

ACTS 14

1. Toward the end of his third missionary journey, where did Paul go when he left Troas?
-Paul left Troas and traveled down the coast to Miletus which was the closest seaport to Ephesus.
2. Whom did Paul call from Ephesus to come to Miletus?
-The elders of the church at Ephesus.
3. Who chose these elders for the church in Ephesus?
-God the Holy Spirit through Paul.
4. How should elders be chosen?
-We must choose people whom God Himself has already chosen, and who are already serving in the church.
5. What is the work of an elder?
-To lead the people of the church to God.
-To teach the people of the church about God.
-To encourage the people of the church when they have difficulties.
-To protect the people of the church from false teachings.

-After Paul finished speaking with the elders at Ephesus, he traveled by ship to Caesarea where he spent a day with Christians before continuing to Jerusalem.

Let's read Acts 21:17

- 17-When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly.
- The Christians in Jerusalem were happy to have Paul with them, but after a short time, what happened?
 - Some Jews who were not Christians recognized Paul.
 - These Jews had heard Paul teach in Asia, but they did not agree with his teaching.
 - These Jews said that Paul taught against the laws of Moses.
 - These Jews also said that Paul taught that it was not necessary to go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship.
 - In Jerusalem, Paul had a friend who was a Christian and a Gentile by the name of Trophimus.
 - These Jews also knew Trophimus, and when they saw him with Paul, they accused Paul of taking an uncircumcised Gentile into the inner part of the temple where only Jews were permitted to go.
 - The punishment for taking an uncircumcised Gentile into the inner part of the temple was death.

-This made the Jews very angry.

Let's read Acts 21:27-28 & 30-34

27-When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him,

28-shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place."

30-The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.

31-While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32-He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

33-The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

34-Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks.

-These Jews attacked Paul and would have killed him.

-Yet the commander of the Roman soldiers rescued Paul and arrested him.

-The next day, the commander of the Roman soldiers brought Paul before his accusers.

-Yet Paul's accusers, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, could not agree between themselves.

Let's read Acts 23:10

10-The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

-Paul wanted to stay in Jerusalem for only a short time after which he planned to go to Rome.

-But where was Paul now?

-Paul was in prison, and it looked like he would be in prison for a long time.

-Did God know what was happening to Paul?

-Yes.

-God knew what was happening to Paul because God had allowed it.

-What did God do for Paul to encourage him?

Let's read Acts 23:11

11-The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

-God spoke directly to Paul, and promised him that Paul would testify about God in Rome as well.

-This greatly encouraged Paul.

-What happened the next day?

Let's read Acts 23:12

12-The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.

-The Jews planned to kill Paul, yet Paul's nephew found out about this plan and told Paul.

-Paul then sent his nephew to tell the commander of the Roman soldiers.

-When the commander of the Roman soldiers heard that the Jews were planning to kill Paul, what did he do?

-He decided to send Paul to Felix, the Roman governor

in Caesarea.

Let's read Acts 23:23-24

23-Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight.

24-Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

-When the Jews heard that Paul was taken to Caesarea, they went to Caesarea to prove that Paul should be put to death.

-Even though Governor Felix knew that Paul was not guilty, he did not want to release Paul from prison.

Let's read Acts 24:27

27-When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

-Why did Governor Felix not release Paul from prison?

-Because he wanted to please the Jews.

-In Caesarea, Paul was in prison for two years until Governor Felix was replaced by a new governor.

-The new governor's name was Porcius Festus.

-Even though God had promised Paul that he would go to Rome, Paul was still in prison after two years.

-It looked like there was no hope for Paul to be released from prison.

-At times, it is difficult to wait for God to do what He has promised.

-If we are sick, we want God to answer immediately.

-If we need advice, we want God to answer immediately.

-If we are in trouble, we want God to answer immediately.

-Yet many times, God does not answer us immediately.

-Why does God sometimes not answer immediately?

-God wants our belief in Him to be strengthened.

-God wants us to believe in Him even when everything is going wrong.

-God wants us to believe in Him even when there seems to be no hope.

-When the new Governor Festus left Jerusalem and arrived in Caesarea, Paul was brought before him.

Let's read Acts 25:1-12

1-Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem,

2-where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul.

3-They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way.

4-Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon.

5-Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong."

6-After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

7-When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

8-Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

9-Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

10-Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well.

11-If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!”

