

# The Acts of the Apostles

Lesson 17: Trouble in Jerusalem

Acts 21:15 to 23:33

After his third mission ended, Paul and his coworkers spent some days in Caesarea.



## Acts 21:15

And after those days  
we took up our  
carriages, and went up  
to Jerusalem.



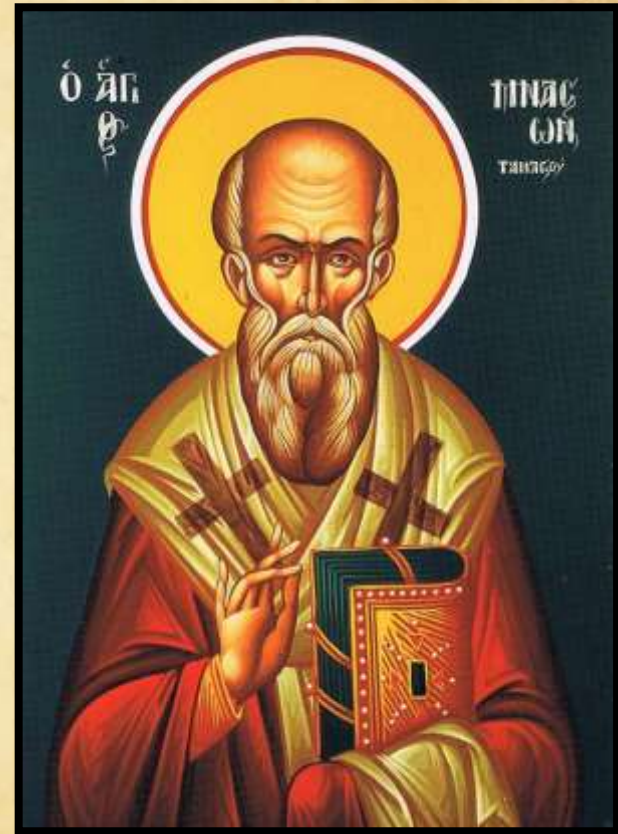
## Acts 21:15

And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.



## Acts 21:16-17

- <sup>16</sup> There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.
- <sup>17</sup> And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.



## Acts 21:18-19

- <sup>18</sup> And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.
- <sup>19</sup> And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.



## Acts 21:18-19

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Simon Peter was probably there also, but it is James (the Lord's half-brother) who seems to be chief among the original apostles.



## Acts 21:20-21

<sup>20</sup> And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him,

Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

<sup>21</sup> And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.





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News had spread that Paul was back in Jerusalem, and there was a growing campaign to make him look bad in the eyes of other Jews.

The elders suggested a way to silence the accusations made against him:



### **Acts 21:22-23a**

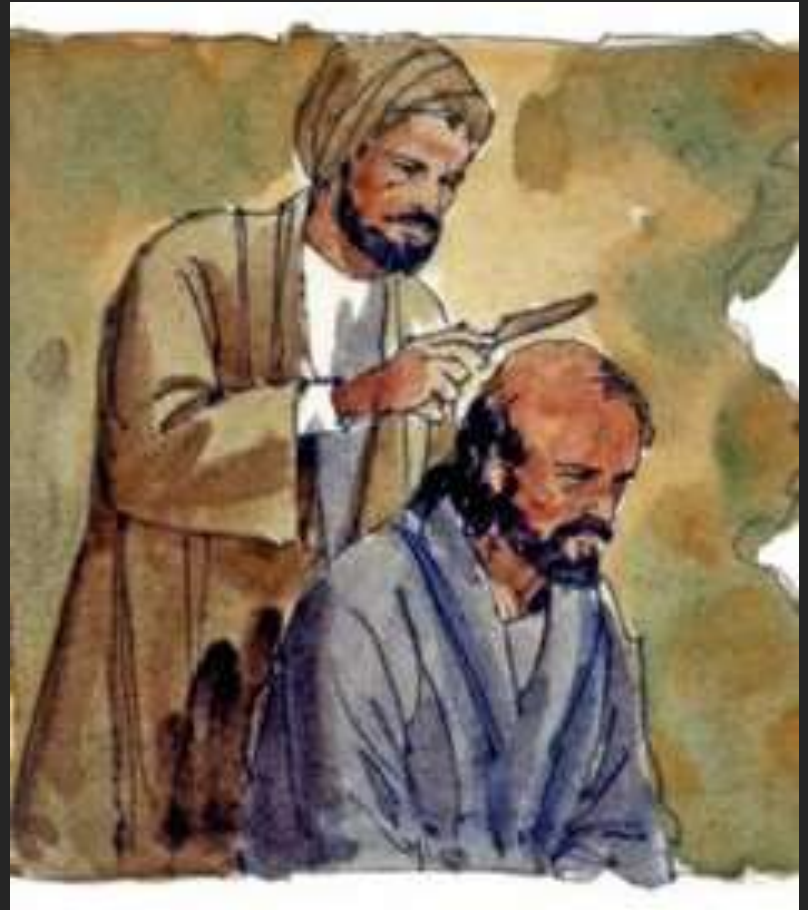
<sup>22</sup> What is it therefore?

the multitude must needs come together:  
for they will hear that thou art come.

