggests about the specific implications of this statement have been made.<sup>865</sup> But most of them are efforts to 'rescue' Paul from moments of discouragement at the sight of his suffering as well as in his assurance. Finally, Timothy is to hold fast to Paul's gospel, characterized not by bitterness and quarreling but by faith and love. Since God can guard what Paul (and Timothy) has entrusted to him, Timothy should be able to guard what God has entrusted to Timothy, as always, through the power God gives him by the Holy Spirit.

"At the core of Stoicism and many other philosophies and religions there was a message that was diametrically opposed to Paul's gospel. For Paul, belief entails a dying to oneself, a crucifixion with Christ, and a rising to a new kind of life in which strength and power come not from the sinful self but from a merciful God who empowers his children. While Paul may be using language often associated with Stoicism, he has fundamentally altered its meaning."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 490–491.]

<sup>863</sup>One should note that πίστις / πιστεύω are not commitment to this belief structure. Instead, they are commitment to Christ who has accomplished this salvation by the will of God for us.

<sup>864</sup>These verses show that Paul's current imprisonment was decidedly more severe than the one in Acts 28:23, 30–31. Other verses fill out the picture. When Onesiphorus came to Rome, he evidently had difficulty finding Paul and had to search diligently (1:17) for him, suggesting that Paul's prison was not an open house but was probably in a secure, remote location. Paul's eulogy in 4:6–8 and 4:18 show his awareness that his earthly life is over. His desire for Timothy to guard the deposit (1:14) and pass it on to reliable men (2:2) agrees with this picture. It is out of this situation that Paul writes, and it is out of this situation that the epistle must be interpreted. It colors Paul's statements, such as his lack of shame (1:8, 12), call to suffering (1:8, 12; 2:3–7, 9), assurance of salvation and God's protection (1:9–11, 12; 2:11–13; 4:6–8, 17–18), call to ministry (1:11; 2:8–13), loyalty to the gospel and his ministry (1:11–12; 2:8–10; 3:10–11, 15–17; 4:6–8), and encouragement to Timothy to be strong and loyal and to persevere (1:8–14; 2:1–2, 3–7, 15; 3:14–17; 4:1–2, 5). All this paints an amazing picture of an amazing man: a life filled with suffering and persecution (as well as victories) and a life that was ending in what many would see as abandonment and defeat. Yet even within the darkness, or perhaps because of the darkness, the theme verses of the epistle stand out dramatically. Paul knew the God he had trusted and was convinced that this God would guard his life until the day of judgment (1:12). Despite the hopelessness of his case before Rome and the desertions of his friends and many of the people to whom he ministered, Paul still knew that the Lord would rescue him from every evil and would save him for heaven (4:18)."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 492–493.]

<sup>865</sup>Within the context, v 15 serves as an illustration of those who did not guard the gospel as Timothy was called to do (v 14). There are two questions about this verse: who were the Asians, and what is the precise meaning of ἀπεστράφησαν, 'have deserted'? (1) πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, 'all those in Asia,' cannot mean that every single person in Asia had deserted Paul; Onesiphorus (vv 16–18) and Timothy certainly had not. (2) Some argue that the Asians who were in Rome had not come to his defense and had deserted him, possibly at the time of his arrest (Jeremias, 52; Simpson, 128–29); perhaps they had returned to Asia (Lock, 89). The problem with this

viduals unwilling to stand with him in his imprisonment. What Paul says directly is ἀπεστράφησάν με, *abandoned me*. This does not suggest apostasy in abandoning their Christian commitment and the Gospel. Instead, it asserts an unwillingness to stand in support of Paul as he was edging closer to execution by the Romans.<sup>866</sup> What seems to be intended here is disappointment in a self-serving fear of being linked to a state criminal on the verge of execution in Rome.

Crisis moments bring clearly to the surface who are genuine friends and who are fair-weather friends.<sup>867</sup> Here at the very end of his life Paul was discovering this again in his ministry, when perhaps he needed them more than ever to stand with him in these final days and weeks.

We know nothing about either Phygelus or Hermogenes whom Paul singles out in this reference.<sup>868</sup> This is the only reference to them in the entire New Testament. And elsewhere only Hermogenes is mentioned quite negatively in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*. But this is apocryphal speculation with no basis in history. What a legacy to have in Christian history! The only thing about these two men that we know is that they deserted Paul in a moment of great need.

While Paul stands disappointed in these folks in Asia, not all of them are deserters. Verses 16-18 focus on the positive image of a Onesiphorus from Ephesus in Asia, who supported Paul by making the difficult trip from Asia to Rome and risked himself in order to help the imprisoned apostle. The apostle couches his appreciation in the form of a prayer of intercession seeking God's blessing upon Onesiphorus and his household.

Paul first offers a prayer of intercession in vv. 16-17: δῶν ἔλεος ὁ κύριος τῷ Ὀνησιφόρου οἴκῳ, ὅτι πολλάκις με ἀνέψυξεν καὶ τὴν ἄλυσίν μου οὐκ ἐπαισχύνθη, 17 ἀλλὰ γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ σπουδαίως ἐζήτησέν με καὶ εὔρεν, 16 *May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me*. The prayer is for God's mercy to be upon the household of Onesiphorus.<sup>869</sup> The head of their house was away in Rome risking himself in

interpretation is that the text does not say those 'from' (ἐκ) Asia but those 'in' (ἐν) Asia. Spicq (2:732) works around this by postulating that the phrase is a Hebraism meaning 'from,' but he has not been followed at this point. (Oberlinner does suggest 'from' as a possibility, postulating οἱ ἐκ τῆ Ἀσίας, 'the ones from Asia,' 58.) (3) Hendriksen (237–38) thinks Paul is referring to Christian leaders in Asia who were asked to come to Rome in Paul's defense but did not. However, the text says πάντες, 'all,' not 'all of those summoned' or 'all the leaders.' (4) The easiest reading of the text remains that Paul means 'all the Christians in Asia' in a statement that is slightly hyperbolic (Guthrie, 135). It appears that while Paul was victorious in Spirit (see above), he was also suffering the natural psychological depression of a person in his situation. 'The defections in Asia have been so staggering' (Fee, 236). 'He was writing with the exaggeration natural in depression' (Kelly, 169), thinking of what had happened when he was arrested (cf. Guthrie, 135). If ἀπεστράφησαν, 'have deserted,' refers to personal abandonment and not apostasy from the gospel, then this hyperbole is understandable." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 493.]

<sup>866</sup> ἀποστρέφειν can mean 'to apostatize,' deserting the gospel itself. This is how the verb is used in its two other occurrences in the PE (Titus 1:14; 2 Tim 4:4). Paul uses the verb only one other time, in an OT quotation (Rom 11:26). There is nothing in the word that requires εὐαγγέλιον, 'gospel,' to be its object (cf. BAGD 100–101). In fact, the text states that the Asians had deserted με, 'me,' suggesting that Paul is describing a personal abandonment that stopped short of apostasy (cf. Dibelius-Conzelmann, Guthrie) and perhaps was true of Demas (4:10). Also, vv 16–18 provide a contrast to v 15, and in vv 16–18 Paul commends Onesiphorus's personal commitment to Paul, not to the gospel. This helps in understanding the previous reference to 'all those in Asia.' While it is extremely doubtful that all the believers in Asia apostatized from the gospel, it is plausible that almost all of them disassociated themselves from Paul during his arrest and imprisonment. Paul does not say why they did this. He attributes Demas's desertion to the love of this world (4:10). It can only be assumed that the Asians did not want to be associated with a state criminal, perhaps because they feared suffering the same fate or perhaps because of the natural desire many felt to separate themselves from undesirables. On a passive verb with a direct object in the accusative (ἀπεστράφησάν με, "have deserted me"), see Robertson (Grammar, 484–85) and BAGD 100 (3)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 493–494.]

<sup>867</sup> Every Christian has discovered this if he or she has been a believer for very long. And particularly is this the case for those in Christian ministry. One's ultimate peace is the awareness of faithfulness to Christ no matter what. But sting comes when professed friends turn out to be fair-weather friends rather than genuine friends.

<sup>868</sup> Paul specifies two of the deserting Asians. Either they were leaders in the desertion or were friends whose desertion was particularly painful for Paul, as was Demas's desertion (4:10). Nothing more is known of either Phygelus (on spelling, cf. Moulton, Grammar 1:101) or Hermogenes (cf. MM, 255). The latter is referred to as a coppersmith in the beginning paragraph of the second-century Acts of Paul and Thecla. He and Demas, it says, 'were full of hypocrisy and flattered Paul as if they loved him' (Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* 2:353; see Explanation), but the account is apocryphal. While Paul generally does not give specific names (cf. 1 Tim 1:18), he does so several times in the PE (1 Tim 1:20; 2:7; 4:10, 14–15)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 494.]

<sup>869</sup> Not much is known about Onesiphorus. He is mentioned only here (vv 15–18) and his household again in 4:19, where it is revealed that he was from Ephesus, hence an Asian who stood in contrast to Phygelus and Hermogenes (v 15). He was active and prominent in Ephesus (v 18). He had also traveled to Rome, where he evidently could not find Paul immediately. Nevertheless, he sought diligently until he found Paul and repeatedly refreshed him, probably with both friendship and physical sustenance. This he did with no

order to help Paul. This had to have brought anxiety to them knowing that their master was in danger in Rome. Thus in gracious fashion Paul asks for God's blessings to be upon them in this time of uncertainty.

The basis given for this prayer is in vv. 16b-17. He had diligently searched for Paul who this time was locked away in a dark unidentified part of the Praetorian Guard's headquarters in the city some ways from the imperial palace. Paul pays tribute to the diligence of Onesiphorus in tracking down Paul's location: γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ σπουδαίως ἐζήτησέν με καὶ εὔρεν, *having arrived in Rom he diligently sought me and found me*. Imprisonment for Paul this time was considerably different than the first time. What Onesiphorus did is described as πολλάκις με ἀνέψυξεν καὶ τὴν ἄλυσίν μου οὐκ ἐπαισχύνθη, *often he refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains*. The verb ἀνέψυξεν from ἀναψύχω suggests that Onesiphorus especially helped take care of Paul's physical needs.<sup>870</sup> Also his very presence must have been enormously encouraging to the aged apostle. Particularly important was also that Onesiphorus was not afraid to identify with Paul as a prisoner of the Romans: καὶ τὴν ἄλυσίν μου οὐκ ἐπαισχύνθη, *and was not ashamed of my chains*. In a cultural atmosphere where honor was everything and shame was to be avoided at all costs, it took considerable courage to put aside these cultural pressures and risk shame from others by identifying with the prisoner Paul.<sup>871</sup> If by τὴν ἄλυσίν μου, *my chain*, Paul means a literal chain around his wrists and legs, rather than just a symbol of imprisonment, then the challenge to Onesiphorus was greater. Although more general phraseology, ἐμὲ τὸν δεσμῖον αὐτοῦ, *me His prisoner*, is used in v. 8 in the admonition to Timothy to not feel shame regarding Paul, the more appropriate and specific τὴν ἄλυσίν μου, *my chain*, is used in v. 16 to refer to Paul's literal imprisonment.

---

shame of Paul's imprisonment (vv 16–17). A martyr with the same name died at Parium in Mysia sometime between A.D. 102 and 114 (Acta Sanctorum, 662–66; Ramsay, ExpTim 9 [1898] 495–97; MM, 450), but no one appears to argue that the same person is intended here. The second-century *Acts of Paul and Thecla* mentions an Onesiphorus, stating that his children were named Simmias and Zeno and his wife Lectra and that they entertained Paul on his journey from Antioch to Iconium (see Explanation), but the account is apocryphal and untrustworthy.

“It is thought by most that Onesiphorus had died by the time of writing, a position argued against by Hendriksen (238–39) and Knight (386). (1) V 16 speaks of Onesiphorus's household, and the time frame is the present. This implies to some that Onesiphorus was no longer part of the household and that the wish is for mercy that they may continue without him. However, that Onesiphorus can be viewed as part of the household is proven possible by 1 Cor 1:16. (2) The wish of v 18 is directed specifically to Onesiphorus, and now the time frame has shifted to the future day of judgment. This may suggest that Onesiphorus had died and would next face judgment. However, Paul can pronounce an eschatological blessing on a church while the people are still alive (1 Thess 5:23) and can speak in general about ‘that day’ without requiring the person to have died (1:12; 4:8). V 16 may be more of a general statement, but starting with the ὅτι, ‘since,’ clause Paul concentrates solely on Onesiphorus himself and what he did. It is therefore natural to single out Onesiphorus for blessing in v 18. It may also be possible that Onesiphorus was separated from his family (because he had just left Paul?) and Paul was therefore thinking of his family as they were currently without him. (3) The past-tense verbs throughout this passage suggest to some that Onesiphorus had since died, and yet each event was in the past from Paul's perspective as he wrote the epistle, and the tenses need not signify anything else. (4) The fourth reason for seeing Onesiphorus as having died is that in Paul's final greeting where he names everyone individually (except the concluding ‘and all the brethren’), instead of greeting Onesiphorus by name, Paul breaks the style and greets the household of Onesiphorus. Given the nature of their relationship, it is surprising that Paul did not greet Onesiphorus by name, if he was alive. However, there could be a historical situation in which this was appropriate (e.g., Onesiphorus did not return home immediately and the letter arrived at Ephesus before him, in which case greeting the household would be appropriate). Caution must also be exercised when arguing on the basis of what is considered to be consistent style when in fact Paul might not have conformed to a modern definition of consistency. (5) Fee argues that v 18a interrupts the flow, v 18b flowing naturally from v 17. But even if v 18a is an interjection, that still proves nothing. When all is said and done, these verses could reflect the possibility that Onesiphorus had died, but there is insufficient evidence to insist that this is necessarily the case (so Oberlinner, 61).”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 494–495.]

<sup>870</sup> ἀνέψυξεν (a NT hapax) is a verb used of ‘reviving’ or ‘refreshing’ someone. Onesiphorus's ‘refreshing’ of Paul (με, before the verb for emphasis) may have been through food that he brought to Paul, but it also undoubtedly came through his presence with Paul in itself (cf. 1 Cor. 16:17–18). He ‘refreshed’ Paul πολλάκις, ‘many times’ or ‘often.’ [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 384.]

<sup>871</sup>“Not only so, but Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's ‘chain.’ ἐπαισχύνθη provides the verbal link with Paul's charge to Timothy in the preceding section (cf. vv. 8, 12). The implication is clear: Onesiphorus was not ashamed, so Timothy should not be ashamed. Although it is possible that ἄλυσις, ‘chain’ (Pl.\* 2x), is used figuratively here and in Eph. 6:20 of Paul's ‘imprisonment’ (BAGD s.v. 2), it is more likely that it refers to the actual ‘chain’ with which he was bound. All other NT occurrences of the word are literal, and this is how Paul uses the term in his comment recorded in Acts 28:20. Furthermore, Paul uses other terms when speaking of his imprisonment (cf., e.g., v. 8). If the literal understanding of ‘chain’ is correct, it makes the comment even more vivid and striking: Onesiphorus was not ashamed to come to me even when I was bound by a chain.” [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 384–385.]



The second prayer wish for Onesiphorus touches on a prayer for him in ‘that day’: δὴ αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εὐρεῖν ἔλεος παρὰ κυρίου ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, *may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day!* Some see this as a signal that Onesiphorus has died prior to the writing of the letter.<sup>872</sup> But this is in no way mandated in Paul’s statement. Rather, the apostle’s gratitude is expressed in the general prayer wish for God to acknowledge what Onesiphorus has done for him on the Day of Judgment.

The two instances of the voluntative optative form of the aorist verb δῶν in vv. 16 and 18 underscore both expressions as simple prayer wishes lifted up to God by Paul in behalf of Onesiphorus and his household.<sup>873</sup>

Again what we notice here is a shining example of true friendship in Christ. When Paul needed individuals to stand with him in the ‘public’ shame of being a prisoner of Rome, Onesiphorus left home and family in Ephesus to travel to Rome in order to support the apostle unashamedly. But others in Asia were not willing to do such and distanced themselves from the apostle publicly even though they were in Asia and he was in Rome. How many of them came to regret this only God knows. But Onesiphorus stands as a shining example of true Christian friendship. And we can learn from such examples.

## 2 Timothy 3:10-15.

10 Σὺ δὲ παρηκολούθησάς μου τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ, τῆ ἀγωγῆ, τῆ προθέσει, τῆ πίστει, τῆ μακροθυμίᾳ, τῆ ἀγάπῃ, τῆ ὑπομονῇ, 11 τοῖς διωγμοῖς, τοῖς παθήμασιν, οἷά μοι ἐγένετο ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, ἐν Ἰκονίῳ, ἐν Λύστροις, οἷους διωγμούς ὑπήνεγκα καὶ ἐκ πάντων με ἐρρύσατο ὁ κύριος. 12 καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ θέλοντες εὐσεβεῖς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διωχθήσονται. 13 πονηροὶ δὲ ἄνθρωποι καὶ γόητες προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι. 14 Σὺ δὲ μένε ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης, εἰδὼς παρὰ τίνων ἔμαθες, 15 καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ βρέφους [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας, τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίαι εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

10 Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions, and my suffering the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 13 But wicked people and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, 15 and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

In the opening statement Paul reminds Timothy of the aspects of ministry and Christian service that provide the ultimate criterion for judging a worthy life. He names nine categories for examination. What we see here is something of an amplification of Paul’s similar but much shorter admonitions earlier to follow his example (cf. 1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; Phil. 4:9; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9).<sup>874</sup> This is in no way arrogance on the part of Paul. In the era of apostolic Christianity of the first century not yet with a set of sacred scriptures apart from the Old Testament, the personal example of the apostolic leaders played a huge role in defining clearly how the Christian life should be lived out.

---

<sup>872</sup>“On the basis of 2 Tim 1:18 and the mention of Onesiphorus’s family, excluding the master of the house (here and in 2 Tim 4:19\*), scholars have occasionally concluded that Onesiphorus was already dead at the (alleged) time of the writing of the epistle. Thus v. 18 becomes, for the Roman Catholic interpretation, a proof-text for the intercession for the dead. But nothing of the sort is implied.<sup>1</sup> For the impartial reader the phrase ‘when he came to Rome’ (γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ) can only be interpreted in this way: ‘Onesiphorus came to Rome, sought me and found me there.’” [Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 106.]

<sup>873</sup>“Based on the exegesis of v 18 below, κύριος, ‘Lord,’ in v 16 probably refers to Christ. δῶν, ‘may ... grant,’ is an aorist active optative, expressing a wish (cf. Rom 15:5; Eph 1:17; 2 Thess 3:16; 2:2–5; J. K. Elliott argues that here and in v 18 the optative δῶν should be δώη, a rare example of the jussive subjunctive [“ΔΙΔΩΜΙ in 2 Timothy,” JTS 19 n.s. (1968) 621–23]; Wallace [Greek Grammar, 483] says that they are voluntative optatives expressing polite requests). On God giving (διδόναι; BAGD 193 [1bβ]) mercy, see the cognate verb in Rom 9:15, 16, 18.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 495.]

<sup>874</sup>“Paul lists nine items that Timothy has observed in Paul’s life and from which he has learned. The article before each word is emphatic; these are the events in Paul’s life of which Timothy knows and the significance of which he understands, hence the translation ‘my,’ looking back to the explicit μου, ‘my’ (cf. Wallace, Greek Grammar, 215–16). The order of the terms is anything but ‘indiscriminate’ (contra Hanson, [1983] 148). Paul begins with the most important items in that they offer the most visible and significant contrast to the opponents. Timothy knows Paul’s doctrine and his manner of life, his conduct; the truth of a message can be connected to the character of the messenger (cf. 3:14). From these two flow Paul’s purpose in ministry, his patience, and the three virtues of faith, love, and steadfastness. The final virtue, steadfastness, is especially significant in light of Paul’s frequent persecutions and sufferings (vv 11–13; cf. Fee, 276).” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 556.]

## Σὺ δὲ παρηκολούθησάς:<sup>875</sup>

Paul sets up the listing of categories of ‘virtues’ with the emphatic construction of **Σὺ δὲ παρηκολούθησάς, γοῦ** have yourself observed....<sup>876</sup> Thus Timothy is singled out as perhaps one of the few associates of Paul with the fuller insight into Paul’s life since he had traveled with the apostle since the second missionary journey in the early 50s to this point in the mid 60s. Luke would have been right behind Timothy in the duration of time with Paul in his missionary service.<sup>877</sup>

The verb παρηκολούθησάς from παρακολουθέω stresses the first hand observation of Timothy from having traveled extensively with the apostle.<sup>878</sup> The figurative sense of literally accompanying someone in their travels (‘to follow with’) as observing, paying close attention to etc. is brought out by Paul’s use of the verb here. Timothy had seen Paul go through all the ups and downs of missionary service well over a decade of missionary service.

**1) μου τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ.** One beginning note that is important. Paul’s use of the personal pronoun, in the possessive genitive case function, μου, *my*, at the front end of a long list signals in Greek grammar that it covers all the words in the listing, and not just the first word in the list. Everything in the list is targeting what Timothy had observed in Paul’s actions.

By definition, διδασκαλία can stress either the action of teaching or the content of what is taught, much in the same way as its English counterpart, ‘teaching.’ This nice double play built into the word διδασκαλία provides Paul with a way to remind Timothy of both aspects of Paul’s ministry. The ‘action’ aspect would allude to how the apostle handled the Old Testament scriptures (see v. 16 for the second of three uses of διδασκαλία in Second Timothy) to highlight the messianic promises of the Bible of Jews and apostolic Christians.<sup>879</sup>

The ‘content’ aspect of διδασκαλία comes to the surface in 4:3 where the adjective ὑγιαίνουσῃς is attached to διδασκαλίᾳς. Most modern interpreters miss the point completely of this phrase and related ones elsewhere in the writings of Paul, Jude, and Peter.<sup>880</sup> The translation ‘sound doctrine’ is highly misleading, and carries a set of false assumptions. Instead, it should be translated as ‘health producing teaching.’ The mark of τῆς ὑγιαίνουσῃς διδασκαλίᾳς was not whether it corresponded doctrinally with some abstract standard of Truth. Careful study of the expression stresses that the point in apostolic teaching was whether what was taught produced spiritually healthy behavior which is defined by God’s ‘behavior.’ If it did not lead to genuine Christ likeness then it was false teaching. True Christianity is validated by actions, not by thinking. The product of τῆς ὑγιαίνουσῃς διδασκαλίᾳς is a mature believer in Jesus Christ who is serving and honor Christ in his/her living. The failure of the false teachers in 4:3-4 to produce such disciples was the signal of the falseness of their teaching (see also 3:1-9). Speculative preoccupation with τοὺς μύθους (v. 4) inevitably leads to a compromising of the moral demands of the Gospel and thus a slipping into a pseudo-Christianity that is spiritually damming to the individual.

Timothy observed first hand over these fifteen plus years how Paul’s presentation of the Gospel message produced thriving congregations of believers who committed themselves to following and obeying the teachings

---

<sup>875</sup>Paul now turns back to Timothy and encourages him; Paul holds up his own life as an example for Timothy to emulate. This is not arrogance or an attempt to teach Timothy what he should already know. It is the act of a good friend and mentor encouraging his son in the faith by reflecting over their common experiences and calling Timothy to remember and be encouraged, and it parallels Paul’s statements elsewhere that people should imitate him (cf. 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 4:9; 2 Thess 3:7, 9). Almost every virtue that follows in v 10 appears elsewhere in the PE in an admonition to Timothy, either using the same word or the same concept (cf. especially 2 Tim 1:7; 2:2, 22, 24; 1 Tim 4:12; 6:11), and often is a characteristic that the opponents lack. For example, love is a characteristic of Paul’s life (3:10); it should also be of Timothy’s (1:7), but the opponents prefer speculations (1 Tim 1:4–5). This positive estimation of Paul’s life balances the negative evaluation in 1 Tim 1:12–17 (cf. the other evaluations such as 2 Cor 6:4–10) and contrasts with the vices of the opponents in 3:1–9.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 556.]

<sup>876</sup>The explicit stating of a verb subject in the first and second person forms places heightened emphasis on the subject which is already embedded in the verb ending. English language readers may struggle with this, but readers of the modern Mediterranean languages can readily understand the concept since their languages function the same way in this as ancient Greek.

<sup>877</sup>Whether the listing is in descending order of importance or not as advocated by Mounce (in above footnote) is questionable. But what is clear is that the listing concludes with persecutions which are then expanded in the subsequent discussion of vv. 11b-13.

<sup>878</sup>The textual variant reading of the perfect tense here παρηκολούθηκας over the aorist form of the adopted reading παρηκολούθησάς by D Ψ 1739 1881 TR attempts through ‘stylistic improvement’ to heighten the impact of this observation upon Timothy by Paul’s statement.

<sup>879</sup>For an example of how Paul did this, see Luke’s summation in Acts 13:16-41 in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia.

<sup>880</sup>For a detailed study of this, see my article “Encountering Heresy: Insight from the Pastoral Epistles,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, Spring 1980.

of Jesus Christ. He witnessed the emergence in many of these congregations outstanding Christian leaders who sacrificed themselves greatly to follow Christ and to serve the cause of the Gospel, just as he himself was such a product. The compromised pseudo-gospel being offered by the false teachers was killing the spiritual life of the house church groups in Ephesus, and Timothy in 4:1-2 is urged by Paul to not waste his time messing with this junk. Only τὸν λόγον as the Gospel of Jesus Christ leads people into a genuine relationship with God and thus into a spiritually healthy life. This was where Timothy needed to spend his time and efforts.

**2) τῇ ἀγωγῇ**, The noun from ἀγωγή is only used here inside the entire NT but focuses on conduct and behavioral actions of an individual.<sup>881</sup> As such it is closely related to τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ above. What constitutes a genuine ἀγωγή? First Timothy 4:12 offers some insights from Paul's prospective: Μηδεὶς σου τῆς νεότητος καταφρονεῖτω, ἀλλὰ τύπος γίνου τῶν πιστῶν ἐν λόγῳ, ἐν ἀναστροφῇ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ἐν πίστει, ἐν ἀγνείᾳ. *Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.* Additionally, the subsequent items in the listing here (#s 3 - 9) define the parameters of a Christian life style.

Therefore, one can legitimately conclude that the first two items naturally come at the head of such a list as this is because they function as 'umbrella' terms that gather up the subsequent items under an introductory heading. But to rank them as the most important items is to misunderstand their role in such a listing.<sup>882</sup>

**3) τῇ προθέσει**, The general nature of the meaning of τῇ προθέσει from πρόθεσις challenges Bible translators greatly. Literally The noun is derived from the verb προτίθημι meaning to *set in front of*.<sup>883</sup> The core sense of Paul's intended meaning moves in the direction of him having set his life out in front of him in order to chart out a course for living it out. The verb along with the derivative noun both function at this figurative level of meaning defining a mental activity. Thus the NRSV translates τῇ προθέσει as *'my aim in life.'* But one should not exclude the public aspect that was an important part of the meaning. Paul's life was built around a central objective, as expressed in Phil. 1:20-24,<sup>884</sup> and this was lived out openly for all to see, both believer and unbeliever.

**4) τῇ πίστει**, What does Paul mean here by πίστις? Many commentators have falsely 'catholicize' Paul here by understanding πίστις in the Pastoral Epistles as a set of beliefs, rather than as personal surrender to Christ in a 'faith commitment' to Christ as is universally the meaning in the other writings of Paul. But this wrong headed interpretation was hatched up as a part of the Bauer Tübingen School agenda in the 1800s to

<sup>881</sup> **ἀγωγή, ἡς, ἡ** (Aeschyl., Hdt. et al.; ins, pap, LXX) 'leading' (Orig. C. Cels. 3, 73, 12) then way of life, conduct (so X., Eq. 3, 4; Polyb. 4, 74, 1; 4 ἄ. τοῦ βίου; Diod S 13, 82, 7; M. Ant. 1, 6; IMagnMai 164, 3 ἦθει καὶ ἀγωγῇ κόσμιον; OGI 223, 15 [III B.C.]; 474, 9; 485, 3; UPZ 113, 12 [156 B.C.]; PTebt 24, 57 [117 B.C.]; SB 9050 V, 11f. ἡ τοῦ βίου ἄ. [s. AKränzlein, JJP 6, '52, 232]; Horoscope in PPrinc 75, 5; Esth 2:20; 2 Macc 11:24; EpArist, Philo, Jos., Ant. 14, 195; Iren. 4, 38, 1 [Harv. II 292, 9]; Orig. C. Cels. 3, 51, 16; s. Nägeli 34) **2 Ti 3:10.** ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ ἄ. *the Christian way of life* 1 Cl 47:6 (v.l. ἀγάπῃ). σεμνῆ . . . ἀγνῆ ἄ. 48:1.—DELG s.v. ἄγω 18. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 17.]

<sup>882</sup> Quite often both in the 'virtue' lists inside the NT, as well as those in the surrounding literature, the first one or two items will function in the capacity of 'umbrella' terms for all of the subsequent items in such lists. This is likewise true for the so-called 'vice lists' that also surface inside the NT and the moral philosophers of the ancient world. See my discussion of both *Virtue and Vice* lists at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com) for more details.

<sup>883</sup> a. The verb προτίθημι 'to set before,' 'to place before,' is first used in a purely local sense, e.g., food in Hes. Theog., 537, also the sacral placing of foods in a temple, e.g., Αλεξανδρεῖς τῷ Κρόνῳ ἀφιερῶντες προτιθέασιν ἐσθίειν τῷ βουλομένῳ ἐν τῷ τοῦ Κρόνου ἱερῷ, Athen., 3, 74 (110 b). 1 The noun means 'offering' and denotes the προθέσεις set before the gods at popular festivals, Ditt. Or., I, 90, 48 (2nd cent. B.C.). b. The verb can then have the special sense 'to lay before the public,' e.g., τὰ μὲν ὅσα προτιθένται τῶν ἀπογενομένων, 'the bones of the dead men were displayed publicly,' Thuc., II, 34, 2; cf. Eur. Alc., 664, 'to make known publicly,' e.g., τοὺς [προέδρους] προτιθέναί περὶ ὧν δεῖ βουλευέσθαι, IG, IV, 1 2, 68, 80 (4th cent. B.C.). Similarly the noun means 'public lying in state of the dead,' Plat. Leg., XII, 947b, 'public declaration' of written laws, Aristot. Pol., VI, 8, p. 1322a, 9. c. The meaning 'to impose,' 'to make a task,' occurs, e.g., in Soph. Ant., 216; mid. it means 'to undertake as a task,' e.g., ὅπερ νῦν προυθέμεθα σκέψασθαι, Plat. Phaedr., 259e etc.; cf. Jos. Ant., 18, 286; κατὰ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπιβολὴν καὶ πρόθεσιν, 'according to the original plan and purpose,' Polyb., 5, 35, 2; cf. Jos. Ant., 19, 190; Philo Vit. Mos., 36; Epict. Diss., IV, 6, 26. d. One also finds the sense 'to place before,' e.g., a preface before a speech, Plat. Leg., IV, 723c; "to prefer" one thing to another, Hdt., III, 53, 4."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964—), 8:164–165.]

<sup>884</sup> **Phil. 1:20-24.** 20 κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, ὅτι ἐν οὐδενὶ αἰσχυρθήσομαι ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου. 21 Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος. 22 εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω. 23 συνέχομαι δὲ ἐκ τῶν δύο, τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῶ [γὰρ] μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον· 24 τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν [ἐν] τῇ σαρκὶ ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς.

20 It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. 23 I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.



drive a wedge between the Protestant Paul in the 'big four' letters of 1/2 Corinthians, Romans and Galatians and the pseudonymous catholic Paul of the assumed early second century Pastoral Epistles. But a careful analysis of the eight times Paul uses πίστις in Second Timothy (1:5, 13; 2:18, 22; 3:8, 10, 15; 4:7) clearly indicates that Paul uniformly uses πίστις in Second Timothy consistent with his other letters in specifying a personal surrender to Christ as Lord.<sup>885</sup> Especially is this clear in 3:15 where no other understanding makes sense. The set of doctrinal beliefs idea finds acceptance as a part of the other wrong headed thinking about Truth as an Aristotelian abstraction of consistency rather than of Truth in terms of John 14:6 as the reflection of God, and what matches Him in His being and actions. By taking Paul this way, one lessens the moral demands of the Gospel and thus corrupts Jesus' emphasis in Mtt. 7:21-23 on 'doing the will of God' as the benchmark criteria of genuine discipleship commitment to Christ.

What Paul affirmed to Timothy was Timothy's awareness of what genuine personal commitment to Christ meant to Paul. He had seen Paul face criticism from inside the church for not compromising his commitment (e.g., Gal. 2:1-10) repeatedly over these years. He had noted Paul putting his life in jeopardy repeatedly before pagan rulers in bravely sharing his faith commitment to these who had the power of life and death over him. From that observation of consistent commitment to Christ there could be no doubting the sincerity of Paul's surrender of his life to Christ.

In a limited way, a progression emerges from the listing sequence thus far. From τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ emerges the understanding of how to live life pleasing to God. This leads to τῆ ἀγωγῆ which defines the heart of that understanding as a Christian life style. This in turn grows out of τῆ προθέσει, which is a planning out of that life style around τῆ πίστει, which is personal commitment to Christ.

**5) τῆ μακροθυμίᾳ.** The noun τῆ μακροθυμίᾳ from μακροθυμία stresses endurance of a lot of crud from others. The English word 'patience' captures only one small aspect of the Greek word. In the other instance of this in Second Timothy in 4:2b, Timothy is urged ἔλεγξον, ἐπιτίμησον, παρακάλεσον, ἐν πάσῃ μακροθυμίᾳ καὶ διδασκίᾳ, *convince, rebuke, encourage with full endurance and teaching*. Clearly Timothy had observed how Paul handled those who disagreed with him both in the synagogues and sometimes in the churches when presenting the Gospel. Nowhere either in Acts or in Paul's letters is there indicated that he ever 'lost his cool' in the midst of heated debate over the Gospel in either location. He endured their criticisms and then rebutted them with solid arguments grounded in the OT scriptures and his personal experience of Christ on the Damascus road. Paul remained consistently committed to Christ and the presentation of the Gospel message about Christ.

Are we now seeing a continuation of the progression with a focus on interpersonal relations in how to treat others, especially those 'dishing out' crud to you? It sure looks that way. This faith surrender to Christ leads to tolerating a lot of nonsense from others, especially your critics.

