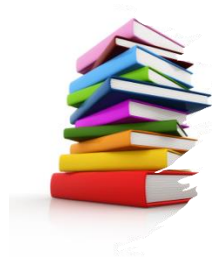


Acts 22-28 CFM Ep 213



In this outline are a few links to some of my favorite books that have really helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon](#). As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you).

The Story of Christianity does not end in Acts 28

At 57:20, I (Mike Day) talk about Eusebius' [Ecclesiastical History](#). I also recommend Bruce Shelley's book [Church History in Plain Language](#) as a resource to learn about the events in Christian history after the canonized history that is contained in the New Testament. There are other great books¹ as well, but these were the ones I briefly mentioned in the podcast.

Overview

In this podcast, we are picking up in the middle of Paul's third missionary journey. In the previous chapter (Acts 21), Paul was arrested in Jerusalem because he is accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple precinct, thus causing a riot (Acts 21.28). He is arrested and imprisoned, but continues to preach the gospel to his captors and fellow prisoners. He is then taken to Caesarea and stands trial before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa, but is eventually sent to Rome to appeal to Caesar. On the way to Rome, he is shipwrecked on the island of Malta, but continues to preach the gospel and perform miracles.

Arrival in Rome (Acts 28.1-31)

Paul finally arrives in Rome and is allowed to live in his own rented quarters, where he continues to preach the gospel to all who come to him. He meets with the Jewish leaders and explains the gospel to them, but many reject it. The book of Acts ends with Paul proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Defends Himself: Acts 22

Acts 22 describes Paul's address to the Jerusalem crowd after being arrested by the Roman authorities, in which he recounts his conversion and commissioning by Jesus to preach to both Jews and Gentiles. Acts 22 also depicts the crowd's anger at Paul's mission to the Gentiles, his assertion of his Roman citizenship, and his transfer to Caesarea to stand trial before Governor Felix.

1. Introduction (Acts 22.1-2)

- Paul addresses the crowd in Jerusalem in Hebrew, gaining their attention and respect.

¹ See: William Bausch, [Pilgrim Church: A Popular History of Catholic Christianity](#), Fides Publishers, 1973. Nick Needham, [2,000 Years of Christ's Power, Volume 1: The Age of the Early Church Fathers](#), Christian Focus, 2016.

- He identifies himself as a Jew, a student of Gamaliel, and as a former persecutor of Christians.²

2. Conversion on the Road to Damascus (Acts 22.3-16)

- Paul recounts his experience on the road to Damascus, where he saw a bright light and heard the voice of Jesus.
- Jesus asked him why he was persecuting him, and Paul was blinded for three days.
- Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, was sent by God to heal Paul and tell him about his mission (Acts 22.12-16).
- Paul is baptized (Acts 22.16).³

3. Commission to Preach to the Gentiles (Acts 22.17-21)

- Paul explains that he was commissioned by Jesus to preach to the Gentiles: “Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles” (Acts 22.21).
- He recounts a vision he had in the temple where Jesus told him to leave Jerusalem because the Jews would not accept his testimony (Acts 22.18).

4. Arrest in the Temple (Acts 22.22-24)

- Paul explains that he went to the temple to worship and was falsely accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple, which caused a riot.⁴
- He argues that the Jews were angry with him because he was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.⁵

5. Roman Citizenship (Acts 22.25-29)

- The commander who arrested Paul learns that he is a Roman citizen and had not been given a fair trial (Acts 22.25).
- Paul asserts his right to appeal to Caesar and demands to be taken to Rome (Acts 22.26-29).⁶

² Remember that Gamaliel preached restraint regarding the Christian movement, telling his followers that if it is of God, that no man could stop it, and if it was of men, it would come to nothing. (See Acts 5.34-40). Elder Maxwell taught, “Did Gamaliel have any spiritual promptings which caused him to call for fair play for the Apostles? Did he later affiliate with the Church of Jesus Christ? We do not now know. But the wisdom of Gamaliel was surely significant.” Neal A. Maxwell, *Sermons Not Spoken*, Deseret Book, 2009, p. 75.

³ Some Old Testament texts speak of ritual washing away of sins (Lev 14:19, 31; 16:30; Num 8:21), but other texts apply the language figuratively (e.g., Ezek 36:33; 37:23; 43:22), most prominently Ezekiel 36:25. Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, IVP Academic, 2014, p. 396.

⁴ See Acts 21.28.