<sup>23</sup> Do therefore this that we say to thee:

## Acts 21:23b-24

- <sup>23</sup> ... We have four men which have a vow on them;
- <sup>24</sup> Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.



## Acts 21:23b-24

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The elders advised Paul to join himself to four men who were undergoing the Nazarite ritual of purification – something Paul had also done in Cenchrea when he shaved his head.

The Nazarite cleansing rituals are described in Numbers 6:



## Numbers 6:18-21

- <sup>18</sup> And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put *it* in the fire which *is* under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.
- <sup>19</sup> And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put *them* upon the hands of the Nazarite, after *the hair* of his separation is shaven:
- <sup>20</sup> And the priest shall wave *them* for a wave offering before the LORD: *this is* holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.
- <sup>21</sup> *This is* the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, *and* of his offering unto the LORD for his separation, beside *that* that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

## Acts 21:23b-24

- <sup>23</sup> ... We have four men which have a vow on them;
- <sup>24</sup> Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

They also wanted Paul to cover the expense of the offerings that were a part of the Nazarite vow. These offerings are listed in Numbers 6:13-15:

- a year-old ram for a burnt-offering
- a year-old sheep for a sin-offering,
- a ram for a thank-offering,
- a basket of unleavened cakes,
- a libation of wine (the pouring out of a drink as an offering).

## Acts 21:23b-24

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The word “Nazarite” comes from the Hebrew *nazir* meaning consecrated or separated.

This is different from a *Nazarene* – someone from the city of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth was not a Nazarite.

## The elders continued:

### Acts 21:25

As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.







### **Acts 21:26**

Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.



## Acts 21:27-29

- <sup>27</sup> And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,
- <sup>28</sup> Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.
- <sup>29</sup> (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

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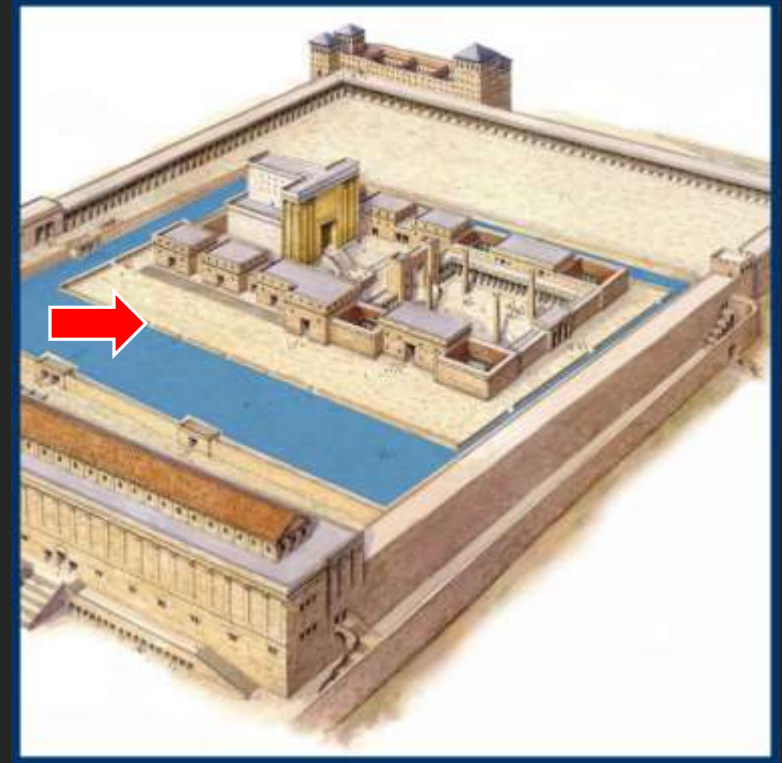
These Jews made three accusations against Paul:

1. That he taught the people to forsake their heritage.
2. That he taught them to forsake the law and the temple.
3. That he defiled the temple by bringing in Gentiles with him.