12-After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

-Festus asked Paul if he was willing to return to Jerusalem to be judged.

-Yet Paul did not want to return to Jerusalem.

-Why did Paul demand that he be judged before King Caesar who lived in Rome?

-Because Paul had been in prison for more than two years, and there seemed to be no end to his imprisonment.

-Because Paul also knew that if he returned to Jerusalem, the Jews would try and kill him.

-Why was Paul able to ask to be judged by Caesar?

-Although Paul was a Jew, he was also a Roman citizen.

-Because Paul appealed to Caesar, Governor Festus sent Paul to Rome.

Let's read Acts 27:1

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

-In Caesarea, Paul and some other prisoners boarded a boat to take them to Rome.

-On the way to Rome, what happened?

-There was a severe storm, and the boat on which Paul was traveling sank into the sea.

-God, however, saved Paul and all the people who were traveling with him.

-After all of the passengers were able to get to the shore of an island named Malta, they began to gather wood to build a fire to get warm.

-As Paul was also gathering wood, a poisonous snake bit him.

-But God did not allow Paul to become sick or die.

-After a time in Malta, Paul and the others boarded another ship, and continued their journey to Rome.

-They boarded another ship and continued on their journey to Rome.

Let's read Acts 28:16

16-When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

-Did God fulfill his promise to take Paul to Rome?

-Yes.

-God always does what He promises.

-After being in Rome for three days, who did Paul call to come and see him?

-The leaders of the Jews.

Let's read Acts 28:17-23

17-Three days later [Paul] called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.

18-They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death.

19-But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar-not that I had any charge to bring against my own people.

20-For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

21-They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.

22-But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect."

-Although Paul had been in Rome for only three days, he wanted to teach the people about Christ.

-Therefore, a day was arranged when Paul could talk to the Jews about Jesus.

Let's read Acts 28:23-24

23-They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

24-Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.

-Did the Jews believe that Jesus was the Savior?

-Even though some Jews believed in Christ, most of the Jews and their leaders would not believe.

-Paul knew that God had foretold through His prophets in the Old Testament that some Jews would reject the Savior whom God sent to them.

-Therefore, Paul told these Jews what God had said through the prophet Isaiah.

Let's read Acts 28:25-27

25-They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

26-'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

27-For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

-Before the Jews left, Paul also told them that God had also foretold in the Old Testament that the Gentiles would be more willing to believe that the Lord Jesus was the Savior.

Let's read Acts 28:28

28-[Paul said] "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

-Even though most of the Jews refused to believe that Jesus was the Savior, there were many Jews from many different countries who did believe.

-But because these Jews were persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, many turned back and renounced their faith in the Lord Jesus.

-These people were like the rocky or shallow soil in Jesus' parable of the sower.

-In a rocky or shallow soil, the plants do not have strong roots, and therefore, die.

-In the Bible, there is a book which was written as a warning to these Jews who were turning away from Christ.

-Although we are not sure who wrote the book, the book is called the book of Hebrews.

-Here are the last words which Luke wrote in this book which is called the Acts of the Apostles:

Let's read Acts 28:29-31

29-[When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

30-And [Paul] stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,

31-preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

-During this time that Paul was a prisoner in Rome, God through Paul wrote several letters.

-Three of the letters were letters to churches.

-One letter was written to the church in Ephesus.

-One letter was written to the church in Colosse.

-One letter was written to the church in Philippi.

-These letters are now a part of the New Testament.

-During his time in Rome, Paul also wrote a letter to a Christian named Philemon who lived in Colosse.

-This letter is also a part of the New Testament.

-After Paul was a prisoner in Rome for two years, what happened to him?

-From the letters which Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus,

we understand that Paul was released from prison.

-After Paul was released, he continued his work of teaching God's Word to people who had never heard.

-During this time, God also used Paul to write four letters.

-One of these letters which God wrote through Paul was his first letter to Timothy.

-Paul also wrote a letter to another Christian man called Titus.

-Both of these letters are now in the New Testament.

-After a time of teaching God's Word, we understand that Paul was once again arrested and imprisoned in Rome.

-During Paul's second time in prison, he wrote his second letter to Timothy.

-After Paul was imprisoned for the second time, he was beheaded by the command of a very wicked Roman king called Nero.

-And so ends the story of the book of Acts.

-If you believe in Christ, you will see Paul in heaven.