⁵ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up all the crowd, and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place; moreover he also brought Greeks into the temple, and he has defiled this holy place.” Acts 21.27-28, RSV.

⁶ In this period, Roman citizenship was not common in the east, especially among the non-elite, so no one had expected it for this prisoner. Paul might wait until he has been chained for the same reason as in 16:37: he now has legal room to maneuver against *them*. Law prohibited even *binding* a Roman citizen without trial; although not all

6. Conclusion (Acts 22.30)

- The chapter ends with Paul being held in custody in Jerusalem, waiting to be taken to Rome to stand trial before Caesar.

Citizenship in the context of Acts 22 and Paul's discussion with Lysias the Tribune

Scholars note that one could achieve Roman citizenship in several ways: one could be (1) born to a Roman father (so Paul); (2) a citizen of a Roman colony (say, Pisidian Antioch, Corinth or Philippi); (3) a retired auxiliary soldier; (4) given a special privilege from Rome (granted to groups or individuals), sometimes as part of a municipal aristocracy or other group honored by Rome; or (5)—and this was most common after being born in Rome or in a colony—a slave freed by his or her owner (so perhaps Paul's ancestors).

This tribune or commander, Lysias, bought his citizenship by a bribe, which was common under the preceding emperor, whose name he took (23:26). To achieve the status of a tribune, he must have had a powerful patron or been one of the rare individuals who toiled his way up through the ranks to this position, probably partly with more bribes. Tribunes were usually equestrians (the Roman knight class) working their way up the political career ladder; this one had not even been born a Roman citizen. But the current governor himself was not an equestrian, so Lysias may not have experienced much disadvantage.

Lysias the tribune may want to assess Paul's relative status. Some commentators note that the cost of citizenship bribes declined toward the end of Claudius's reign, so he may be suggesting, "You probably acquired your citizenship more cheaply than I acquired mine!" (Claudius's successor reduced such corruption, so the information Luke reports here reflects the period in question.) Paul may have replied in Latin: he was *ingenuus*, a citizen by birth (though cf. his family in 16:37). Those who were born citizens had higher status in that regard than those who achieved it; Paul thus has superior citizenship status in some sense.⁷

Who was Claudius Lysias the tribune?

Lysias the tribune was a Roman military commander⁸ who is portrayed in Luke's narrative as a fair Roman military leader, doing his job, while also treating Paul with fairness and respect in Acts. He is mentioned

governors followed the law, the tribune would be wise to avoid a breach that could bring him into trouble with the governor. If one claimed to be a citizen, officials were supposed to treat him as such until documentation could be procured or checked. Keener, p. 397.

⁷ Keener, p. 397.

⁸ Acts 21:33 calls him a *χιλίαρχος* (*chiliarchos*), which literally means "commander of a thousand." This term was used to refer to a Roman military officer who was in charge of a cohort of around 1,000 soldiers. Different Bible translations use different terms to translate "χιλίαρχος" in Acts 21:33. Some translations use "commander" or "tribune," while others use "chief captain" or "captain." The use of "chief captain" to refer to Lysias in this verse is likely an attempt to convey the idea that he was a high-ranking officer in the Roman military. Essentially, Claudius Lysias is "a high-ranking military officer in charge" of anywhere from 600 to 1,000 men,[2] and this appears to be the case for it is said that his command was over a "cohort" (σπεῖρα, *speira*) in Jerusalem which is "the tenth part of a Roman legion having about 600 men" (Acts 21:31). See: *χιλίαρχος*, Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. See also: <https://www.billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/chiliarchos> Accessed 3.23.23.

several times in the chronicle of Paul's arrest and imprisonment, particularly in Acts 21 and 23. We learn of his name in Acts 23.26.

According to Acts 21.31-33, Lysias was the commander of the Roman troops stationed in Jerusalem who intervened when Paul was falsely accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple and a riot broke out. Lysias ordered his soldiers to take Paul into custody and tried to find out what had happened. He was told that Paul was a troublemaker and a ringleader of a sect, but Lysias did not know who he was or what he had done.

Lysias then commanded that Paul be brought to the barracks for his own protection. When Paul spoke to him in Greek, Lysias was surprised that he was not the Egyptian rebel he had assumed him to be. Lysias also learned that Paul was a Roman citizen, which gave him certain legal protections.

Later in Acts 23, Lysias again intervenes when Paul's life is threatened by a group of Jews who plot to kill him. Lysias learns of the plot and sends Paul to Caesarea, under armed escort, to be tried by the governor.