## Acts 21:27-29

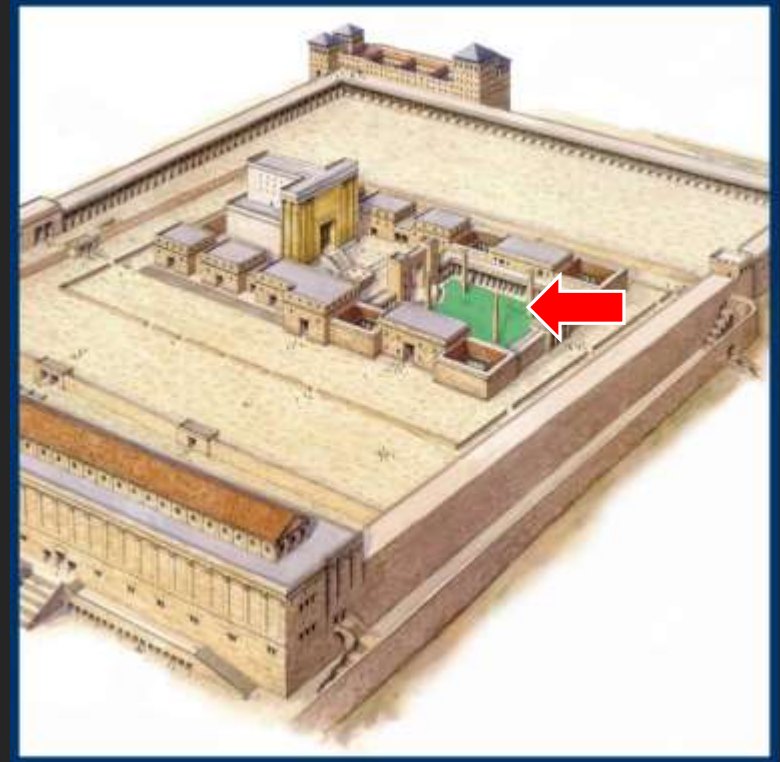
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- <sup>29</sup> (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

Remember that no Gentile was allowed beyond the “middle wall of partition” that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the inner court.



The Court of the Gentiles

The uproar against Paul started within the temple, inside the gate called Beautiful which led into the Court of Women.

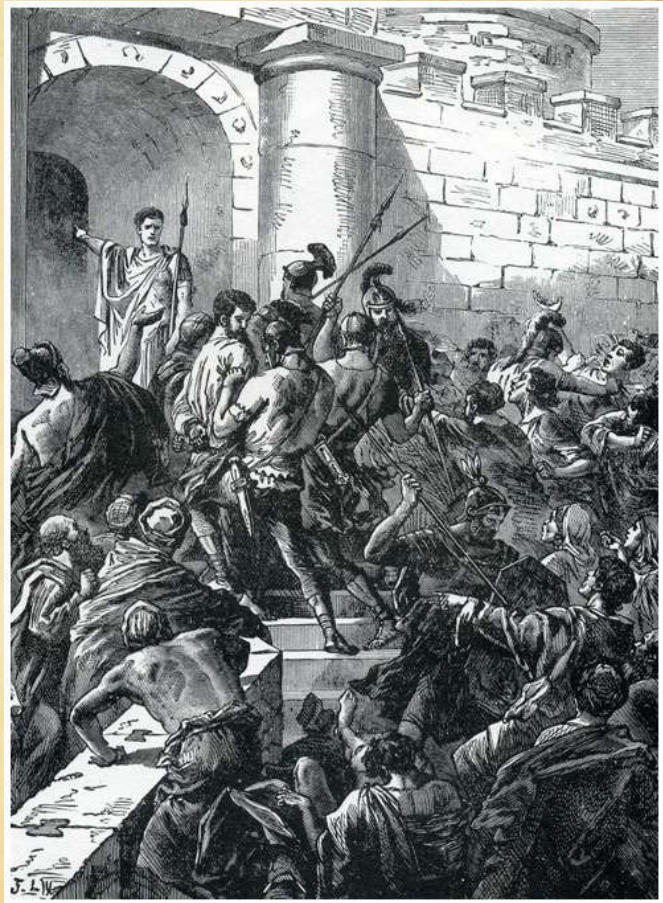


The Court of Women



**Acts 21:30**

And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.



**Acts 21:30**

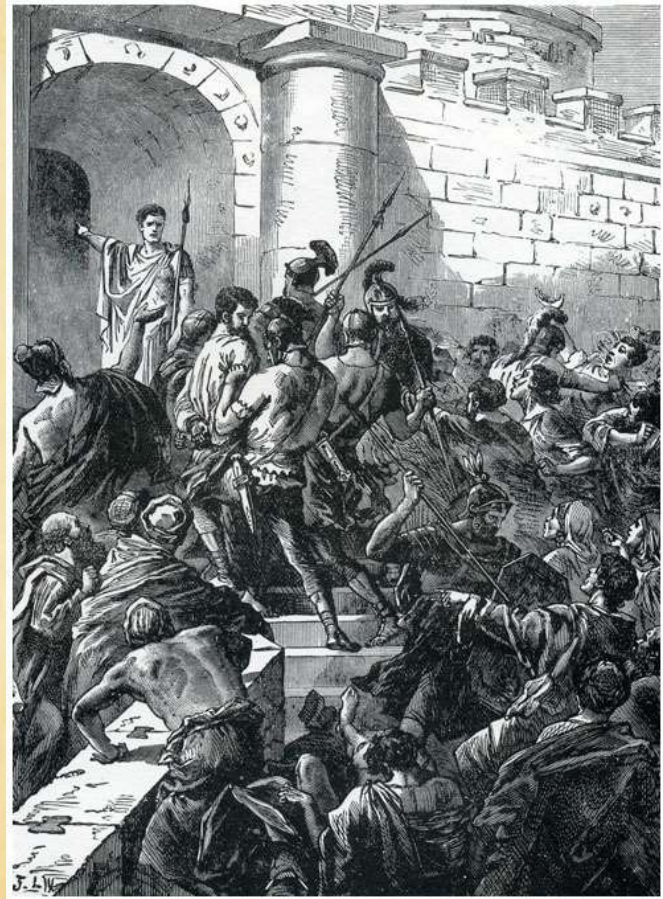
And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

The gate doors were shut by the temple guards because a death on the grounds would defile the temple.