**6) τῆ ἀγάπῃ,** But being able to μακροθυμέω, *remain tranquil in the midst of criticism*, is deeply connected to ἀγάπη. This has almost nothing to do with the English word 'love' in spite of the tendency to translate ἀγάπη as love. Biblical ἀγάπη, as defined in John 3:16, is a unselfish giving of oneself to the benefit of another. It centers on the volitional side of us, i.e., the choosing side, rather than the emotional side of us. We deliberately choose to give ourselves unselfishly to helping others find God and a beautiful life in Christ. Here is the key to being able to endure crud from our critics (cf. # 5). In the three other uses of ἀγάπη in Second Timothy (1:7, 13; 2:22; 3:10), Paul links ἀγάπη closely with self-discipline and faith as blessings granted by God in His work in our lives.

I strongly suspect that Timothy found tremendous inspiration in Paul's unselfish commitment to helping others find God through Christ. Clearly if there ever has been a shining example of unselfish love of the people of the world, it is that of the apostle Paul. He dared cross a profoundly deep mentality in his Jewish heritage that God was the exclusive possession of circumcised Jews. One that had guided him in his pre-Christian life. But the love of Christ for lost humanity enabled Paul to abandon that Jewish elitism and spend the remainder of his life unselfishly seeking to lead a lost humanity -- both Jew and non-Jew -- to faith commitment to Christ. The posture of servant, δοῦλος, became a defining trait of his Christian life.

**7) τῆ ὑπομονῆ,** ὑπομονή in typical English translation seems almost a synonym of μακροθυμία. To be sure they are somewhat related in both stressing the idea of consistency. But ὑπομονή -- the only use here in 2 Timothy -- underscores the broader idea of steadfastness with a functional, action orientation, while μακροθυμία stressed a mental tolerance of criticism while remaining unmoved from one's commitments. This

<sup>885</sup>The argument that the articular uses refer to a set of doctrines and the anarthrous uses to personal commitment is a false understanding of the role of the article which is to highlight focus on the noun when used, and often to allude back to a previous use of the same word.

unmovable consistency in loving commitment to Christ and others comes out of ἀγάπη and will be absolutely essential for the final two traits yet to be mentioned.

**8) τοῖς διωγμοῖς**, The logical consequence of unselfishly and consistently giving oneself to help others find God in Christ inevitably leads to διωγμός, *persecution*. As Paul acknowledges in 1 Tim. 1:13, he had once been a persecutor, διώκτης, of Christians, but he would spend virtually all of his Christian life on the receiving end of διωγμός. But Paul walked into this commitment having been warned of what lay ahead, as Luke makes clear in Acts 9:16 with the words of Christ, ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑποδείξω αὐτῷ ὅσα δεῖ αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου παθεῖν, *I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name*. For a brilliant, rising star among the Jewish Pharisees to give up all this in order to live out the rest of his life often beaten, always hated, frequently treated as a common criminal etc. could not have come out of something inside Paul himself. His suffering τοῖς διωγμοῖς came as a outgrowth of the qualities mentioned previously in this life.

How often did Timothy in his travels with Paul have to watch his beloved mentor being treated so foully and horribly. Either through circumstance or by Paul's undescribed actions, very rarely did any of Paul's associates catch the hatred and violent actions leveled against the apostle. But they came often to the apostle as he traveled over the northeastern Mediterranean world preaching Christ. And now perhaps the worst treatment of all was being dished out upon Paul in Rome, and Timothy wasn't there to support him. It's no wonder that one of Paul's last requests to Timothy in 4:9 was Σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ταχέως, *Do your best to come to me quickly*.

**9) τοῖς παθήμασιν**, Out of τοῖς διωγμοῖς come τοῖς παθήμασιν, *sufferings*. How much pain and discomfort the apostle experienced in serving Christ cannot be added up. For a listing of such things up through the half way point of the third missionary journey see 2 Cor. 6:4-10 and 11:22-33.

Interestingly, in the quantitative relative clause that expands this reference, οἳ μοι ἐγένετο ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, ἐν Ἰκονίῳ, ἐν Λύστροις, *that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra*, he references only those sufferings that happened on the first missionary journey, and in the region where Timothy grew up; see Acts 13:13-14:20 for Luke's depiction of this period.<sup>886</sup> Some question Paul's use of this early period for references when many other of a more recent nature could have been chosen. But this is nonsense and represents a modern way of thinking that Paul is pressed into.<sup>887</sup> It was in Timothy's hometown where Paul suffered the worst of these persecutions, and this Timothy would have known about if not witnessed personally.

---

<sup>886</sup>“In Paul's first missionary journey he traveled to the south central part of Asia Minor. In Pisidian Antioch Paul was received well, but then the jealous Jews incited persecution, and Paul and Barnabas were expelled (Acts 13:14–52). In neighboring Iconium they spent considerable time, but Paul left when the Jews and Gentiles tried to stone them (Acts 14:1–5). Then in Lystra Paul and Barnabas were initially welcomed as gods, but eventually Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city (Acts 14:6–20). Acts 16:1–3 relates that Timothy was from this region and had a good reputation in the church (Acts 16:1–3). The PE also mention that Timothy was raised in a believing household (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). From this it can be assumed that Timothy knew of Paul's earlier treatment in these cities, perhaps even having witnessed both the stoning and Paul's miraculous recovery (Acts 14:20).” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 557.]

<sup>887</sup>“However, to use this type of argument seems to be overly rigid and speculative, and ignores many plausible reasons, including the eight enumerated below, for why the author chose to reflect on these particular persecutions.

“(1) Even if Paul did not personally meet Timothy until his second journey, there is no valid reason to assume that Timothy did not know of Paul or that he could not have witnessed the persecutions. Acts 16:1 does not say that Paul had just met Timothy. To say that the townspeople spoke well of Timothy (Acts 16:2) does not mean that this was Paul's first and only contact with him. But even if this were so, it is difficult to believe that Timothy would not have known how his home town had previously treated Paul. In fact, it can be argued that Paul's willingness to take Timothy on the second missionary journey assumes a longer period of acquaintance. (2) Paul has already appealed to Timothy's early spiritual heritage (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15), and a knowledge of these early persecutions is part of that heritage (Fee, 277). (3) Witnessing such ferocious persecutions at a young age could have made a considerable impact on Timothy (Kelly, 199), especially the remembrance of seeing Paul, presumably dead from stoning, get up and walk. (4) Timothy knew of these geographical areas, and the persecution by people from his home area could have had a considerable impact on him (cf. Chrysostom, who emphasizes that these trials are recorded only to encourage Timothy and not in praise of Paul). (5) It would be natural for an older person like Paul to reflect back on the events of his younger days, including the first days of his friendship with Timothy (Guthrie, 161). (6) By pointing out the earliest persecutions, Paul is emphasizing that Timothy has always known that persecutions are part of ministry and that therefore he should endure the work and persecutions now at Ephesus (Knight, 440). (7) Although Paul and Timothy would have experienced persecutions jointly, the first experience often carries the strongest memories. (8) Perhaps these persecutions were the most severe (Ellicott, 141). It is not possible to know why Paul chose to reflect on these persecutions and not others, but there are ample possibilities, and speculation at this point is unwarranted. It seems at best speculative to demand that the “real” Paul would have had to refer to the more recent persecutions rather than the earlier ones. Kelly (199) points out, furthermore, that if the author of the PE were simply borrowing uncritically from his sources, then why did he not draw from the events in Acts 16–17 where it is clear that Timothy was with Paul? (For other recountings of past persecutions, see 2 Cor 6:4–10; 11:22–33).”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 558.]

The quantitative relative clause introduced by οἷα is followed by the qualitative relative clause οἷους διωγμούς ὑπήνεγκα καὶ ἐκ πάντων με ἐρρύσατο ὁ κύριος, *What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them*. By this final declaration Paul underscores the intensity of these sufferings and then asserts the Lord's deliverance from them in a powerful expression of praise of Christ. During this core segment of the first missionary journey Paul had several close brushes with death and discovered how brutal people could be against Christians. This came toward the beginning of his missionary service, and was a 'baptism of fire' for him early on in serving Christ. It made an indelible impression on Paul as he recalls the past. When the young Timothy became aware of this while living at Lystra this latter blessing of Christ upon the ministry of the apostle made a deep impression on him, and likely played a role in his willingness a couple of years later to leave Lystra and join the missionary group as they move on to new territory in preaching the Gospel. In his subtle way Paul alludes to these persecutions, which I strongly suggest had been discussed repeatedly over the years in Paul's circle of associates that included Timothy. They had become a defining mark of Paul's missionary service for the rest of his life.

## 2 Timothy 4:6-18.

6 Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδομαι, καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἀναλύσεώς μου ἐφέστηκεν. 7 τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγώνισμαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα· 8 λοιπὸν ἀπόκειται μοι ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης στέφανος, ὃν ἀποδώσει μοι ὁ κύριος ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐμοὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσιν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ.

9 Σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ταχέως· 10 Δημᾶς γὰρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην, Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν· 11 Λουκᾶς ἐστὶν μόνος μετ' ἐμοῦ. Μᾶρκον ἀναλαβὼν ἄγε μετὰ σεαυτοῦ, ἔστιν γὰρ μοι εὐχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν. 12 Τύχικον δὲ ἀπέστειλα εἰς Ἔφεσον. 13 τὸν φαιλόνην ὃν ἀπέλιπον ἐν Τρωάδι παρὰ Κάρπῳ ἐρχόμενος φέρε, καὶ τὰ βιβλία μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας. 14 Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ χαλκεὺς πολλὰ μοι κακὰ ἐνεδείξατο· ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· 15 ὃν καὶ σὺ φυλάσσω, λίαν γὰρ ἀντέστη τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις. 16 Ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μου ἀπολογία οὐδεὶς μοι παρεγένετο, ἀλλὰ πάντες με ἐγκατέλιπον· μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθεῖν· 17 ὁ δὲ κύριός μοι παρέστη καὶ ἐνεδυνάμωσέν με, ἵνα δι' ἐμοῦ τὸ κήρυγμα πληροφορηθῇ καὶ ἀκούσωσιν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἐρρύσθην ἐκ στόματος λέοντος. 18 ῥύσεται με ὁ κύριος ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔργου πονηροῦ καὶ σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον· ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

9 Do your best to come to me soon, 10 for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. 12 I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds. 15 You also must beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message. 16 At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

In vv. 1-5, Paul gives Timothy a series of admonitions -- κήρυξον..., ἐπίστηθι..., ἔλεγξον..., ἐπιτίμησον..., παρακάλεσον,... (vv. 1-2). This is followed with the stating of a basis for the admonitions (γὰρ, vv. 3-4). Next comes another set of admonitions -- Σὺ δὲ νῆφε..., κακοπάθησον..., πληροφορήσον (v. 5). Then follows the statement of basis (γὰρ) for these admonitions in vv. 6-8. In the first pair of admonitions / reasons in vv. 1-4, the admonitions are based upon the deteriorating moral conditions of the time leading to false teachers invading the Christian communities. But in the second pair of vv. 5-8, the admonitions to Timothy are based upon Paul's expectation of his own impending death. This literary context is helpful for understanding Paul's words in vv. 6-8.

In this initial pericope of vv. 6-8 -- often labeled Paul's "Last Will and Testament" -- we have a clear expression of Paul anticipating his death and that not too far away from the time of the writing of this letter to Timothy. The logic of Paul's thought is very clear in the core expressions: impending death -- faithful service leading up to it -- God's acknowledgement of this commitment in eternity.



**First** is his *present* anticipation of death in v. 6: Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδομαι, καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἀναλύσεώς μου ἐφέστηκεν, *For I am being poured out as a libation, and the opportune moment of my departure has arrived.* The language used here is of a temple sacrifice being presented to God.<sup>888</sup> The present tense verb stresses the ongoing process of imprisonment (ἤδη) as the libation / drink-offering sacrifice (cf. Exod. 29:38-42). Interestingly this is the same image Paul used several years before in Phil. 2:19-23 in an earlier anticipation of his death. That which was poured out in the temple sacrifice was the blood of the sacrificial animal, and Paul compares that to his life being poured out.<sup>889</sup> The framing of his anticipated death in such religious terms underscores Paul's sense of God's control over his present situation in Rome. This is highlighted by the use of the passive voice form of the verb. The second core statement is καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἀναλύσεώς μου ἐφέστηκεν, *and the opportune moment of my departure has arrived.*<sup>890</sup> Paul's religious perspective sees death not as the ending of a life but as an ἀνάλυσις, a *departure*. Death is a transition of life from one location to another, not an ending of life. The timing of its occurrence is ὁ καιρὸς, something inside the plan of God and determined not by men but by God, rather than an event to be charted on a calendar (= χρόνος). For Paul that divine determination is ἐφέστηκεν, *eminent*. The perfect tense verb used from ἐφίστημι here stresses that this καιρὸς has been set by God and stands close by. Paul is not 'counting the days' because of having been given a calendar date, but rather he senses that God is moving in his circumstances to very soon bring the apostle home to heaven. Even though this departure moment, τῆς ἀναλύσεώς μου, will come through the sword of the Roman soldier executioner cutting off his head, Paul sees this as God's hand moving to transition the apostle from this life to heaven.

**Second**, there is the satisfaction with the *past* (v. 7): τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγώνισμαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τητήρηκα, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* In three short pointed declarations, each with a Greek perfect tense verb, Paul asserts his confidence of faithful service to Christ. He uses two and possibly three metaphors of a soldier,<sup>891</sup> an athlete,<sup>892</sup> and a public servant<sup>893</sup> to make this claim

<sup>888</sup>σπένδειν means 'to offer a libation or drink-offering' (BAGD 761). The present tense here stresses that the process has begun, and the passive voice that God, not Rome, is still in control, despite appearances (the verb is always used in the passive in early Christian literature [BAGD 761]). The background is the drink offering, the OT ritual of pouring out a drink before the altar as a sacrifice to God, often accompanied by other sacrifices. This practice was common throughout ancient cultures (O. Michel, TDNT 7:528-35; T. H. Gaster, IDB 4:150; Exod 29:38-42 [with the daily burnt offerings]; Lev 23:13; Num 15:5; 28:7). Lock compares it to the Greek ritual of pouring out a libation to Zeus at the end of a feast. He adds that 'the metaphor rests on the Jewish belief in the sacrificial value of a martyr's death' (114)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 577.]

<sup>889</sup>Little did Paul know at this point how accurate this image would be to his execution. The sacrificial animal had its jugular vein slit open at the throat in dying, and Paul would be beheaded, according to church tradition.

<sup>890</sup>He sees God's control even in the pouring out of his death as a libation, and thus his death is not a defeat but merely an ἀνάλυσις, 'loosing,' a 'departure' from this life to the next. ἀνάλυσις occurs only here in the NT but is used of soldiers breaking camp or sailors loosing a ship from its moorings, and it is a known euphemism for death (cf. Peaston, ExpTim 93 [1982] 180-82; BAGD 57). Its verbal cognate, ἀναλύειν, 'to depart,' occurs in Phil 1:23 also as a euphemism, emphasizing the passage from life through death to be with Christ. Spicq (2:803-4) cites an interesting analogy of sailors offering a libation before sailing, and ἀνάλυσις ('loosing, departure') is used of a ship loosing its anchor before setting sail; the libation is offered, and Paul's ship is setting sail for heaven. Paul now knows that he will have to face what he had hoped would not occur, a period of disembodied existence, separate from the body but present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:1-8). ἐφίσταμαι in the perfect tense means 'is imminent,' which is different from its use in v 2 in the aorist tense (BAGD 330-31)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 578.]

<sup>891</sup>(1) 'The good fight I have fought.' ἠγώνισμαι, 'I have fought' (cf. 1 Tim 4:10 where it is used of the struggle in ministry of both Paul and Timothy), and ἀγῶνα, 'fight,' are cognates. Paul uses the same phrase to call Timothy to perseverance (1 Tim 6:12; see Comment there; on καλός, 'good,' see Comment on 1 Tim 1:8). Simpson (155-57) argues that it is a military metaphor (cf. 2 Tim 2:3-4), but most say it is an athletic metaphor because of the following two statements. (The following phrase does use athletic imagery, but Paul often varies his metaphors.) On the athletic metaphor in Paul, see 2 Tim 2:4-5 and Comment on 1 Tim 6:12 (cf. 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 3:12-14)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 579.]

<sup>892</sup>(2) 'The race I have completed.' What Paul has earlier anticipated (Phil 3:13-14) has now come to pass. δρόμος can mean 'course' in general (BAGD 206-7), but most believe it is specifically an athletic course, a race. Acts uses the word of John the Baptist finishing his ministry (Acts 13:25) and of Paul's desire to finish his ministry (Acts 20:24). On the basis of this statement, most conclude that Paul knows his life will soon end (also 2 Tim 1:15-18; 4:16-18) and date this epistle as the last of Paul's writings. Paul has persevered and has brought his ministry to its intended end, its goal, its full completion, that all the Gentiles might hear the good news of the gospel (4:17; for τελεῖν, 'to complete,' cf. Rom 2:27; 13:6; 2 Cor 12:9; Gal 5:16)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 579-580.]

<sup>893</sup>(3) 'The faith I have kept.' While there is a question regarding the specific meaning of 'the faith' (cf. Knight, 460, and below), the basic meaning of the clause is clear. Paul has remained true to his calling, his appointment as an apostle of Christ (1 Tim 1:12)

emphatically. This is not self-serving by Paul, but intended for Timothy to reflect upon as incentive to be just as faithful in his service to Christ. The perfect tense verb specifies an earlier moment of commitment that has had an lasting impact which shaped the contours of his life from then on. Each of the three metaphors<sup>894</sup> stresses the same essential point: Paul's faithfulness to follow Christ no matter what the cost.

Thus the Christian life is first defined as a τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα, **the noble struggle**. Whether this is from the perspective of a soldier or an Olympic wrestler it involves facing a hostile opponent. Serving Christ will always be done in the face of opposition. To be sure, the believer will receive support and encouragement inside the community of believers -- at least most of the time -- but will always encounter enemies who oppose everything the believer is committed to in the Gospel of Christ. The second image of the Olympic track runner in a race underscores the challenge of bringing a life of service to a successful completion. Faithful service to Christ over a lifetime will always encounter obstacles and challenges. But the believer's objective is to successfully complete the τὸν δρόμον, **course of the race**, as laid out by God for each believer. And like the committed Olympian runner the believer is just as committed to a successful completion. The third image, although less well defined, plays off one who has been given a job to do in the service of others, and faithfully executes that responsibility to the very day of retirement. What Paul has faithfully kept, τετήρηκα, is τὴν πίστιν, Despite the tendency of much of modern scholarship to define this as doctrine, the most natural meaning is Paul's faith commitment made to Jesus by him on the Damascus road some three plus decades earlier. Compare Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18 with Paul's statements in Acts 26:19 and Gal. 1:15-16

**Acts 26:19.** 19 Ὅθεν, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, οὐκ ἐγενόμην ἀπειθῆς τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὄπτασίᾳ, **After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,**

**Gal. 1:15-17.** 15 Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν [ὁ θεὸς] ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ 16 ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, εὐθέως οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι 17 οὐδὲ ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους, ἀλλ' ἀπῆλθον εἰς Ἀραβίαν καὶ πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα εἰς Δαμασκόν. **15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.**

Now approaching the end of that job assignment Paul asserts that he has been consistent and faithful to the initial faith commitment to Christ for preaching and teaching the Gospel message about Jesus Christ.

**Third**, there is the expectation of God's **future** acknowledging him and his commitment in the coming day of judgment before God; λοιπὸν ἀπόκειται μοι ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης στέφανος, ὃν ἀποδώσει μοι ὁ κύριος ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐμοὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἡγαπηκόσιν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ, **finally there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.** The adverb λοιπὸν very possibly has an inferential meaning in the usage here, and thus would be translated better as **'therefore.'**<sup>895</sup> But the core meaning of 'remaining' suggests that this third item is the final point of Paul's listing.<sup>896</sup>

and a proclaimer of the gospel (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11). Elsewhere Timothy is encouraged to keep (τηρεῖν) himself (1 Tim 5:22) and the commandment (1 Tim 6:14) pure (cf. 2 Tim 1:14). Despite their respective persecutions and suffering, they are to remain true to their calling and commitments. It is possible that 'the faith' is to be understood in this subjective sense of remaining true to one's calling ('kept faith'; Bernard; Spicq; Dibelius-Conzelmann; Barton, Bib 40 [1959] 878-84; Brox; Pfitzner, Agon Motif, 183; Fee). Dibelius-Conzelmann (121 n. 18) and Fee (291) show that it is a common phrase with this meaning. Kelly argues that the context requires this general sense of 'consistent loyalty throughout his ministry to his divine mandate' (209)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 580.]

<sup>894</sup>The uncertainty over whether two or three images centers over whether the first image is that of a soldier or whether of an olympic wrestler. Clearly the second image is of an olympic track runner.

<sup>895</sup>While λοιπὸν, "now" (adverbial use of λοιπός), can possibly have an inferential sense, 'therefore' (BAGD 480 [3b]; cf. possibly 1 Cor 7:29; Moule, Idiom-Book, 161, 207), this would be unusual and not appropriate to this context since it would suggest that Paul's crown of righteousness has been earned by his life of obedience (v 7). The normal use of λοιπὸν as an adverb of time, 'from now on, in the future, henceforth' (BAGD 480 [3a]), is more appropriate for the context. Paul has finished his earthly life, and the next major event of his Christian life is what lies ahead in heaven (cf. the use of λοιπὸν to indicate the last in a series: Acts 27:20; 1 Cor 1:16; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 6:10; Phil 3:1; 4:8; 1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 3:1; EDNT 2:360; Moule, Idiom-Book, 161). Death is not a factor (cf. Explanation)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 582.]

<sup>896</sup>**63.21 λοιπός, ἢ, ὄν; ἐπίλοιπος, ὄν; κατάλοιπος, ὄν:** pertaining to the part of a whole which remains or continues, and thus constitutes the rest of the whole—"rest, remaining, what remains, other."<sup>73</sup>

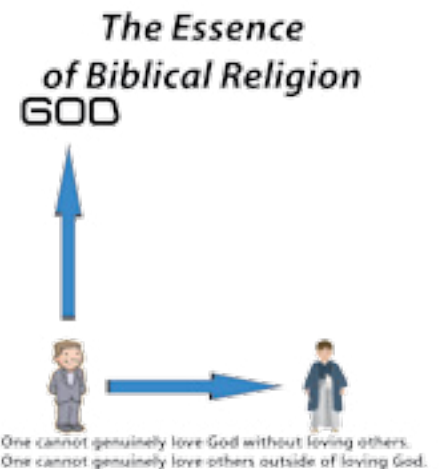
λοιπός: τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν 'the remaining blasts' Re 8:13; οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων 'the rest of the people' Re 9:20.

ἐπίλοιπος: τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ... χρόνον 'the rest of ... the time' 1 Pe 4:2.

The core action is ἀπόκειται, the present tense passive verb from ἀπόκειμαι with the sense of ‘being set up for future acquisition.’ Used just 4 times in the entire NT (Lk. 19:20; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 9:27) and only here in 2 Timothy, the idea is that something is in the process of being set up for Paul (μοι) to receive at Judgment Day. What is to be prepared by God for him is defined as ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης στέφανος, **the crown of righteousness**. This very rich depiction of salvation is full of meaning. The crown is ὁ...στέφανος which in secular first century life was a wreath made of olive branches and leaves that was given to athletes and soldiers in celebration of victory. On judgment day God will acknowledge Paul’s overcoming of sin through his faith commitment to Christ and which was validated through the years of dedicated service to Christ. But this crown is not made of olive branches and leaves. Rather it is δικαιοσύνη, **righteousness**, itself, just as Paul affirmed years before to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 5: 21.<sup>897</sup> A frequent image depicting this is to be dressed in white robes / clothes, as in Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 7:14. We become qualified to stand in the presence of a totally pure God only when clothed in His purity.

This crown is further qualified by the relative clause ὃν ἀποδώσει μοι ὁ κύριος ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐμοὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσιν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ, **which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will grant to me on that Day, but not just to me only but to all those loving His appearance**.<sup>898</sup> The verb ἀποδώσει from ἀποδίδωμι is used here and in 4:14 inside 2 Timothy. In the second instance it clearly is within the framework of the commercial background of the verb’s meaning of to ‘pay back’ what one has earned and deserves. And that background should be considered here even though the commercial tone is receding further into the background here. It is more than simply to give (= δίδωμι) and has implications that what Paul is to be given on Judgment Day comes out of a divine consideration on whether a faith commitment has been proven true by faithful service. This is the reason for placing the apposition ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, **the righteous Judge**, in the relative clause, and thus indirectly linked through the verb subject to ἀποδώσει. God in granting Paul the crown will have fairly and justly evaluated his life of service before making His decision. Probably in the background stands what Paul anticipates from the Roman judge who will decide whether Paul lives or dies. He doesn’t expect a δίκαιος κριτής to make that decision.

But the apostle qualifies this potent of being given a crown on Judgment Day to include not just himself but καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσιν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ, **also all those loving His appearing**. Interestingly faith commitment, πεπιστευκόσιν, become love commitment, ἠγαπηκόσιν. The concepts are interchangeable. The perfect tense particle ἠγαπηκόσιν stresses having made a commitment of love to God in the past that has defined one’s life from that point forward. But the ἀγαπάω aspect expands to include sacrificial devotion to people as well as to God, and in that sense enlarges the idea of faith commitment. This falls squarely within the framework of the core Hebrew / Christian vertical / horizontal understanding of religious commitment. One is not genuinely committed to God without being committed to people. And one cannot be genuinely committed to people outside of being committed to God.



The ἐπιφάνεια of Christ can refer to His first appearance in incarnation (2 Tim. 1:10) or His second appearance (2 Tim. 4:1, 8). In this context of chapter four, it refers to Christ’s second appearance as divine Judge of all humanity including believers. The idea derived from the root word of φῶς, **light**, and the parallel verb form ἐπιφαίνω is that Christ becomes visibly present to others. But that appearance is as

κατάλοιπος: ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον ‘so that the rest of mankind would seek the Lord’ Ac 15:17.

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 613.]

<sup>897</sup>2 Cor. 5:21. τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενόμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>898</sup>“ὁ κύριος, ‘the Lord,’ is Christ since he is identified as the judge (4:1) and the context is his return (v 8b; cf. Comment on 2 Tim 2:19 for the use of the article with κύριος). ἀποδίδωμι can mean ‘to reward’ for both good (1 Tim 5:4) and bad (2 Tim 4:14) behavior; however, it can simply mean ‘to give’ (BAGD 90). Christ is ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, ‘the righteous judge’ (cf. 2 Thess 1:5; cf. 2 Pet 2:22; Rev 16:5, 7; 19:2; cf. Ps 7:11), called as a witness to Timothy’s ministry (2 Tim 4:1), who awards a crown of righteousness. Righteousness is inherently God’s characteristic and his to give to Paul and Timothy. There may be an implicit comparison between the true judge, who will give Paul what is right, and the Roman judge, who is soon to pronounce the death sentence on him. ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, ‘that day,’ is the day of judgment (cf. 2 Tim 1:12, 18; 4:1; cf. 2 Thess 1:10), which Paul will next refer to as his ἐπιφάνεια, ‘appearing’ (v 8b).” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 582–583.]



ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, [the righteous Judge](#). Paul in this declaration declares that those devoted in self-sacrificing love to God and others look forward to the Judge's appearance in the confidence that their lives will reflect genuine commitment to God once put under the scrutiny of the Judge's spotlight. The outcome of their being judged will be positive and encouraging.

What a perspective for one approaching his death! Paul stands as a moving example not just to inspire Timothy to being faithful in his ministry, but also to every believer over the centuries seeking to honor Christ in his or her life.

The second pericope in this passage is vv. 9-18 with two sub points: vv. 9-15; 16-18.<sup>899</sup> Both units focus on personal instructions to Timothy and notes regarding a variety of individuals. From a literary genre perspective they fall into the general category of Travel Plans which typically signal the closing out of the body proper of an ancient letter and a transition into the Conclusio section. Due to Paul's circumstance at the time of the writing of the letter he is not anticipating any travel plans for himself. But he does make a travel request of Timothy, and references the travel activities of several others who had worked with Paul previously.

The first subunit of vv. 9-15 are especially focused on Timothy and a travel request from Paul to him. The header request in v. 9 sets up the unit: Σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ταχέως, [Endeavor to come to me quickly](#). This same request is repeated in v. 21a, Σπούδασον πρὸ χειμῶνος ἐλθεῖν. [Endeavor to come before winter](#). These grow out of Paul's expression in the Proem of 1:4, ἐπιποθῶν σε ἰδεῖν, μεμνημένος σου τῶν δακρῶν, ἵνα χαρᾶς πληρωθῶ, [while longing to see you and remembering your tears, so that I may be filled with joy](#). Such a time will require several weeks at best to make, depending on what travel options were available at different points of the journey.

The request to leave Ephesus for Rome before winter suggests that this letter is being written in late summer or early fall.<sup>900</sup> In the northern Mediterranean world travel during winter could be both extra difficult and dangerous. If any segment of the trip involved sea travel, as would a trip from Ephesus to Rome, finding a ship that was not packed away for the winter in some harbor would not be easy. The stormy seas during the winter months pretty much shut down sea travel, especially if it included crossing long stretches of open sea. Some of the [Roman roads](#) would have had snow and ice on them during the winter. This includes the [Via Egnatia](#) running across Macedonia from Byzantium (thru Philippi) on the Aegean Sea coast in the east to Dyrrachium at the Adriatic Sea on the western coast. It crossed some mountain ranges where travel in the winter would have been especially difficult. Should Timothy have to wait until spring time, this might be too long given Paul's statement in vv. 6-8 where he doesn't think that he has much time left before execution. But if Timothy leaves Ephesus ταχέως, i.e., within a reasonably short period of time after receiving this letter, he should be able to arrive in Rome while Paul is still alive.



Paul was anxious to see Timothy one last time, and thus the tone of urgency in the request. He anticipated Timothy's departure from Ephesus with much work still needing to be done. In this section he indicates to Timothy that Τύχικον δὲ ἀπέστειλα εἰς Ἐφεσον, [And I have sent Tychius to Ephesus](#) (v. 12). If the aorist verb ἀπέστειλα is intended by Paul as an Epistolary Aorist function, then the translation would be ["And I am sending Tychius to Ephesus,"](#) and would strongly imply that Tychius<sup>901</sup> was carrying the letter to Timothy in Ephesus from Rome.<sup>902</sup>

<sup>899</sup>This is signaled in the UBS Greek NT with Ἐν at the beginning of verse 16 being capitalized. Ordinarily the first word in a new sentence is not capitalized.

<sup>900</sup>It could possibly have been written in the summer with anticipation of how much time it would take for the letter to arrive in Ephesus from Rome, and how long it would take Timothy to arrange for a departure from Ephesus to Rome -- all before the travel difficulties of the winter months set in.

<sup>901</sup>Tychicus was a natural choice for this task. He was Asian and had been with Paul on his trip from Macedonia through Troas and Miletus (where Paul spoke with the Ephesian elders) and presumably on to Jerusalem. He had already carried Paul's letters to the Ephesian (and Colossian) church and remained to tell them how Paul was doing (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; Titus 3:12). Paul calls him a beloved brother, a faithful servant (Eph 6:21), and a fellow slave in the Lord (Col 4:7). Later tradition says that he became the bishop of either Colophon or Chalcedon (Menologion, Dec. 9). δέ, 'and,' makes Tychicus's leaving a reason for Timothy to bring Mark (see Comment on v 11). [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 591.]

<sup>902</sup>This distinctive function of the Greek aorist tense is only found in ancient letters and the past time verb assumes the vantage  
Page 795

Paul gives as a reason (γάρ), for this request for Timothy to come to Rome, the departure of several associates from Rome to other places. Δημᾶς γάρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην, Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν· Λουκᾶς ἔστιν ὁ μόνος μετ’ ἐμοῦ, for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, a Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.

The clearly negative departure is that of Demas: Δημᾶς γάρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην, for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Demas is referenced by Paul in strong language of abandoning his Christian faith rather than just disassociating himself from Paul.<sup>903</sup> It may be that Demas was returning home to Thessalonica, based on references in Col. 4:11, 14, and Phlm 24. Paul’s rebuke is couched in με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα, he deserted me because he loved this age. This strongly points to more than just abandonment of Paul in a time of need, although one would understand that such is a part of Demas’ actions that signaled a deeper spiritual problem.<sup>904</sup>

Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Crescens to Galatia. The abbreviated form only assumes the verb ἐπορεύθη, has gone, from the previous statement. Thus it does not carry a negative assessment like the one of Demas. This is the single reference to Crescens in the entire NT, so not much is known about him. Probably, but not certainly, he returned home to Galatia, as Demas did by going to Thessalonica.<sup>905</sup>

Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν, Titus to Dalmatia. The same abbreviated grammar structure is used for Titus as well. Thus no negative implications are present in the departure of Titus from Rome to Dalmatia. This was a province point of the readers looking to a past time point of composition of the letter. Additionally, this function is quite common in the ending of letters in the Travel Plans section.

<sup>903</sup>Δημᾶς, ‘Demas’ (BAGD 178; MM, 144; BDF §125[1]), may be a shortened form of Δημήτριος, ‘Demetrius,’ but he is not to be identified with the Christian in 3 John 12 or the Ephesian silversmith (Acts 19:24, 38) of the same name. Demas is Paul’s ‘fellow worker’ mentioned in Col 4:14; Phlm 24 and listed in both places with Luke, as he is here. He is mentioned along with Hermogenes as a hypocritical friend of Paul in the apocryphal *Acts of Paul* (see Explanation on 2 Tim 1:15–18; Acts of Paul 1, 4, 12–14, 16) and elsewhere as an apostate (Epiphanius Haer. 51.6). The fact that Paul attributes his desertion to the love of this present age suggests that he apostatized from the faith (contra Spicq, 2:810–12) rather than the weaker meaning of disassociating himself from Paul along with the Asians (1:15; cf. Fee, 299, citing the use of the words by Polycarp Phil. 9.1–2). Paul uses ἐγκαταλείπειν, ‘to desert’ (BAGD 215; 2 Cor 4:9), to describe the abandonment by his friends at his first defense (v 16). It is a strong word; it is the same word Jesus uses to quote from Ps 21:1 (LXX) when he cries out on the cross, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mark 15:34; see Form/Structure/Setting). The suggestion is that Demas is a good friend and that his personal desertion is painful for Paul. The use of ἀγαπᾶν, ‘to love,’ contrasts with its use in v 8; a crown awaits those who love Jesus’ return, but because Demas loved this age (ἀγαπήσας, ‘because he loved,’ is a causal participle), he deserted Paul. τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα, ‘the present age,’ is a common idiom (cf. 1 Tim 6:17; Titus 2:12; cf. Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:6; 2 Cor 4:4). Bernard (144) suggests that Demas is not a Jew, based on Col 4:11, 14, but rather a Thessalonian and is therefore returning home. In Phlm 24 Demas is listed with Aristarchus, who himself is a Thessalonian (cf. Acts 20:4; 27:2; cf. W. D. Thomas, ExpTim 95 [1983] 179–80).” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 589–590.]