Overall, Lysias the tribune is portrayed in Acts as a fair and just commander who was committed to maintaining order and protecting the rights of Roman citizens, even if he did not always understand the complexities of the situation he was facing.

Acts 23: Paul defends himself to the council, the plot to kill him, his move to Caesarea Maritima

Acts 23 describes Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin, his division of the council by confessing his belief in the resurrection (a brilliant move), and a plot by more than 40 Jews to kill him. The chapter also depicts Jesus appearing to Paul and assuring him that he will testify about him in Rome, and Paul's transfer to Caesarea Maritima to stand trial before Governor Felix.

1. Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish council) to defend himself against accusations of teaching against the law and defiling the temple (Acts 23.1-10).
2. A dispute breaks out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees on the council over the issue of resurrection, which provides an opportunity for Paul to appeal to the Pharisees and distance himself from the Sadducees (Acts 23.6-9).⁹
3. The commander, Claudia Lysias, removes Paul from the council and takes him back to the barracks for his own protection, as a plot to kill Paul has been uncovered (Acts 23.10-11).
4. The Lord appears to Paul and encourages him, promising that he will testify in Rome (Acts 23.11).

⁹ Some scholars contend that the Sadducees believed only in the five books of Moses; but even if this were the case, they must have believed in the angels that appeared in Genesis. Luke's parenthetical comment here probably refers to the Sadducees' denial of the developed angelology and demonology of the Pharisees (12:15 is not Pharisaic), or maybe ideas about people becoming angels after death or being resurrected in angelic form. "Spirit" may address a different issue: The Sadducees reportedly did not believe in life after death; belief in an afterlife before the resurrection allowed Pharisees to accept that Jesus could have appeared to Paul as a spirit (cf. 22:7-8; 23:9) even if they did not accept his resurrection. Many Jewish people believed that resurrection bodies would be like angelic bodies; some also portrayed the intermediate state in angelic terms. Keener, p. 399.

5. More than 40 Jewish men make a vow not to eat or drink until they have killed Paul (Acts 23.12-15).¹⁰
6. Paul's nephew learns of the plot and tells Paul, who sends his nephew to inform the commander (Acts 23.16-22).
7. Lysias arranges for a large escort to take Paul to Caesarea to appear before Governor Felix, and he writes a letter explaining the situation (Acts 23.23-30).
8. The escort takes Paul as far as Antipatris,¹¹ and then returns to Jerusalem (Acts 23.31-32).
9. Paul is kept in custody in Herod's Praetorium in Caesarea while Felix considers his case (Acts 23.33-35).

Who was Felix?

Felix was a Roman governor who served as the procurator of Judea from approximately 52 to 60 AD. According to historical accounts, Felix was originally a slave who was later freed and rose to prominence in the Roman government. He was known for his ruthless and corrupt tactics, and was accused of using his position as governor to extort money from the Jewish people. Felix was also criticized for his handling of the frequent uprisings and riots that occurred in Judea during his tenure as procurator.

In Acts 23, Felix is depicted as the governor who receives Paul after he is taken into custody by the Roman commander Lysias. Felix hears Paul's case and listens to the accusations against him, but ultimately delays making a decision about what to do with him. Felix is described as having some knowledge of The Way (Christianity),¹² but also as being more interested in receiving a bribe from Paul than in rendering justice.¹³

¹⁰ Ambushes by robbers and terrorists were common (e.g., Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.538), especially at night. During these years shortly before the Jewish war with Rome, the sicarii (21:38) regularly assassinated Jews suspected of collaboration with the Romans, and all Palestine was uneasy; this report is thus quite believable. Keener, p. 399.

¹¹ Antipatris was a city located in the Sharon Plain in ancient Israel. The city was originally built by Herod the Great and was named after his father, Antipater. Antipatris was strategically located on the road between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean coast, and served as a military outpost for the Romans.

¹² ἀκριβέστερον εἰδώς τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ (Acts 24.33) "having a higher degree of knowledge about The Way" – this term was used to describe the early Christian movement, as followers of "The Way."

¹³ In Acts 24, it is suggested that Felix wants to secure a bribe from Paul. When Paul is brought before Felix, the high priest and other Jewish leaders make accusations against him, claiming that he is a troublemaker who stirs up riots and sedition among the Jewish people. However, when Paul is given the opportunity to speak in his own defense, he denies these charges and makes a case for his innocence.