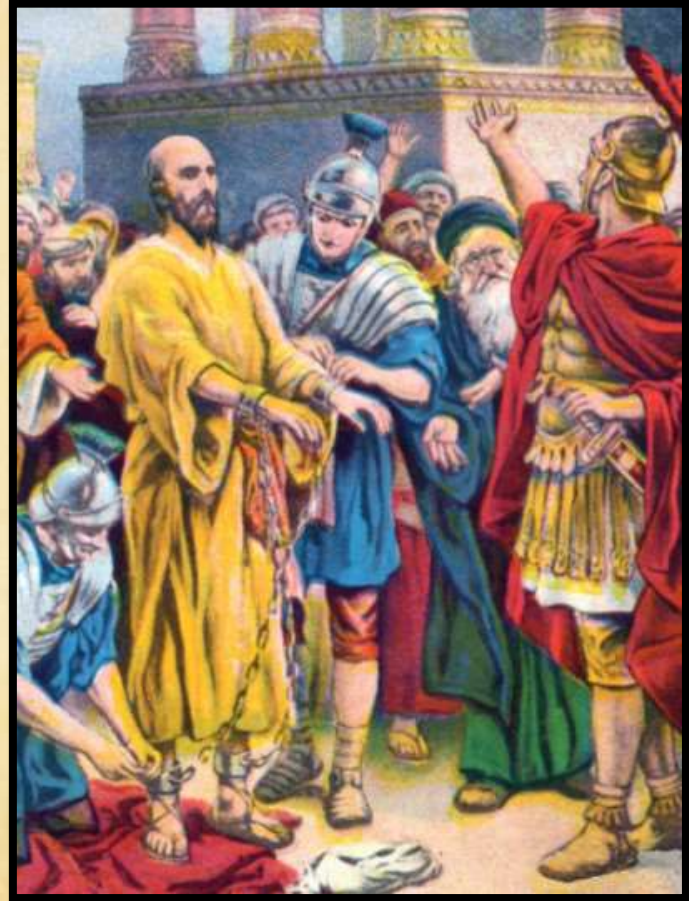
## Acts 21:31-32

- <sup>31</sup> And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.
- <sup>32</sup> Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.



### Acts 21:33

Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.



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Remember what the prophet Agabus told Paul in Caesarea:

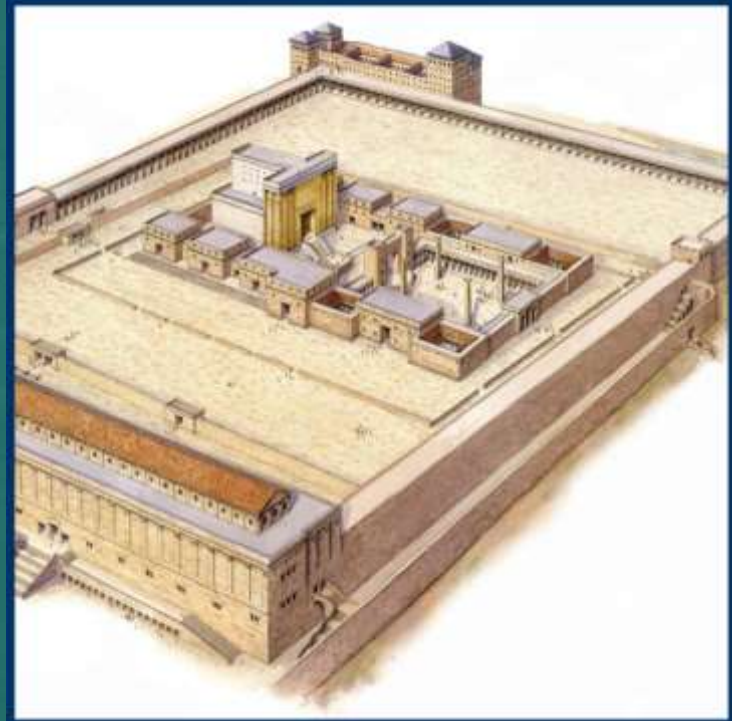
## Going back to verses 10 and 11:

- <sup>10</sup> And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.
- <sup>11</sup> And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.