<sup>904</sup>It is highly doubtful that the spiritual issues ran as deeply as the apocryphal Acts of Paul assume:

**2.1. 1** When Paul went up unto Iconium after he fled from Antioch, there journeyed with him *Demas and Hermogenes the coppersmith, which were full of hypocrisy, and flattered Paul as though they loved him*. But Paul, looking only unto the goodness of Christ, did them no evil, but loved them well, so that he assayed to make sweet unto them all the oracles of the Lord, and of the teaching and the interpretation (of the Gospel) and of the birth and resurrection of the Beloved, and related unto them word by word all the great works of Christ, how they were revealed unto him (Copt. adds: how that Christ was born of Mary the virgin, and of the seed of David).

**2.4. 4** And when Paul saw Onesiphorus he smiled, and Onesiphorus said: Hail, thou servant of the blessed God. And he said: Grace be with thee and with thine house. *But Demas and Hermogenes were envious, and stirred up their hypocrisy yet more, so that Demas said: Are we not servants of the Blessed, that thou didst not salute us so?* And Onesiphorus said: I see not in you any fruit of righteousness, but if ye be such, come ye also into my house and refresh yourselves.

[Acts of Paul, [Early Christian Writings.org](http://Early Christian Writings.org)]

<sup>905</sup>Nothing more is known of Crescens. Tradition says that he went north from Rome into Gaul, founded the churches in Vienne and Mayence near Lyons (*Acta Sanctorum*, June 27; Menologion, May 30), and became the bishop of Chalcedon (Chronicon Pasch. 2.121). He had not ἐγκατέλιπεν, ‘deserted,’ Paul. Only Demas is the subject of that verb; Crescens and Titus are governed by ἐπορεύθη, ‘has gone.’ Crescens is a Latin name (BAGD 450). There is an interesting textual history (see Note c for manuscript evidence); the best reading is Γαλατίαν, ‘Galatia.’ Normally in Paul, Galatia refers to the Roman province in Asia Minor, but this may be because that is where his journeys took him. Galatia can also refer to Gaul, modern-day France and northern Italy (Lightfoot, Galatians, 2–3; Spicq, 2:811–12; Kelly, 213), and often a qualifier such as ‘in Asia’ is required to designate the Galatia in Asia Minor. This is suggested by the variant reading Γαλλίαν, which can only mean Gaul. Some of the early church fathers saw Γαλατίαν as Gaul to the north, and this could explain the shift to Γαλλίαν in an attempt to clarify the location (cf. Lock, xxxvii; it could also be due to reading the second alpha as a lambda [TCGNT 2, 581]). If this is the case, then it is perhaps a slight indication that Paul was able to extend his ministry toward the west as he desired (Rom 15:24, 28), assuming Crescens was following Paul’s trail of ministry.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 590.]

that included Nicopolis ([Titus 3:12](#)) and Illyricum ([Rom. 15:19](#)) where Paul had previously traveled. Thus perhaps he was on another follow up trip for Paul like Crete had been a few years before.<sup>906</sup>

Λουκάς ἐστὶν μόνος μετ' ἐμοῦ, [Only Luke is with me](#). What should we make of this in light of the greetings statement in v. 21, Ἀσπάζεται σε Εὐβουλος καὶ Πούδης καὶ Λίνος καὶ Κλαυδία καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες, [Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers](#).? Very likely Luke was the one remaining close associate of Paul's 'inner circle' left in Rome,<sup>907</sup> while the four individuals -- not named elsewhere -- were either a part of a larger circle of friends and perhaps members of the Christian community in Rome. Luke with his training was also capable of writing Greek well and thus very likely was responsible for the actual composition of this letter along with First Timothy and Titus.

After referencing these who no longer were available to help him while in prison in Rome, apart from Luke, Paul expands his request for Timothy to make a trip to Rome.

Μάρκον ἀναλαβὼν ἄγε μετὰ σεαυτοῦ, ἔστιν γάρ μοι εὐχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν, [Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry](#). Although John Mark was not in Ephesus, he was somewhere on the assumed route that Timothy would take from Ephesus to Rome. Paul, now reconciled to Mark, who had deserted Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, felt Mark could make a contribution to the ministry of the apostle in Rome.<sup>908</sup> This reconciliation with Mark had taken place sometime earlier since Mark was with Paul in Caesarea during the time of his imprisonment there (Col. 4:10-11; Phlm. 24). Sometime shortly after Paul's execution, if not before, Mark will be in Rome according to 1 Pet. 5:13. By this point he had become a valuable servant of Christ to both Paul and Peter who both would end their lives in Rome during the same general time frame of the 60s.

Τύχικον δὲ ἀπέστειλα εἰς Ἔφεσον. [I have sent Tychius to Ephesus](#). This has already been discussed above, but in essence Tychius was carrying this letter to Ephesus and was to be Timothy's replacement when he left for Rome.

τὸν φοιλόνην ὃν ἀπέλιπον ἐν Τρωάδι παρὰ Κάρπῳ ἐρχόμενος φέρε, καὶ τὰ βιβλία μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας. [When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments](#). This is a very helpful insight into Paul's daily life that we only have here in all of his letters.<sup>909</sup> The need for the τὸν φοιλόνην, [cloak](#),<sup>910</sup> probably is in light of the coming winter months where Paul would need additional clothes to

<sup>906</sup>Titus had gone to Dalmatia. Perhaps he wintered in Nicopolis on his return from Crete and then headed north (see discussion on v 9). Dalmatia was the southwestern part of Illyricum on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea (modern-day Yugoslavia, currently Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina; cf. Pliny Hist. 3.26). Paul had gone as far as Illyricum in his journeys (Rom 15:19), so Titus may have been following up on Paul's missionary endeavors as he may have done in Crete." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 590.]

<sup>907</sup>Luke was a gentile physician, Paul's beloved friend and traveling companion (Col 4:14; Phlm 24; cf. Acts 20:6; 21:15; 24:23; 28:16), traditionally viewed as the author of the Third Gospel and Acts. Because he was the only person with Paul, it is most likely that he was the amanuensis of this epistle (and of 1 Timothy and Titus; cf. Introduction, "Historical Reconstruction from the PE")." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 590.]

<sup>908</sup>On his way from Ephesus to Rome, Timothy is to pick up Mark (ἀναλαμβάνειν, 'to get'; BAGD 57; cf. Acts 22:30; ἀναλαβὼν is a participle of antecedent action: 'having gotten Mark, bring him'). John Mark was the son of Mary of Jerusalem and the cousin of Barnabas. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey as far as Pamphylia but then returned to Jerusalem (Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13). The circumstances were such that Paul did not want to take him on the second missionary journey, so Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus and Paul took Silas (Acts 15:37, 39). Evidently there was a reconciliation because Mark was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and was called Paul's fellow worker (Col 4:10-11; Phlm 24; cf. 1 Pet 5:13). 2 Tim 4:11 is often seen as an acknowledgment that the reconciliation was complete, although this can be assumed from Paul's prior use of the title fellow worker. According to tradition, Mark wrote the Second Gospel based on Peter's teaching (Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.39.15) and died a martyr's death (B. H. Throckmorton, Jr., IDB 3:277-78). On εὐχρηστος, "useful," cf. Comments on 2 Tim 2:21 and Phlm 11. Paul has used διακονία, "service," of his ministry (1 Tim 1:12) and of Timothy's (2 Tim 4:5; on the word, cf. discussion of διάκονος, "deacon," in Comment on 1 Tim 3:8). This suggests that Paul is thinking of Christian ministry in general as is also suggested by the immediate context. Paul's coworkers have left, and the following δέ, "and" (v 12), ties Mark's usefulness directly to Tychicus's departure. Chrysostom sees Paul's request as a desire for Mark to help fill the ministerial void in Rome when Paul has died ("Homily 10"; NPNF 13:513). Paul could also be thinking of personal service to himself analogous to the service rendered by Onesiphorus (1:16-18; cf. 1 Cor 16:15)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 590-591.]

<sup>909</sup>This is a personal comment, uncovering Paul's humanness, his daily and physical desires. It is assumed that he asks for the cloak because he is cold or in anticipation of the coming winter (v 21). Since there is no way to know the identity of the books and parchments, it is not certain if the concern is legal (e.g., papers showing Roman citizenship), ministry oriented (e.g., blank writing material for further correspondence), or personal and sentimental. The verse is so personal that even many scholars who deny Pauline authorship of the PE assume its authenticity. If this verse was included by a pseudepigrapher, he was clearly attempting to deceive his readership." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 591-592.]

<sup>910</sup>φοιλόνης, ου, ό is to be spelled so (B-D-F §25) as against the great uncials and critical editions, which have φολόνης (PFay 347 [II A.D.]). This appears to be a Lat. loanw. (paenula; see Hahn p. 10, 8; EFraenkel, ZVS 42, 1909, 115, 1; ESchwyzler, MusHely 3,





protect him from the bone chilling winter cold. This assumes we have the correct understanding of this Greek word φαιλόνης.<sup>911</sup> It had been left behind in Troas on his last visit there. Helpful also is that this assumes Timothy will go overland north from Ephesus to Troas then across the Aegean Sea to Philippi and thus travel along the Via Egnatia to the western coast where he would board a ship at Dyrrachium on eastern side of the Adriatic Sea. From Dyrrachium he would then cross over to Brindisi in the Apulia region. There he would have taken the [Via Appia](#) directly up to Rome in the Italian peninsula. This route would have taken Timothy close to Nicopolis where Titus was; Dyrrachium was not far away. Additionally he would have passed through Thessalonica where Demas had gone. Perhaps he and Mark had the opportunity to visit Demas and try to help him.

But Paul had not only left his coat with Carpus at Troas, he had other documents there which he wanted Timothy to pick up and bring to Rome. When Paul had left these items behind is not likely to have been on one of the trips through Troas mentioned in Acts or his other letters.<sup>912</sup> Most likely one of his trips in the Aegean region between his first and second Roman imprisonment is the probable time frame. He mentions two kinds of items for Timothy to pick up: τὰ βιβλία μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας, [the scrolls and especially the parchments](#). The τὰ

<sup>911</sup>46, 50–52; but s. B. below), also in rabb. in var. spellings. Its original form was φανόλας (Rhinton [III B.C.], Com. Graec. Fgm. 7 Kaibel [in Pollux 7, 61]) or φαινόλης (Epict. 4, 8, 34; Artem. 2, 3; 5, 29; Athen. 3, 97e; POxy 736, 4; 1737, 9; 15; PGiss 10, 21; PHamb 10, 19 [II B.C.]; Gignac I 100), also φαινόλιον (POxy 531, 14 [II A.D.]; 936, 18; 19). From these by metathesis (s. CLobeck, Pathologiae Sermonis Graeci Elementa I 1853, 514; W-S. §5, 18; B-D-F §32, 2; MIt-H. 81; 106; 155) came φαιλόνης (which is still quotable at least in its dim. form φαιλόνιον [-όνιον]: POxy 933, 30; PGiss 12, 4 [II A.D.]; BGU 816, 24 [III A.D.]; cp. Mod. Gk. φελόνι cloak (POxy 531, 14 τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ λευκὰ τὰ δυνάμενα μετὰ τῶν πορφυρῶν φορεῖσθαι φαινολίον. Likew. Epict.; Athen., loc. cit. In view of these pass. the translation ‘valise’ is excluded; s. Field, Notes 217f, cited in M-M; also excluded is the interpretation in the direction of διφθέρα, the leather cover for papyrus rolls) **2 Ti 4:13** (on the subject-matter s. POxy 1489 [III A.D.] τὸ κιθῶνιν [=χιτώνιον] ἐπιλέλθισμαι παρὰ Τεκνοῦσαν εἰς τὸν πολῶνα. πέμψον μοι).—See B. 417, where φαινόλα is treated as the original fr. which Lat. paenula is borrowed, and not vice versa; s. also MIt-H. 106.—Frisk. DELG s.v. φαίω A. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1046.]

<sup>912</sup>“While Timothy is ‘coming’ to Paul (ἐρχόμενος; cf. the infinitive ἐλθεῖν in vv. 9, 21), Paul asks him to ‘bring’ or ‘carry’ (φέρε; cf. Acts 4:34, 37; 5:2) with him τὸν φαιλόνην. φαιλόνης (a NT hapax, spelled φελόνης in some manuscripts) is regarded by most as a loanword from Latin *paenula*, which appeared at a much earlier date than the Greek word. The original form was φανόλας or φαινόλης, which by metathesis (transposition) became φαιλόνης (see BAGD; MHT II, 106). The φαιλόνης, ‘cloak,’ was ‘a large, sleeveless outer garment, made of a single piece of heavy material, with a hole in the middle through which the head was passed’ (Kelly). Since it served as protection against cold and rain, Paul may have wanted it because winter was at hand (v. 21) and also perhaps because his prison was cold. Whatever the immediate reasons, Paul wanted to recover essential possessions that he had left behind (ὄν ἀπέλιπον; see evidence for a variant spelling, which makes no difference in meaning, in NA26).” [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 466.]

<sup>912c</sup>“Paul frequently visited Troas (Acts 16:8, 11; 20:5, 6; 2 Cor 2:12), but since the PE as a whole do not fit into the framework of Acts (cf. Introduction, “Historical Reconstruction from Acts”), this type of scenario may be assumed. It is doubtful that Paul would have left items of such personal value behind during the visits mentioned in Acts and only now ask for them.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 592.]

βιβλία would have clearly been documents containing writings of some kind. Whether these were of a religious nature or whether they contained documentation of his citizenship etc. needed for his legal defense in Rome is not clear. The τὰς μεμβράνας clearly were leather writing materials of a very expensive nature. This would provide materials for writing while in prison.<sup>913</sup> This understanding assumes that μάλιστα means here ‘in addition to’ rather than ‘i.e., that is.’ If the latter meaning is the correct one, then τὰς μεμβράνας defines τὰ βιβλία as leather parchment scrolls rather than the standard papyrus scrolls normally understood by τὰ βιβλία during this period of time. Carpus, Κάρπος, is not mentioned elsewhere and nothing beyond his living as a believer in Troas is known. The spelling of his personal name is also καρπός meaning ‘fruit.’

The final instruction given to Timothy is a warning to avoid the Ephesian coppersmith named Alexander: 14 Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ χαλκεὺς πολλὰ μοι κακὰ ἐνεδείξατο· ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· 15 ὃν καὶ σὺ φυλάσσου, λίαν γὰρ ἀντίστη τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds. 15 You also must beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message. He is mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:20 in a similarly negative manner by Paul.<sup>914</sup> It is also likely that the Alexander named in Acts 19:33-34 is the same man as the Jewish spokesman distancing the Jews from Paul before the government leaders.<sup>915</sup> He had done Paul much harm, πολλὰ μοι κακὰ ἐνεδείξατο, when Paul was in Ephesus, perhaps here alluding to the Acts 19:33-34 event.

Paul expresses confidence that God will judge Alexander very severely for his actions: ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, The Lord will pay him back according to his deeds. In genuine Christian fashion retaliation or revenge is not in Paul’s hands. It lays in God’s hands to judge evil deeds.

What Paul wants Timothy to do is to be one his guard to avoid this fellow while in Ephesus: ὃν καὶ σὺ φυλάσσου, λίαν γὰρ ἀντίστη τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις, whom you also be on guard against, for he strongly opposed our message.<sup>916</sup> As a leader in the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus he strongly rejected the Gospel preached by Paul and others in the city. Paul didn’t want Timothy to tangle with him if at all possible.

The second sub-unit of text in vv. 16-18 turns to a personal reflection of Paul regarding his imprisonment at Rome. The identifying reference to this first Roman trial is Ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μου ἀπολογία, in my first defense. But the mystery is the intent of this reference.<sup>917</sup> Does it refer to his first imprisonment some years before? Or does

---

<sup>913</sup>“βιβλίον, ‘book,’ is the diminutive of βιβλος and is a common word for books, writings, or collections of writings such as in a library (G. Schrenk, TDNT 1:617–18). It is used of secular writings, such as the certificate of divorce (Matt 19:7; Mark 10:4), as well as of the writings in the OT (Luke 4:17, 20; Gal 3:10; Heb 9:19; 10:17) and the NT (John 20:30; 21:25; and the twenty-three references in Revelation to the book, the scroll, and the book of life; cf. McGown, HTR 34 [1941] 219–50; Skeat, “Early Christian Book Production,” 2:54–79). μεμβράνα is a Latin loan word for ‘parchment,’ a writing material more expensive than papyrus, capable of being reused and more durable, made from the skins of sheep and goats. Kelly (216) argues that the word was commonly used of a codex (as opposed to a scroll). μάλιστα can mean ‘especially’ (cf. discussion in Comment on 1 Tim 4:10), in which case the parchments are in addition to the books. It can also be an identifier, ‘that is, namely, to be precise,’ in which case the books are more closely defined as the parchments (Skeat, JTS n.s. 30 [1979] 173–77). Only Paul, Carpus, and perhaps Timothy knew what they contained.” [William D. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 592.]

<sup>914</sup>1 Tim. 1:19b-20. ἦν τινες ἀπωσάμενοι περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἐναυάγησαν, 20 ὧν ἐστὶν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ σατανᾷ, ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν μὴ βλασφημεῖν.

By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; 20 among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme.

<sup>915</sup>Acts 19:33-34. 33 ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ὄχλου συνεβίβασαν Ἀλέξανδρον, προβαλόντων αὐτὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων· ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος κατασεισάσας τὴν χεῖρα ἤθελεν ἀπολογεῖσθαι τῷ δήμῳ. 34 ἐπιγνόντες δὲ ὅτι Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν, φωνὴ ἐγένετο μία ἐκ πάντων ὡς ἐπὶ ὥρας δύο κραζόντων· μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων.

33 Some of the crowd gave instructions to Alexander, whom the Jews had pushed forward. And Alexander motioned for silence and tried to make a defense before the people. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours all of them shouted in unison, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

<sup>916</sup>“γὰρ introduces a statement about Alexander’s opposition, which is what Timothy must beware of. Alexander opposed ‘our’ (ἡμετέροις, i.e., that of Paul and his fellow workers) teaching and presumably will continue to do so. λίαν (cf. Mt. 2:16; 27:14; Mk. 6:51; Lk. 23:8), ‘very much’ or ‘exceedingly,’ placed first for emphasis, expresses the degree of his opposition. With ἀντίστη (from ἀντίστημι), ‘opposed,’ Paul repeats the verb used in 3:8 (see the comments there), where he spoke of the false teachers’ opposition to the ‘truth.’ Plural λόγοις, ‘words,’ signifies that Alexander’s opposition was to their actual statements, i.e., the content of their message (plural λόγοι in the PE\* in 1 Tim. 4:6; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13), and harks back to 1:13 and 2:2.” [George W. Knight, The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 468.]

<sup>917</sup>“The primary question of the passage is the historical setting of the defense, namely, what was the πρώτη, ‘first,’ defense? (1) Historically it has been viewed as Paul’s first imprisonment (Acts 24–28; Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 2.22.2–3; Theodoret 3.695–96; T. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, 3 vols. [Repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1953 (tr. from 3rd German ed., 1909)] 2:7–8; Lock, 119).

it refer to the Roman *prima actio*, which was a public evidence gathering preliminary hearing as the first stage of his present imprisonment? Although arguments can be made for and against both views,<sup>918</sup> the latter view seems much more likely than the first view.<sup>919</sup> This provides an exegetical foundation for understanding the component elements of Paul's words here.

What then does οὐδείς μοι παρεγένετο, ἀλλὰ πάντες με ἐγκατέλιπον· μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθεῖν, *no one stood by me, but all deserted me; may it not be held against them?* In verse 11, Paul says that Luke was with him. But was Luke present in Rome at the time of this preliminary hearing? Or, did he arrive in Rome subsequently? Further, who does Paul mean by οὐδείς and πάντες? If 'no one' and 'all' are taken in their full literal force then the 'defense' doesn't refer to either the first Roman imprisonment described in Acts 28 nor the 'preliminary hearing' of this second imprisonment. If Luke did not arrive until after the hearing and the others (vv. 10-12) had already been dispatched to other places, only members of the church in Rome were left to stand by him at this hearing, and none of them would do so. Whatever their reasons, they abandoned Paul (με ἐγκατέλιπον) at this important moment. We do know from Phil. 1:15-18<sup>920</sup> that some members of the Roman church despised Paul and sought

---

This interpretation takes οὐδείς, 'no one,' in the absolute sense, which solves the apparent contradiction with v 11 that says Luke is currently (i.e., in the second imprisonment) with Paul. It also gives full force to v 17a, which speaks of Paul's rescue from the mouth of the lion (i.e., a Roman judge), which in turn agrees with the implication that Paul's imprisonment in Acts 28 would end in release. But there are several difficulties with this view. In Acts 28 there is no hint of a universal abandonment, nor is there the sense of impending death as in 2 Tim 4:6-8. There is the question of why Paul would be telling Timothy about his first imprisonment since Timothy already knew about it and the sense of the passage is that Timothy is being informed. Most important, it is difficult to see why Paul would be reflecting on events several years in the past. Vv 16-17 appear to be in the same time frame as vv 14-15 and v 18, and it is difficult to see how reflections on a past event would apply to Paul and Timothy's current situation.

“(2) Most modern writers see this first defense as the Roman *prima actio*, a public, preliminary hearing designed to gather basic information, which, if necessary, would be followed by a trial (see description by H. C. G. Moule, *The Second Epistle to Timothy: Short Devotional Studies on the Dying Letter of St. Paul* [Philadelphia: Union, 1905] 168-69). Spicq (2:818-19) points out that ἀπολογία, 'defense,' is a technical term for the reply of the defendant, requested by the magistrate, to accusations charged against him. This was one of the benefits of the Roman legal system, and the opportunity was frequently used to defend one's ideas rather than one's personal innocence. At this hearing Paul made his defense (cf. Acts 25:16; Phil 1:7). Either no friends came forward to encourage Paul as was the custom (Guthrie, 176; perhaps Luke [v 11] had not yet arrived), or Paul is again speaking in somewhat hyperbolic language typical of depression (cf. 1:15), or perhaps by παρεγένετο, 'came forward,' Paul is thinking not of friends but of someone making a formal defense for him. In Roman law, the *patronus* argued in defense of the prisoner; the *advocatus* gave counsel (Ellicott, 161). Perhaps the initial response to his *prima actio* was positive. Paul sees that there will be sufficient delay for Timothy to arrive (cf. the two-year delay in Acts 24:27; Spicq, 2:818), and for Paul this initial validation of his innocence and the ensuing delay is a rescue from a 'lion's mouth' (v 17b). But this rescue is at best temporary because Paul still expects to die. More likely, v 17b is the recognition that even in death God will rescue him, not from death but by taking him to the heavenly kingdom (v 18). After all, Paul does not regard death as a major event; the only major thing he has ahead is his 'crown of righteousness' (4:8). Most important, this interpretation fits the contextual needs of the verse. Paul is alone; Alexander is a serious threat, whom Timothy should avoid; Paul was deserted at his preliminary hearing; Timothy should take heart because God will rescue Paul and bring him to heaven. Alexander's opposition will have been to no avail.”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 594-595.]

<sup>918</sup>“Two general views are advocated with regard to what event Paul speaks of in the phrase πρώτη μου ἀπολογία, 'my first defense.' One is that it refers to an earlier imprisonment of Paul, probably the ('first') imprisonment in Rome recorded at the end of Acts, since Paul is before that court for a second time (so Eusebius, HE 2.22; Bouma; Hendriksen; Lock; Wohlenberg; Zahn, Introduction, II, §33; the most thorough defense is presented by Bouma, Hendriksen, and Zahn; cf. further Meinertz, "πρώτη ἀπολογία"). But most modern commentators (e.g., Bernard, Brox, Dibelius-Conzelmann, Fee, Guthrie, Jeremias, Kelly, Ridderbos, Spicq; see especially Ridderbos and Kelly) take it as referring to the first stage of Paul's present trial. Both views are possible and the arguments for them (presented below) cannot be considered conclusive.” [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 468-469.]

<sup>919</sup>“The advocates of the second view regard it as unlikely that Paul would mention an earlier trial, the outcome of which Timothy already knew. It appears, rather, that Paul is informing Timothy about recent events. The 'first defense' is thus the *prima actio*, the preliminary investigation in Paul's present trial. Paul was 'deserted' either because his fellow workers had not yet arrived or out of fear had left him, or because the Christians at Rome, who unlike his fellow workers were in a position to 'stand by him,' did not do so. He was 'delivered' (v. 17) in that he was not condemned at that first hearing and thus had time to write and ask Timothy to come to him before the next stage of the trial (vv. 9, 21). This would fit with Paul's view that his 'deliverance' could finally lead to the 'heavenly kingdom' (v. 18). Because the trial was public and was in the capital of the Gentile world, it might be regarded as the culmination of his work of taking the gospel to the Gentiles (v. 17; cf. Acts 23:11 and Paul's presentation of the gospel while on trial in Acts 26).” [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 469.]

<sup>920</sup>**Phil. 1:15-18a.** 15 τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν· 16 οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κείμεναι, 17 οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἄγνως, οἰόμενοι θλίψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου. 18 Τί γάρ, πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω.



to work against him during his first imprisonment. Perhaps this negative sentiment had grown inside the church over these four or five years since so much that many did not want to help him and the rest were fearful of standing by him at the hearing. In addition this depiction has tones of the abandonment of Jesus while on the cross in Mark 14:50, Καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον πάντες, *All of them deserted him and fled.* See also Mk. 15:34.

In a manner similar to Phil. 1:18, Paul refuses to give in to bitterness against these individuals: μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθεῖν, *May it not be counted against them!* His attitude toward them is different from the one expressed about Demas (v. 10) and Alexander (v. 14) because their actions, i.e., non actions, were different. The aorist optative mood passive voice verb λογισθεῖν is formed as a prayer wish, and here expresses compassion for these brothers who did not stand by Paul at his hearing.<sup>921</sup>

But in spite of no fellow believers standing with Paul at this hearing, the Lord did (v. 17): ὁ δὲ κύριός μοι παρέστη καὶ ἐνεδυνάμωσέν με, ἵνα δι' ἐμοῦ τὸ κήρυγμα πληροφορηθῆ καὶ ἀκούσωσιν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἔρρυσθην ἐκ στόματος λέοντος. *But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.* Christ stood with Paul and strengthened him: ὁ δὲ κύριός μοι παρέστη καὶ ἐνεδυνάμωσέν με.<sup>922</sup> The 'standing by me' language here in reference to Christ echoes Acts 23:11, Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν· θάρσει· ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὕτως σε δεῖ καὶ εἰς Ῥώμην μαρτυρῆσαι. *That night the Lord stood near him and said, "Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome."* Such similar expressions are not surprising since the writer of Acts was also the composer of Second Timothy.

The strengthening of Paul had two objectives (v. 17b): ἵνα δι' ἐμοῦ τὸ κήρυγμα πληροφορηθῆ καὶ ἀκούσωσιν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, *so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.* First came the purpose of τὸ κήρυγμα, the *kerygma*, being carried forward to completion (πληροφορηθῆ). This is a rich expression only partially captured in translation. The κήρυγμα for Paul defined the verbally proclaimed message of the Gospel as 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; Titus 1:3 make clear. The core meaning of the verb πληροφορηθῆ from πληροφορέω is a compound verb from πλήρης and φέρω with the literal meaning of carrying something to completion. It strongly suggests that in Paul's mind this hearing, in which he had substantial liberty to defend himself before the Roman authorities, represented the final opportunity the apostle would have to proclaim the Gospel message to unbelieving Gentiles before his death.<sup>923</sup> Second this enabled Paul to present the Gospel so that ἀκούσωσιν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, *all the nations might hear.* The specific intent of this statement has led to some confusion among commentators. Clearly Paul had not preached the Gospel to 'all the Gentiles' at this point. This is one possible meaning of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. But given the metropolitan nature of Rome and the other possible meaning of all the nations Paul's defense before a large Roman governmental audience could easily have been understood by him to imply that all the people groups in the empire had been impacted through touching repre-

---

15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 16 These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice.

<sup>921</sup>As culpable as such action was, Paul does not put it in the same category as that of Demas (who left Paul out of love for the present world, v. 10), nor does he wish God's just retribution on them as he did on Alexander (v. 14). Perhaps he knows that those he is thinking of did what they did out of fear (as did Jesus' disciples, Mk. 14:50). For that reason he compassionately writes μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθεῖν, 'may it not be counted against them' (μὴ with the optative expresses a negative wish). λογίζομαι is used here in the sense of 'count against' (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19; aorist optative in wish statements [or wish prayers] also in Rom. 15:5, 13; 1 Thes. 3:11f.; 5:23; 2 Thes. 2:17; 3:5, 16; 2 Tim. 1:16, 18; here only with the negative; cf. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 32.) [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 469–470.]

<sup>922</sup>More characteristic of Paul is his unshakable confidence in his Lord (vv. 17–18). Unusual is the sense of the Lord's presence expressed in these terms ('stood beside me'), perhaps reflecting a sense of almost physical accompaniment, rather than Paul's more common mystical 'in Christ' (but perhaps also reflecting the language and memory of Acts 23:11 and 27:23). More typical is the resulting sense of empowerment (see the Commentary on 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 2:1). And still more characteristic is the conviction of a still-enduring commission to proclaim the gospel (here κήρυγμα *kerygma*) to all the Gentiles/nations (see the Commentary on 1 Tim 2:7).<sup>126</sup> This could still be fully discharged even in court (cf. Acts 26), but also through and not just despite his sufferings and circumstances (see Phil 1:12–18). The recollection of Daniel's deliverance from the lions, a story no doubt well known in every Jewish household (Dan 6:22, 27; 1 Macc 2:60; Heb 11:33; see also Ps 22:21), implies that Paul's peril had been every bit as serious as Daniel's had been." [James D. G. Dunn, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 858.]

<sup>923</sup>Thus the English translations such as the NRSV 'might be fully proclaimed' captures some of the meaning but loses much of it in the translation process.

sentative members in this audience.<sup>924</sup> Assuming this to be Paul's intention behind the statement, the apostle can then conclude his ministry of being the missionary to the Gentiles / nations successfully.

With the assertion in v. 17a ὁ δὲ κύριός μοι παρέστη καὶ ἐνεδυνάμωσέν με, *but the Lord stood with me and supported me*, comes the second parallel clause statement καὶ ἐρρύσθην ἐκ στόματος λέοντος, *and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth*. Taken literally this phrase would seem to imply being delivered from death by a lion in the arena. But this is virtually impossible because the [Roman Colosseum](#) didn't exist at this point in time with construction of it beginning under emperor Vespasian in 70 AD and taking a decade before events took place in it. The expression follows a widely used idiom in that period of time to speak of escaping death as a rescue from a lion's mouth.<sup>925</sup> For Jewish Christians such as Paul the image of Daniel's deliverance by God (Dan. 6:19-23) provided an ideal background image for such an idiom.

What this figurative expression specifies is that Paul successfully gave his defense at the preliminary hearing and escaped the sentence of death. But this was to be only a temporary reprieve that would keep him alive long enough hopefully for Timothy to make the trip from Ephesus to Rome.<sup>926</sup> The apostle was not declared innocent of whatever charges being brought against him, but instead was to be held in custody until a formal trial would be scheduled. From Roman records, this formal trial before the emperor could happen within a matter of a few months or could take a few years before taking place. The historians of the time clearly indicate that Nero had little interest in hearing the trials of Roman citizens and often left them unattended for years at a time. If the list of trials grew too large he was known to arbitrarily declare everyone either guilty or innocent without bothering with a formal trial. Although Paul escaped death immediately after the preliminary hearing, he was left in limbo with uncertainty about when such a trial might take place. But this gave him confidence that Timothy would have enough time to make the several week long trip from Ephesus to Rome.

In verse eighteen, he continues his thanksgiving to the Lord for protecting him: ῥύσεται με ὁ κύριος ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔργου πονηροῦ καὶ σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον, *The Lord will rescue me from every evil*

---

<sup>924</sup>“There is a question concerning the phrase ‘all the Gentiles.’ Paul obviously has not preached to every single person in the non-Jewish world. It may have been that Paul sees his proclamation to the Roman court, at the center of the world's dominant empire, as being in essence a proclamation to all the Gentiles (Bernard; Spicq, 2:820–21). However, the phrase “all the nations/Gentiles” can mean “all groups of people,” Jew and Gentile alike (translating ἔθνη as “nations,” not “Gentiles”; Gal 3:8; cf. Matt 28:19; possibly Rom 1:5). This is presumably what Guthrie (177) and others (e.g., Kelly, 219) mean in speaking of the ‘cosmopolitan character of the audience.’ By proclaiming the gospel to the authorities in Rome, Paul has now preached to all groups and all types of Gentiles and therefore has fulfilled his ministry.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 597.]