After hearing both sides of the argument, Felix does not immediately render a verdict on Paul's case. Instead, he keeps Paul in custody and orders that he be given certain privileges, such as the freedom to receive visitors and for his friends to provide for his needs. The text of Acts 24.26-27 specifically states that Felix hoped that Paul would offer him a bribe in exchange for his release:

"At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him. When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison."

Felix is portrayed as a complicated figure in the New Testament, with a reputation for both cruelty and corruption. He represents the Roman authority that dominated Judea during the time of the early Church, and his actions toward Paul and other Christians provide important context for the broader political and religious tensions of the period.

Acts 24: Paul stands before Felix

Acts 24 describes Paul's appearance before Felix the governor, the accusations made against him by the Jewish leaders, and Felix's reluctance to make a decision about his case. The chapter also suggests that Felix was motivated by a desire for personal gain and may have been open to accepting a bribe from Paul in exchange for his release.

1. Paul is brought before Felix the governor in Caesarea to face accusations made against him by the Jewish leaders (Acts 24.1-9).
 - They label Paul “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24.5).
 - They say Paul sought to “profane the temple” (Acts 24.6).
2. The Jewish leaders accuse Paul of being a troublemaker and stirring up riots among the people. Paul denies these charges and argues that he is not a threat to the public order (Acts 24:10-21).
 - Paul states that they cannot prove their charges (Acts 24.13).
 - The accusers should have come before Felix rather than raise a ruckus (Acts 24.19-19).¹⁴
3. Felix delays making a decision about Paul's case and orders that he be kept in custody but given certain privileges (Acts 24:22-23).
 - Felix keeps Paul, but lets him have “liberty” (Acts 24.23).¹⁵
4. Felix hopes that Paul will offer him a bribe in exchange for his release and sends for him often to converse with him (Acts 24:24-26).

This passage suggests to me that Felix was motivated not by a desire to do justice or to protect the public order, but rather by a desire for personal gain. Luke portrays Felix as greedy, hoping that Paul or his supporters would offer him money or some other form of compensation in exchange for his release. This portrayal of Felix is consistent with his reputation as a corrupt and self-interested governor, as described in other historical sources. See: [Ronald Brownrigg, *Who's Who in the Bible*, Bonanza Books, 1980, p. 112-114.](#) See also: Andrew Skinner, D. Kelly Ogden, David B. Galbraith, [Jerusalem: The Eternal City](#), Deseret Book, 1996, p. 206-207.

¹⁴ Temples were to be places of refuge, yet Paul had been apprehended during worship. It was standard practice in legal rhetoric to reverse the accusers' charges onto them; speakers often could also insinuate someone's guilt. Paul here implies that his accusers rather than himself were responsible for the riot. Moreover, the original accusers have not shown up, and therefore could be charged with abandoning the case, a punishable offense (for frivolous prosecution). The current “plaintiffs” are not eyewitnesses and could not withstand cross-examination, and the original plaintiffs have abandoned the case! By the conventions of Roman law, the case should simply be dismissed at this point; that Felix fails to dismiss it suggests the political dangers of doing so. Keener, p. 404.

¹⁵ Prisoners of status usually received lighter custody, especially if the charges against them were not persuasive. Paul is probably still kept in the procurator's own palace (23:35), making it easy for Felix to visit him. Centurions sometimes oversaw prisoners of status (cf. 23:17). Apart from very meager prison rations, prisoners depended on friends to bring food and other items; guards sometimes charged bribes for access to prisoners, but Felix's instructions here could forestall that. Keener, p. 404.

5. Two years pass and Felix is succeeded by Porcius Festus. Felix leaves Paul in custody as a favor to the Jews (Acts 24:27).

Who was Porcius Festus?

Porcius Festus was a Roman procurator who served as the successor to Felix as the governor of the Roman province of Judea. He is mentioned here in Acts 24.27 as the governor who succeeded Felix after he left Paul in custody. Festus was appointed by Emperor Nero in AD 60 or 61, and he served as governor until his death in AD 62. During his time in office, Festus dealt with a number of political and religious conflicts, including the ongoing tensions between the Jewish leaders and the Roman authorities.