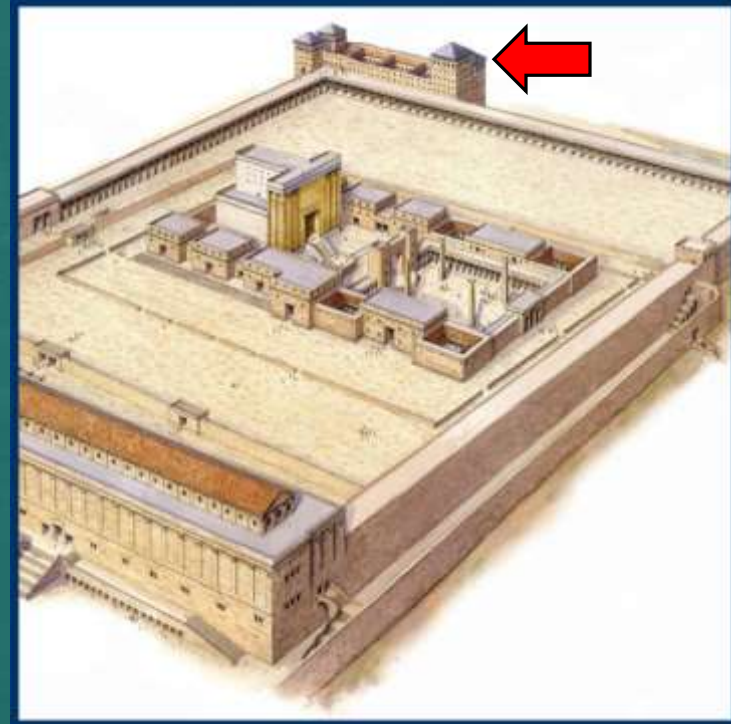
**Acts 21:34**

And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.



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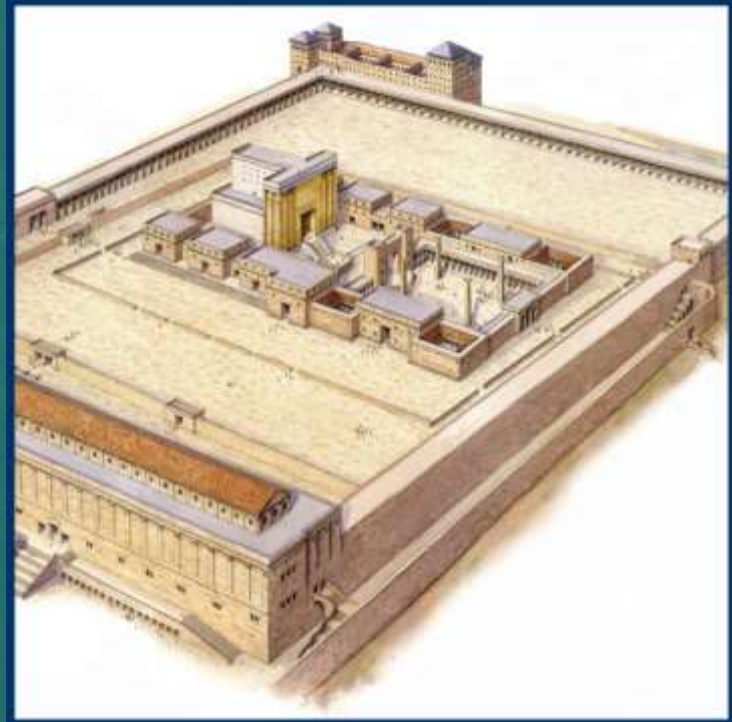


The Castle of Antonia was a military barracks named for Mark Antony.



**Acts 21:35-36**

- 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.
- 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.



The Castle of Antonia was a military barracks named for Mark Antony.

## Acts 21:37-38

- <sup>37</sup> And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?
- <sup>38</sup> Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?



### **Acts 21:39**

But Paul said, I am a man *which am*  
a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia,  
a citizen of no mean [insignificant]  
city:  
and, I beseech thee, suffer [allow]  
me to speak unto the people.



### **Acts 21:40**

And when he had given him licence,  
Paul stood on the stairs, and  
beckoned with the hand unto the  
people.

And when there was made a great  
silence, he spake unto *them* in the  
Hebrew tongue, saying,



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Chapter 21 ends in the middle of this sentence. Paul's speech to the Jews of Jerusalem begins in Chapter 22:



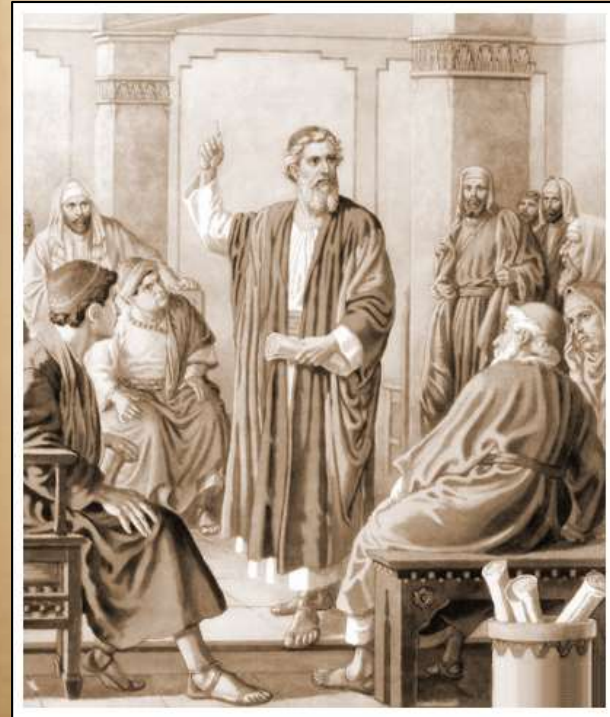
## Acts 22:1-2

- <sup>1</sup> Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.
- <sup>2</sup> (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)



**Acts 22:3**

I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.