<sup>925</sup>“ῥύεσθαι, ‘to rescue’ (cf. 1 Tim 2:15; 2 Tim 3:11), denotes more an escape from danger than a salvation from sin. Ellicott says that the word means Paul ‘shall be removed from the sphere of evil in every form’ (163). The lion was commonly used metaphorically of strength (Rev 5:5; cf. Gen 49:9) and danger (Pss 7:2; 22:21; 35:17; 1 Macc 2:60; Heb 11:33; 1 Pet 5:8; and the imagery in Rev 4:7; 9:8, 17; 10:3 [cf. Isa 31:4; Hosea 11:10; Amos 3:8]; cf. W. Michaelis, TDNT 4:252–53, especially 2:253 nn. 20, 21). The story of Daniel and the lion's den (Dan 6:19–23) would have encouraged the proverbial use of this imagery to denote rescue from any serious danger as Paul is doing here. Many have attempted to identify the lion specifically even though much subjectivity is required and the construction is anarthrous, λέοντος, ‘a lion,’ not ‘the lion.’ It is doubtful that Paul was literally saved from being thrown to the lions in the amphitheater (cf. the cry *Christianos ad leonem*, ‘Christians to the lion’; Bernard, 148). Knight (471) cites Robertson's assertion (Word Pictures 4:633) that this would not be a possible fate for a Roman citizen. Some identify the lion as Satan (cf. 1 Pet 5:8), the rescue being Paul's faithfulness and refusal to deny Christ (cf. 2 Tim 2:11–13) before the judge. The early Greek fathers identified the lion as the emperor (Chrysostom says it is Nero; “Homily 10”; NPNF 13:514). Herod Agrippa was told of Tiberius's death with the statement ‘The lion is dead’ (Josephus Ant. 18.6.10 §228; cf. Prov 19:12; Ezek 19:1, 9). Several writers compare 2 Tim 4:17 to Ps 22:1, a psalm understood to be prophetic of Christ's death (especially vv 14, 16). There too the psalmist speaks of being deserted (v 1), but believers will be delivered by God (vv 4–5) as they cry out to be saved from the mouth of the lion (v 21; cf. Form/Structure/Setting). In the psalm it is rescue from death, which Fee (298) says is the meaning of ‘lion’ in 2 Tim 4:17. But while Paul was delivered from immediate death, it was only a temporary stay of execution. It is preferable to see Paul speaking metaphorically of his rescue from immediate death, recognizing that while he will die in this imprisonment, God will rescue him from any serious danger and bring him safely to heaven (v 18).” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 597–598.]

<sup>926</sup>“Not only did the Lord stand by Paul; he also rescued him. In the discussion of v 16 above, the possible historical scenarios behind this verse were covered. The conclusion was that Paul made his defense at a preliminary hearing and instead of being condemned to immediate death was given a temporary reprieve, allowing sufficient time for Timothy to travel to Rome. It was also a victory in that Paul proclaimed the gospel in the Roman courts and received a somewhat positive hearing. It is this event that Paul terms a rescue from a lion's mouth. This does not mean that Paul believes he will be freed. He knows he is going to die (vv 6–8), and the temporary rescue (ἐρρύσθην, ‘was rescued’) enjoyed now looks forward to the rescue (ῥύσεται, ‘will rescue’ [v 18]) that will take him into God's heavenly kingdom. Paul does not envisage a rescue to freedom and extended earthly ministry.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 597.]

attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. The two future tense verbs ῥύσεται and σώσει now point to the coming days in Paul's life. This grows out of his reflections on at least three previous difficult situations -- the harm done by Alexander (vv. 14-15), the abandonment of associates at his hearing (v. 16), and the rescue from the lion's mouth (v. 17). Here the reflection takes on a theological tone of the Lord protecting him from failure to give a good witness to Christ and a delivering of him into heaven at the Lord's timing.<sup>927</sup> The anticipated deliverance (ῥύσεται) is ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔργου πονηροῦ, *from every evil action*. Paul should not be understood to mean that no future physical harm will come to him. He had experienced enough of this already to know better than to think that. Many are convinced that this unique phrase with no parallel elsewhere in the NT is an adaptation of the Lord's Prayer expression ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, *deliver us from the Evil One* (Mt. 6:13b). What the apostle is confident of is that the Lord will protect him from every spiritual injury that Satan would attempt.<sup>928</sup>

The second statement καὶ σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον complements the first one with a confident expression that Christ will deliver (σώσει) him into the heavenly kingdom. The adjective τὴν ἐπουράνιον, *heavenly*, distinguishes the present reign of Christ in the believer's life from the future reign in heaven.<sup>929</sup> Here the clearest English meaning of σώσει, especially with the preposition εἰς, is 'will deliver into.' The English word 'will save for' lacks clarity which is demanded by the contextual usage of σώσει εἰς here. Not only will Satan be unable to harm or jeopardize Paul's relationship with Christ, at death the Lord will safely bring the apostle into his heavenly home with Christ.

Out of this comes a short doxology of praise: ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν, *to Whom be praise for ever and ever! Amen!* This kind of expression is typically Pauline and is found in several of his letters: Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:25-27; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15-16. Such doxologies are expressions of deep gratitude that bursts forth in expressions of praise to God and to Christ.<sup>930</sup> The use of ἀμήν, is the

<sup>927c</sup> ῥύσεται με ὁ κύριος ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔργου πονηροῦ καὶ σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον, 'The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will save [me] into his heavenly kingdom.' Having reflected on three past events—the evil done by Alexander (vv 14-15), the desertions at his hearing (v 16), and the rescue from a lion's mouth (v 17)—Paul looks to the future (cf. Rom 5:9-10; cf. 2 Cor 1:10; 2 Tim 4:8) and draws out a general theological truth. ὁ κύριος, 'the Lord' (i.e., Jesus; cf. 4:1, 8, 14, 17), ῥύσεται, 'will rescue' (cf. Comments on 1 Tim 2:15; 2 Tim 3:11), him, not from death (4:6-8), not from a lion, but from any danger that would destroy Paul or his faith (interpreting ἔργου πονηροῦ, 'evil deed,' as spiritual, not physical). Stated positively this means that Jesus will save him and transport him out of the earthly realm of sin and Rome to the heavenly kingdom of God. Paul is absolutely confident (cf. 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 4:17) that God is able to keep what Paul has entrusted to him (cf. 2 Tim 1:12)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 598.]

<sup>928c</sup> Singular attributive παντός with no article means 'every' or 'each' without exception. παντός ἔργου πονηροῦ is 'every evil (i.e., hostile) action' (cf. G. Harder, TDNT VI, 557). The eschatological direction that Paul goes later in this sentence makes it clear that he is not excluding any evil that might be done to him, but only the power of evil to destroy him finally (Fee). The distinctiveness of the combination πᾶν ἔργον πονηρόν, found nowhere else in the NT (plural ἔργα πονηρά in Jn. 3:19; 7:7; Col. 1:21; 1 Jn. 3:12; 2 Jn. 11; this is the only NT occurrence of the singular and of the phrase with any form of πᾶς) is further evidence that it is a Pauline adaptation of the petition in the Lord's Prayer, utilizing singular πονηροῦ from the petition." [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 472.]

<sup>929c</sup> At least half of the Pauline occurrences of βασιλεία, 'kingdom, reign,' represent that aspect of Christ's (and God's) spiritual reign that believers will enter in the future (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 2 Thes. 1:5). In 1 Cor. 15:24ff., as here (αὐτοῦ referring back to ὁ κύριος), Paul specifically identifies that 'reign' as Christ's.

"Paul uses both ἐπουράνιος, 'heavenly,' and οὐρανός, 'heaven,' of the realm that is distinguishable from earth (cf. especially 1 Cor. 15:47-49 and also Eph. 1:10; 3:15; Col. 1:16, 20). Several times Paul speaks of Christ as Master 'in heaven' (ἐν οὐρανῷ, Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). The ἐπ- in ἐπουράνιος denotes that the word means 'in heaven' (H. Traub, TDNT V, 538). Considering these factors, it appears that Paul is speaking of Christ's kingdom 'in heaven' and saying that when he dies he will be brought safely into that kingdom and remain in it from then on (cf. 1 Thes. 4:13-18). In this heavenly kingdom Paul will 'be at home with the Lord' (the best understanding of 2 Cor. 5:8). Here he expresses the same confidence that he expressed earlier when death was a possibility (Phil. 1:23), but now it is a certainty." [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 472-473.]

<sup>930c</sup> This doxology, like the other Pauline doxologies, expresses the desire that praise should be expressed through eternity (using αἰών) and concludes with the ἀμήν of affirmation. Only Gal. 1:5 is exactly the same as the doxology here. But four of Paul's doxologies use the doubled αἰών, as is done here, three in the same way as here (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, 1 Tim. 1:17; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; only slightly different in Eph. 3:21). Most speak of praise (in its entirety or as part of or as the conclusion of a longer statement) with the word δόξα (1 Tim. 1:17 with τιμῆ; δόξα alone in Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 4:20). Three times Paul uses ᾧ, as here (1 Tim. 6:16; Rom. 16:27; Gal. 1:5). These doxologies and others in the NT usually consist of three or four (as here) component parts: the person praised (usually in the dative, here ᾧ), the word(s) of praise (usually δόξα with other words, here ἡ δόξα alone), a conclusion indicating the eternal duration of the praise (usually εἰς with αἰών in a single or doubled form), and usually an ἀμήν of affirmation." [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand



standard response of affirmation that equals the Hebrew *הלל*, *Selah* (selāh), which signaled the congregational response to the Levitical choir chanting of one of the psalms in temple worship. Most likely its inclusion here seeks a similar congregational response to the reading of this letter in the various house church groups in Ephesus. By this point in the reading of the letter to each congregation a sense of sadness over the impending death of Paul would have descended upon the groups. This congregational Amen! in response to Paul's certainty of being heaven bound would have encouraged the assembly of believers.

This Amen marks the terminus point of the letter body and opens the way for the brief *Conclusio* section to follow in vv. 19-22.

## 2 Timothy 4:19-21.

19 Ἄσπασαι Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν καὶ τὸν Ὀνησιφόρου οἶκον. 20 Ἐραστός ἐμεινεν ἐν Κορίνθῳ, Τρόφιμον δὲ ἀπέλιπον ἐν Μιλήτῳ ἀσθενοῦντα. 21 Σπούδασον πρὸ χειμῶνος ἐλθεῖν. Ἀσπάζεται σε Εὐβουλος καὶ Πούδης καὶ Λίνος καὶ Κλαυδία καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained in Corinth; Trophimus I left ill in Miletus. 21 Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.

In these concluding verses of the letter that comprise the *Conclusio* section, Paul includes the standard *greetings* (vv. 19-21) and the *benedictio* blessing and prayer (v. 22). Out of our specific concerns we will look at the greetings since they give indications of the geographical location of several of Paul's associates at the time of the writing of the letter.

The sending of greetings in letter correspondence in the ancient world was very important to the nurturing of formal friendships. Much of Greco-Roman society was built around a network of friendships with other people outside one's family. For Christians living in such an atmosphere the religious role of Christian hospitality added even greater importance of the sending of greetings in letters.

Here Paul does the rather usual thing of requesting that certain people in Ephesus be greeted by Timothy in Paul's behalf (1). Also he includes greetings for individuals with him at the time of the composition of the letter in Rome (4). These would be individuals personally acquainted with Timothy and desiring to be greeted in the letter. But inserted between these two typical sections of the Greetings pattern are the mentioning of some other individuals who were not with Paul at the writing of the letter (2), along with a brief request repeating an earlier one to Timothy (3).

1) Ἄσπασαι Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν καὶ τὸν Ὀνησιφόρου οἶκον, *Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus*. What surfaces here is that Prisca<sup>931</sup> and Aquila are in Ephesus by the mid 60s of the first century. In the early 50s they were in Ephesus at the time of the writing of this letter (1 Cor. 16:19) from Ephesus. But by the time of the writing of Romans in the mid 50s they were back in Rome (Rom. 16:3). Paul first met them in Corinth (Acts 18). And now by the mid 60s they are in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19). One should remember that Πρίσκα (*Prisca*) is a shortened form of Πρίσκιλλα (*Priscilla*) with a Latin basis. Both forms are used in the NT in reference to this *one lady*.<sup>932</sup> *Πρίσκα (Prisca) is Paul's way of referring to her* (Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19), but Πρίσκιλλα Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 473.]

<sup>931</sup>**Prisca, Priscilla** (pris'kuh, pri-sil'uh), a prominent woman in the early Christian church, always mentioned in connection with Aquila, her husband. Paul calls her Prisca (a common Latin name), but Acts prefers Priscilla. Prisca's husband was a leatherworker and normally would not be expected to travel extensively with his wife and to purchase property, as is suggested in the NT references (Acts 18:2-28; cf. Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19). The fact that Prisca is mentioned before Aquila (unusual for the ancients) both by Paul and by the writer of Acts may indicate that Prisca had a higher social status (perhaps through inherited wealth) than her husband and that this was the source of their means. Driven from Rome by Claudius' edict (A.D. 49/50) that expelled Jews from that city, they moved to Corinth, where they came into contact with Paul; then, leaving Corinth with Paul, they settled in Ephesus. Paul greets them in Rom. 16:3 and 1 Cor. 16:19 (cf. also 2 Tim. 4:19). [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 823-824.]

<sup>932</sup>**Πρίσκα** (Πρῖσκα? s. B-D-F §41, 3; cp. Mlt-H. 155) and its dim. **Πρίσκιλλα**, ης, ἡ (Preisigke, Namenbuch. A priestess of Zeus named Πρίσκιλλα is mentioned in an honorary ins fr. the city of Olbasa: Ramsay, Phrygia I p. 309 no. 122) **Prisca, Priscilla**, tent-maker (s. *Ἀκύλας* and the lit. there), named before her husband in the majority of cases (Harnack [s.v. Ἀκ.] concludes fr. this that she was a more important pers. than her husband and that she may have played the major part in the writing of Hb: ZNW 1, 1900, 16ff.—In Ramsay, op. cit. p. 637 no. 530 [70-80 A.D.] Julia Severa is named before her husband Tyrionius Rapon, prob. because she was of higher rank) Ac 18:2, 18, 26. The forementioned passages have the name Πρίσκιλλα (likew. **Ro 16:3** v.l.; **1 Cor 16:19** v.l.), but Πρίσκα is the predominant form in the Pauline letters **Ro 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Ti 4:19**.—IReimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles* '95. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 863-864.]

(Priscilla) is Luke's way of referring to her (Acts 18:2, 18, 26). This husband wife team were Jewish Christians and had been expelled from Rome (Acts 18:2) in the middle to late 40s, and had resettled at Corinth. When Paul arrived in Corinth on the second missionary journey in the early 50s they took him into their home which also became one of the meeting places for Christians in the city. But when Paul left the city headed for Syria, the couple traveled with him as far as Ephesus where they stayed (Acts 18:18-19). A house church was established in their home and they served as major 'church planters' in the city until Paul returned to Ephesus a few years later on the third missionary journey. When Apollos arrived in Ephesus it was this couple who ἀκριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθεντο τὴν ὁδὸν [τοῦ θεοῦ], [took him aside and more accurately explained the way of God to him \(Acts 18:26\)](#). When Paul wrote First Corinthians from Ephesus in the mid 50s they were still in Ephesus serving Christ through a house church group (1 Cor. 16:19). Then in Romans 16:3, written from Corinth a couple of years after First Corinthians, this couple was back in Rome serving Christ there. And then about a decade later they are back in Ephesus serving Christ (2 Tim. 4:19). This mobility in moving around from Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus most likely had more to do with their vocation than anything else. It was common place in the first century Roman world for relatively successful businesses to be located in multiple cities. Since virtually all business operations in that world functioned out of one's home, they would have had multiple homes in at least these three cities. Traveling back and forth between them would have been normative. But in each location their home became a meeting place for Christians.

The frequent mentioning of Prisca's name before that of her husband Aquila (4 of the 6 references) is unusual for the ancient world. The one exception to this in the literature of that time is when the wife comes from a higher social order than does her husband. Then her name is mentioned first before her husband's. Many commentators draw this conclusion about Prisca due to the pattern of listing during that time. It is highly unlikely -- as a few commentators suggest -- that she was the talkative one of the two and thus was more prominent in her church service. The references in both Acts and Paul's letters clearly paint a picture of both of them being very active Christian leaders. Theirs was a partnership of joint service to Christ. Paul's expression τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, [fellow workers with me in Christ Jesus](#), in Rom. 16:3 makes this very clear. Additionally, Acts 18:2 indicates that Aquila was a native of the Roman province of Pontus. Whether Prisca came from there also or was a native of Rome is not clear, but the later is more likely.

Also for Timothy to greet in behalf of Paul was τὸν Ὀνησιφόρου οἶκον, [the household of Onesiphorus](#). In 1:16-18, Paul had mentioned the tireless service that Onesiphorus had done for him when he was in Rome helping Paul previous to the writing of this letter. Perhaps this greeting reference implies that he is now back home in Ephesus. But it could mean simply Paul's greetings to his household in Ephesus while Onesiphorus was still in Rome helping the apostle. Some speculation surfaces that Onesiphorus had died on his way home to Ephesus from Rome, but such is not implied by this greeting and should not be read into it.<sup>933</sup> The phrase τὸν Ὀνησιφόρου οἶκον naturally would imply both Onesiphorus and all the members of his family including any slaves as a part of the family.

2) Ἐραστός ἔμεινεν ἐν Κορίνθῳ, Τρόφιμον δὲ ἀπέλιπον ἐν Μιλήτῳ ἀσθενοῦντα, [Erastus remained in Corinth; Trophimus I left ill in Miletus](#). In this insertion into the letter greetings stands references to two of Paul's associates currently elsewhere than Rome at the writing of this letter. Erastus as a name shows up three times in the NT at Rom. 16:23 and at Acts 19:22 and 2 Tim. 4:20. The Erastus in Rom. 16:23 lived in Corinth during the 50s and was indicated by Paul as ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, [city treasurer](#).<sup>934</sup> What is very unclear is whether

<sup>933</sup>“If Onesiphorus had indeed died, then this prayer is the earliest one for the dead found in Christian literature. As such it has been cited as clear scriptural support (especially among Roman Catholics) for prayer for the dead. (Jewish precedent for such prayer is found in 2 Macc 12:43–45.) The prayer itself in 1:18 with its double use of ‘the Lord’ is problematic; it raises the question of whether the references are to Christ and/or God (Hanson Pastoral Epistles NCBC, 127).” [Florence Morgan Gillman, “Onesiphorus (Person),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 22.]

<sup>934</sup>Quite interesting is an archaeological discovery in 1929 of an inscription in Corinth that mentions an Erastus who occupied the Latin-name municipal office of [aedilis](#), which normally was translated over into Greek as ἀγοράνομος, with the general meaning of commissioner of public works.

In 1929 an inscription was uncovered in Corinth which mentions an Erastus who had the Latin-named municipal office of aedilis, a function usually translated into Greek as agoranomos. The inscription, dated to the mid-1st century C.E., is on a long paving block of Acrocorinthian limestone found near the theater where a street from the NE enters a square. The seemingly incomplete text refers to an Erastus who had had the street paved at his own expense in return for his aedileship. Should this aedilis be identified with the Erastus of Rom 16:23, i.e., was the Christian Erastus, the oikonomos/arcarius (?), the same man as Erastus the agoranomos (?)/aedilis? At issue is the question of identity between an oikonomos and an aedilis, and, most importantly, in the face of the probable non-equivalence of those offices, the question of whether the

this Erastus was the same man as in the other two references, and even more intriguing is whether he was the high city official found on the Corinthian inscription in 1929. In Acts 19:22 Erastus and Timothy are mentioned as having been sent by Paul into Macedonia while Paul remained a while longer in Ephesus. Here both of them are labeled *δύο τῶν διακονούντων αὐτῷ*, *two of his helpers*. That is, both are ministers of the Gospel along with Paul. Then in 2 Tim. 4:20, Erastus is mentioned as remaining at Corinth. His home is not Corinth but he for some unnamed reason chose to stay in Corinth in ministry at least for a time. This Erastus seems possible to identify with the one in Acts 19:22, but is unlikely to be identified as the Erastus of Rom. 16:23.

Paul's mentioning of Erastus in Second Timothy is perhaps prompted by his reference of Prisca and Aquila, who are in Ephesus. Erastus, another close friend of Timothy (cf. Acts 19:22) is in Corinth. Thus Paul is left only with Luke in Rome among this inner circle of longtime close associates of the apostle.

Additionally, Trophimus is a close friend of Timothy (cf. Acts 20:4). He was the Ephesian non Jew that Paul was accused in Jerusalem of having brought into the inner court of the temple (Acts 21:29). When Paul, after release from Roman imprisonment in 63 AD, began traveling in ministry, Trophimus was with him, but became ill and Paul left him behind at Miletus. At this point in time the city was quite wealthy and prosperous, and a Christian community was located there who would take care of Trophimus during his illness. This was not far from Ephesus, his home town where Timothy was presently located. Perhaps Timothy did not know of his illness. Thus Trophimus is also not able to be with Paul in Rome during this critical time.<sup>935</sup>



3) *Σπούδασον πρὸ χειμῶνος ἔλθειν*, *Endeavor to come before winter*. Thus quite logically this request follows the references to the names of these associates who were located elsewhere and not able to come to Rome. Given the difficulties of traveling in that region during the winter months, Paul is anxious for Timothy to leave Ephesus in late fall at the latest in order to be sure of arriving in Rome before these difficulties set in. See the above [discussion](#) on 4:9 for more details.

4) *Ἀσπάζεται σε Εὐβουλος καὶ Πούδης καὶ Λίνος καὶ Κλαυδία καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες*, *Eubulus sends greet-*

same person might have held both successively, the rank of aedilis being the higher.

For those who argue the improbability of the Erastus of Rom 16:23 and the Erastus of the pavement being the same person, e.g., Cadbury (1931: 58), the inscription of course adds nothing to our knowledge of the NT Erastus. But for some others who think it likely that the Christian oikonomos either (1) was at the time Paul mentioned him, or (2) later became an aedilis, the stone is illuminating. For example, Murphy-O'Connor, reflecting the first slant, has commented that since the responsibilities of an aedilis included the management of public markets, "it is not impossible that Paul first met Erastus in the latter's official capacity—that is when paying rent or taxes on his work space, which explains why he would call Erastus 'the treasurer of the city' " (1984: 155). Taking the second nuance is Theissen, who theorizes that Erastus could have been the oikonomos in the year when Romans was written and later have risen higher in his public career to the position of aedilis (1982: 83). This author points out that to be chosen aedilis one would have to have been a Roman citizen. Thus in his view Erastus was apparently a successful man who had risen into the ranks of local notables.

[Florence Morgan Gillman, "Erastus (Person)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 571.]

<sup>935c</sup> Although Erastus, Corinth, Trophimus, and Miletus are all mentioned in Acts, it is doubtful that the events in v 20 refer to the time period of Acts since too much time had passed. For example, if Trophimus became sick during the events in Acts 20, the last time Paul is reported to have visited Miletus, then Paul is telling Timothy about an event that occurred at least three years earlier. It also appears that Timothy did not know of Trophimus's illness, and yet Miletus was only thirty-five miles south of Ephesus. It requires little imagination to see historical scenarios that would account for Paul's travels (after Acts 28) in this area with his close friends. Ephesus (vv 12, 19), Miletus (v 20), and Troas (v 13) were close to each other and were on a main travel route on the western coast of Asia Minor. Timothy's ongoing work in Ephesus could have been the reason for Paul's desire to visit Ephesus again (cf. 1 Tim 3:14). Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21:29), and it would be natural for him to have been included in another visit to that location.

"Although the ordering of events is a mystery, it is conceivable that Paul was traveling to Ephesus and was arrested perhaps in Troas. Trophimus became ill before or after the arrest and stayed behind at Miletus, and Erastus accompanied the arrested Paul as far as Corinth. Most likely not much time had elapsed between Trophimus's illness and the writing of the Second Epistle to Timothy. Timothy and Trophimus were at least associates and perhaps friends, Timothy was in obvious need of support, Miletus was only thirty-five miles from Ephesus, and yet it appears from v 20 that Timothy did not know of Trophimus's illness. This suggests that the illness and Paul's arrest happened in close proximity; Paul was quickly taken to Rome (as would be expected of the leader of the Christian mission to the Gentiles) and given a preliminary hearing. Paul then wrote, asking Timothy to come quickly before winter and informing him of the whereabouts of these two friends."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 599–600.]



ings to you along with Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers. In the second part of the typical greetings section where individuals with the sender of the letter wish to send greetings to the recipient of the letter, Paul names four individuals with him at the time of the composing of the letter, along with an unnamed group of fellow believers, who asked to be included in greetings sent to Timothy. All four names are Latin rather than Greek names and the fourth one is of a lady. None of them are mentioned elsewhere in the NT. But several legends about most of them surface among the church fathers.<sup>936</sup> The Latin names suggest that they were members of the Roman church, rather a part of the inner circle of Paul's associates who did not stand with him at his hearing (v. 16).<sup>937</sup> They had a personal acquaintance with Timothy and wished to have their greetings passed on to him in Paul's letter.

As Paul sometimes does in the Greetings section of his letters, a group of individuals are named after the listing of individuals: 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Thess. 5:26; Titus 3:15. The expression καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες, and all the brothers, most likely references members of the Roman church with positive acquaintance with Timothy. Although Paul had felt terribly alone at times during this second imprisonment (v. 16), there were Christian friends around him and especially now at the writing of this letter to Timothy.

Hopefully from this survey of Second Timothy you have sensed the reflective tone of this final writing of the apostle prior to his death. Even a cursory reading of the letter communicates Paul preparing to die and cherishing the close friendships with numerous Christians over the years. And his relationship with Timothy was among the most cherished. Thus before dying Paul wanted to see him one more time, and thus the request for Timothy to leave Ephesus and make his way to Rome as quickly as he could. But this would not leave the Christian community at Ephesus without a Pauline associate to help them solve their problems. Tychicus was bringing this letter and would take Timothy's place at Ephesus (cf. 4:12). His home was the Lycus Valley east of Ephesus (Col. 4:9) and he was a seasoned veteran in helping churches solve their problems. He was already well known and respected by the Ephesian church (Eph. 6:21) and could help them greatly.

### Subsequent accounts from second century onward:

Sorting out the details of Paul's death is rather challenging.<sup>938</sup> The church fathers in general merely assert

---

<sup>936</sup>Tradition says that Linus became the first bishop of Rome (Irenaeus Adv. Haer. 3.3.3; cf. Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.2 [3.4.9]) and served for twelve years (Bernard, 151). A later tradition says that he was the son of Pudens and Claudia (Apost. Const. 7.46), and further 'ingenuity' (Bernard, 151) traces them to the beginning of British Christianity. Paul concludes by sending greetings from all the Roman Christians (ἀδελφοί, 'brethren,' here refers to men and women; cf. 1 Tim 4:6; 1 Cor 16:20; 1 Thess 5:26, 27)." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 601.]

<sup>937</sup>These are members of the Roman Church, not companions of St. Paul, cf. 10, 11, and probably not of sufficient standing in the city to have appeared in court in support of him (cf. 16)." [Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (I & II Timothy and Titus), International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 120.]

<sup>938</sup>The preceding picture of the historical setting for Paul's relationship with Timothy and Titus has been derived from Acts and the PE. While every element is not provable, the question being asked is whether it is consistent and plausible. Part of this picture is also corroborated by the writings of the early church. While there are inherent problems with the reliability of early traditions, their agreement (or disagreement) with the self-witness of Acts and the PE is significant. Many of the following citations and more are laid out by James, Genuineness, 5–19.

"(1) By the end of the second century the PE were widely accepted as authoritative and Pauline (Kümmel, Introduction, 370; Koester, Introduction 2:298). (Wall's assertion that there is no "clear textual witness to them [i.e., the PE] prior to the third century" [BBR 5 ([1995] 125) places him in the minority among critical scholars.) Clement of Alexandria constantly connects his citations from the PE to Paul (references in Spicq, 1:167–68). He cites 1 Tim 6:20 in his discussion of the Gnostic heretics' rejection of the letters to Timothy. Spicq argues that this is significant, for it shows that the letters were known and had been accepted into the canon by the time of Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion (1:168). Quinn (3) notes the approximately 450 references to the PE from second-century writings listed in *Biblia Patristica* (1:507–18), which is evidence that the PE could not have been recent creations. By the second century the PE had been translated into Latin and Syriac, and included Paul's name (Lock, xxv). There are no divergent traditions and no other names suggested for authorship. This absence of alternatives argues against any view that sees the PE written to combat Gnosticism and Marcion. Bernard gives a full list of the proposed citations from and allusions to the PE in the early Fathers.

"(2) The PE have not survived in the Chester Beatty Papyri, a collection of papyri that includes a codex of Paul's writings (P<sup>46</sup>) dating from the beginning to the mid-third century. These papyri also do not include Philemon, but do include Hebrews. The last seven leaves of the codex have been lost. Thus, conclusions regarding the absence of the PE are based on assumptions concerning how many leaves the codex should have had, that the scribe could not have added extra pages, and the size of the writing on the leaves. Jeremias (4) argues that a comparison of the first and last pages reveals that the scribe's writing grew smaller toward the end of the codex, presumably because he was running out of room (cf. Finegan, HTR [1956] 93). Against those who question the authenticity of the PE because of their absence in the papyri, Guthrie argues, 'The very fact that all that remains comprises some fragments of a codex containing the gospels and Acts, most of one containing Paul's epistles and parts of one containing Revelation, is a sufficient indication of the precariousness

of this method of argument. It is not the pastorals alone that would be suspect but all the other books of the New Testament which are not represented in the papyri' (*Introduction*, 611). The absence of Philemon may suggest that the codex included only Paul's public letters, omitting letters to individuals such as Timothy, Titus, and Philemon (so Quinn, CBQ 36 [1974] 379–85; L. T. Johnson, 3). Thus, the omission of the PE and Philemon from P<sup>46</sup> may have no significance in terms of the authenticity of the PE. Kelly (4) also points out that Clement of Alexandria's familiarity with the PE is evidence that the later third-century Egyptian church knew of the PE, in spite of their absence in P<sup>46</sup>.

"(3) Bernard (xvi–xvii) cites three passages from the 'Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to Their Brethren in Asia' (in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 5.1) concerning the martyrdom of their bishop, Pothinus, in A.D. 177 that show a similarity of wording with 1 Timothy. Bernard notes J. A. Robinson's argument that the text of this letter 'betrays a familiarity with the Latin version of the N.T., rather than the Greek original. If this could be regarded as established (and his arguments seem to me to be well founded), it would prove that by the year 180 the Pastoral Letters were so firmly received as canonical that a Latin version of them had been made and was current in Gaul' (xvii).

"(4) Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons and a disciple of Polycarp (who was a disciple of the apostle John), in his *Adversus Haereses* (c. 180) cites the PE frequently and is the earliest to cite them using Paul's name (cf. Spicq, 1:167–68). Bernard lists the following citations: Pref. (1 Tim 1:4); 4.16.3 (1 Tim 1:9); 2.14.7 (1 Tim 6:20); 3.14.1 (2 Tim 4:9–11); 3.2.3 (2 Tim 4:21); and 1.16.3 (Titus 3:10). Concerning 1.16.3 Bernard states, 'It is noteworthy that Irenaeus is appealing to the Epistle to Titus as written by St Paul, against heretics, who would certainly have denied the authority of the words quoted if they could have produced reasons for doing so' (xvi).

"(5) The Muratorian Canon lists the PE as canonical (c. A.D. 180): *Ad Titum una et ad Timotheum duae pro affectu et dilectione, in honorem tamen ecclesiae catholicae, in ordinationem ecclesiasticae disciplinae sanctificatae sunt*, to Titus one, and to Timothy two, (written) out of goodwill and love, are yet held sacred to the glory of the catholic Church for the ordering of ecclesiastical discipline; (in Spicq, 1:167; ET in Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* 1:44).

"(6) Bernard (xiii–xviii) cites quotations and allusions in (a) Theophilus, bishop of Antioch (c. A.D. 181, who cites the PE as "proceeding from 'the Divine Word'" (Ad Autolyicum 3.14; cf. Spicq, 1:165); (b) the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla, which attests to the existence of the PE by c. A.D. 170 through its use of names occurring in the NT only in the PE (cf. Spicq, 1:166); (c) Hegesippus (c. A.D. 170); (d) Athenagoras (c. A.D. 176; cf. Hanson, [1983] 11–12; Spicq says the similarity may be due to chance, 1:165); and (e) Heracleon (c. A.D. 165). Spicq adds the Letter to Diognetus (1:165).

"(7) Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 155) is aware of the letters. Bernard (xiv) lists 1 Tim 4:1 and Titus 3:4 as reflected in Dial. 7.7; 35.3; 47.15.

"(8) Marcion was a heretic from the mid-second century who was excommunicated in A.D. 144 and set up a rival church. In propounding a doctrine of love to the exclusion of the law, he rejected everything that was remotely Jewish in the NT, such as Matthew, Mark, John, and parts of Luke. His 'canon' omitted the PE as well. Tertullian states:

To this epistle alone [Philemon] did its brevity avail to protect it against the falsifying hands of Marcion. I wonder, however, when he received [into his Apostolicon] this letter which was written but to one man, that he rejected [recusaverit] the two epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus, which all treat of ecclesiastical discipline. His aim, was, I suppose, to carry out his interpolating process even to the number of [St. Paul's] epistles. (Adv. Marc. 5.21; ANF 3:473–74; full Latin text is in Bernard, xviii; cf. Spicq, 1:168–69)

"Concerning the significance of Marcion's witness, Scott concludes, "But the fact that they were excluded, at so early a date, from the body of Paul's letters, affords grounds for suspicion. Could Marcion have passed over them if they were already accepted by the whole church as the undoubted work of Paul?" (xvi). In my opinion, if Marcion felt no compunction in dismissing Matthew, Mark, and John, why would he have felt any less restricted in ignoring the thirteen chapters of the PE?

"Marcion's witness may be judged of little or no value. (a) Marcion's decisions regarding those books that should be accepted into the canon were guided by a theological position that the orthodox church ultimately rejected. (b) There are statements in the PE that Marcion would have found objectionable: 'he law is good' (1 Tim 1:8); a denial of the value of asceticism (1 Tim 4:3); the high value placed on the OT (2 Tim 3:16); and the assertion that God desires to save all (1 Tim 2:4). Coincidentally, when Paul tells Timothy to avoid 'the unholy chatter and contradictions [ἀντιθέσεις] of what is falsely named 'knowledge' [τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως]' (1 Tim 6:20), he uses the term ἀντιθέσεις, which is the same word Marcion used for the title of his writings on the conflict between the gospel and the law (Tertullian Adv. Marc. 1.19.4–5). Clement of Alexandria says that some gnostics rejected the PE because of the final phrase τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως, 'what is falsely claimed knowledge' (Strom. 4.9). Kelly argues that Marcion's 'mutilated New Testament canon' rejected the PE because of a 'dislike of their anti-heretical tone.' Dibelius-Conzelmann (2) note that none of Marcion's specific teachings are reflected in the Ephesian heresy that can be reconstructed from the PE. (c) While it is true that Marcion could have stripped the PE of any hint of Jewishness, as he did to other books, there is nothing in the PE that would have helped him positively in his cause. Several other Gnostics also rejected the PE. Kelly (4) notes that the Gospel of Truth, ascribed to Valentinus (A.D. 150), quotes from all the NT except the PE. Guthrie (*Introduction*, 610 n. 2) points out that Jerome records, in his preface to Titus, Basilides' rejection of all three of the PE (cited by James, *Genuineness*, 21) and Tatian's (died A.D. 170) rejection of 1 and 2 Timothy because of the letters' view on asceticism. Jerome comments that "these adverse judgments were not critical in any true sense, but merely arbitrary" (in White, "Pastoral Epistles," 76).