According to the historian Josephus, Festus did what he could to restore peace in his tumultuous times and did so “by the vigour of his methods,” but died only two years after his appointment. He was known for his strict enforcement of Roman law and his efforts to maintain order in the province. He also had a reputation for being fair and just in his dealings with the Jewish people. In the New Testament, Festus is depicted as the governor who presided over Paul's trial and eventual appeal to Caesar in Rome (Acts 25-26). During this time, Festus struggled to understand the complex religious and political issues involved in Paul's case, and eventually decided to send him to Rome for trial.¹⁶

Acts 25: Paul before Festus and Agrippa

Acts 25 describes Paul's appearance before the new governor, Porcius Festus, and his defense against the accusations made by the Jewish leaders. The chapter also depicts Festus struggling to understand the legal and religious issues involved in Paul's case, and eventually deciding to send him to Rome. Finally, the chapter introduces King Agrippa II, who plays a significant role in the events of the Acts 26.

1. After two years in custody, Paul is brought before Porcius Festus, the new governor of Judea (Acts 25.1-5).
2. The Jewish leaders present their case against Paul to Festus, but their accusations are vague and unsupported (Acts 25.6-7).
3. Paul defends himself against the accusations, insisting that he has done nothing wrong according to Jewish law or Roman law (Acts 25.8-12).
4. Festus asks Paul if he is willing to be tried in Jerusalem, but Paul insists on his right as a Roman citizen to be tried before Caesar in Rome (Acts 25.12).
5. Festus confers with King Agrippa II, who is visiting the region, and decides to send Paul to Rome (Acts 25:13-27).

Who was Agrippa (Acts 25.13)?

King of Chalcis (AD 50–92). The second Agrippa, the young son of the first, and great grandson of Herod the Great,¹⁷ was given the Lebanese ethnarchy of Chalcis by the Emperor Claudius. To this was added

¹⁶ Ronald Brownrigg, *Who's Who in the New Testament*, Routledge, 2002, p. 84-85.

¹⁷ When Agrippa I passed away (Acts 12.23), his son Agrippa II was only seventeen years old, and his daughters Berenice, Mariamne, and Drusilla were sixteen, ten, and six, respectively. Agrippa II ruled a small territory in Palestine and collaborated with the Roman authorities. Although he advocated for his people, he was also loyal to

Galilee, Iturea, Gaulanitis, and Trachonitis in the year 53. In about the year 60, Paul appeared before Agrippa at the request of Festus, the Roman procurator, who wished to draw up the charges against Paul before sending him to Rome.

Luke's account in Acts gives some indication of the respect in which Agrippa was held by both Romans and Jews. Festus lays Paul's case before Agrippa with much deference: 'But I found that he had done nothing deserving death; and as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to send him. But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you, and, especially before you, King Agrippa, that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write.' (Acts 25:25–26) Paul, too, pays tribute to Agrippa in the opening words of his defence: 'I think myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defence today against all the accusations of the Jews, because you are especially familiar with all customs and controversies of the Jews.' (Acts 26:2,3) Agrippa's generous reply and Paul's comment reflect the mutual admiration and concern of the two men: 'In a short time you think to make me a Christian!' 'Whether short or long,' Paul replies, 'I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.' (Acts 26:28–29)

Agrippa lived on in Caesarea, surviving the disastrous revolt and destruction of his own people in the years 66–70. With his retirement to Rome and his death there in the year 92, the Herodian dynasty came to an end, having played no little part in the earliest years of the Christian era and the life of the Christian Church.¹⁸

Who was Bernice (Acts 25.13)?

Berenice, who is sometimes referred to as Bernice by ancient writers (as Luke does), was the sister of Agrippa. Some ancient writers accused her of having an incestuous relationship with her brother Agrippa, but this charge is unlikely and may have been motivated by politics, anti-Judaism, or love of gossip. Later, Berenice became the mistress of the Roman general Titus, who laid siege to Jerusalem. Despite being fifteen years her junior, Titus promised to make her empress once he became emperor. However, due to anti-Jewish public opinion, he ultimately reneged on the promise, causing Berenice to leave Rome heartbroken. Jewish aristocrats who supported Rome during the war, such as Josephus after his capture, depicted Agrippa II and his sister in a positive light, and they were still alive when Luke wrote his account.¹⁹

Acts 26: Paul defends himself before King Agrippa

Acts 26 describes Paul's appearance before King Agrippa II and Bernice, and his defense of his faith and his actions. The chapter highlights Paul's conversion from Judaism to Christianity and his mission to spread the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, and depicts Agrippa acknowledging Paul's innocence but ultimately agreeing with Festus that he should be sent to Rome for trial.

Rome and minted a coin in AD 89 to celebrate Rome's victory over the Jewish rebels. According to Josephus, Agrippa frequently met with Roman officials, especially when they first arrived in the region. Since Agrippa had the power to appoint high priests (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.179, 196), Festus could obtain Judean advice that was more significant than that of Paul's accusers. Festus ultimately took Agrippa's side in a conflict with the priests.