## Acts 22:4-5

- 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.
- 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.





## Acts 22:6-8

- <sup>6</sup> And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.
- <sup>7</sup> And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- <sup>8</sup> And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.





### **Acts 22:9-10**

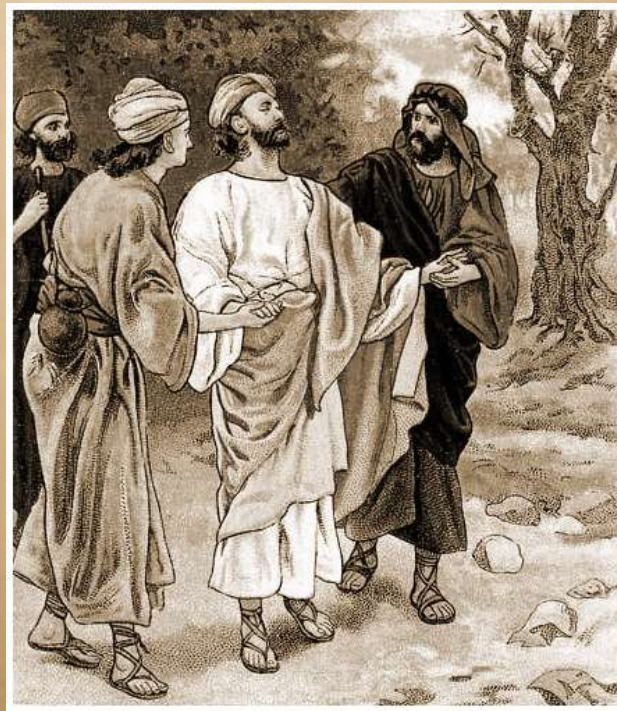
<sup>9</sup> And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

<sup>10</sup> And I said, What shall I do, Lord?

And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

## Acts 22:11-13

- <sup>11</sup> And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.
- <sup>12</sup> And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,
- <sup>13</sup> Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.



## Acts 22:14-16

- <sup>14</sup> And he said,  
The God of our fathers hath  
chosen thee, that thou  
shouldest know his will,  
and see that Just One,  
and shouldest hear the voice  
of his mouth.
- <sup>15</sup> For thou shalt be his witness  
unto all men of what thou hast  
seen and heard.
- <sup>16</sup> And now why tarriest thou?  
arise, and be baptized, and  
wash away thy sins, calling on  
the name of the Lord.





### **Acts 22:17-18**

- <sup>17</sup> And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;
- <sup>18</sup> And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

## Acts 22:19-20

- <sup>19</sup> And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:
- <sup>20</sup> And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.





**Acts 22:21**

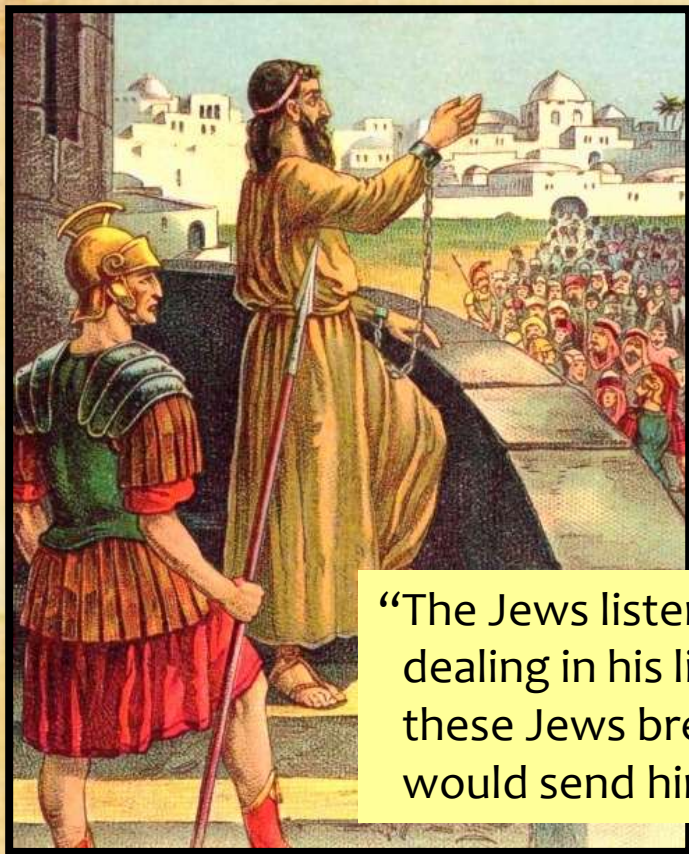
And he said unto me,  
**Depart: for I will send thee far  
hence unto the Gentiles.**



### **Acts 22:22**

And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.