"(9) In discussing Marcion's rejection of the PE, Lock points out that at this same time the PE were included in the Syriac and Latin versions, thus attesting to their canonical acceptance (xxii, xxv).

"(10) The homily known as 2 Clement was written by A.D. 140. Bernard (xviii–xix) lists three specific allusions to the PE (1 Tim 1:17 [2 Clem. 20]; 4:10 [2 Clem. 7]; 6:14, 19 [2 Clem. 8]) and several other passages recalling their language (cf. Spicq, 1:163).

"(11) Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna and disciple of John (c. A.D. 117), cites 1 Tim 6:10 and 6:7 as authoritative without identi-

that he died during Nero's reign but provide very few details. History and legend often are merged together in any depiction that is given. The universal emphasis is upon the heroic manner of his death. One must remember that these references are coming at least a century after Paul died, and the shaping of such accounts is made

---

fying their source (Phil. 4.1). Bernard identifies six other passages in the PE that Polycarp may cite (xiv–xv; cf. Jeremias, 4; Metzger, Canon, 61; Spicq finds approximately twenty, 1:163–64). However, some question the validity of seeing the PE as a source for Polycarp, arguing that the author of the PE used Polycarp (Harrison, Polycarp's Two Epistles; Goodspeed, Introduction, 344; Barnett, Literary Influence, 182–84) or that they both came out of the same environment (Dibelius-Conzelmann, 2). However, Guthrie argues, "There is nothing in the manner of Polycarp's citations from the Pastoral Epistles to suggest recently published works. Indeed, it is most difficult to conceive of a disciple of the apostle John (cf. Tertullian De praescr. 32 and Jerome Catal. sacr. eccl. 17) readily accepting and using Pauline epistles which were not authentic and which were not introduced until the rise of Marcionism (c. AD 140)" (Introduction, 610). He adds that there is no "intelligible reason why an imitator of Paul would have echoed the language of Ignatius or Polycarp" (Introduction, 611 n. 4). On the issue of Polycarp as a whole, see Harrison, Problem, 177–78; id., Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians; Harnack, Briefsammlung, 72; Spicq, 1:162–63; Jeremias, 4; Dibelius-Conzelmann, 2; von Campenhausen, "Polykarp," 28–29; Brox, 26–28; Kümmel, Introduction, 370.

"(12) Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (c. A.D. 116), has no quotations from the PE, but there are 'coincidences in phraseology [that] can hardly be accidental' (so Bernard, xv, citing seven passages and also several 'peculiar' words that occur in Ignatius and elsewhere only in the PE; also Kelly, 3; cf. Spicq, 1:163). Hanson ([1983] 12–13) rightly points out that the Roman persecution reflected in Ignatius' writings does not correspond to the background of the PE.

"(13) Spicq (1:164–65) proposes several parallels to the Epistle of Barnabas, which he dates at the same time as Ignatius (Barn. 5:6 par. 2 Tim 1:10; 3:16; Barn. 1:4, 6 par. Titus 1:2; 3:7; Barn. 7:2 par. 2 Tim 4:1; Barn. 1:3 par. Titus 3:6).

"(14) Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) may show an awareness of the PE (references in Bernard, xix; Spicq, 1:162–63; cf. Kelly, 10). Holtzmann thinks Clement and the PE both reflect the same 'atmosphere,' but Streeter (Primitive Church, 153) and Harrison (Problem, 177–78) argue that the author of the PE cites 1 Clement, which at least shows how similar the passages in question are. The Oxford Society of Historical Theology report denies any overlap (*The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1905] 37ff.).

"(15) The persecution of Domitian (A.D. 96) is not the type of suffering to which Paul is calling Timothy in the second epistle. Paul is warning Timothy that all Christians will be persecuted as they live out their commitment to Christ (especially in 2 Tim 3:12). This is decidedly different from what we would expect to be written if the government were conducting an official persecution of the church. Also, Rev 2:1–7, addressed to the Ephesian church, and Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians (c. A.D. 110; e.g., Eph. 9.1) show no indication of the types of problems addressed in the PE.

"(16) Spicq connects the comments in 2 Pet 3:15–16 directly to 1 Tim 1:12–16, citing both verbal (ἠγγεῖσθαι, "to consider," μακροθυμία, "patience") and conceptual connections (e.g., the long suffering of Christ relative to Paul; Spicq, 1:160–62). He also compares Titus 2:13 with 2 Pet 3:15, 18 because in each the author discusses mercy and salvation in the context of a believer's peace and confidence. If this connection is valid, and depending on one's dating of 2 Peter, it will have implications for the dating of the PE.

Conclusion. Kümmel is less impressed with the external attestation to the PE than I am, and yet he does admit that "from the end of the second century on . . . the Pastorals are considered without question to be letters of Paul" (Introduction, 370). It seems unlikely to me that writings accepted "without question" by the end of the second century would be recent creations. Bernard concludes:

We find traces of the Pastoral Epistles in Gaul and Greece in 177, in Rome in 140 (certainly)—as far back as 95, if we accept Clement's testimony—and in Asia as early as 116.... And this attestation appears the more remarkable, both as to its range and its precision, if we consider the character of the letters under examination. They are not formal treatises addressed to Churches, like the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, but semi-private letters to individuals, providing counsel and guidance which to some extent would only be applicable in special circumstances. (xx)

"Bernard continues by emphasizing that these individual writers reflect not just their own 'single authority' but

the continuous tradition of their respective sees.... It bears witness to the belief of the primitive Christian communities at Rome, at Smyrna, at Antioch, that the Pastoral letters were, at the least, documents "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." ... We are forced to conclude, that, if not genuine relics of the Apostolic age, they must have been forged in St Paul's name and accepted on St Paul's authority all over the Christian world, within fifty years of St Paul's death—within thirty years if we accept the testimony of Clement of Rome. (xx, xxi)

"Spicq adds, 'The bishops of Rome, Antioch, Smyrna, who use the [traditions] ad verbum, are not private naive persons editing a pious literature, but Pastors, trustees of the official doctrine and of the treasure of the Scriptures.... How would these eminent witnesses of orthodoxy have been able to give credence to an error when the Pauline corpus was without doubt already accepted?' (Spicq, 1:166, appealing to 2 Pet 3:16).

"While some argue that the early church was not critical in its acceptance of texts into its canon, the problems of accepting John, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and 2 Peter suggest that the early church was acutely concerned about the texts they accepted. The authenticity of the PE was not questioned until the nineteenth century. This does not make the raising of this question wrong; but it must be admitted that it is a modern concern. The external evidence for the authenticity of the PE is strong and consistent with the self-witness of the PE. This places the burden of proof on those denying authenticity. For further analysis of the external evidence for the PE, see Bernard, xi–xxi; James, Genuineness, 5–24; Spicq, 1:160–70; and Guthrie, Introduction, 608–12."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lxiv–lxix.]



according to the cultural standards of Greco-Roman heroic deaths,<sup>939</sup> not from a pure historical inquiry.<sup>940</sup> Thus the mixing of history and legend is normative and expected by the contemporary readers of the fathers.<sup>941</sup> But in modern biographical concerns these two streams of source material must be sorted out into distinctly different categories, since the historical concern is primary.<sup>942</sup>

Interestingly, and unfortunately, the most detailed accounting of Paul's death comes out of the apocryphal sources and is virtually pure legend. Thus it provides almost no historical information about Paul's death itself. Yet, it does reveal how some Christian groups later on viewed Paul's death, and the legendary account framed within the literary genre of the heroic death of a major figure of history inside Greco-Roman culture gives us insights into the functioning of Christianity later on. In later Christianity especially the Greco-Roman idea of what constitutes a heroic death becomes the framing foundation for the developing genre of Christian martyrdom. With emerging principles of religious doctrine attached to this core framework, the hero of subsequent Christianity became the Christian martyr.<sup>943</sup> Thus the genre gradually emerges into a very distinct literary form, and always includes the legendary materials in order to dramatize the death of the Christian hero more. And generally the

<sup>939</sup>In order to understand how the heroic death literary genre worked for prominent individuals in the Greco-Roman world, one must begin with the accounts of the myths of the Greek and Romans gods and goddesses who often died and then came back to life in the annual fertility rituals of ancient religions. .

<sup>940</sup>“A hero or heroine cannot simply be equated with the protagonist of a story; he or she might be a secondary character rather than the leading character. Furthermore, not all protagonists are heroic. Heroes and heroines possess at least five traits: (1) they are representative figures for the culture producing them; (2) their experiences and struggles are ones with which a culture identifies and therefore experiences as something shared; (3) they embody values or virtues that a culture wishes to affirm; (4) although they need not be wholly idealized, they are mainly exemplary figures to whom a culture looks up as being worthy of emulation; (5) they capture the popular imagination. The corresponding functions that heroes perform in a culture are primarily two—they function as an inspiration and they codify a culture's values and beliefs.

“A hero or heroine is a construct created by the imagination from real-life materials. Life itself furnishes the data from which the human race creates its heroes, but a hero never exists in its pure form in real life. A literary hero is a distillation from available material, and the process of distillation involves selectivity and highlighting. Creating heroes and heroines is one of the most important things a society does, partly because it is a chief means by which a society transmits its values and its moral identity.”

[Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 378.]

<sup>941</sup>To be sure an emerging sense of the heroic existed in Jewish writings of the intertestament era onward. The notion and often the depiction of the Jewish hero was heavily influenced by Greek thinking and literary conventions. But this literary tradition functioned in the post apostolic Christian era independently of Christian writers. The church fathers, and clearly the apocryphal writers, demonstrate no influence from nor appreciation of the Jewish tradition. Anti-Semitism inside Christianity raged as fiercely as it did in the surrounding Greco-Roman culture. Therefore within the scope of our concern to trace Christian martyrdom after the apostolic era, the Jewish traditions will not be treated.

For a somewhat helpful listing of Christian martyrs see “List of Christian martyrs,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org).

<sup>942</sup>The easier methodology without overly technical literary critical procedures is first to find the legendary aspects embedded in the texts. Two primary things to look for in identifying legendary materials: (1) The hero / martyr is always portrayed as being smarter than his opponent. Typically ‘smarter’ means more clever and the ability to outwit his executioner. But this smarter based action is not to avoid being executed. The objective of the hero is to die, and this can be due to a wide range of motivations both religious and cultural. But for the Roman hero to die a hero's death he must show that he is in control of his death rather than his executioner. (2) And second look for depictions of sensational supernatural events taking place in connection to the hero's death. This is the sure sign that the hero / martyr was indeed an extraordinary person rather than just a regular human being. The Greco-Roman world did not seek unusual events as pointing to the presence of God's power in the life of the individual, as one would find in the Bible. Instead, the supernatural phenomena point to the superior power of the hero as a divine person himself / herself.

These two elements are basic to ancient legendary material, and are not too difficult to detect in analyzing one of these texts. Once these aspects in a text are identified and sorted out of the narrative, what remains will point in the direction of real history. Before the remaining aspects are accepted as actual history, however, they need to correspond in general at least to other known historical aspects related to the event depicted in the text. And always a note of caution should guide the reaching of conclusions.

<sup>943</sup>A. J. Wallace and R. D. Rusk, in *Moral Transformation: The Original Christian Paradigm of Salvation* (New Zealand: Bridgehead, 2011), pp. 218, provide a helpful charting out of the emerging profile of a Christian martyr in post apostolic Christianity. One should note, however, that this profile is intentionally broad and inclusive sociologically, rather than limited to early post apostolic Christianity. This is quoted in “Martyr,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org).

#### Common features of stereotypical martyrdoms

1.	A hero	A person of some renown who is devoted to a cause believed to be admirable
2.	Opposition	People who oppose that cause.
3.	Foreseeable risk	The hero foresees action by opponents to harm him or her, because of his or her commitment to the cause.

pattern prevails that the more important the Christian person the more dramatic his or her death was -- at least in the depiction of it. And thus comes the greater tendency to resort to using legendary material in the depiction.

In the emerging tradition of Christian [martyrology](#)<sup>944</sup> in the post apostolic era, Christ became a central figure but, due to Christ's death going far beyond a pure heroic death that set an inspiring example, the focus shifts to mainly the two leaders individuals of apostolic Christianity, Paul and Peter. Other NT leaders are treated but not with the intensity of these two leaders. In the fully developed martyrology by the fourth century AD the focus goes beyond the leaders of apostolic Christianity and includes listings of the saints and other martyrs whose significance merits a special celebration during the annual religious calendar. Over time this structure expands and becomes localized as well as inclusive for all of Roman Catholicism.

### Church Fathers as sources:

A scanning of the church fathers does not uncover much about the death of Paul beyond it happening in a Greco-Roman heroic fashion. Early allusions to the death of Peter and Paul typically come in connection to the discussions of death by some early Christian leaders. Ignatius of Antioch represents the earliest of such discussions by second century Christian leaders. The other approach is to focus on the exemplary life of Paul and Peter and mention their death, not in the theological terms of martyrdom, but as expressions of the ultimate witness to Christ in refusal to compromise their faith. Clement of Rome around 96 AD would stand as the earliest expression of this approach.

#### Clement of Rome, First Corinthians 5:1-7.

**5:1-7.**<sup>945</sup> 1 Ἀλλ' ἵνα τῶν ἀρχαίων ὑποδειγμάτων παυσώμεθα, ἔλθωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα γενομένους ἀθλητὰς· λάβωμεν τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν τὰ γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα. 2 διὰ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον οἱ μέγιστοι καὶ δικαιοτάτοι στυλοὶ ἐδιώχθησαν καὶ ἕως θανάτου ἠθλησαν. 3 λάβωμεν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀποστόλους· 4 Πέτρον, ὃς διὰ ζῆλον ἄδικον οὐχ ἓνα οὐδὲ δύο, ἀλλὰ πλείονας ὑπήνεγκεν πόνους καὶ οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη· εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης. 5 διὰ ζῆλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, 6 ἑπτὰκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, φυγαδευθεὶς, λιθασθεὶς, κήρυξ γενόμενος ἔν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν, 7 δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη· τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἀνελήμφθη,<sup>1</sup> ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός.

**5:1-7.**<sup>946</sup> 1 BUT, to cease from the examples of old time, let us come to those who contended in the days nearest to us; let us take the noble examples of our own generation. 2 Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted and contended unto death. 3 Let us set before our eyes the good apostles: 4 Peter, who because of unrighteous jealousy suffered not one or two but many trials, and having thus given his testimony went to the glorious place which was his due. 5 Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance; 6 seven times he was in bonds, he was exiled, he was stoned, he was a herald both in the East and in the West, he gained the noble fame of his faith, 7 he taught righteousness to all the world, and when he had reached the limits of the West he gave his testimony before the rulers, **and thus passed from the world and was taken up into the Holy Place,—the greatest example of endurance.**

What Clement reflects is more the exemplary nature of Paul's life. His death is only mentioned in passing

4.	Courage and Commitment	The hero continues, despite knowing the risk, out of commitment to the cause.
5.	Death	The opponents kill the hero because of his or her commitment to the cause.
6.	Audience response	The hero's death is commemorated. People may label the hero explicitly as a martyr. Other people may in turn be inspired to pursue the same cause.

<sup>944</sup>One preliminary starting point is to clearly distinguish between the NT use of the Greek word μάρτυς for witness, and the later post apostolic use of it for martyr. About the only legitimate connection between these two uses is the core idea of witness. The later use

The biblical materials make use of a broad word group of related words built around the idea of witness: μάρτυς, μαρτυρέω, μαρτυρία, μαρτύριον, ἐπιμαρτυρέω, συμμαρτυρέω, συνεπιμαρτυρέω, καταμαρτυρέω, μαρτύρομαι, διαμαρτύρομαι, προμαρτύρομαι, ψευδόμαρτυς, ψευδομαρτυρέω, ψευδομαρτυρία [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964—), 4:474.]

<sup>945</sup>Pope Clement I et al., "The Apostolic Fathers," ed. *Pope Clement I et al., The Loeb Classical Library* (London; New York: Heinemann; Macmillan, 1912–1913), 1:16.

<sup>946</sup>Pope Clement I et al., *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. *Pope Clement I et al., vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library* (London; New York: Heinemann; Macmillan, 1912–1913), 1:17.

and without the baggage of developing martyrology that Ignatius will express. Even though the apostle was executed in Rome where Clement lived he does not reflect the later veneration of the church at Rome. Neither does he bother to mention that Paul was executed in his home town. Instead, what was important was the endurance of persecution by Paul over a life time of ministry. This reflects an attitude closer to what is found inside the NT itself.

### Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*<sup>947</sup>

4.1.<sup>948</sup> Ἐγὼ γράφω πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, καὶ ἐντέλλομαι πᾶσιν, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐκὼν ὑπὲρ θεοῦ ἀποθνήσκω, ἕάνπερ ὑμεῖς μὴ κωλύσητε. παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μὴ εὖνοια ἄκαιρος γένησθέ μοι. ἄφετέ με θηρίων εἶναι βορᾶν, δι' ὧν ἔνεστιν θεοῦ ἐπιτυχεῖν. σῖτός εἰμι θεοῦ καὶ δι' ὀδόντων θηρίων ἀλήθομαι, ἵνα καθαρὸς ἄρτος εὑρεθῶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>1</sup> 2 μᾶλλον κολακεύσατε τὰ θηρία, ἵνα μοι τάφος γένωνται καὶ μηθὲν καταλίπωσι τῶν τοῦ σώματός μου, ἵνα μὴ κοιμηθῆις βαρὺς τινι γένωμαι. τότε ἔσομαι μαθητὴς ἀληθῶς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτε οὐδὲ τὸ σῶμά μου ὁ κόσμος ὄψεται. λιτανεύσατε τὸν Χριστὸν<sup>2</sup> ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, ἵνα διὰ τῶν ὀργάνων τούτων θυσία<sup>3</sup> εὑρεθῶ. 3 *οὐχ ὡς Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος διατάσσομαι ὑμῖν. ἐκεῖνοι ἀπόστολοι, ἐγὼ κατάκριτος· ἐκεῖνοι ἐλεύθεροι, ἐγὼ δὲ μέχρι νῦν δοῦλος. ἀλλ' ἐὰν πάθω, ἀπελεύθερος γενήσομαι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀναστήσομαι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐλεύθερος. νῦν μανθάνω δεδεμένος μηδὲν ἐπιθυμεῖν.*

4.1-3.<sup>949</sup> I write to all the churches and certify to all that I die willingly for God provided you do not hinder me. I exhort you: do not become an inopportune kindness for me; let me be the food of wild beasts through whom it is possible to attain God; I am the wheat of God, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread; 2/ instead, entice the wild beasts that they may become my tomb and leave behind no part of my body that when I fall asleep, I may burden no one. Then I shall truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ when the world will not even see my body. Pray Christ for me that by these means I may be found a sacrifice of God. 3/*I do not command you as Peter and Paul: they (were) apostles, I (am) a condemned man; they (were) free, I (am) still a slave; but if I suffer, I shall become a freedman of Jesus Christ, and I shall arise free in him; and now I am learning, as one bound, to desire nothing.*<sup>950</sup>

<sup>947</sup>Three recensions of Ignatius' letters are traditionally listed: (a) short, (b) middle, (c) long. The short recension, preserved only in Syriac,<sup>15</sup> is nothing more than an abridgement of the letters to Polycarp, Ephesians, and Romans (with a paragraph from Tralians) constructed from the middle recension for monastic purposes.<sup>16</sup> The middle recension (the text brought to light by Ussher) is represented in Greek by only one manuscript of the eleventh century (Cod. Mediceo-Laurentianus 57, 7) or copies of it.<sup>17</sup> It lacks the letter to the Romans which had at some point been detached and incorporated into an account of the saint's martyrdom (for which the Greek text is preserved in Cod. Parisiensis-Colbertinus 1451).<sup>18</sup> There is also a papyrus for the Greek of (roughly) Sm. 3.1–12.1.<sup>19</sup> Several important versions of the middle recension are found: Latin,<sup>20</sup> Syriac (three sets of fragments are known),<sup>21</sup> Armenian (close to the Syriac),<sup>22</sup> Arabic (also close to the Syriac),<sup>23</sup> and Coptic (two manuscripts in fragmentary form).<sup>24</sup>

“There are several Greek manuscripts of the long recension and several of the corresponding Latin version.<sup>25</sup> The long recension contains an expanded version of the seven letters of the middle recension and six additional letters (one to Ignatius from a certain Mary of Cassobola, the others from Ignatius to the same Mary, to the Tarsians, to the Antiochenes, to Hero, and to the Philippians). All or most of these additional letters also came to be associated with the letters of the middle recension as preserved in Greek, Latin,<sup>26</sup> and Armenian. At least one or two of them were included in the Syriac and Coptic materials. But the Arabic does not have them.

“The order of the letters varies widely in all these sources. Modern editions of the middle recension of the letters follow the order suggested by Eusebius (Hist. eccl. 3.36), though there is reason to believe that he was wrong about the first three of them (see on Mag. 15).”

[William R. Schoedel, Saint Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, and Helmut Koester, *Ignatius of Antioch: a Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 3–4.]

<sup>948</sup>Pope Clement I et al., “The Apostolic Fathers,” ed. Pope Clement I et al., *The Loeb Classical Library* (London; New York: Heinemann; Macmillan, 1912–1913), 230.

<sup>949</sup>William R. Schoedel, Saint Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, and Helmut Koester, *Ignatius of Antioch: a Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 175.

<sup>950</sup>4.3 Finally, we may assume that Ignatius' interpretation of his death as ‘sacrifice’ (4.2) is as metaphorical here as it is in Rom. 2.2 (cf. Mart. Pol. 14.1; Eusebius Hist. eccl. 5.1.51).<sup>9</sup> Indeed, it is probably the mention of sacrifice that leads over in the bishop's mind to reflection on his status as a condemned man (4.3). For both themes, as we have seen, express his sense of inferiority to the apostles and those in harmony with them (see on Eph. 8.1; 12.1). Some have sensed a somewhat different emphasis in this passage especially in Ignatius' use of the term ‘slave.’<sup>10</sup> But our comments on Mag. 12 (and the comparison with Epictetus Gnom. 32 noted there) confirm the initial impression that ‘slave’ is simply a variant for the terms ‘condemned’ and ‘bound.’ It is also too literal a reading of our text, then, to conclude that it was martyrdom that made the apostles free. Martyrdom frees Ignatius because only so can he be a true disciple. But he evidently thinks of the apostles as having been on a different footing from the beginning (see on Mag. 6.1). They are not looked on as exercising authority from on high after their martyrdom but as having stamped their character on the churches in which they worked (cf. Eph. 11.2–12.2). *Thus the selection here of Peter and Paul no doubt reflects Ignatius' awareness of a tradition about their*



The seven letters of Ignatius of Antioch were most likely written around 107 AD as this spiritual leader in Antioch of Syria was being taken to Rome for execution by the government authorities.<sup>951</sup> For him the martyrdom of Peter and Paul is beginning to take on special meaning of a heroic death in the Greco-Roman style of dying. The religious aspect is beyond death becoming the gateway to heaven for believers. Rather it elevated these to a higher status in heaven with special privileges. His sense of unworthiness in comparison to them reflects a developing hero worship characteristic of the surrounding culture of that day. Thus the move away from the NT understanding of worthy example and the meaning of Christian death is underway. It is in large part driven by Ignatius' personal circumstance of facing execution once he arrived in Rome, and may well include other factors also.<sup>952</sup>

---

*joint presence and their martyrdom in Rome which significantly bolstered the prestige of that city's Christian community.*<sup>11</sup> Surely Peter and Paul were thought of by Ignatius as 'free' and capable of commanding obedience even apart from their martyrdom, and surely that is why the bishop recognizes his inability to speak to the Romans with the same authority as they (cf. Eph. 3.1; Tr. 3.3). Ignatius differs from the apostles in that only through martyrdom can he become as they were. He is learning, then, to 'desire nothing,' that is, to give up his attachment to this world (cf. Rom. 7.1)." [William R. Schoedel, Saint Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, and Helmut Koester, *Ignatius of Antioch: a Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 176–177.]

<sup>951</sup>“Bishop of Antioch in Syria in the late first century, whose writings were very close to the thought of the NT writers. He wrote seven letters while en route under armed guard to Rome to suffer martyrdom (probably AD 107). The letters were to churches in cities through which he passed, Philadelphia and Smyrna, and to churches that sent delegations to visit him during this final journey—namely, Ephesus, Tralles, and Magnesia. He sent a letter ahead to the church in Rome to prevent their intervention with the Roman authorities in delivering him into martyrdom. He also wrote a letter to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. Similar to the NT epistles, these writings reveal a strong commitment to Christ and to the physical facts of his birth, death, and resurrection. The Epistles of Ignatius parallel the Gospels in several places and appropriate language from a number of the Pauline letters.

“The letters of Ignatius are evidence for the rapid development of the episcopal structure in the early church of Asia Minor and Syria. In the NT, the local church was governed by a body of equal officers called elders or bishops, but in these letters there is reference to a single ruling bishop in each city except Rome. Ignatius is the first writer to use the term “catholic” (universal) to describe the church. His use of the term implied a connectional church with a unity in faith toward Christ and with delegations to express concerns between the churches.

“He opposed the Ebionite heresy, which demanded the keeping of the Jewish regulations as the way of salvation. According to Ignatius, in order to affirm Christ the believer must reject Jewish practices. The Christian must worship on the Lord's Day, the day of his resurrection, rather than observe the Jewish sabbaths. Yet he did view the church as the continuation of the OT people of God and the prophets as disciples who looked forward to Christ.

“Ignatius also attacked Docetism, which held that Christ only appeared to have real birth, death, and resurrection. In reciting the facts of Christ's life, Ignatius was the first one outside the NT writers to speak of the virgin birth of Jesus. Ignatius also emphasized the fact that the apostles touched the body of their risen Lord. Ignatius said it was the real suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross and his physical resurrection that made it possible for him to face martyrdom.

[Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 626.]

<sup>952</sup>“Peremptory as Ignatius sometimes is, he nevertheless frequently effaces himself before the churches. Especially relevant here is a cluster of ideas that revolves around the bishop's references to himself as the *περίφημα* ('lowly offering,' 'offscouring') and *ἀντίρωγον* ('expiation') of those to whom he writes. This in turn intersects a series of antitheses that contrasts his being 'condemned' and their being 'shown mercy' (Eph. 12.1), his being 'in danger' (cf. Tr. 13.3) and their being 'strengthened' (Eph. 12.1), his being 'condemned' and not being an 'apostle' (Tr. 3.3; Rom. 4.3), his being a 'slave' and the apostles being 'free' (Rom. 4.3). We also find Ignatius doubting his own 'worthiness' (cf. Eph. 2.2; Mag. 12.1; 14.1; Tr. 4.2; 13.1; Rom. 9.2; Sm. 11.1) and referring to himself (more or less in Pauline terms) as the 'last' of the Antiochenes (Eph. 21.2; Tr. 13.1 Rom. 9.2; Sm. 11.1; cf. Mag. 14) and a 'miscarriage' (Rom. 9.2).

“Some of this language (notably the term *περίφημα*, 'offscouring') verges on polite self-depreciation ('your humble servant'). But that will not account for the complexity of its development (see on Eph. 8.1; 12.1). The fact that in this connection Ignatius modelled himself partly on Paul has been taken to suggest that like the apostle he had once persecuted the church (or at least had long been an outsider). But that has no support in the context of the letters, and it seems more likely that we have another instance of Pauline terminology being put to new use. That Ignatius was 'in danger' of losing his nerve in the arena is also certainly true (cf. Rom. 7.2). But that appears to be a symptom of a deeper sense of unease. The suggestion of Schlier<sup>68</sup> was that Ignatius regarded his 'bonds' as symbols of his enslavement in matter. Schlier was right to sense deeper elements in the bishop's self-effacement, but the solution is no doubt forced (see on Eph. 3.1). Also forced is the suggestion that Ignatius spoke as he did because he had been deprived of participation in the eucharist, the one channel of salvation (see on Rom. 7.3).

“The view developed in this commentary is that Ignatius had in fact experienced a blow to his self-esteem and that this is reflected in his dealings with the churches. Conceivably it was his arrest that had shaken him and that had forced him to wonder about his worthiness, especially since he sensed doubts about the firmness of his resolve. But again more seems to be involved. For it appears unlikely that the hostility of the 'world' would be so unexpected and shattering an event to a person like Ignatius. Moreover, it is puzzling that whereas he regards his own arrest as but the beginning of discipleship (Eph. 1.2; 3.1; Tr. 5.2; Rom. 4.2; 5.3; Pol. 7.1), he can consider churches that sit quietly on the sidelines as spiritually his superior. Can we believe that they are not 'in danger' simply because

Also Clement's perspective is psychologically more healthy and biblical in perspective,<sup>953</sup> it was Ignatius' approach that exerted the greater influence on emerging perspectives on martyrdom that eventually produced a full blown martyrology by the fourth century AD. Yet references to Paul's death continue largely to only be markings that he indeed died the death of a martyr, but without detailed depictions of the circumstances of that death.

**Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, II. 25.**<sup>954</sup>

XXV. [1] Κραταιουμένης δ' ἤδη τῷ Νέρωνι τῆς ἀρχῆς, εἰς ἀνοσίους ὀκείλας ἐπιτηδεύσεις, κατ' αὐτῆς ὠπλίζετο τῆς εἰς τὸν τῶν ὄλων θεὸν εὐσεβείας. γράφειν μὲν οὖν οἷός τις οὗτος γεγένηται τὴν μοχθηρίαν, οὐ τῆς παρουσίας γένοιτ' ἂν σχολῆς· [2] πολλῶν γε μὴν τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ἀκριβεστάταις παραδεδωκότων διηγήσεσιν, πάρεστιν ὅτω φίλον, ἐξ αὐτῶν τὴν σκαιότητα τῆς τάνδρος ἐκτόπου καταθεωρῆσαι μανίας, καθ' ἣν οὐ μετὰ λογισμοῦ μυρίων ὄσων ἀπωλείας διεξελθὼν, ἐπὶ τοσαύτην ἤλασε μαιφονίαν, ὡς μηδὲ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων τε καὶ φιλάτων ἐπισχεῖν, μητέρα δὲ ὁμοίως καὶ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ γυναῖκα σὺν καὶ ἄλλοις μυρίοις τῷ γένει προσήκουσιν τρόπον ἐχθρῶν καὶ πολεμίων ποικίλαις θανάτων ιδέαις διαχρήσασθαι. [3] ἐνέδει δ' ἄρα τοῖς πᾶσι καὶ τοῦτ' ἐπιγραφῆναι αὐτῷ, ὡς ἂν πρῶτος αὐτοκρατόρων τῆς εἰς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβείας πολέμιος ἀναδειχθεῖ. [4] τούτου πάλιν ὁ Ῥωμαῖος Τερτυλλιανὸς ὧδέ πως λέγων μνημονεῖε “ἐντύχετε τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν ὑμῶν, ἐκεῖ εὐρήσετε πρῶτον Νέρωνα τοῦτο τὸ δόγμα, ἠνίκα μάλιστα ἐν Ῥώμῃ, τὴν ἀνατολὴν πᾶσαν ὑποτάξας, ὠμὸς ἦν εἰς πάντας, διώξαντα. τοιούτω τῆς κολάσεως ἡμῶν ἀρχηγῷ καυχώμεθα. ὁ γὰρ εἰδὼς ἐκεῖνον νοῆσαι δύνатаι ὡς οὐκ ἂν, εἰ μὴ μέγα τι ἀγαθὸν ἦν, ὑπὸ Νέρωνος κατακριθῆναι.”

[5] Ταῦτη γοῦν οὗτος, θεομάχος ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα πρῶτος ἀνακηρυχθεὶς, ἐπὶ τὰς κατὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐπήρθη σφαγᾶς. Παῦλος δὲ οὖν ἐπ' αὐτῆς Ῥώμης τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτμηθῆναι καὶ Πέτρος ὡσαύτως ἀνασκολοπισθῆναι κατ' αὐτὸν ἱστοροῦνται, καὶ πιστοῦται γε τὴν ἱστορίαν ἢ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου εἰς δεῦρο κρατήσασα ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτόθι κοιμητηρίων πρόσρησις, [6] οὐδὲν δὲ ἦττον καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς ἀνὴρ, Γάϊος ὄνομα, κατὰ Ζεφυρίνον Ῥωμαίων γεροντῶς ἐπίσκοπον· ὃς δὲ Πρόκλῳ τῆς κατὰ Φρύγας προῖσταμένῳ γνώμης ἐγγράφως διαλεχθεὶς, αὐτὰ δὲ ταῦτα περὶ τῶν τόπων, ἔνθα τῶν εἰρημένων ἀποστόλων τὰ ἱερὰ σκηνώματα κατατέθειται, [7] φησίν· “ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ τρόπαια τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔχω δεῖξαι. ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσης ἀπελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸν Βασικανὸν ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν Ὡστίαν, εὐρήσεις τὰ τρόπαια τῶν ταύτην ἰδρυσάμενων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.”

[8] Ὡς δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν ἄμφω καιρὸν ἐμαρτύρησαν, Κορινθίων ἐπίσκοπος Διονύσιος ἐγγράφως Ῥωμαίοις ὁμιλῶν, ὧδε παρίστησιν “ταῦτα καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς τοσαύτης νουθεσίας τὴν ἀπὸ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου φυτεῖαν γενηθεῖσαν Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ Κορινθίων συνεκεράσατε. καὶ γὰρ ἄμφω καὶ εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν Κόρινθον φυτεῦσαντες ἡμᾶς ὁμοίως ἐδίδαξαν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ὁμοσε διδάξαντες ἐμαρτύρησαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν.”<sup>1</sup>

---

they are not now facing a comparable crisis? Can we believe that this is merely an exaggerated form of politeness? Our suggestion is that Ignatius' self-effacement is connected with the unsettled state of affairs in Antioch. that what the other churches and their bishops have that he lacks is a clear claim to having preserved what he regards as the supreme blessing inherited from the apostolic age — namely, concord and unity (see on Eph. 11.2–12.2; cf. Rom. 4.3; 7.1).<sup>69</sup> Thus a challenge to Ignatius' authority in Antioch would be the clearest evidence of disunity and would call into question the value of his ministry there. Fiercely convinced of the rightness of his cause, however, he and his friends would seek recognition from others and would use it to deflate opposition in Antioch. His commendation of those who saw beyond his 'bonds' (see on Sm. 10.2; Pol. 2.3) would reflect his conviction that his loss of respect in Antioch was not destined to last. For he uses his captivity to define his relations with the churches in terms of both the prestige that his bonds represent and the potential disgrace and unworthiness that they symbolize. If this is correct, we would expect his self-doubts to lessen on hearing about the reestablishment of “peace” in his church, and reasons are given in the commentary for thinking that this is so.”