¹⁸ Ronald Brownrigg, [Who's Who in the New Testament](#), Routledge, 2002, p. 108.

¹⁹ Keener, p. 406.

1. King Agrippa II and Bernice arrive in Caesarea and visit Festus, who discusses Paul's case with them (Acts 26.1-3).
2. Festus introduces Paul to Agrippa and Bernice, and Paul gives a defense of his faith and his actions (Acts 26.4-23).
3. Paul recounts his early life as a Pharisee and his persecution of the early Christians (Acts 26.4-11).
4. Paul describes his vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus and his subsequent conversion to Christianity (Acts 26.12-18).
5. Paul explains his mission to preach the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, and his arrest and imprisonment for this cause (Acts 26.19-23).
6. Agrippa acknowledges that Paul has done nothing deserving of death or imprisonment, and suggests that he could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar (Acts 26.24-32).
7. Despite this, Festus and Agrippa both agree that Paul should be sent to Rome to stand trial before Caesar (Acts 26.30-32).

Acts 27: Paul is sent to Rome

Acts 27 describes Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner, including his encounter with a storm, his reassurance to the crew and passengers, and the ship's grounding on the island of Malta.

1. Paul and other prisoners are placed under the custody of a centurion named Julius and board a ship bound for Rome (Acts 27.1-2).
2. After stopping at several ports, they encounter a fierce storm that lasts for days²⁰ and threatens to destroy the ship (Acts 27.3-20).²¹

²⁰ Both eyewitness reports and novels included descriptions of storms and shipwrecks; eyewitness reports could tell their story using patterns also found in epic. This narrative is clearly eyewitness history; the details of the voyage, including the number of days it took to reach particular harbors given the winds mentioned, fit exactly the report of one who had undertaken such a voyage. This point was shown already in the nineteenth century by an experienced Mediterranean mariner. Keener, p. 409.

²¹ In Acts 27.3-20, Luke narrates the harrowing journey of Paul and his companions on a ship headed towards Rome. Despite the ominous weather conditions, the ship's captain and crew decide to set sail from the port of Fair Havens (Καλοῦς Λιμένας – Acts 27.8. Based on the description given in Acts 27.8, which states that it was "near the town of Lasea," it is believed to have been located on the southern coast of the island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.).

Paul and his company soon encounter strong headwinds and are forced to take shelter in the nearby port of Phoenix (Φοῖνιξ – the name of a haven in Crete on the south coast). The journey resumes with renewed hope but soon turns disastrous as a fierce storm called Euroclydon (Εὐροκλύδων) engulfs the ship, causing it to be tossed violently in the waves. The crew frantically tries to secure the vessel and lighten its load, throwing cargo and equipment overboard. As the storm rages on for days, the passengers grow increasingly fearful for their lives and lose all hope of survival.

3. Paul reassures the crew and passengers, telling them that an angel of God has appeared to him and promised that all on board will be saved (Acts 27.21-26).
4. The storm continues - The ship's crew and passengers are adrift in the storm for two weeks, as they furiously work to lighten the load of the ship (Acts 27.27-32).
5. The ship wrecks - With the ship drifting towards land, the crew fears running aground on the rocks, so they lower weights to determine the depth of the water.²² They then drop four anchors to slow the ship down and pray for daylight. Some of the crew attempt to escape in a lifeboat, but Paul warns the centurion that everyone must stay on board to survive. The remaining crew and passengers eat a meal to prepare for the shipwreck (Acts 27.33-38).
6. The Rescue - As the ship hits a sandbar, it begins to break apart. The soldiers plan to kill the prisoners to prevent their escape, but the centurion stops them. All 276 people on board make it to shore safely on broken pieces of the ship (Acts 27.39-44).²³

Who was Aristarchus (Acts 27.2)?

(Greek: Ἀρίσταρχος 'the best ruler') A faithful fellow-traveller and constant companion of the Apostle Paul, Aristarchus is first mentioned together with Gaius. They were both Macedonians; Aristarchus came from Thessalonica and was probably a convert from Judaism.