### Acts 22:22

And they gave him audience **unto this word**, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

“The Jews listen with some restraint to Paul’s account of God’s dealing in his life. But when Paul speaks one word – *Gentiles* – these Jews break into a frenzy. They cannot believe that God would send him to the Gentiles.” The Nelson Study Bible

## Acts 22:23-24

- <sup>23</sup> And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,
- <sup>24</sup> The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.



## Acts 22:23-24

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- <sup>24</sup> The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

He planned to torture Paul until he confessed his true identity.

The captain could not believe that a religious testimony would make people so angry!



## Acts 22:25-26

- <sup>25</sup> And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?
- <sup>26</sup> When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.



## Acts 22:27-28

<sup>27</sup> Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

<sup>28</sup> And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom.  
And Paul said, But I was *free born*.



## Acts 22:27-28

<sup>27</sup> Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

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And Paul said, But I was *free born*.

New International Version:  
Then the commander said,  
“I had to pay a lot of money  
for my citizenship.”  
“But I was born a citizen,”  
Paul replied.



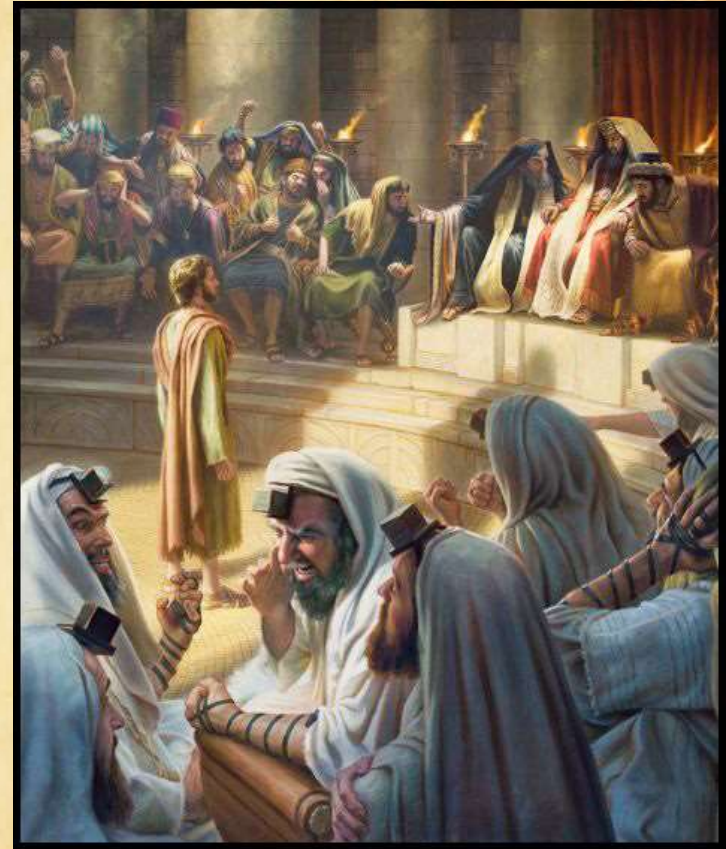
### **Acts 22:29**

Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.



### **Acts 22:30**

On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.





### Acts 22:30

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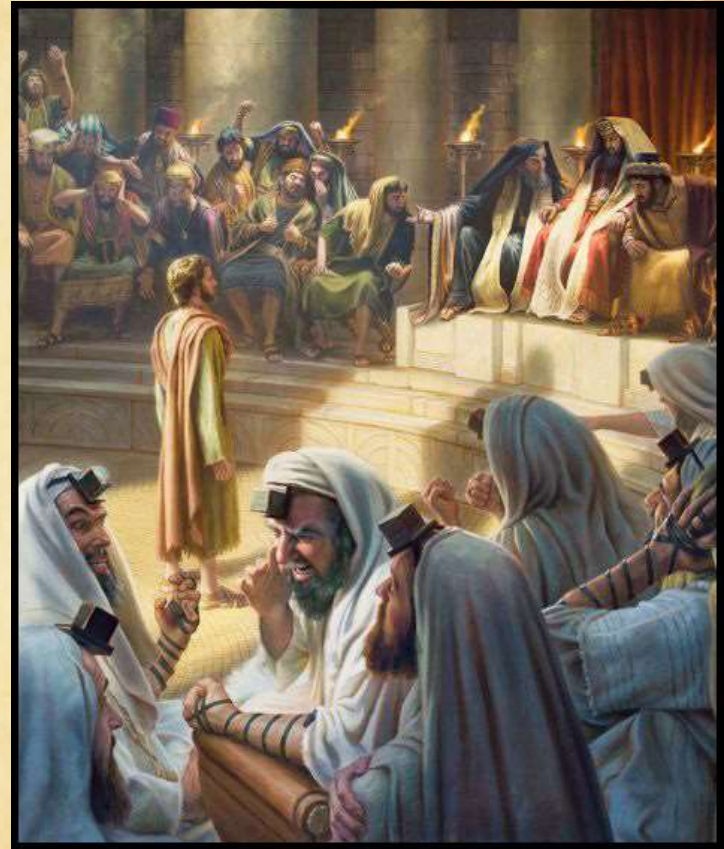


Chapter 22 ends here. In Chapter 23, we read of Paul's testimony before the Sanhedrin.