[William R. Schoedel, Saint Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, and Helmut Koester, *Ignatius of Antioch: a Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 13.]

<sup>953</sup>“Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity,<sup>14</sup> compelled<sup>15</sup> to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west,<sup>16</sup> and suffered martyrdom under the prefects.<sup>17</sup> Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.” [Clement of Rome, “The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 6.]

<sup>954</sup>Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote in the 4th century, states that Paul was beheaded in the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero.<sup>117</sup> This event has been dated either to the year 64, when Rome was devastated by a fire, or a few years later, to 67. According to one tradition, the church of *San Paolo alle Tre Fontane* marks the place of Paul's execution. A Roman Catholic liturgical solemnity of Peter and Paul, celebrated on June 29, commemorates his martyrdom, and reflects a tradition (preserved by Eusebius) that Peter and Paul were martyred at the same time.<sup>118</sup> The Roman liturgical calendar for the following day now remembers all Christians martyred in these early persecutions; formerly, June 30 was the feast day for St. Paul.<sup>119</sup> Persons or religious orders with special affinity for St. Paul can still celebrate their patron on June 30.<sup>120</sup> [“Paul the Apostle,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)]

καὶ ταῦτα δέ, ὡς ἂν ἔτι μᾶλλον πιστωθεῖη τὰ τῆς ἱστορίας.<sup>955</sup>

XXV. [1] When the rule of Nero was now gathering strength for unholy objects he began to take up arms against the worship of the God of the universe. [2] It is not part of the present work to describe his depravity: many indeed have related his story in accurate narrative, and from them he who wishes can study the perversity of his degenerate madness, which made him compass the unreasonable destruction of so many thousands, until he reached that final guilt of sparing neither his nearest nor dearest, so that in various ways he did to death alike his mother, brothers, and wife, with thousands of others attached to his family, as though they were enemies and foes. But with all this there was still lacking to him this—that it should be attributed to him that he was the first of the emperors to be pointed out as a foe of divine religion. [3] This again the Latin writer Tertullian mentions in one place as follows: “Look at your records: there you will find that Nero was the first to persecute this belief when, having overcome the whole East, he was specially cruel in Rome against all.”<sup>956</sup> [4] We boast that such a man was the author of our chastisement; for he who knows him can understand that nothing would have been condemned by Nero had it not been great and good.”

[5] In this way then was he the first to be heralded as above all a fighter against God, and raised up to slaughter against the Apostles. It is related that in his time Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the title of “Peter and Paul,” which is still given to the cemeteries there, confirms the story, no less than does a writer of the Church named Caius, who lived when Zephyrinus was Bishop of Rome. [6] Caius in a written discussion with Proclus, the leader of the Montanists,<sup>957</sup> speaks as follows of the places where the sacred relics of the Apostles in question are deposited: “But I can point out the trophies of the Apostles, for if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church.”<sup>958</sup> [7] And that they both were martyred at the same time Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, affirms in this passage of his correspondence with the Romans: “By so great an admonition you bound together the foundations of the Romans and Corinthians by Peter and Paul, for both of them taught together in our Corinth and were our founders, and together also taught in Italy in the same place and were martyred at the same time.” [8] And this may serve to confirm still further the facts narrated.<sup>959</sup>

First, note the ‘historical’ methodology of Eusebius. He reports events and persons based upon the sources he had tracked down. For him, historical proof of an event is the witness of a couple or more sources. This may seem legitimate, but it is very critical to understand that the accuracy of these sources is seldom if ever verified by any objective means. Thus multiple sources for a legend usually gives it historical credibility for Eusebius. This is particularly true for Eusebius if one of his sources comes from a heretic, such as Proclus, a Montanist, in the above narrative. Modern perspectives would not accept such as historical validation, and rightly so.<sup>960</sup> Thus the necessity of stringent critiquing of Eusebius remains absolutely essential.

<sup>955</sup>Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: Greek Text*, ed. T. E. Page et al., vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 178–182.

<sup>956</sup>“The Greek is scarcely translatable and is clearly a bad rendering of Tertullian: ‘Consulite commentaries uestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse’ (‘Consult your records: you will find that Nero was the first to let the imperial sword rage against this sect when it was just springing up in Rome’).” [Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932).

<sup>957</sup>“Literally, ‘the opinion among the Phrygians.’ Montanus was of Phrygian origin. His story is told by Eusebius in Hist. Eccl. 5:14–18. Proclus was one of his successors.” [Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932).]

<sup>958</sup>“According to the tradition that Peter was crucified on the Vatican (the exact spot is variously indicated), and Paul beheaded on the Via Ostia at Tre Fontane.” [Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932).]

<sup>959</sup>Lake Kirsopp, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 179–183.

<sup>960</sup>It should be noted that ancient historians did not operate with the concept of objective validation principles as would be the case after the Enlightenment in the western world. And of course the definitional understanding of history in the ancient world was profoundly different than in the modern world. Ancient history, ἱστορία, was one of the component elements and sources for developing a philosophy, and this mainly because it was a reporting of interaction from the past between the gods and humanity. Any legitimate philosophy in the ancient world had to include, as a major perspective, the so-called vertical dimension of divine-human interaction as essential to an adequate explanation of how life should work. No one could function successfully in life without proper managing of his



The first four sections present a summary of the wickedness of Nero largely based on his treatment of Christians but not limited to them. This, according to Eusebius 2.5.3 (above text), was a view largely based upon statements made by Tertullian in the late second century in his *The Apology* 5.<sup>961</sup> But Tertullian's exaggerated depiction is highly questionable itself. In 5.3 he appeals to the Roman histories for validation of his claim: *Consultite commentarios vestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse*. In particular he seems to be alluding to Tacitus' *The Annals* 15.44.<sup>962</sup> What Tacitus describes is a relationship with the gods.

<sup>961</sup>V. <sup>1</sup>Ut de origine aliquid retractemus eiusmodi legum, vetus erat decretum, ne qui deus ab imperatore consecraretur nisi a senatu probatus. Scit M. Aemilius de deo suo Alburno. Facit et hoc ad causam nostram, quod apud vos de humano arbitratu divinitas pensatur. Nisi homini deus placuerit, deus non erit; homo iam deo propitius esse debet. <sup>2</sup>Tiberius ergo, cuius tempore nomen Christianum in saeculum introivit, adnuntiata sibi ex Syria Palaestina, quae illic veritatem ipsius divinitatis revelaverant, detulit ad senatum cum praerogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit, Caesar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum. <sup>3</sup>Consultite commentarios vestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse. Sed tali dedicatore damnationis nostrae etiam gloriamur. Qui enim scit illum, intellegere potest non nisi grande aliquod bonum a Nerone damnatum. <sup>4</sup>Temptaverat et Domitianus, portio Neronis de crudelitate, sed qua et homo, facile coeptum repressit, restituit etiam quos relegaverat. Tales semper nobis insectores, iniusti, impii, turpes, quos et ipsi damnare consuestis, a quibus damnatos restituere soliti estis. <sup>5</sup>Ceterum de tot exinde principibus ad hodiernum divinum humanumque sapientibus edite aliquem debellatorem Christianorum!

[Tertullian and Minucius Felix, *Tertullian's Apology and de Spectaculis: Latin Text*, ed. G. P. Goold and W. C. A. Kerr, trans. T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann, 1931), 28–30.]

V. <sup>1A</sup> Word of discussion on the origin of laws on this matter. There was an ancient decree, that no god should be consecrated by an emperor without the approval of the Senate. M. Aemilius knows about that law in the matter of his god, Alburnus. It bears also on our case, because among you a god's divinity depends on man's decision. Unless a god please man, he shall not be a god at all; in fact, man must be gracious to god! <sup>2</sup>It was in the age of Tiberius, then, that the Christian name went out into the world, and he referred to the Senate the news which he had received from Syria Palestine, which had revealed the truth of Christ's (ipsius) divinity; he did this exercising his prerogative in giving it his endorsement. The Senate had not approved beforehand and so rejected it. Caesar held to his opinion and threatened danger to accusers of the Christians. <sup>3</sup>Consult your histories. There you will find that Nero was the first to rage with the imperial sword against this school in the very hour of its rise in Rome. <sup>4</sup>But we glory—nothing less than glory—to have had such a man to inaugurate our condemnation. One who knows Nero can understand that, unless a thing were good—and very good—it was not condemned by Nero. <sup>5</sup>Domitian too, who was a good deal of a Nero in cruelty, attempted it; but, being in some degree human, he soon stopped what he had begun, and restored those he had banished. Such are ever our persecutors—men unjust, impious, foul—men whom you yourselves are accustomed to condemn; and those whom they condemn you have become accustomed to restore. <sup>6</sup>But from among so many emperors down to to-day, men wise in things divine and human, pick me out one who warred against the Christians!

[Tertullian and Minucius Felix, *Tertullian's Apology and de Spectaculis*, ed. G. P. Goold and W. C. A. Kerr, trans. T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann, 1931), 29–31.]

<sup>962</sup> [44] Et haec quidem humanis consiliis providebantur. mox petita dis piacula aditque Sibyllae libri, ex quibus supplicatum Vulcano et Cereri Proserpinaeque ac propitiata Iuno per matronas, primum in Capitolio, deinde apud proximum mare, unde hausta aqua templum et simulacrum deae perspersum est; et sellisternia ac pervigilia celebrare feminae quibus mariti erant. sed non ope humana, non largitionibus principis aut deum placamentis decedebat infamia quin iussum incendium crederetur. ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quaesitissimis poenis adfecit quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat; repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Iudaeam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque. igitur primum correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens haud proinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contacti laniati canum interirent, aut crucibus adfixi aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat et circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigae permixtus plebi vel curriculo insistens. unde quamquam adversus sontis et novissima exempla meritis miseratio oriebatur, tamquam utilitate publica sed in saevitiam unius absumerentur.

[Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales* (Latin), ed. Charles Dennis Fisher (Medford, MA: Perseus Digital Library, 1906).]

Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess. And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their

brutal persecution of Christians in the city of Rome for a short period of time after the [great fire of Rome](#) in July of 64 AD. Although both Tertullian and Eusebius have been interpreted to imply that this launched an empire wide persecution of Christians, a close reading of both their statements make it clear that this is not what they are saying.<sup>963</sup> Clearly the statement of the Roman historian Tacitus does not imply such a widespread persecution. What these ancient sources indicate, and the other Roman historian Suetonius who mentions this in his [The Twelve Caesars](#) confirms, is that this persecution, although indescribably brutal, did not last very long and was confined to Christians in and around the city of Rome.

One of the lingering questions is whether Paul was caught up in the initial persecution of Christians shortly after the fire in July 64 AD, or whether his death happened later on as a somewhat isolated execution by Nero prior to Nero's suicide in 68 AD?<sup>964</sup>

First Clement 5 -- about 96 AD -- simply asserts "and suffered martyrdom under the prefects." The prefects mentioned here are usually taken to mean under [Tigellinus](#) and [Sabinus](#), in the last year of the Emperor Nero. Some think Helius and [Polykletus](#) are referred to here. But others, both here and in the preceding sentence, regard the words as denoting simply the witness borne by Peter and Paul to the truth of the gospel before the rulers of the earth.<sup>965</sup> If the general understanding of Tigellinus and Sabinus is accurate, then the execution of Paul -- and Peter -- would come sometime in 68 AD. Clearly Clement does not associate Paul's death with the fire in Rome and the persecutions of Christians connected to it.

Tertullian -- at the end of the second century -- in *De praescriptionibus haereticis*, 36, (Rome, "where Paul wins his crown in a death like John's") indicates that Paul was executed in Rome. And in *Apology* 5 he indicates that Roman government persecution of Christians began during Nero's reign.

Eusebius -- about 325 AD -- asserts Paul's death under Nero, in line with the general consensus of church fathers. But none of the church fathers specifically link Paul's death to the great fire of Rome. What several do, however, including Eusebius is to link Paul's and Peter's execution to one another. But Eusebius somewhat distances their deaths from one another: *It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero.* How much time distance between the two deaths cannot be determined due to the ambiguity of Eusebius' statements, and that of the other church fathers who mention their deaths together.<sup>966</sup> In all likelihood the time span was not long given Eusebius' quote of Dionysius:

[8] Ὅς δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν ἄμφω καιρὸν ἐμαρτύρησαν. Κορινθίων ἐπίσκοπος Διονύσιος ἐγγράφως Ἑρμαίους information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

[Tacitus, *The Annals* 15.44," [wikisource.org](#)]

<sup>963</sup>The very interesting angle taken by Tertullian beginning in chapter 5 and continuing on for some space is that only the real evil emperors were 'good enough' to condemn Christians to martyrdom. Those he considered mediocre did not qualify as persecutors of Christians in any way. Nero and Domitian in the first century were the only two he felt 'worthy' to persecute Christians. What emerges is a developing doctrine of martyrdom which is eagerly sought after by 'genuinely devoted' Christians. Note Eusebius' statement based on Tertullian's: *We boast that such a man [Nero] was the author of our chastisement; for he who knows him can understand that nothing would have been condemned by Nero had it not been great and good.*

<sup>964</sup>This tradition, that Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome, is early and universal, and disputed by no counter-tradition, and may be accepted as the one certain historical fact known about Paul outside of the New Testament accounts. **Clement** (Ad. Cor. chap. 5) is the first to mention the death of Paul, and seems to imply, though he does not directly state, that his death took place in Rome during the persecution of Nero. **Caius** (quoted below, § 7), a writer of the first quarter of the third century, is another witness to his death in Rome, as is also **Dionysius of Corinth** (quoted below, § 8) of the second century. **Origen** (quoted by Euseb. III. 1) states that he was martyred in Rome under Nero. **Tertullian** (at the end of the second century), in his *De praescriptione Haer.* chap. 36, is still more distinct, recording that Paul was beheaded in Rome. **Eusebius** and **Jerome** accept this tradition unhesitatingly, and we may do likewise. As a Roman citizen, we should expect him to meet death by the sword." [Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, vol. 1, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1890).]

<sup>965</sup>Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), S.v., footnote 17.

<sup>966</sup>What motivates the mentioning of the deaths of Peter and Paul together universally is the tradition that both of them were "founding fathers" of the church at Rome. This usually means that early Christianity -- especially after the ascendancy of the church at Rome to the dominant role in western Christianity -- that both these men played foundational roles in developing the Christianity community at Rome.

ὁμιλῶν, ὧδε παρίστησιν “ταῦτα καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς τοσαύτης νοουθεσίας τὴν ἀπὸ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου φυτεῖαν γενηθεῖσαν Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ Κορινθίων συνεκεράσατε. καὶ γὰρ ἄμφω καὶ εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν Κόρινθον φυτεύσαντες ἡμᾶς ὁμοίως ἐδίδαξαν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ὁμοσε διδάξαντες ἐμαρτύρησαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν.” καὶ ταῦτα δέ, ὡς ἂν ἔτι μᾶλλον πιστωθεῖη τὰ τῆς ἱστορίας.

[8] And that they both were martyred at the same time Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, affirms in this passage of his correspondence with the Romans: “By so great an admonition you bound together the foundations of the Romans and Corinthians by Peter and Paul, for both of them taught together in our Corinth and were our founders, and together also taught in Italy in the same place and were martyred at the same time.

By ἄμφω καιρὸν ἐμαρτύρησα and ἐμαρτύρησαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν, Eusebius does not mean ‘within a few days of each other.’ But these expressions do imply during the same general time period.

Also note that Paul was beheaded while Peter was crucified, according to Eusebius. As a Roman citizen Paul could not be crucified. But Roman citizens condemned to death by the emperor normally were beheaded by the sword. Additionally Paul suffered death on the [Via Ostia at Tre Fontane](#). But that Peter was crucified on the spot where the Vatican is located today.<sup>967</sup> A church, [Tre Fontane](#), exists today on the traditional site and it is one of the pilgrimage sites in Rome for Roman Catholics.

For evidence Eusebius appeals to their ‘relics’ being preserved at both the Vatican and at the Ostian Way:

οὐδὲν δὲ ἦττον καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς ἀνὴρ, Γάϊος ὄνομα, κατὰ Ζεφυρίνον Ῥωμαίων γεροντῶς ἐπίσκοπον· ὃς δὴ Πρόκλῳ τῆς κατὰ Φρύγας προϊσταμένῳ γνώμης ἐγγράφως διαλεχθεὶς, αὐτὰ δὴ ταῦτα περὶ τῶν τόπων, ἔνθα τῶν εἰρημένων ἀποστόλων τὰ ἱερὰ σκηνώματα κατατέθειται,<sup>968</sup>

Caius in a written discussion with Proclus, the leader of the Montanists, speaks as follows of the places where the sacred relics of the Apostles in question are deposited: “But I can point out the trophies of the Apostles, for if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church.”<sup>969</sup>

Notice that he quotes Caius, an orthodox church historian, who quoted a ‘heretic’ Proclus about the location of the bones of Peter and Paul. He will then quote (in # 7) from another orthodox church bishop in Corinth as further evidence of both apostles being executed in Rome.

Additionally Eusebius appeals to the existence of two cemeteries named “Peter” and “Paul” in existence in the early 300s as further evidence of their being executed in Rome:

Παῦλος δὴ οὖν ἐπ’ αὐτῆς Ῥώμης τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτμηθῆναι καὶ Πέτρος ὡσαύτως ἀνασκολοπισθῆναι κατ’ αὐτὸν ἱστοροῦνται, καὶ πιστοῦται γε τὴν ἱστορίαν ἢ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου εἰς δεῦρο κρατήσασα ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτόθι κοιμητηρίων πρόσρησις,<sup>970</sup>

It is related that in his time Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the title of “Peter and Paul,” which is still given to the cemeteries there, confirms the story, no less than does a writer of the Church named Caius, who lived when Zephyrinus was Bishop of Rome.<sup>971</sup>

Within the framework of Eusebius’ historical methodology, these ‘proofs’ offer confirming evidence of the execution of both Peter and Paul during the reign of Nero. But in line with the earlier traditions, he does not link their deaths directly to the fire at Rome. Thus no compelling evidence exists to date Paul’s execution around the time of the fire in 64 AD. What Eusebius does assert very bluntly is that Nero’s persecution of Christians, historically connected to the fire in 64 AD, created an atmosphere of hostility where Christians in Rome could be and were subject to persecution during the remainder of his reign until his death in 68 AD. The likelihood, then, is that Peter and Paul got trapped by this hostile atmosphere sometime after the persecution in 64. They simply were ‘in the wrong place at the wrong time.’ How they happened to be in Rome at the same time is never explained, only

<sup>967c</sup>According to the tradition that Peter was crucified on the Vatican (the exact spot is variously indicated), and Paul beheaded on the [Via Ostia at Tre Fontane](#).” [Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932).]

<sup>968</sup>Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: Greek Text*, ed. T. E. Page et al., vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 180–182.

<sup>969c</sup>Lake Kirsopp, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 181–183.]

<sup>970c</sup>Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: Greek Text*, ed. T. E. Page et al., vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 180.

<sup>971</sup>Lake Kirsopp, *The Ecclesiastical History and 2: English Translation*, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann; G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), 181.



asserted.

What we can learn with considerable certainty from the church fathers is that Paul was executed by Nero at some point after the fire in Rome in 64 AD and before Nero's death in 68 AD. Also, that his execution was a beheading. And that it very likely took place on the Via Ostia in the southern part of the city. It is the apocryphal *Martyrdom of Paul* that adds interestingly legendary material to this.

The other crucial insights about Paul's death in the church fathers is mostly theological rather than historical. Among Christians in the first seven or eight centuries was a preoccupation with the spiritual benefits of dying as a Christian martyr. The concern was both personal and corporate. When the individual died as a genuine martyr certain special benefits were attached to his status in heaven. And then for the church, especially the western church, those in heaven as martyrs could act in behalf of Christians on the earth. Scattered voices were raised against such, but they were drowned out. Vigilantius in the early fifth century was one of these.<sup>972</sup> The doctrine of saints is closely tied into the developing martyrology during this period. This is vitally connected to the Catholic idea of the communion of the saints, which is asserted to be affirmed in the Apostles' Creed "I believe in ... the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints."<sup>973</sup> The meaning of the phrase 'the communion of saints' is understood inside Catholicism to be "the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of the same mystical body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices" ["The Communion of Saints," [newadvent.org](http://newadvent.org)].<sup>974</sup>

Emerging martyrology begins in the second century with the developing ideas of martyrdom as the best and quickest 'ticket' to heaven.<sup>975</sup> Ignatius is the earliest expression of an 'over eagerness' to die as a Christian martyr. The gradually developing ideas of the spiritual benefits of martyrdom often reflected the surrounding Greco-Roman cultural values placed on voluntary death and suicide. But the sense of being a spiritual sacrifice in the Old Testament and especially in the Jewish Maccabean tradition play an important role. The later *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas* (200-203 AD) help shape the developing ideas of special benefits and heavenly status to Christian martyrs. By the fourth century the system of saints in heaven and Christians on earth being able to appeal to them via prayers for this special assistance is taking shape and finding increasing acceptance especially in western Christianity. Vigilantius' sound condemnation of such practices in 403 AD fall largely on deaf ears. Thus the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* in the early fifth century drew up a official list of saints in heaven who could receive the prayers for assistance from Christians on earth within this Roman Catholic framework. The descendents of this early work still play an important role in modern Catholic practice.<sup>976</sup>

<sup>972</sup>"The points against which he argues are four: (1) The superstitious reverence paid to the remains of holy men, which were carried round in the church assemblies in gold vessels or silken wrappings to be kissed, and the prayers in which their intercession was asked; (2) the late and frequent watchings at the basilicas of the martyrs, from which scandals constantly arose, the burning of numerous tapers, which was a heathen practice, the stress laid on the miracles performed at the shrines, which, Vigilantius maintained, were of use only to unbelievers; (3) the sending of alms to Jerusalem, which might better have been given to the poor in each diocese, and generally the monkish habit of divesting oneself of possessions which should be administered as a trust by the possessor; and (4) the special virtue attributed to the unmarried state. Vigilantius held that for the clergy to be married was an advantage to the church; and he looked upon the solitary life as a cowardly forsaking of responsibility." ["Vigilantius," *Dictionary of Christian biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth Century* at CCEL.org]

<sup>973</sup>For a helpful tracing of creedalism in early Roman Catholic tradition see the article in the only Roman Catholic encyclopedia, "Apostles' Creed," [newadvent.org](http://newadvent.org). Of course, this represents a Roman Catholic point of view, which is often challenged from within Protestantism.

<sup>974</sup>The shift in language of the ninth article of the creed from "the Holy Church" in the old Roman form to the Council of Trent formula "the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints" generates much of the controversy and debate here. The addition of these phrases are often understood to be a reaction to the presbyter *Vigilantius* in the early fifth century with his vigorous condemnation of the veneration of the saints tradition emerging inside western Christianity. *Cyril of Jerusalem* in the fifth century is assumed to be responsible for this expansion initially. Vigilantius' primary writing in 403 AD, which unfortunately is no longer available, condemned what he deemed to be the 'superstitions' of the church, including the veneration of relics, of saints, etc., including the indiscriminate sending of alms to Jerusalem where Jerome had allowed massive corruption as the spiritual authority in Jerusalem and the surrounding region. This prompted a severe criticism of him by Jerome in *Contra Vigilantium*. Jerome eventually won out and declared Vigilantius to be a heretic, and this was accepted over time except for the region in Gaul where he came from and lived during the later years of his life.

<sup>975</sup>One should note clearly the profound distinction between a Christian being executed for his/her faith and dying as a martyr. By the fifth century AD in western Christianity especially only certain church leaders could die as a martyr, because of the special status and authority they were assumed to have in heaven. The early language of Clement of Rome that Paul merely died by execution is left behind in favor of the language of Paul dying as a martyr. Enormous amounts of surreptitious baggage come to added to this later way of depicting the death of some Christians.

<sup>976</sup>"The martyrology, or ferial, of the Roman Church in the middle of the fourth century still exists. It comprises two distinct lists, the *Depositio martyrum* and the *Depositio episcoporum*, lists most frequently found united." ["Martyrology," [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)]

## New Testament Apocrypha as sources:

The very few scattered references to Paul's death in the apocryphal writings follow along the same lines as the church fathers. And usually they contain no more material about it than is found in the church fathers. All that is except for one document. We will closely examine it for whatever insights it can provide.

### Martyrdom of Paul<sup>977</sup>

This text has existed both as a part of the longer *Acts of Paul* (*Acta Pauli*<sup>978</sup>) and as a separate document throughout its history from the late second century down to the present time. Composed, according to Tertullian, by a presbyter in Asia around 160 AD in honor of Paul, this longer document -- according to the Stichometry of Nicephorus some 8,600 lines but 8,560 in the Stichometry of the Codex Claromontanus (Luke's Acts of the Apostles is listed by these sources as 2,800 and 2,600 respectively) -- found early favor in many circles of Christianity but gradually fell out of favor. This longer document did not survive. But because three major sections of it were copied and circulated as separate documents -- Acts of Paul and Thecla, Third Corinthians, Martyrdom<sup>979</sup> -- they have survived over time as

<sup>977</sup>“A document describing Paul's encounter with the emperor Nero in Rome and his subsequent trial, execution, and miraculous appearance after death. Originally the Martyrdom of Paul was the concluding section of the 2d century apocryphon the Acts of Paul, but it was separated very early and transmitted independently in medieval Christianity in connection with the cult of the holy apostle and martyr. The story tells how Paul runs afoul of Nero by resurrecting and converting Patroclus, the imperial cupbearer. A search leads to Paul's arrest and that of many other Christians, all of whom are condemned to death when Nero hears Paul's threats of apocalyptic judgment with fire. Paul predicts that the emperor will see him after his death; after his execution by beheading, when milk miraculously spurts from his neck rather than blood, the apostle does appear, causing Nero to free the remaining Christians. While in jail awaiting execution, Paul had begun to convert the Roman centurion Cestus and the prefect Longus, who at his instructions visit his tomb at dawn and receive baptism from Titus and Luke. The historical value of the story is minimal, as is suggested by its borrowing of many motifs from similar accounts of the deaths of holy people, and its literary merits are few; but the Martyrdom of Paul nonetheless achieved great popularity.” [Philip Sellew, “Paul, Martyrdom Of,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 204–205.]

<sup>978</sup>For those with greater interest in the *Acts of Paul*, an entire web site -- *Acta Pauli* at <http://actapauli.wordpress.com/> -- is devoted to an ongoing scholarly discussion of various aspects of examination of these materials.

**Logos.com** also maintains a web page with information about the *Acta Pauli* studies at [https://topics.logos.com/Acts\\_of\\_Paul](https://topics.logos.com/Acts_of_Paul).

<sup>979</sup> **a) The Acts of Paul and Thecla, a single episode which has been preserved complete in Greek and many versions: parts of it exist in the Coptic.**

*After the flight from Antioch, when he would go to Iconium.*

It is possible that in this episode the author of the Acts may have used a local legend, current in his time, of a real Christian martyr Thecla. It is otherwise difficult to account for the very great popularity of the cult of St. Thecla, which spread over East and West, and made her the most famous of virgin martyrs. Moreover, one historical personage is introduced into the story, namely, Queen Tryphaena, who was the widow, it seems, of Cotys, King of Thrace, and the mother of Polemo II, King of Pontus. She was a great-niece of the Emperor Claudius. Professor W. M. Ramsay has contended that there was a written story of Thecla which was adapted by the author of the Acts: but his view is not generally accepted.

[Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 272.]

**b) The correspondence with the Corinthians, partly preserved in the Coptic, and current separately in Armenian and Latin.**

*When he was departed from.... and would go <to Philippi>.*

Now when Paul was come to Philippi.... he entered into the house of.... and there was great joy (among the brethren) and to every one.

On the following page begins the episode of the correspondence with the Corinthians, which was circulated separately in Syriac, Latin, and Armenian, and found a place in the Syriac collection of Pauline epistles (and is commented on with the rest by Ephraem the Syrian), and in the Armenian Bible. We have it in (a) many Armenian MSS., (b) in Ephraem's commentary—only extant in Armenian, (c) in three Latin MSS., at Milan, Laon, and Paris: as well as in the Coptic MS., which is here less fragmentary than in the preceding pages.

We begin with a short narrative, introducing the letter of the Corinthians to Paul; then follows another short piece of narrative, extant in Armenian only; then Paul's reply, commonly called the 'Third Epistle to the Corinthians'.

There are various phrases and whole sentences, especially in the Armenian and the Milan MS. of the Latin, which are absent from the Coptic and the Laon MS. and are regarded, rightly, as interpolations.

These will be distinguished by small capitals.

The page of the Coptic MS. on which the correspondence begins is fragmentary at the beginning.

- l. 1. the lawless one
- l. 2. the reward. They.... in
- l. 3. a prayer.... every
- l. 4. one, and every one (?)

independent documents.

The account of Paul's execution reflects an awareness of the traditions among the church fathers noting Paul's death by beheading on the *Via Ostia at Tre Fontane* in Rome. But instead of contradicting these traditions as often is the case, the writer chose to build on them with his own story that supposedly adds details not found in any of the church fathers.<sup>980</sup> Again what will be noticed from a careful reading is the re-framing of the story within the Greco-Roman parameters of the expected manner of a heroic death by a divine man. The two dominant motifs of maintaining control of the situation and presence of the supernatural phenomena are very prominent.

#### X THE MARTYRDOM

I. Now there were awaiting Paul at Rome Luke from Galatia (Gaul, Gk.) and Titus from Dalmatia: whom when Paul saw he was glad: and hired a grange outside Rome, wherein with the brethren he taught the word of truth, and he became noised abroad and many souls were added unto the Lord, so that there was a rumour throughout all Rome, and much people came unto him from the household of Caesar, believing, and there was great joy.

And a certain Patroclus, a cup-bearer of Caesar, came at even unto the grange, and not being able because of the press to enter in to Paul, he sat in a high window and listened to him teaching the word of God. But whereas the evil devil envied the love of the brethren, Patroclus fell down from the window and died, and forthwith it was told unto Nero.

But Paul perceiving it by the spirit said: Men and brethren, the evil one hath gained occasion to tempt you: go out of the house and ye shall find a lad fallen from the height and now ready to give up the ghost; take him up and bring him hither to me. And they went and brought him; and when the people saw it they were troubled. But Paul said: Now, brethren, let your faith appear; come all of you and let us weep unto our Lord Jesus Christ, that this lad may live and we continue in quietness. And when all had lamented, the lad received his spirit again, and they set him on a beast and sent him back alive, together with the rest that were of Caesar's household.

II. But Nero, when he heard of the death of Patroclus, was sore grieved, and when he came in from the bath he commanded another to be set over the wine. But his servants told him, saying: Caesar, Patroclus liveth and standeth at the table. And Caesar, hearing that Patroclus lived, was affrighted and would not go in. But when he went in, he saw Patroclus, and was beside himself, and said: Patroclus, livest thou? And he said: I live, Caesar. And he said: Who is he that made thee to live? And the lad, full of the mind of faith, said: Christ Jesus, the king of the ages. And Caesar was troubled and said: Shall he, then, be king of the ages and overthrow all kingdoms? Patroclus saith unto him: Yea, he overthroweth all kingdoms and he alone shall be for ever, and there shall be no kingdom that shall escape him. And he smote him on the face and said: Patroclus, art thou also a soldier of that king? And he said: Yea, Lord Caesar, for he raised me when I was dead. And Barsabas Justus of the broad feet, and Urion the Cappadocian, and Festus the Galatian, Caesar's chief men, said: We also are soldiers of the king of the ages. And he shut them up in prison, having grievously tormented them, whom he loved much, and commanded the soldiers of the great king to be sought out, and set forth a decree to this effect, that all that were found to be Christians and

---

I. 6. Paul.... again (or together).

I. 7. prayed that a messenger be sent to Philippi. For the Corinthians were in great trouble concerning Paul, that he would depart out of the world, before it was time. For there were certain men come to Corinth, Simon and Cleobius, saying: There is no resurrection of the flesh, but that of the spirit only: and that the body of man is not the creation of God; and also concerning the world, that God did not create it, and that God knoweth not the world, and that Jesus Christ was not crucified, but it was an appearance (i. e. but only in appearance), and that he was not born of Mary, nor of the seed of David. And in a word, there were many things which they had taught in Corinth, deceiving many other men, (and deceiving also) themselves. When therefore the Corinthians heard that Paul was at Philippi, they sent a letter unto Paul to Macedonia by Threptus and Eutyclus the deacons. And the letter was after this manner.

[Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 288.]

**c) The Martyrdom, the concluding episode of the Acts, preserved separately (as in the case of John and others) in Greek and other versions.**

This, preserved separately to be read on the day of Commemoration, exists in two Greek copies, an incomplete Latin version, and versions in Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Slavonic, besides fragments in our Coptic MS.

[Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 293.]

<sup>980</sup>This reflects one of the almost universal traits of the ancient heretical Christian writings. Most all of it was motivated by the conviction of the inadequacy of the orthodox materials that supposedly kept critically important spiritual truth hidden and failed to communicate it to the churches. Typically the writers were charismatic type personalities who built religious followings off their supposedly superior spiritual insights. Interestingly their general stance reflects the same argument that Satan used with Eve against God in the Garden of Eden.



soldiers of Christ should be slain.

III. And among many others Paul also was brought, bound: unto whom all his fellow-prisoners gave heed; so that Caesar perceived that he was over the camp. And he said to him: Thou that art the great king's man, but my prisoner, how thoughtest thou well to come by stealth into the government of the Romans and levy soldiers out of my province? But Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, said before them all: O Caesar, not only out of thy province do we levy soldiers, but out of the whole world. For so hath it been ordained unto us, that no man should be refused who wisheth to serve my king. And if it like thee also to serve him (Lat. thou wilt not repent thereof: but think not that the wealth, &c., which seems better), it is not wealth nor the splendour that is now in this life that shall save thee; but if thou submit and entreat him, thou shalt be saved; for in one day (or one day) he shall fight against the world with fire. And when Caesar heard that, he commanded all the prisoners to be burned with fire, but Paul to be beheaded after the law of the Romans.

But Paul kept not silence concerning the word, but communicated with Longus the prefect and Cestus the centurion.