At the very height of the silversmiths' riot at Ephesus, towards the close of Paul's teaching ministry in about the year 57, Aristarchus and Gaius were seized by the mob and dragged into the great theatre. The silversmiths felt their trade in shrines and images of Artemis (Diana of the Ephesians) threatened by the teachings of Paul, and stirred up the crowd to demonstrate against Paul and his companions. In the resultant confusion, Aristarchus and Gaius seem to have borne the brunt of the grievance and Paul was warned not to come to their rescue. The town clerk finally called an end to the disorder and we may assume that Aristarchus and Gaius escaped, if a little the worse for wear.

The following year, they are both mentioned among the representatives of Christian congregations accompanying Paul, and the money-offering for the relief of the poor, from Troas to Jerusalem. Only Aristarchus, however, is recorded as sailing with Paul and Luke from Caesarea, on Paul's long and eventful voyage to Rome.

It is probable that, during Paul's long imprisonment in Rome, his friends took turns in keeping him company and sharing captivity along with him. This would account for Paul's mention in his later letters of different 'fellow prisoners'. ***Certainly when Paul wrote his letter to the Christian Church at Colossae, Aristarchus was his companion in prison.*** By the time Paul writes his personal letter to Philemon, it is

²² Sailors would judge the depth of the water by lowering lead weights smeared with grease on a hollow underside, to pick up samples from the sea floor. The soundings suggest that they were at this point near Koura, east of Malta; they may have passed within a quarter mile of it. Roughly half an hour would pass between twenty and fifteen fathoms, showing that they are approaching grounding dangerously quickly, probably with underwater rocks that would rip open the hull. Keener, p. 413.

²³ Large ships frequently carried several hundred people; Josephus even claimed that he had traveled aboard a ship with six hundred people. Most ships that hugged the coasts weighed less, but large ones could weigh 250 tons. Alexandrian grain ships (such as in 27:6; 28:11), built for the open sea, were larger, many weighing 340 tons, some over eight hundred tons, and a few to twelve hundred tons. Keener, p. 413-414.

Epaphras whom he mentions as his fellow-prisoner, whereas Aristarchus is listed, together with Mark, Demas, and Luke, as a fellow-worker.

Thus all five references to Aristarchus, covering a period of seven critical years in the life of Paul, seem to refer with little doubt to one and the same faithful and staunch companion of the apostle. [Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Col. 4:10; Philem. 24].²⁴

Acts 28: Paul lands at Malta and eventually comes to Rome

Acts 28 describes Paul's experience on the island of Malta, where he receives a good audience with the residents. Luke portrays Paul's arrival in Rome, his preaching to the Jews and Gentiles there, and the response of the people to his message.

1. Paul and the other survivors of the shipwreck on Malta are shown hospitality by the islanders. Paul is bitten by a snake (Acts 28.1-10).²⁵
2. They continue their journey to Rome and are met by believers who encourage Paul (Acts 28:11-15).
 - "The Appii forum" (Acts 28.15).²⁶
3. Paul preaches to the Jews in Rome, but many reject his message (Acts 28:16-24).
 - "We came to Rome" (Acts 28.16).²⁷
 - Paul called the chief of the Jews together (Acts 28.17).²⁸
4. Paul then turns his attention to the Gentiles, and many believe and are healed (Acts 28:25-31).

²⁴ Brownrigg, p. 19.

²⁵ In cold weather some snakes can look stiff like twigs until the heat of a fire stirs them. Snakebites were a topic of medical concern in antiquity. Poisonous snakes are now extinct on heavily populated Malta, probably partly because the forest cover that once existed is now gone. Keener, p. 414-415.

²⁶ The "Market of Appius," or Appii Forum, was about 43 Roman miles (39.5 miles; 63.5 kilometers) from Rome on the same paved road. Jewish communities had existed in Italy for a long time and may have formed the basis for the first Christian groups there (cf. 2:10). Keener, p. 416.

²⁷ Rome had as many as a million residents, though not all fit within its traditional walls. Along the Appian Way, Paul and the others would enter Rome's Porta Capena, through an area with many poor immigrants. Paul was loosely chained by the wrist to a soldier (28:20), presumably a member of the Praetorian Guard, Caesar's elite personal guard in Rome, which consisted of nine or twelve cohorts. The relatively light confinement reported here was used only for prisoners of status who posed no threat (officials would know of the opinion in 26:31), though he did not receive the lightest custody (i.e., without chains). Paul would have considerable freedom within the home, which may have been an apartment in one of Rome's many blocks of tenements; he could have met with visitors in the building's courtyard, if available. Keener, p. 416.