**Acts 23:1**

And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.



## Acts 23:2-3

- 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.
- 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou whited wall*: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?



## Acts 23:4-5

- 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?
- 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.



## Acts 23:4-5

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“Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people” (Exodus 22:28).

(In this verse, the “gods” are magistrates and judges.)



### Acts 23:6-8

- <sup>6</sup> But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.
- <sup>7</sup> And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.
- <sup>8</sup> For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.



### Acts 23:9-10

- <sup>9</sup> And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.
- <sup>10</sup> And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

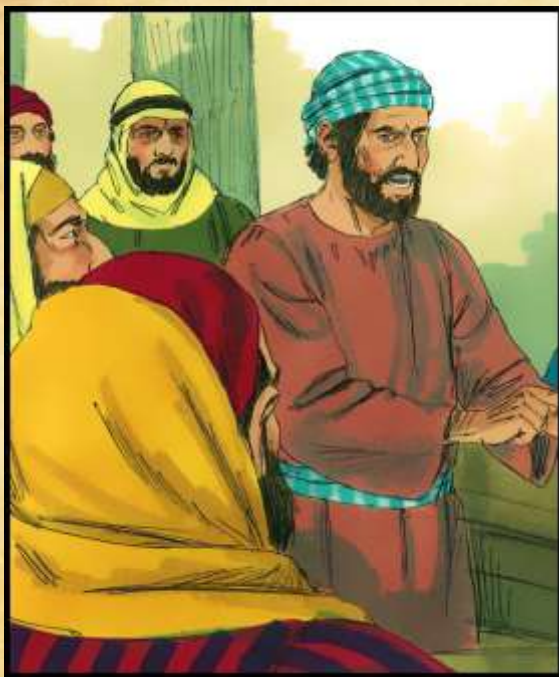
**Acts 23:11**

And the night following  
the Lord stood by him, and  
said,

Be of good cheer, Paul: for  
as thou hast testified of me  
in Jerusalem, so must thou  
bear witness also at Rome.







### **Acts 23:12-13**

- <sup>12</sup> And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.
- <sup>13</sup> And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.



### Acts 23:14-15

- <sup>14</sup> And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.
- <sup>15</sup> Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

## Acts 23:16-17

- <sup>16</sup> And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.
- <sup>17</sup> Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.



## Acts 23:18-19

- <sup>18</sup> So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.
- <sup>19</sup> Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?



## Acts 23:20-21

- <sup>20</sup> And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.
- <sup>21</sup> But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.



## Acts 23:22-24

- <sup>22</sup> So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, See *thou* tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.
- <sup>23</sup> And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;
- <sup>24</sup> And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.



## Acts 23:25-30

<sup>25</sup> And he wrote a letter after this manner:

<sup>26</sup> Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

<sup>27</sup> This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

<sup>28</sup> And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

<sup>29</sup> Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

<sup>30</sup> And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

## Acts 23:31-33

- 31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.
- 32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:
- 33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

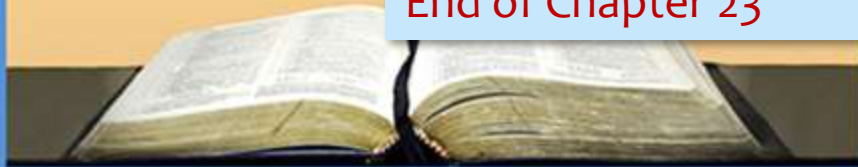




## Acts 23:31-33

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End of Chapter 23





UP NEXT:  
In Caesarea

## Questions to test your understanding of this lesson:

1. According to Acts 21:19, what did Paul tell the apostles in Jerusalem?
2. The apostles told Paul about the thousands of Jews who believed, who were all zealous of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. How long did Paul's purification ceremony last? (see Acts 21:27)
4. According to Acts 21:28, what were the three accusations made against Paul?
5. According to Acts 21:31, what did the Jews want to do to Paul?
6. What prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 21:33?
7. The Jews listened patiently to Paul until he said what word?
8. The captain of the guard planned to torture Paul, but stopped when Paul told him he was a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. What did Jesus tell Paul in his prison cell?
10. Who told the captain about the conspiracy of forty men to kill Paul?

Each question is worth 10 points. Do NOT share your answers with other students.



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