Nero therefore went on (was) (perhaps add 'raging') in Rome, slaying many Christians without a hearing, by the working of the evil one; so that the Romans stood before the palace and cried It sufficeth, Caesar! for the men are our own! thou destroyest the strength of the Romans! Then at that he was persuaded and ceased, and commanded that no man should touch any Christian, until he should learn throughly concerning them.

IV. Then was Paul brought unto him after the decree; and he abode by his word that he should be beheaded. And Paul said: Caesar, it is not for a little space that I live unto my king; and if thou behead me, this will I do: I will arise and show myself unto thee that I am not dead but live unto my Lord Jesus Christ, who cometh to judge the world.

But Longus and Cestus said unto Paul: Whence have ye this king, that ye believe in him and will not change your mind, even unto death? And Paul communicated unto them the word and said: Ye men that are in this ignorance and error, change your mind and be saved from the fire that cometh upon all the world: for we serve not, as ye suppose, a king that cometh from the earth, but from heaven, even the living God, who because of the iniquities that are done in this world, cometh as a judge; and blessed is that man who shall believe in him and shall live for ever when he cometh to burn the world and purge it throughly. Then they beseeching him said: We entreat thee, help us, and we will let thee go. But he answered and said: I am not a deserter of Christ, but a lawful soldier of the living God: if I had known that I should die, O Longus and Cestus, I would have done it, but seeing that I live unto God and love myself, I go unto the Lord, to come with him in the glory of his Father. They say unto him: How then shall we live when thou art beheaded?

V. And while they yet spake thus, Nero sent one Parthenius and Pheres to see if Paul were already beheaded; and they found him yet alive. And he called them to him and said: Believe on the living God, which raiseth me and all them that believe on him from the dead. And they said: We go now unto Nero; but when thou diest and risest again, then will we believe on thy God. And as Longus and Cestus entreated him yet more concerning salvation, he saith to them: Come quickly unto my grave in the morning and ye shall find two men praying, Titus and Luke. They shall give you the seal in the Lord.

Then Paul stood with his face to the east and lifted up his hands unto heaven and prayed a long time, and in his prayer he conversed in the Hebrew tongue with the fathers, and then stretched forth his neck without speaking. And when the executioner (speculator) struck off his head, milk spurted upon the cloak of the soldier. And the soldier and all that were there present when they saw it marvelled and glorified God which had given such glory unto Paul: and they went and told Caesar what was done.

VI. And when he heard it, while he marvelled long and was in perplexity, Paul came about the ninth hour, when many philosophers and the centurion were standing with Caesar, and stood before them all and said: Caesar, behold, I, Paul, the soldier of God, am not dead, but live in my God. But unto thee shall many evils befall and great punishment, thou wretched man, because thou hast shed unjustly the blood of the righteous, not many days hence. And having so said Paul departed from him. But Nero hearing it and being greatly troubled commanded the prisoners to be loosed, and Patroclus also and Barsabas and them that were with him.

VII. And as Paul charged them, Longus and Cestus the centurion went early in the morning and approached with fear unto the grave of Paul. And when they were come thither they saw two men praying, and Paul betwixt them, so that they beholding the wondrous marvel were amazed, but Titus and Luke being stricken with the fear of man when they saw Longus and Cestus coming toward them, turned to flight. But they pursued after them, saying: We pursue you not for death but for life, that ye may give it unto us, as Paul promised us, whom we saw just

now standing betwixt you and praying. And when they heard that, Titus and Luke rejoiced and gave them the seal in the Lord, glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Copt. and glorified the Lord Jesus Christ and all the saints).

Unto whom be glory world without end. Amen.

### **Comments on The Martyrdom**

#### **The setting for the event:**

I. Now there were awaiting Paul at Rome Luke from Galatia (Gaul, Gk.) and Titus from Dalmatia: whom when Paul saw he was glad: and hired a grange outside Rome, wherein with the brethren he taught the word of truth, and he became noised abroad and many souls were added unto the Lord, so that there was a rumour throughout all Rome, and much people came unto him from the household of Caesar, believing, and there was great joy.

The writer does not distinguish which arrest of Paul provides the setting. His description appears to be placing Paul's execution at the end of his first imprisonment, rather than at a later second imprisonment. This, of course, contradicts the [Vercelli Acts](#) account that describes Paul's departure from Rome for Spain at the end of his first imprisonment.

At the time when Paul was sojourning in Rome and confirming many in the faith, it came also to pass that one by name Candida, the wife of Quartus that was over the prisons, heard Paul and paid heed to his words and believed. And when she had instructed her husband also and he believed, Quartus suffered Paul to go whither he would away from the city: to whom Paul said: If it be the will of God, he will reveal it unto me. And after Paul had fasted three days and asked of the Lord that which should be profitable for him, he saw a vision, even the Lord saying unto him: Arise, Paul, and become a physician in thy body (i.e. by going thither in person) to them that are in Spain.

Interestingly, both Luke and Titus were supposedly waiting for Paul when he arrived in Rome. This contradicts Luke's Acts 28 account which implies through the "we narrative" that Luke traveled with Paul from Caesarea to Rome. Supposedly also, Luke's home is Gaul in the Greek text which is interpreted as Galatia in the translation. This contradicts much of early church tradition that connects Luke to the Roman province of Macedonia. Additionally, Titus is supposedly from the Roman province of Dalmatia, but this seems to be a wrong understanding of 2 Tim. 4:10 in which Paul indicates that Titus has gone to Dalmatia for ministry. In Rom. 15:19, Paul indicates that he had preached the Gospel all the way to Illyricum, a city in Dalmatia by 56 AD. Later Christianity in Dalmatia was plagued by cult groups and Greco-Roman influences.<sup>981</sup> Later church tradition makes no mention of a connection of Dalmatia and Titus, and instead focuses attention on his ministry in Crete as emphasized in Paul's *Letter to Titus*.

The writer freely borrows from Acts 28 with references to Paul's rented home and preaching activity. In 28:16 Luke indicates Paul's status as a prisoner: "Ὅτε δὲ εἰσήλθομεν εἰς Ῥώμην, ἐπετρέπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ. *When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.* But now Paul's residence becomes a *grange*, i.e., farmhouse from the Latin *granica*, outside of Rome.

Luke's depiction in 28:30-31 is expanded and changed considerably:

30 Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι καὶ ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν, 31 κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως.

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

In the Martyrdom it becomes:<sup>982</sup>

Now there were awaiting Paul at Rome Luke from Galatia and Titus from Dalmatia: whom when Paul saw he was glad: and hired a grange outside Rome, wherein with the brethren he taught the word of truth, and he became noised abroad and many souls were added unto the Lord, so that there was a rumour throughout all Rome, and much people came unto him from the household of Caesar, believing, and there was great joy.

---

<sup>981</sup>“The Dalmatian church was infiltrated by both cults and Greco-Roman religious factions. A dedication “to the gods and goddesses” appears in the wall of a Dalmatian church (Fox 1986: 194), and Ramsay MacMullen lists Dalmatia as a cult center (MacMullen 1981: 13, 127).” [Jerry A. Pattengale, “Dalmatia (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992),].

<sup>982</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 293.

The 'heroic' Paul must always be successful and not face any downturn in ministry. Luke avoids any mention of converts in his depiction, which would not have been in line with the 'heroic' statue of the Greco-Roman cultural mentality followed by the writer of the Martyrdom. The mentioning of many converts includes Roman officials which provides the launch pad into the next scene in the narrative.

### A Resurrection Miracle by Paul?

And a certain Patroclus, a cup-bearer of Caesar, came at even unto the grange, and not being able because of the press to enter in to Paul, he sat in a high window and listened to him teaching the word of God. But whereas the evil devil envied the love of the brethren, Patroclus fell down from the window and died, and forthwith it was told unto Nero.

But Paul perceiving it by the spirit said: Men and brethren, the evil one hath gained occasion to tempt you: go out of the house and ye shall find a lad fallen from the height and now ready to give up the ghost; take him up and bring him hither to me. And they went and brought him; and when the people saw it they were troubled. But Paul said: Now, brethren, let your faith appear; come all of you and let us weep unto our Lord Jesus Christ, that this lad may live and we continue in quietness. And when all had lamented, the lad received his spirit again, and they set him on a beast and sent him back alive, together with the rest that were of Caesar's household.<sup>983</sup>

Quite interestingly, the writer re-works the story of Eutychus at Troas in Acts 20:7-12 in order to have Paul raising a young man back to life after a long sermon from Paul.<sup>984</sup> The setting for this 'miracle' is fascinating. Patroclus is connected to Nero's inner court as a servant. Out of interest in Paul he makes the trip to the country farmhouse that Paul is leasing to hear him. Not getting there quickly enough in the evening, he is forced to sit in a high window to listen to Paul because of the press of the crowd. This must have been some kind of farmhouse!

What is interesting but unanswerable is the meaning of the phrase "the word of God." It could not have referred to a written source given the fact that no sacred NT scriptures were in existence at this point, and the anti-Semitism of Christian writers by 160 AD would have not allowed them to refer to the OT as sacred scriptures. If by this phrase the orally preached Gospel was intended, it is an unusual expression because inside the NT the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is the standard phrase.

Unlike Acts where Luke describes Eutychus going to sleep and falling out the window due the fumes and smoke from many lamps in the upstairs room where the meeting was taking place, here the devil causes Patroclus to fall down from the window on the outside of the building. When the all knowing Paul realizes this fall, he instructs others to go get Patroclus, rather than going to him like with Eutychus. Note the difference in Paul's verbal reaction between the two accounts: 1) Patroclus: "But Paul perceiving it by the spirit said: Men and brethren, the evil one hath gained occasion to tempt you: go out of the house and ye shall find a lad fallen from the height and now ready to give up the ghost; take him up and bring him hither to me" 2) Eutychus: "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." Clearly a different, later theological perspective is reflected in the Martyrdom. In this account, the all knowing Paul sensed the lad on the ground outside, but Paul was informed normally by others about Eutychus.

The unconscious young man was to be carried to Paul inside the house, where he was revived merely at being in the presence of Paul. Being fearful of recuperations from Nero who was told that his cup-bearer had died, the gathered crowd quickly put him on a donkey and sent him back to Nero with other members of Nero's household who had attended the meeting. The response of the crowd here was relief that they were not in trouble with Nero, whereas in Troas Eutychus' revival brought considerable joy to the gathered believers.

Note again the subtle "name dropping" here with the mention of other members of Nero's household

<sup>983</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 294.

<sup>984</sup>Acts 20:7-12. 7 Ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων συνηγμένων ἡμῶν κλάσαι ἄρτον, ὁ Παῦλος διελέγετο αὐτοῖς μέλλων ἐξιέναι τῇ ἐπαύριον, παρέτεινεν τε τὸν λόγον μέχρι μεσονυκτίου. 8 ἦσαν δὲ λαμπάδες ἱκαναὶ ἐν τῷ ὑπερώῳ οὗ ἦμεν συνηγμένοι. 9 καθεζόμενος δὲ τις νεανίας ὀνόματι Εὐτυχὸς ἐπὶ τῆς θυρίδος, καταφερόμενος ὑπνῷ βαθεῖ διαλεγόμενου τοῦ Παύλου ἐπὶ πλεῖον, κατενεχθεὶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπνου ἔπεσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ τριστέγου κάτω καὶ ἦρθη νεκρός. 10 καταβάς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ἐπέπεσεν αὐτῷ καὶ συμπεριλαβὼν εἶπεν· μὴ θορυβεῖσθε, ἡ γὰρ ψυχή αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστίν. 11 ἀναβάς δὲ καὶ κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον καὶ γευσάμενος ἐφ' ἱκανόν τε ὀμιλήσας ἄχρι ἀγῆς, οὕτως ἐξῆλθεν. 12 ἦγαγον δὲ τὸν παῖδα ζῶντα καὶ παρεκλήθησαν οὐ μετρίως.

7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. 9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead. 10 But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." 11 Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. 12 Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.



being present at this meeting out in the country at Paul's farmhouse. The writer is anxious to underscore Paul's impact with emphasis upon it reaching the inner circle of Nero's household. This is the way a real hero worked in ancient Rome. He always was influential over powerful people.

### **Nero's fearful response to the news about Patroclus:**

II. But Nero, when he heard of the death of Patroclus, was sore grieved, and when he came in from the bath he commanded another to be set over the wine. But his servants told him, saying: Caesar, Patroclus liveth and standeth at the table. And Caesar, hearing that Patroclus lived, was affrighted and would not go in. But when he went in, he saw Patroclus, and was beside himself, and said: Patroclus, livest thou? And he said: I live, Caesar. And he said: Who is he that made thee to live? And the lad, full of the mind of faith, said: Christ Jesus, the king of the ages. And Caesar was troubled and said: Shall he, then, be king of the ages and overthrow all kingdoms? Patroclus saith unto him: Yea, he overthroweth all kingdoms and he alone shall be for ever, and there shall be no kingdom that shall escape him. And he smote him on the face and said: Patroclus, art thou also a soldier of that king? And he said: Yea, Lord Caesar, for he raised me when I was dead. And Barsabas Justus of the broad feet, and Urion the Cappadocian, and Festus the Galatian, Caesar's chief men, said: We also are soldiers of the king of the ages. And he shut them up in prison, having grievously tormented them, whom he loved much, and commanded the soldiers of the great king to be sought out, and set forth a decree to this effect, that all that were found to be Christians and soldiers of Christ should be slain.<sup>985</sup>

This next paragraph describes the reaction of Nero to the news about his servant Patroclus. In the preceding paragraph the writer reported that when Patroclus fell out the window, news of his death was taken to Nero in the palace at Rome. Now the writer picks up on that with the continuation of his story.

Nero's initial reaction was that of grief, but he quickly promoted another to take the place of Patroclus to be in charge of the wine.<sup>986</sup> But with the new appointee ready to begin, the other servants in the house hold informed Nero that Patroclus actually was alive. Being scared by this news Nero hesitated to enter the dining room at the palace, but did eventually enter and was shocked to see Patroclus alive and in his place of service.

In the ensuing dialogue between Nero and Patroclus, the emperor wants to know who made him alive. To which Patroclus replies that Jesus Christ made him alive. In a rather skewed direction, Nero then wants to know whether this Jesus Christ intends to overthrow him and take control of the empire. Notice the "religious" language viewpoint in Nero's words: *Shall he, then, be king of the ages and overthrow all kingdoms?* Patroclus rather boastfully declares yes. Nero responds by slapping Patroclus and reminding him that he is a soldier pledged to loyalty to Nero. But Patroclus affirms greater loyalty to Christ. Also, several other soldiers present -- *Barsabas Justus of the broad feet, and Urion the Cappadocian, and Festus the Galatian, Caesar's chief men* -- affirm to Nero their loyalty to Christ as well. All of these were then locked up and an order was given to search out any other "soldiers of Christ." All would be slain for their loyalty to Christ.

### **Nero's rage at Paul:**

III. And among many others Paul also was brought, bound: unto whom all his fellow-prisoners gave heed; so that Caesar perceived that he was over the camp. And he said to him: Thou that art the great king's man, but my prisoner, how thoughtest thou well to come by stealth into the government of the Romans and levy soldiers out of my province? But Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, said before them all: O Caesar, not only out of thy province do we levy soldiers, but out of the whole world. For so hath it been ordained unto us, that no man should be refused who wisheth to serve my king. And if it like thee also to serve him (Lat. thou wilt not repent thereof: but think not that the wealth, &c., which seems better), it is not wealth nor the splendour that is now in this life that shall save thee; but if thou submit and entreat him, thou shalt be saved; for in one day (or one day) he shall fight against the world with fire. And when Caesar heard that, he commanded all the prisoners to be burned with fire, but Paul to be beheaded after the law of the Romans.

But Paul kept not silence concerning the word, but communicated with Longus the prefect and Cestus the centurion.

Nero therefore went on (was) (perhaps add 'raging') in Rome, slaying many Christians without a hearing, by the working of the evil one; so that the Romans stood before the palace and cried: It sufficeth, Caesar! for the men

---

<sup>985</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 294.

<sup>986</sup>The role of the cup bearer was to insure that no one could poison the emperor by poisoning his wine. Since the cup bearer had to first taste all the wine served to the emperor, he had significant motivation to protect the wine in storage from being tampered with.

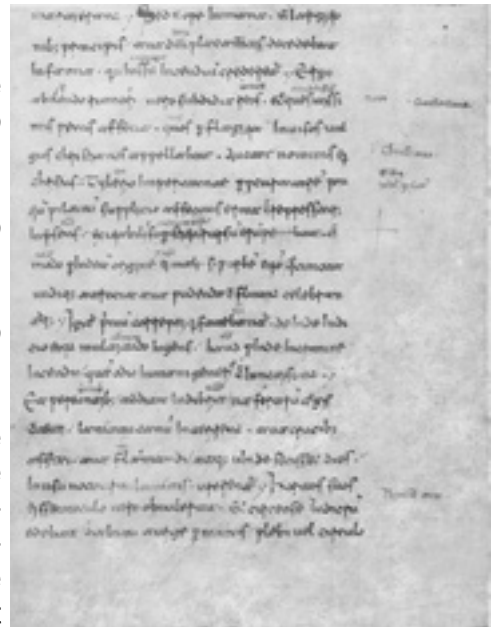
are our own! thou destroyest the strength of the Romans! Then at that he was persuaded and ceased, and commanded that no man should touch any Christian, until he should learn thoroughly concerning them.<sup>987</sup>

In the search for Christians ordered by Nero, Paul ended up being arrested and brought before the emperor. In typical Roman heroic fashion Paul receives adoration from the other prisoners leading Nero to conclude that he is a ring leader of this insurgent movement. But Nero ‘mistakenly’ thinks that he has now captured the ring leader and thus can end this sedition movement. If the ‘king’ Paul served were so intelligent he would not have let his right hand man be captured: *Thou that art the great king’s man, but my prisoner, how thoughtest thou well to come by stealth into the government of the Romans and levy soldiers out of my province?*

Paul’s response -- attributed to the leadership of the Holy Spirit by the writer -- does not correct Nero’s mistaken notion of who Christ is. Rather, it boastfully asserts the superior power of Christ over Nero. Paul supposedly even makes an appeal to Nero to join ranks and become a Christian himself. With Paul’s mentioning of Christ’s anticipated action of fighting “against the world with fire,” Nero decides the best punishment of the Christian soldiers would be to burn them alive. Yet, due to Paul’s Roman citizenship, the only option for Paul is beheading.

Paul then goes to work on Longus, the prefect, and Cestus, the centurion, who have direct responsibility for his custody. All the while Nero unleashes a vicious persecution of Christians throughout the city of Rome, and executes many without due process under Roman law. It is so intense, in the view of the writer, that even Roman citizens themselves appeal to Nero to cease the persecution. Their argument was that Nero was killing off the best and most important Romans in the city by this persecution. Nero heeds their argument and backs off from the vicious persecution to the extent that none are to be executed until he has further investigated this movement that Paul leads.

Once more the signals of a Roman hero in the story guide the writer in describing these scenes. Paul remains subtly ‘in control’ despite Nero’s thinking that he has the upper hand. Paul continues to make converts among the Roman officials even while Nero is persecuting and executing Christians in the city. Interestingly here, the writer echoes some of the vicious tones of persecution of Christians subsequently to the great fire in July 64 AD. He reflects some awareness of the stories of Nero’s behavior in blaming the Christians for the fire.<sup>988</sup> Probably he had read



**A copy of the second Medicean manuscript of *Annals*, Book 15, chapter 44**

<sup>987</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 294–295.

<sup>988</sup> Compare Tacitus’ account in the *Annals*, book 15 which covers 62-65 AD. This was written around 109 AD.

Of Rome meanwhile, so much as was left unoccupied by his mansion, was not built up, as it had been after its burning by the Gauls, without any regularity or in any fashion, but with rows of streets according to measurement, with broad thoroughfares, with a restriction on the height of houses, with open spaces, and the further addition of colonnades, as a protection to the frontage of the blocks of tenements. These colonnades Nero promised to erect at his own expense, and to hand over the open spaces, when cleared of the debris, to the ground landlords. He also offered rewards proportioned to each person’s position and property, and prescribed a period within which they were to obtain them on the completion of so many houses or blocks of building. He fixed on the marshes of Ostia for the reception of the rubbish, and arranged that the ships which had brought up corn by the Tiber, should sail down the river with cargoes of this rubbish. The buildings themselves, to a certain height, were to be solidly constructed, without wooden beams, of stone from Gabii or Alba, that material being impervious to fire. And to provide that the water which individual license had illegally appropriated, might flow in greater abundance in several places for the public use, officers were appointed, and everyone was to have in the open court the means of stopping a fire. Every building, too, was to be enclosed by its own proper wall, not by one common to others. These changes which were liked for their utility, also added beauty to the new city. Some, however, thought that its old arrangement had been more conducive to health, inasmuch as the narrow streets with the elevation of the roofs were not equally penetrated by the sun’s heat, while now the open space, unsheltered by any shade, was scorched by a fiercer glow.

Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess. And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. *But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty dur-*

Tacitus' account, which by his day was considered to be the standard version of the great fire. Yet in none of the accounts by Roman historians is there any record of Roman citizens asking Nero to terminate his persecution of Christians. The account in the *Martyrdom* seems to be a fantasy creation in order to reinforce the heroic image of Paul. His writing of this tale about half a century after Tacitus' account enabled him to avoid any criticism of creating legend rather than writing history, since no one living in his day had a first hand account of many of the details. But more importantly as a Gnostic oriented writer, he was supposed to have secret knowledge of events that were hidden from the eyes of the uninitiated.

### **Paul dares Nero to behead him:**

IV. Then was Paul brought unto him after the decree; and he abode by his word that he should be beheaded. And Paul said: Caesar, it is not for a little space that I live unto my king; and if thou behead me, this will I do: I will arise and show myself unto thee that I am not dead but live unto my Lord Jesus Christ, who cometh to judge the world. But Longus and Cestus said unto Paul: Whence have ye this king, that ye believe in him and will not change your mind, even unto death? And Paul communicated unto them the word and said: Ye men that are in this ignorance and error, change your mind and be saved from the fire that cometh upon all the world: for we serve not, as ye suppose, a king that cometh from the earth, but from heaven, even the living God, who because of the iniquities that are done in this world, cometh as a judge; and blessed is that man who shall believe in him and shall live for ever when he cometh to burn the world and purge it throughly. Then they beseeching him said: We entreat thee, help us, and we will let thee go. But he answered and said: I am not a deserter of Christ, but a lawful soldier of the living God: if I had known that I should die, O Longus and Cestus, I would have done it, but seeing that I live unto God and love myself, I go unto the Lord, to come with him in the glory of his Father. They say unto him: How then shall we live when thou art beheaded?<sup>989</sup>

Perhaps the most brash assertion in the entire *martyrdom* story comes here. Paul supposedly accepts his fate of being beheaded but warns Nero: if thou behead me, this will I do: I will arise and show myself unto thee that I am not dead but live unto my Lord Jesus Christ, who cometh to judge the world. In other words, proof of the legitimacy of his religious commitment to Christ will be in the form of a beheaded man coming back to life and appearing to Nero! Nero evidently was unmoved by such a dare, but it caught the attention of Longus and Cestus whom Paul had been working on to become Christians already. They are amazed that Paul is prepared to die for his religious commitment.

Paul's response to their amazement is an appeal to them to become Christians. The witness works and they want to know how to be saved: *Then they beseeching him said: We entreat thee, help us, and we will let thee go.* Interestingly enough, they promise to let Paul escape Nero's grip if he will help them become Christians. This sounds a little like Simon Magnus' offer to Peter of money if Peter and John will show him how to gain the supernatural power he had observed in their ministry, Paul in responding to the offer of Longus and Cestus does not explain how to become a Christian to them. Rather, he brags about his loyalty to Christ even to martyrdom. They are then alarmed thinking that a dead, beheaded Paul cannot help them become Christians: *How then shall we live when thou art beheaded?*

The influence of the Roman heroic genre upon the writer comes to the forefront here with the outlandish dare of Paul to the emperor. In none of the appearances of Paul before the various Roman authorities in Acts 24-26 does Paul ever respond in such a manner. Instead he follows the contemporary custom of polite respect for the authority of the Roman leader as he begins his defense. For example before Felix at Caesarea, he begins his defense speech with ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ὄντα σε κριτὴν τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ ἐπιστάμενος εὐθύμως τὰ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι, "I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation" (Acts 24:10b). *Then before Agrippa and Festus. 2 Περὶ πάντων ὧν ἐγκαλοῦμαι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, ἡγῆμαι* *ing the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.*

*Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.*

<sup>989</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 295.



ἐμαυτὸν μακάριον ἐπὶ σοῦ μέλλων σήμερον ἀπολογεῖσθαι 3 μάλιστα γνώστην ὄντα σε πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἐθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων, διὸ δέομαι μακροθύμως ἀκοῦσαί μου. 2 “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg of you to listen to me patiently” (Acts 26:2-3).

The Lukan Paul treats the Roman authorities with due respect, the apocryphal Paul treats Nero with contempt. And he is so preoccupied with himself that he ignores a request to explain to a pair of significant Roman leaders the way to faith in Christ. The Christianity the writer of the martyrdom is offering is a hugely perverted version of the biblical Gospel, and concentrates on giving believers brute power in the name of God over rulers and people of significance. This religion promotes a ‘preacher cult’ where the religious experience of believers revolves around the presence and power of human leaders. Does that remind you of anything similar in our world?

### Paul is beheaded:

V. And while they yet spake thus, Nero sent one Parthenius and Pheres to see if Paul were already beheaded; and they found him yet alive. And he called them to him and said: Believe on the living God, which raiseth me and all them that believe on him from the dead. And they said: We go now unto Nero; but when thou diest and risest again, then will we believe on thy God. And as Longus and Cestus entreated him yet more concerning salvation, he saith to them: Come quickly unto my grave in the morning and ye shall find two men praying, Titus and Luke. They shall give you the seal in the Lord.

Then Paul stood with his face to the east and lifted up his hands unto heaven and prayed a long time, and in his prayer he conversed in the Hebrew tongue with the fathers, and then stretched forth his neck without speaking. And when the executioner (speculator) struck off his head, milk spurted upon the cloak of the soldier. And the soldier and all that were there present when they saw it marvelled and glorified God which had given such glory unto Paul: and they went and told Caesar what was done.<sup>990</sup>

Here is one of the most peculiar ways of leading individuals to faith in Christ ever recorded! Paul’s above conversation with Longus and Cestus, we now discover, took place in the prison rather than in the audience room with the emperor present. After a bit of time, Nero decided to check to see whether Paul had been executed yet as ordered. So he sent Parthenius and Pheres to the prison in another part of the palace to see. When they discover Paul alive and not dead, Paul admonishes them to *Believe on the living God, which raiseth me and all them that believe on him from the dead*. Note again the egocentric orientation of Paul’s words. They indicate that when they see Paul raised from the dead after being beheaded they will believe: *We go now unto Nero; but when thou diest and risest again, then will we believe on thy God*. Longus and Cestus become even more concerned about their salvation and Paul promises them confirmation of the power of his religion: *Come quickly unto my grave in the morning and ye shall find two men praying, Titus and Luke. They shall give you the seal in the Lord*.

Paul prepares for his execution with a lengthy prayer in Hebrew as he faces the east toward Jerusalem as a faithful Jew would pray in the Diaspora. He then offers his neck to the executioner who proceeds to chop off his head with a sword. In typical Roman heroic genre fashion, spectacular supernatural phenomena accompany Paul’s death: *And when the executioner (speculator) struck off his head, milk spurted upon the cloak of the soldier*. Not blood but milk -- life giving and nourishing milk -- spurts from Paul’s body and hits the executioner. Those watching the execution recognize the death of a heroic person from this phenomenon and praise Paul’s God. Then they go back to Nero to convey the news about the spectacular death of Paul.

Very likely the writer was familiar with many of the written ‘martyrdoms’ in circulation by his day. The pattern described here follows the standard mold of the accounts of the deaths of various Christian leaders in the second century. The execution of Polycarp, spiritual leader at Smyrna, in Rome before the middle of the second century is one such example:

At length, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, there came forth a dove,<sup>991</sup> and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished; and all the people wondered that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was

---

<sup>990</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 295–296.

<sup>991</sup>“Eusebius omits all mention of the dove, and many have thought the text to be here corrupt. It has been proposed to read ἐπ’ ἀριστερῶ, ‘on the left hand side,’ instead of περιστερῶ, ‘a dove.’” [Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885).]

one, having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been or shall yet be accomplished.<sup>992</sup>

The Roman heroic genre required some kind of supernatural phenomenon from the gods in order to validate the individual's special character. These second century Christian martyrdom writings<sup>993</sup> customarily provide such in their accounts, reflecting a religious viewpoint out of their Christian faith. The writer of this martyrdom of Paul adheres to this common pattern in early Christian writings. Apart from the one instance of the rather strange phenomenon recorded by Matthew (27:51-54<sup>994</sup>) in regard to Jesus' death, the New Testament does not attach any such depictions to the death of any of the apostles or others who die for their faith commitment.

### Paul comes back to life:

VI. And when he heard it, while he marvelled long and was in perplexity, Paul came about the ninth hour, when many philosophers and the centurion were standing with Caesar, and stood before them all and said: Caesar, behold, I, Paul, the soldier of God, am not dead, but live in my God. But unto thee shall many evils befall and great punishment, thou wretched man, because thou hast shed unjustly the blood of the righteous, not many days hence. And having so said Paul departed from him. But Nero hearing it and being greatly troubled commanded the prisoners to be loosed, and Patroclus also and Barsabas and them that were with him.<sup>995</sup>

True to his promise to come back to life even though beheaded, Paul puts in an appearance before Nero. But the emperor is accompanied by many philosophers, these who often denied the supernatural, and also the centurion who is presumably Cestus the centurion mentioned in paragraph III. The 'ninth hour' would be mid-afternoon when Paul put in his appearance. Supposedly Nero had been troubled by Paul's earlier dare and was seeking help from these philosophers to figure out what this fellow was intending by his previous statement. The presence of Cestus is important because it sets the stage for the climatic paragraph, VII, that follows this one.

Paul's declaration to Nero is a rather self-serving statement of vindication of himself -- behold, I, Paul, the soldier of God, am not dead, but live in my God. -- that is followed by the pronouncement of Nero's doom: But unto thee shall many evils befall and great punishment, thou wretched man, because thou hast shed unjustly the blood of the righteous, not many days hence. Paul's 'prediction' is calculated to happen in the next few days to Nero. Of course, nothing in the Roman histories, especially Tacitus who has the most detailed account, exists about any immediate punishment. In fact, Tacitus mentions Nero opening up the palace for homeless victims of the fire to stay in temporarily until alternative housing could be constructed. To be sure, the fire did cause reverberations elsewhere in the empire in large part because of the anticipated taxation in order to rebuild much of Rome which had been destroyed. This led over time to some attempts by various groups of senators to plot to assassinate Nero, none of which were successful however.

Paul's pronouncement is short and blunt, according to the writer. He shows up, makes his declaration, and disappears: And having so said Paul departed from him. This is somewhat atypical, since Roman heroes often blabbed on incessantly. But the writer's aim at this point is to stress the impact on Nero of this 'resurrection' appearance of Paul: But Nero hearing it and being greatly troubled commanded the prisoners to be loosed, and Patroclus

---

<sup>992</sup>Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., "The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna," in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 42.

<sup>993</sup>The study of these [martyrologies](#) is a distinct scholarly discipline, due to the undue attention and claims of special powers attributed to the 'saints' due to being martyred. Protestant interest in martyrdom was spurred by the Puritan John Foxe with his [Foxe's Book of Martyrs](#) released in 1563. The Protestant interest has been motivated by the inspiration of heroic dying by faithful Christians.

<sup>994</sup>**Matt. 27:51-54.** 51 Καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω εἰς δύο \* καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐσεισθη καὶ αἱ πέτραι ἐσχίσθησαν, 52 καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεώχθησαν καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν, 53 καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς.

54 Ὁ δὲ ἑκατόνταρχος καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ τηροῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἰδόντες τὸν σεισμὸν καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, λέγοντες· ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

54 Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

<sup>995</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 296.

also and Barsabas and them that were with him. Thus Paul, the heroic master of the situation, comes out on top by securing the release of those Christian prisoners, especially among the ranks of the Roman soldiers. Interestingly, no impact on the philosophers is noted by the writer. And no explanation for why is provided. Evidently they enter the scene only as a foil backdrop symbolic of the wisest of men in that day who are baffled by Paul's appearance.

### A strange experience at Paul's grave the next morning:

VII. And as Paul charged them, Longus and Cestus the centurion went early in the morning and approached with fear unto the grave of Paul. And when they were come thither they saw two men praying, and Paul betwixt them, so that they beholding the wondrous marvel were amazed, but Titus and Luke being stricken with the fear of man when they saw Longus and Cestus coming toward them, turned to flight. But they pursued after them, saying: We pursue you not for death but for life, that ye may give it unto us, as Paul promised us, whom we saw just now standing betwixt you and praying. And when they heard that, Titus and Luke rejoiced and gave them the seal in the Lord, glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Copt. and glorified the Lord Jesus Christ and all the saints).

Unto whom be glory world without end. Amen.<sup>996</sup>

The climax of the martyrdom account is reached with the heroic Paul appearing over his grave praying with Titus and Luke just as promised earlier to the Roman officials Longus and Cestus. Paul's heroism is highlighted by characterizing Titus and Luke negatively as running away in fear when these two Roman official arrive at the grave. These officials have to chase them down in order to get them to explain how to become Christians. Interestingly, this conversion is presented as [the seal in the Lord](#). But this is not explained and the readers are left wondering whether some kind of 'magical bestowal' by Christian leaders is the essence of Christian conversion. It appears to be the priestly blessing of confirmation given to Longus and Cestus.

As such the doctrine of salvation is radically moving away from what is found in the canonical New Testament. The foundations of the priestly role in mediating salvation to the laity are taking shape in this.

What can we conclude about Paul's execution from The Martyrdom of Paul? Historically speaking, nothing! M.R. James asserts that the original writer of The Acts of Paul was "an orthodox Christian," but he is anything but a biblical Christian. And a second century 'orthodoxy' label is actually highly questionable. Tertullian does not consider him orthodox in the late second century. His fanciful tale of Paul's death provides nothing of solid historical value about what happened to Paul at the end of his life. The only point that it shares in common with the so-called 'orthodox' church fathers is that Paul was beheaded. But the time, place, and circumstances of this account are contradicted uniformly by the church fathers. Clearly in the early 300s, Eusebius in his *Church History* (2.25.5-7) does not mention this writing as evidence for Paul's death. When the [Manichaenians](#) as a vigorously condemned heretical group began using the *Acts of Paul* in the middle to late 200s, this rightfully doomed the document among the mainstream of Christian churches.