²⁸ Rome had a significant Jewish community (a common guess is forty to fifty thousand) organized in numerous *synagogues. Many lived in the impoverished area across the Tiber; the majority spoke predominantly Greek. The "local Jewish leaders" are leaders (apparently bearing titles such as "rulers of synagogues," "gerousiarchs," and "rulers") of different synagogue communities; in contrast to Alexandria's Jewish community, no single leader or body ruled over the whole Jewish community in Rome. The Jewish congregations in Rome were all autonomous, and Christians could spread their views among the various synagogues with relative freedom. The Jewish community there had also made many Roman converts and sympathizers (to the chagrin of many male Roman aristocrats). Keener, p. 416.

- Paul cites Isaiah 6. Throughout Acts, a recurring theme is that many of God's chosen people rejected their Messiah while Gentiles accepted him. Paul's citation of Isaiah 6 serves as the culmination of this theme. It is not a surprising occurrence, but rather a fulfillment of Scripture. As is typical toward the end of a book, the authors often recapitulate major themes that were introduced earlier in their work.

Paul's recounting of his experiences

'Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

In journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine* own countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness' (2 Corinthians 11.24-27).

'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day' (2 Timothy 4.6-8).

President Kimball's feeling about the apostle Paul:

"I have a great admiration and affection for our brother Paul, our fellow apostle. He was so dedicated, so humble, so straightforward. He was so eager, so interested, so consecrated. He must have been personable in spite of his problems, for the people hung onto him with great affection when he was about to leave them. I love Paul, for he spoke the truth. He leveled with people. He was interested in them. I love Paul for his steadfastness, even unto death and martyrdom. I am always fascinated with his recounting of the perils through which he passed to teach the gospel to member and nonmember."²⁹

The Rest of the Story

Luke brings his account of Paul's journey to a close, with the apostle under Roman custody in the heart of the Roman empire. During his two-year imprisonment in Rome from about AD 61-63, Paul likely wrote several letters including Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews.³⁰ However, the end of the narrative does not signify the end of his ministry. Later, after his release, Paul wrote his epistles to Titus and Timothy. Although tradition suggests that Paul was beheaded in Rome on Nero's orders, there is a desire to know more about the closing moments of his life.

²⁹ President Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report, April 1969*.

³⁰ Not everyone agrees on the authorship of Hebrews (See: [Who wrote Hebrews?](#)). Most scholars believe that Paul actually wrote seven of the Pauline epistles (Galatians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians), while three of the epistles in Paul's name are widely seen as pseudepigraphic (First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus).

Wilfred Griggs offers this as a suggestion regarding Paul's story after Acts 28:

"Paul's arrival in Rome brings the reader to the end of the book of Acts, but not necessarily to the end of the life of the apostle. Luke concludes: 'And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.' (Acts 28:30.)

Why doesn't the account continue? If Paul had lost his case-and his life-before the emperor, an account of his martyrdom would have been a most appropriate seal for his testimony and ministry. However, he [must] not have died at this time. Neither Felix, nor Festus, nor Agrippa deemed Paul guilty of crime, let alone worthy of death. Furthermore, Paul is rather optimistic about his own future in the so-called 'prison epistles' written during this time from Rome. (Philip. 1:21-26; Philip. 2:23-24; Philem. 1:22.)

A number of other evidences hint that Paul was acquitted and traveled for some time before another imprisonment and death. Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus do not fit into the chronology of Acts, and therefore must have been written later. From these epistles one notes that Paul visited Ephesus (see 1 Tim. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:14-15), Miletus (see 2 Tim. 4:20), Troas (see 2 Tim. 4:13), Corinth (see 2 Tim. 4:20), Nicopolis (see Titus 3:12), and Crete (see Titus 1:5). The prison epistles show that Paul also intended to travel to Philippi (see Philip. 1:26; Philip. 2:24) and Colossae (see Philem. 1:22) if he was acquitted. In Romans 15:24, 28, Paul writes of a planned trip to Spain; and Clement, bishop of Rome at the end of the first century A.D., spoke of Paul traveling 'to the limits of the west,' which would certainly refer to Spain. [Rom. 15:24, 28] (See 1 Clement 5:7.) Tradition is substantially uniform, however, in stating that some time in the later part of Nero's reign Paul was executed in Rome. Behind him he left the rich treasures of his epistles and the record of his faithful friend Luke, which portrays an example of devoted service and missionary zeal that 20 centuries of time have only burnished brighter."³¹

³¹ C. Wilfred Griggs, "[Paul: The Long Road from Damascus](#)," *Ensign*, Sept. 1975.