

## PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME (Acts 24-28)

### PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT IN CAESAREA (Acts 24-26)

#### 5 TRIALS & PRISON TERMS:

- Crowd
- Sanhedrin
- Governor Felix
- Governor Festus
- King Agrippa

#### Acts 24-26:

##### 1. GOD USES THE \_\_\_\_\_ TO HELP GUIDE PEOPLE.

- Each person has a conscience. Conscience is a gift from God. Paul said that conscience either accuses or excuses a person (*Rom. 2:15*).
- It is possible for an unbeliever to live with a clear conscience. *"Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, 'My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day (Acts 23:1).*

This verse probably includes Paul's life before he was a believer. Remember that he obeyed the Law before receiving Christ. By the Law, Paul was without fault (*Phil. 3:6*). Some unbelievers may live with a clear conscience.

- A conscience can make mistakes. It acts on the basis of knowledge. Knowledge is information or understanding gotten through experience. But knowledge may be incomplete.

Conscience judges only on the basis of what it knows. Paul writes of those who have a weak conscience. He says these have a weak conscience because they lack true knowledge (*1 Cor. 8:7*).

- A conscience can be renewed and enlightened. The Scripture makes a person's conscience more reliable. Paul argues that a person may not recognize some sins without Scripture (*Romans 7:7*). God's Word is a light to our paths (*Ps. 119:105*). The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit enlighten the conscience.
- A conscience can be seared and ruined. (*1 Tim. 4:2*).
- Believers who ignore their consciences will wreck their faith (*1 Tim. 1:19*). A guilty conscience destroys faith (*1 John 3:21*).
- A clear conscience strengthens faith and love (*1 John 3:21-22; 1 Tim. 1:5*).
- We are blessed if our consciences do not condemn us for our choices. (*Rom. 14:22*).

**2. GOD SENDS \_\_\_\_\_ WITH A MESSAGE TO ENLIGHTEN THE CONSCIENCE.**

God speaks to everyone through the conscience. But He sends preachers to strengthen the work the conscience begins. Preachers bring truth that is a brighter light than conscience.

*"I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them 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" (Acts 26:17-18).*

The conscience may tell a person what is right or wrong, but the gospel brings the power to change a person's life.

The gospel enables people to choose between darkness and light, moving from Satan's kingdom to God's kingdom.

The conscience condemns. But the gospel offers forgiveness and a new beginning.

The conscience can tell us when we sin. But the gospel *"is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile"* (Rom. 1:16).

### **PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT IN ROME (Acts 27-28)**

Rome was the largest city in Paul's day. It was the capitol and symbol of the Roman Empire, famous for its sin. (Rev. 17:1-18)

#### **1. Faith enables us to survive the storms of life (Acts 27:13-44)**

Faith in God is the only thing that helps during great trouble. Storms fill people with fear and discouragement. But those with faith in God can stand during darkest trials.

*"So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me"* (Acts 27:25).

#### **2. Some people's theology is confused (Acts 28:1-10)**

#### **3. People lose what they refuse to use (Acts 28:11-31)**

- In the city, Paul called the leaders of the Jews together.
- He lived in a house that he rented.
- A Roman soldier guarded him at all times.

- Some think the soldier was chained to him.
- Jewish leaders and other Jews came to Paul's house. From morning to evening he taught them. Response was mixed. Some were convinced that Jesus is the Son of God. Others refused to believe. This brought a strong word from Paul.

Why did the Jews not understand?

- Their hearts had become calloused.
- This happened as they rebelled against God.
- They had closed their eyes and could not see.

A solemn warning to us. We lose what we refuse to use (*Matt. 13:11-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-40; Rom. 11:8*).

Many Jews rejected the gospel.

But many Gentiles listened and received it (*Acts 28:28-30*).

The book of Acts ends in Rome...the way it began in Jerusalem—with the preaching of the kingdom.

## HOMEWORK:

1. On what does a conscience base its judgments?
2. Describe a storm that faith in God helped you survive.
3. How do people's values change in the storms of life?