What can be learned of historical value is not about Paul but about the methodology of the writer. He becomes something of a textbook example of the huge dangers of allowing one's surrounding cultural norms to define the parameters of Christian understanding. And to become so enslaved to these cultural norms that one has to completely re-cast the central characters of apostolic Christianity into the contemporary mold of a Roman hero and quasi divine-man reflects inevitably a move into heresy and a betrayal of the Gospel preached by the apostle Paul and for which he sacrificed his life. With the modern emphases in certain places on 'contextualizing' the Gospel in order to make it understandable to a modern audience, the same move into heresy and a perverted form of the Gospel is not only the danger but the occurring reality. A careful, honest study of Christian history unfortunately reveals repeated instances of the very same thing happening.

### Acts of Thekla<sup>997</sup>

---

<sup>996</sup>Montague Rhodes James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 296.

<sup>997</sup>According to ancient Christian tradition, Thekla of Iconium was a convert, companion, and colleague of the apostle Paul. After she proved herself faithful by enduring persecutions, Paul ordained her to teach. At about the year 200 C.E. Tertullian (*De Bapt.* 1.17) wrote:

But if they claim writings which are wrongly inscribed with Paul's name—I mean the example of Thecla—in support of women's free-



One interesting tidbit about Paul that emerges from this other section of *The Acts of Paul* is a reference to a supposed physical appearance of the apostle: a man little of stature, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining, and nose somewhat hooked, full of grace: for sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had the face of an angel (*Acts of Paul and Thekla*, 2.3). How historically reliable this is can be seriously questioned.<sup>998</sup> Probably it has little basis in actuality. The statement is supposedly made by Onesiphorus while living at Iconium as he was watching by the roadside for Paul to arrive in the city. With Onesiphorus not knowing him personally, Titus had supposedly described Paul to him so that he could recognize the apostle when he came along the main road into the city.

\*\*\*\*\*

dom to teach and baptize, let them know that a presbyter in Asia, who put together that book, heaping up a narrative as it were from his own materials under Paul's name, when after conviction he confessed that he had done it from love of Paul, resigned his position.

"The book referred to here almost certainly was the Acts of Paul, in which we find the following stories of this Thekla.

"When Paul and his two traveling companions, Demas and Hermogenes, arrive in Iconium to preach their gospel and the necessity of sexual continence, a beautiful young woman named Thekla converts and then refuses to marry Thamyris, to whom she had been betrothed. He and Theocleia, her mother, unsuccessfully beg her to abandon this newcomer Paul. Thamyris, however, succeeds in bribing Demas and Hermogenes to desert Paul and they tell him how to bring charges against the apostle before Roman authorities. Thekla visits Paul in jail and she is brought with him to trial. Paul is flogged and released, but Thekla, at her mother's insistence, is condemned to the pyre. A miraculous shower extinguishes the flames and Thekla leaves Iconium in search of Paul.

"She finds Paul and Onesiphorus' family in a cave praying for her welfare, narrates her rescue, and asks Paul to baptize her. He refuses until she is more fully proven. She and Paul then enter Antioch of Pisidia, where an officer of the emperor cult attempts to have his way with her. In defending herself she violates the imperial symbols Alexander wears and thus is accused of the capital offense of sacrilege. A Roman judge condemns her to the beasts. The first beast released is a lioness, which refuses to eat her. Next comes a bear but the lioness kills it. Then a lion fights the lioness and both die. Inasmuch as Paul had refused to baptize her, she baptizes herself safely in a pool of ferocious (?) seals. Other beasts are released, but the women inebriate them by throwing flowers, spices, and perfumes into the arena. In desperation the executioners finally tie her to two bulls and thrust hot pokers onto their genitals. The bulls bolt but fire burns the ropes and Thekla is spared. Queen Tryphaena, her patroness in Antioch, gives her money to care for the poor and sends her off to find Paul. When the apostle hears Thekla's story he tells her "to teach the word of God." Tradition claimed that she established a ministry in Seleucia of Isauria where she taught, cared for the poor, and healed the sick (see, e.g., the later Greek additions to the end of the Acts of Paul and Thekla).

"Tertullian thought the author of the Acts of Paul concocted Thekla out of an overly enthusiastic 'love of Paul,' but it is more likely the author had learned Theklan legends from local storytellers and wrote them up in his own Acts. Given the dominant place of women in the story and the use of Thekla's memory to authorize women teaching and baptizing, it is likely these storytellers were themselves celibate women. The author of the pseudo-Pauline Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) seems to have known such stories and to have dismissed them and their legitimations of women's ministries as "tales told by old women" (1 Tim 4:7; MacDonald 1983). It is difficult to know how the legends were generated, but it is quite possible that an Anatolian woman named Thekla was in fact active in the Pauline mission and later became the subject of fantastic legends used to support women in their ministries.

"Be that as it may, Thekla was popular in the imaginations of early Christians. The sections of the Acts of Paul pertaining to her circulated independently as the Acts of Paul and Thekla and were widely read and copied. We know of several traditions about her death, and she was the heroine of Methodius' Symposium (early 4th century). Her iconography is rich until the 12th century. Thekla typically is depicted listening to Paul preach, half naked between two wild beasts, or as an orant surrounded by flames. Vowed virgins often took her name, including Macrina, the sister of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa. Her feast day was celebrated in the East on September 24 and in the West (until she was stripped of canonical status at the Second Vatican Council) on September 23.

"The zenith of her popularity came in the 4th to 6th centuries and was largely concentrated in Seleucia, Isauria, the traditional location of her ministry. Gregory of Nazianzus called Seleucia "the city of the holy and illustrious virgin Thekla" (On the Great Athanasius 22), and here archaeologists found a richly decorated, huge basilica—almost the length of a football field—as well as other shrines, all in honor of St. Thekla. A 4th-century nun named Egeria visited Seleucia and recorded in her extant diary that it contained "a tremendous number of [monastic] cells for men and women (The Travels of Egeria 23, 1–6). A 5th-century resident of Seleucia wrote a two-volume work entitled *The Life and Miracles of Saint Thekla*, the first half of which simply paraphrases the Acts of Paul and Thekla. The second half, however, contains 46 stories of miracles attributed to Thekla by the local faithful, thus providing a window through which to see entire provinces of Asia Minor devoted to the veneration of this virgin martyr.

"The text of the Acts of Paul and Thekla appears in pp. 235–72 of *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, vol. 1, eds. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet (Leipzig 1891–1903; reprint Darmstadt 1959). See also NTApoc 2: 353–64 and DACL 15: 2225–36.

[Dennis R. MacDonald, "Thekla, Acts Of," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 443–444.]

<sup>998</sup>The author places Titus as having passed through the city, but Demas and Hermogenes being in the city and out of envy stirring up trouble for Onesiphorus because Paul lodged with him rather than with them while he was in the city. They are also critical of Paul as well; cf. paragraphs 12–14. Of course, Luke's Acts of the Apostles makes no mention of any of this on either Paul's first visit during the first missionary journey nor during the second visit on the second missionary journey. The negative image of Demas does not emerge inside the NT until over a decade later in Second Timothy and there Demas is not connected to Galatia at all.

### 8.1.6.3 Reconstructing the End of Paul's Life

How can we understand the end of Paul's life? In the process of the last several units we have looked at Second Timothy, representative church fathers, and the primary apocryphal sources. Hopefully by now some conclusions are coming together.

Here are some important assumptions:

**1) Historical reliability can only be granted to Second Timothy.**

In spite of all the questions that have been raised about the Pastoral Epistles in many circles of modern scholarship,<sup>999</sup> careful analysis of the contents of the texts of these three documents reflects the same approach to recording historical reality as found elsewhere inside the New Testament.<sup>1000</sup> And when compared with the non-canonical materials from both the church fathers and especially those in the New Testament Apocrypha, it should be clear that the biographical references inside Second Timothy are unquestionably more reliable historically than those from the other two sources.

What emerges from Second Timothy is an elderly apostle approaching his own death, and doing so with confidence in his Lord. The letter mostly was written by Paul from Rome to Timothy in Ephesus as a reassurance of Timothy's ministry in Ephesus and also as a request for Timothy to make a trip to Rome in order to have some time with the apostle before his impending death. Because the letter was finished and sent to Ephesus prior to Paul's death, no details about the end of Paul's life are given. Thus we learn nothing from Second Timothy about how Paul's life ended, apart from the strong assumption in the letter that it would end in Rome.

**2) General confidence regarding Paul's last years can be granted to only a few basic assertions in the church fathers.**

Careful analysis of the scattered references about the last years in Paul's life that are found in

---

<sup>999</sup>“The authenticity of the PE was not questioned until the nineteenth century. Schleiermacher (*Über den sogenannten ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheus* [1807]) was the first to raise the question of the authorship of 1 Timothy because of its vocabulary, and Eichhorn (*Historisch-kritische Einleitung* [1812]) extended the skepticism to 2 Timothy and Titus. Baur (*Pastoralbriefe*) and the Tübingen school dropped all three letters from the Pauline corpus for linguistic and historical reasons, postulating that only four of the canonical writings bearing Paul's name were from Paul. In the twentieth century critical scholarship began to acknowledge the personal elements and historical allusions in the PE and suggested the possibility that Pauline fragments had been included (Harrison, *Problem* [1921]; Scott, 1936; Falconer, 1937; Easton, 1948) or that the corpus was the work not of a second-century forger but of a pseudepigrapher (see below), possibly an admirer of Paul who wanted to make Paul's message relevant to the needs of a later generation. Subsequently, it has often been viewed as one of the “assured results of scholarship” that Paul could not have written the PE. For example, the NEB translates 1 Tim 1:2 ‘his true son,’ rather than ‘my true son’ (γνησίῳ τέκνῳ), implying a distance between the writer and Paul (confirmed by personal correspondence between C. H. Dodd and R. H. Mounce, which was reported to me by the latter).

“Yet there have always been defenders of Pauline authorship in continental, British, and American scholarship: Alford, *Greek New Testament* (1st ed., 1849); Ellicott (1864); Huther (ET 1885); Plummer (1st ed., 1888); F. Godet, *Studies on the Epistles* (tr. A. H. Holmden [New York; Dutton, 1889]); Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays* (1893); Bernard (1899); Zahn, *Introduction* (1st Ger. ed., 1899); B. Weiss (1902); Wohlenberg (1st ed., 1906); Hort, *Christian Ecclesia* (1914); Ramsay (1909–11); James, *Genuineness* (1909); White (1910); Parry (1920); Lock (1924); Michaelis, *Pastoralbriefe* (1930); Robertson, *Word Pictures* (1931); Thörnell, *Pastoralbrevens* (1931); Torm, *Psychologie* (1932); Roller, *Formular* (1933); Spicq (1st ed., 1948); Jeremias (1st ed., 1953); Simpson (1954); Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles and the Mind of Paul* (1956); Hendriksen (1957); Ellis, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (1961); Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times* (Ger. 1962, ET 1970); E. F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964); Kelly (1964); Holtz (1965); Ridderbos (1967); Bürki (1974, 1975); Fee (1984); L. T. Johnson, *Writings* (1986); Knight (1992); more listed in Spicq, 1:159.”

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lxxxiii–lxxxiv.]

<sup>1000</sup>“By the end of the second century the PE were widely accepted as authoritative and Pauline (Kümmel, *Introduction*, 370; Koester, *Introduction* 2:298). (Wall's assertion that there is no ‘clear textual witness to them [i.e., the PE] prior to the third century’ [BBR 5 ([1995] 125) places him in the minority among critical scholars.) Clement of Alexandria constantly connects his citations from the PE to Paul (references in Spicq, 1:167–68). He cites 1 Tim 6:20 in his discussion of the Gnostic heretics' rejection of the letters to Timothy. Spicq argues that this is significant, for it shows that the letters were known and had been accepted into the canon by the time of Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion (1:168). Quinn (3) notes the approximately 450 references to the PE from second-century writings listed in *Biblia Patristica* (1:507–18), which is evidence that the PE could not have been recent creations. By the second century the PE had been translated into Latin and Syriac, and included Paul's name (Lock, xxv). There are no divergent traditions and no other names suggested for authorship. This absence of alternatives argues against any view that sees the PE written to combat Gnosticism and Marcion. Bernard gives a full list of the proposed citations from and allusions to the PE in the early Fathers.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lxiv–lxv.]

the writings of the church fathers reveals surprisingly few details. Some second century fathers, beginning with Clement of Rome, were persuaded that Paul made a trip to Spain after being released from imprisonment in the early 60s. But later fathers, especially Eusebius in the early 300s, never mention a trip to Spain and only describe activities in the Aegean Sea region after resumption of ministry about 63 AD. Eusebius provides more details than any other largely based on his treatment of First Timothy and Titus.

The one point that stands pretty much in universal agreement among the church fathers is that Paul died in Rome at the end of a second imprisonment under Nero. Yet almost no details are given about the circumstances of his death. Once more, Eusebius is the exception with notations of Paul being beheaded on the Via Ostian at Tre Fontane. Of this Eusebius was persuaded by what he considered as credible 'proofs,' although these do not carry nearly as much weight as evidence in today's historical methodology as they did to Eusebius with his rather primitive approach. The beheading of Paul does, however, fit the scenario of how a Roman citizen would have been executed after losing an appeal to the Roman caesar. Many of the accounts of the fathers describe the execution of both Paul and Peter in the same account, with Peter as a non-Roman citizen being crucified.

The tendency toward very minimal depictions of Paul's death was driven primarily by the emerging martyrology doctrine in Christianity beginning at the middle to the end of the second century. Thus primary interest was centered in the assertion that Paul died as a faithful martyr, which then guaranteed his special status among the 'communion of the saints' in heaven. Thus the historical details of his death became largely irrelevant in this concern. Most important was the religious aspect of him dying as a faithful witness who did not compromise his faith at the time of execution.

Thus about all that can be concluded from the church fathers with reasonable historical certainty is that 1) Paul died in Rome and 2) he was beheaded under Nero's orders. Unclear and thus unresolved is whether this execution was directly connected to the great fire in Rome in July of 64 AD. The fathers do not link his death to the fire. Thus it could easily have taken place later on prior to the end of Nero's life in 68 AD. Thus we have a range of dates from 64 to 68 AD for the timing of his execution, but no decisive evidence pointing to just when it may have occurred. Also unclear is the connection of Paul's execution to that of Peter. From all indication both took place in Rome, and under Nero. And evidently within a reasonably close time period to one another's death. Beyond that the evidence does not exist for any further details.

### **3) *The obvious legendary nature of the apocryphal materials makes them worthless for understanding anything historical about the end of Paul's life.***

The sources inside the apocryphal documents written from the second through the fifth centuries AD are rather limited, particularly in any detail. The *Vercelli Acts*, preserved inside the *Acts of Peter* written originally in the second half of the second century, assume a release from the first imprisonment and a trip to Spain. The sole surviving Latin translation text centers on the depiction of Paul leaving Rome for Spain. But the episode is so structured within the legendary framework of a Roman hero genre, that its historical value is essentially worthless. The use of random images from different events in Luke's Acts of the Apostle are re-worked into a presenting of Paul in a god like manner as he prepares to depart Rome for Spain.

The end of Paul's life is similarly presented in legendary fashion in the *Martyrdom of Paul* document, that originally was a part of the apocryphal *Acts of Paul* coming out of Asia toward the end of the second century. It is the single apocryphal document that attempts to describe Paul's death in any detail. But the Roman hero literary genre with close links to the *Theos-aner* picture provided the framework for the writer to depict Paul's beheading under Nero in even more bizarre fashion than the *Vercelli Acts* material. The single thing to be gleaned historically from this is the clear indication of the writer's acceptance of the church fathers in noting Paul being beheaded by Nero in Rome. But the writer collapses -- or likely confuses -- the two imprisonments of Paul in Rome into a single experience, with echoes of details coming from both experiences in the fathers and from isolated Roman historians such as Tacitus.

Consequently, the apocryphal materials provide virtually no reliable data historically about the final years of Paul's life. As were many of the church fathers, these heretical writers are caught up in the emerging martyrology system and thus are concerned to present a hero's death as even greater confirmation of the apostle's spiritual status in heaven as a martyr. The casting of this death within the literary framework of a Roman hero becomes a strong lesson to us today to make absolutely sure that biblical principles and culturally driven perspectives are kept clearly separate in our understanding of Christianity and of the Bible.



## What can we conclude?

In light of the very limited reliable information about the final years of Paul's life, careful scholarship should exert considerable caution in drawing conclusions about this period of Paul's journey on earth.

### 1) Release from initial Roman imprisonment.

That Paul was released from imprisonment at the end of the two years described by Luke in Acts 28 seems certain. The confirmation of this comes primarily from the canonical Pastoral Epistles inside the New Testament.<sup>1001</sup> The biographical references inside First Timothy and Titus clearly will not 'fit' the Acts framework, and thus describe movements of Paul and his associated subsequent to the end of Acts. When viewed holistically these materials paint a picture of resumed ministry after release from imprisonment in Rome. This activity centered in the region of the Aegean Sea and included Crete, Ephesus in Asia, as well as the provinces Macedonia and Dalmatia. A few of the biographical references, mainly in the Conclusio, of Second Timothy affirm activity by Paul's associates in the same region.

This perspective finds clear confirmation from the church father Eusebius in his Church History with his depiction of a resumption of ministry by Paul largely based upon a running commentary of First Timothy and Titus. But what is confirmed virtually universally by the church fathers who mention Paul and his activities is the release of the apostle from imprisonment in Rome in the early 60s.<sup>1002</sup> This perspective is adopted also in the apocryphal materials as well.

The best calculation of a time frame for this release falls sometime in 63 AD. Probably it was early in the year and allowed the apostle greater freedom to travel beginning in the spring of 63 AD.

### 2) Resumption of ministry for unspecified period of time.

That Paul did resume ministry upon being released from imprisonment in Rome is rather clear. But where did he go? In Phil. 1:24-26, Paul expresses confidence in being released from imprisonment and returning to Philippi in Macedonia to spend some time there. In 1 Tim. 1:3, Paul reminds Timothy of his reminding him to spend time in Ephesus while they were on their way to Macedonia. This was one wish that Paul evidently was able to realize during this period. Another wish expressed some years earlier is less certain about being realized. In Rom. 15:24, Paul in writing to the church at Rome about 56 AD, expressed the ambition to preach the Gospel in Spain. Nothing in the Pastoral Letters hints at him getting to do this. But several church fathers particularly in the second century assume that he did, but give no details about any such trip.

Thus the issue of the location of resumed ministry centers around two regions: the Aegean Sea area and Spain. From the solid data in the pastorals with confirmation by Eusebius in the church fathers, we are confident of the ministry in the Aegean Sea. But the trip to Spain rests on much shakier grounds and is highly uncertain.



<sup>1001</sup>“Arguments both for and against a release, as far as Acts is concerned, are arguments from silence. If the historical allusions in the PE contradicted the teaching of Acts, then the historical argument would be more significant. But since the historical framework of the PE does not contradict Acts, the silence in Acts is not an argument against the PE (so also Spicq, 1:170).” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), lvi.]

<sup>1002</sup>“Some historical sources suggest that the implication of Acts and Paul's expectation came true, that he was found innocent and released (A.D. 61–63). The ending of Acts suggests that Paul had not yet gone to trial, and many have concluded that Paul went to trial, was found innocent, and was released (see discussions in Bernard, xxi–xxxiv; Spitta, *Geschichte*, 106–7; Zahn, *Introduction* 2:4–10, 54–84; Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, 356–60; Hitchcock, *ExpTim* 41 [1930] 20–23; Pherigo, *JBL* 70 [1951] 277–84; Schlatter, *Church*, 232–39; Bruce, *New Testament History*, 361–67; Brox, 29; on the historical reconstruction, see Spicq, 1:121–46). Harnack was perhaps optimistic when he said Paul's release was 'a certain fact of history' (gesicherte Tatsache; see *Geschichte*, “Note 46,” II:1.240n), but a strong case can be made for his release (see below). There are several reasons that Paul could have been acquitted, such as the possibility that his accusers did not appear in court (cf. Cadbury, “Note XXVI: Roman Law and the Trial of Paul,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1. The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake [New York: Macmillan, 1933] 5:297–338; Pherigo, *JBL* 70 [1951] 271–84; Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*, 99–119; Bruce, *New Testament History*, 361–64; Marshall, *Acts*, 426). While there is no way to prove this scenario, neither can it be proven that Paul died in this one Roman imprisonment.” [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), liv.]

**a) That this included a trip to Spain is highly doubtful.**

Several of the church fathers, beginning with Clement of Rome in 96 AD, assumed that Paul made a trip to Spain upon being released from imprisonment. Of course, nothing of such a trip is even hinted at in the pastorals. So whatever conclusions are reached have to come completely from the non-canonical materials.<sup>1003</sup> The first clear evidence of Christianity in Spain is much later in the mid-third century,<sup>1004</sup> but hints of the presence of Christianity there reach back to the second century.<sup>1005</sup> A lot of the motivation for this assumption seems predicated on Paul fulfilling his desire to travel to Spain as expressed in Rom. 15:24. Clearly such an ambition was reasonable, for in the first century Spain was home to considerable numbers of Hellenistic Jews which would have provided the apostle a basis for evangelizing in the same manner as he had earlier in the north western Mediterranean world.<sup>1006</sup>

But other signals from the church fathers raise questions about such a trip. [Pope Gelasius I](#) in the fifth century contended that Paul never traveled to Spain.<sup>1007</sup> Clearly when Eusebius discusses in the early 300s Paul's ministry after release from Roman imprisonment he never mentions Spain, but focuses on the Aegean Sea region based on the pastoral letters of Paul with extensive discussion.

My conclusion of the issue is that it is very unlikely that Paul made such a trip to Spain.<sup>1008</sup> No solid evidence from the church fathers nor the apocryphal materials provides any real foundation for such an assumption. Plus the isolated references in these sources merely note a trip to Spain but with absolutely no details of what it involved. Added to this is the absence of any substantial Spanish tradition of Paul having established churches in Spain. This is highly unusual if Paul had done substantial evangelizing among Hellenistic Jews in Spain. Extensive church traditions exist in the region where Paul evangelized on the three missionary journeys described in Acts.

**b) That it centered on the Aegean Sea region defined in the Pastoral Epistles and Eusebius is clear.**

But the indication of ministry activity in the Aegean Sea region is substantial, and it fits the anticipation of ministry expressed by Paul during his first imprisonment in his Letter to the Philippians. The following is a list of locations mentioned in the Pastoral Letters whether either Paul and/or his associates traveled to during this period of resumed ministry. Sequentially, First Timothy and Titus come somewhat early in this

<sup>1003</sup>“Perhaps the significance of Spain’s place in the Roman Empire gave Paul the inspiration to evangelize this W frontier (Rom 15:24, 28). Strategically placed churches in this important region would have been consistent with Paul’s missionary strategy, but whether he actually traveled to Spain remains in doubt. Although Clement, writing approximately thirty years after Paul’s death, records that the apostle reached ‘the boundary of the West’ (1 Clem. 5:7), an expression that probably refers to Spain, and the Acts of Peter and the Muratorian Fragment concur explicitly, this evidence has not removed the uncertainty from the minds of most scholars. The tradition which asserts that James introduced Spain to the Gospel (PL, LXXXIII, 151) has not been taken seriously.” [Warren J. Jr. Heard, “Spain (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 176.]

<sup>1004</sup>“The first clear evidence of Christianity in Spain comes from a mid-3rd cent. debate about whether two Spanish bishops should retain their positions after having sacrificed to pagan deities during the persecution of Decius in 250. A Spanish church council at the beginning of the 4th cent. shows that there were at least thirty-seven Christian congregations by the 3rd cent. But the origin and early history of the church in Spain is unclear.” [Adam L. Porter, “Spain,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 361.]

<sup>1005</sup>“The very late tradition first traceable to Bishop Isidore of Seville (PL LXXXIII, 151), that the apostle James introduced Spain to the gospel merits little credence. The early foothold that Christianity took in Spain finds attestation in Irenaeus (Adv. haer. i.10.2) and Tertullian (Adv. Judaeos 7).” [F. W. Danker, “Spain,” ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 592.]

<sup>1006</sup>“Spain, the classical name of a well-known country in Europe, anciently applied to the whole peninsula, or what we now term Spain and Portugal. The original designation of the country was Tarshish. In Paul’s time (Rom. 15:24) it was subject to Rome and the resort of many Jews. The purpose of Paul to visit it implies two interesting facts—namely, the establishment of a Christian community in the country, and this by means of Hellenistic Jews residing there.” [Thomas J. Shepherd, *The Westminster Bible Dictionary* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1880), 484.]

<sup>1007</sup>“Pope Gelasius I (died 19 November 496) was Pope from 1 March 492 to his death in 496.<sup>[2]</sup> He was probably the third and last Bishop of Rome of North African berber origin in the Catholic Church. Gelasius was a prolific writer whose style placed him on the cusp between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.<sup>[3]</sup> Gelasius had been closely employed by his predecessor Felix III, especially in drafting papal documents. His ministry was characterized by a call for strict orthodoxy, a more assertive push for papal authority, and increasing tension between the churches in the West and the East.” [Pope Galasius I,” [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)]

<sup>1008</sup>Completely baseless is the following statement:

Yet clearly Paul saw Spain as a strategic place for mission work, and he or others that he designated planted the Christian church in Spain during the 1st century A.D. That Spanish church has had both a tortuous and glorious history.

[Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1991.]

period of ministry, while Second Timothy comes at the very end after Paul is back in Rome as a prisoner.

- a) 1 Tim. 1:3. Paul & Timothy headed to Macedonia
- b) 1 Tim. 1:3. Timothy in Ephesus
- c) 1 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:13. Paul's hopes to come to Timothy soon in Ephesus
- d) Titus 1:5. Paul left Titus behind on Crete.
- e) Titus 3:12, Paul sends Aretmas to Titus on Crete
- f) Titus 3:12. Paul asks Titus to meet him in Nicopolis where Paul will spend the winter
- g) Titus 3:13. Titus is to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos as they pass through Crete
- h) 2 Tim. 1:4. Paul longs to see Timothy
- i) 2 Tim. 1:8. Paul is a prisoner
- j) 2 Tim. 1:15. All in Asia have turned away from Paul, including Phygelus and Hermogenes
- k) 2 Tim. 1:16-18. Onesiphorus has traveled to Rome from Ephesus to be with Paul
- l) 2 Tim. 2:9. Paul is being chained in prison like a criminal
- m) 2 Tim. 2:17. Hymenaeus and Philetus have abandoned the Gospel in Ephesus
- n) 2 Tim. 3:6-8. Paul's life is being poured out as an offering to God as he nears death
- o) 2 Tim. 3:9. Timothy is to do his best to come to Paul soon
- p) 2 Tim. 3:10. Demas has left Paul for Thessalonica
- q) 2 Tim. 3:10. Crescens has gone to Galatia
- r) 2 Tim. 3:10. Titus has gone to Dalmatia
- s) 2 Tim. 3:11. Only Luke is left with Paul in Rome.
- t) 2 Tim. 3:11. Timothy is to pick up Mark and bring him to Rome
- u) 2 Tim. 3:12. Paul has sent Tychius to Ephesus (carrying 2 Timothy & to replace Timothy)
- v) 2 Tim. 3:13. Timothy is to pick up a coat and some scrolls at Troas on his way to Rome
- w) 2 Tim. 3:16. Everyone deserted Paul at his preliminary hearing in Rome.
- x) 2 Tim. 3:19. Prisca & Aquila are in Ephesus with Timothy
- y) 2 Tim. 3:19. Greetings are sent to the household of Onesiphorus in Ephesus
- z) 2 Tim. 3:20. Erastus remained in Corinth (when Paul passed through there earlier)
- aa) 2 Tim. 3:20. Paul left Trophimus ill in Miletus when he passed through there earlier
- ab) 2 Tim. 3:21. Eubulus sends Timothy greetings from Rome
- ac) 2 Tim. 3:21. Also Pudens, Linus, and Claudia send greetings from Rome with all the brothers.



During the early period Ephesus ①, Macedonia ②, and Crete ③ are the three primary locations emphasized. Evidently First Timothy was written from Macedonia to Ephesus after Paul had traveled to Philippi with Timothy, sent him on to Ephesus (or perhaps dropped him off at Ephesus), and then wrote the letter to him soon after arriving in Macedonia. What cannot be known with certainty is the sequence of his travels. Did Paul go immediately from Rome to Philippi, as he indicated was his desire in Phil. 1:26 (διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, through my coming again to you); 2:24 (πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι, and I am persuaded in the Lord that I also will come quickly)? This letter, written sometime in the second of the two year imprisonment (ca. 61-63 AD), expresses optimism of being released in Rome and quickly making a trip to Philippi. The normal route for a trip from Rome to Philippi would have gone down the Via Appia from Rome to the eastern Italian coastal port of Brindisi, across the Adriatic Sea to Dyrrachium then eastward by the Via Egnatia to Philippi (see map below). But



the apostle could have taken a longer route that included Corinth, Crete, Ephesus and then Philippi.

All of these places were visited at some point during the resumption according to 1 Timothy and Titus with points z) and aa) from 2 Timothy in the above list. Nicopolis in western Greece is about two hundred kilometers south of Dyrrachium on the coast also. This was where Paul spent the winter and wanted Titus to join him (cf. 3:12). At some point he passed through Miletus, southwest of Ephesus some 40 or so kilometers, where Trophimus fell sick and was left behind. Timothy, already in Ephesus, evidently was not aware that this friend was that close by.

Of course, most of the geographical references center on either Ephesus where Timothy was located virtually throughout Paul's resumption of ministry, or on Crete where Titus was during the early part of it.

Thus tracing a step by step reconstruction of Paul's travels in the resumption of ministry is not possible with the limited data. But the general region first covered by Paul on the second and third missionary journeys was the location of his final period of earthly ministry.

### **3) That Paul was beheaded in Rome in a second imprisonment is reasonably clear from Second Timothy and the church fathers.**

The circumstances of his second arrest are unknown. Nothing inside the canonical New Testament touches upon Paul's death. Consequently we are dependent completely on later Christian sources for our information. As discussed above the only information available and with some reasonable certainty comes from the church fathers. That which is widely asserted is that Paul was beheaded in Rome during Nero's reign. The time range for this is from 64 to 68 AD, and we do not have sufficient information to pin point it with exactness. It does seem to have come some time after the great fire in Rome in July of 64 and clearly before Nero's death in June of 68. Projecting a date more precise than this is pure guess work without any real basis behind it.

The church father Eusebius in his *Church History*, 2.25, provides us with a few more details which he is convinced are accurate. Paul was beheaded on the Via Ostia at Tre Fontane in Rome. He offers the witness of a few others before him as proof, but this is in no way validated. What is clear, and fortunately for Eusebius he omits, is the legend found in the apocryphal *Martyrdom of Paul* that when his head was cut off it bounced three times along the street and three springs instantly rose up flowing water on these three spots. The tradition of beheading clearly conforms to the provision for executing Roman citizens. This was the only option for executing them when convicted by the courts of a capital offense.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have examined the period of Paul being in custody from the time of his arrest in Jerusalem about 57/58 AD to the time of his execution in about 65 to 68 AD. It consumed almost a decade of his life, if one includes the period of resumption of ministry from 63 to his second imprisonment in Rome. The length of this period is uncertain and could range from 63 to 67 AD assuming his second imprisonment came late. If his execution came in connection with the fire in Rome then he had less than two years of ministry, about half of the other possibility.

This period of being in custody first by the Jews in Jerusalem and then by the Romans from Caesarea on stands in contrast to the other periods of his life. From the time of his conversion about 33 AD to the beginning of the first missionary journey about 47 AD comes somewhat as a time of preparation for missionary service, with most of it being spent in Tarsus. This is followed by the three missionary travels described in Acts from about 47 to 57 AD. His Christian journey on earth covered slightly over three decades. But during that time oh what a mountain of accomplishments piled up through his labors under the leadership of God! The most significant shift of Christian history came about through his tireless preaching of the Gospel to non-Jews in the Mediterranean world. Christianity which began as



a branch of Judaism for the first couple of decades in Judaea under Peter's leadership reached out to the non Jewish world largely through Paul's ministry to become a global religion embracing all nations who would surrender themselves in faith commitment to Christ as Lord. This shift from existing under the umbrella of Judaism to a self-standing religious movement of its own would continue through out the second half of the apostolic era of the first Christian century. And by the end of the first century the Jewish Christian side of Christianity would be but a small minority of those claiming Christ as Savior.

For Paul a third of his Christian life was spent under arrest and fighting charges of heresy and criminality. His Jewish enemies thought they had silenced him in Jerusalem, and did their best to kill him. But God had other plans. The Romans who eventually would be his executioners became his savior initially in protecting him from Jewish hostility. Once he arrived in the imperial capital in Roman custody his future became clouded with uncertainty. He by God's grace was able to continue ministry not only at Caesarea but also in Rome with a generous custodial provision by the Romans. And his first trial resulted in being released to resume ministry for a period of time in the 60s. But he was eventually trapped by the shifting winds of Roman policy toward Christians now considered operating as a *religio illicita* outside governmental approval. Thus sometime prior to emperor Nero's own death in June of 68 AD Paul was executed by government authorities in Rome.

As I reflect back on Paul's life, I am profoundly challenged by his example of consistent service and devotion to the Christ who turned his life around on the road leading into Damascus in 33 AD. I am especially intimidated by how he did not waver in that commitment even with ten plus long years of custody and uncertainty about his future. So far as the record shows he was not mistreated by the Romans after the Jews tried to beat him to death in the outer courtyard of the Jerusalem temple. This, however, may true of his Roman custody up till the very end with his statement to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:9 of being treated like a criminal during this second imprisonment: *κακοπαθῶ μέχρι δεσμῶν ὡς κακοῦργος*. But we don't know the specifics of what he meant by this statement. Unquestionably, he had suffered unimaginable abuse during his missionary service, mostly by Jewish enemies in the cities where he traveled. These are well documented by Luke in Acts and in several of Paul's own letters.

For me to consider spending ten plus years in official custody out of a thirty plus year total Christian life on earth would be indeed challenging. But careful examination of the biblical sources about Paul's captivity experience reveals countless numbers of individuals coming to Christ, including some high government authorities. Seven of the thirteen letters in the New Testament came out of this final period of Paul's life. What spiritual treasures these documents have been to countless millions of Christians over the centuries.

**Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.**

**We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.**





