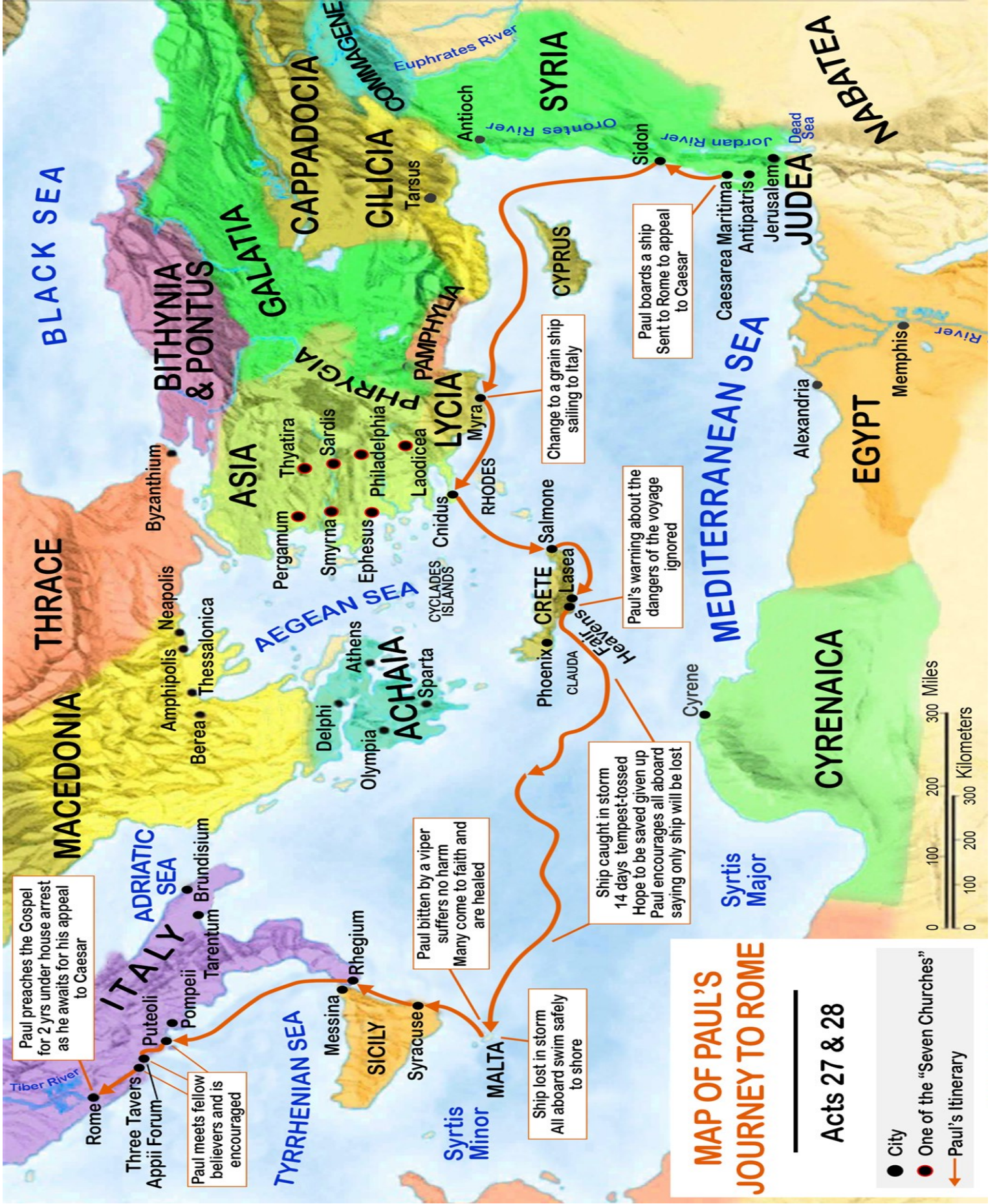


ACTS 22:24-23:11



A. Acts 22:24 - 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.

1. The mention of Gentiles **ended** Paul's speaking because the Jews, hating that word, began shouting.

Lysias, more than likely, could not understand Hebrew. He sees and hears the Jewish uproar and doesn't have the slightest idea **why** this Jewish mob exploded, but evidently they thought Paul was guilty of some crime. If not, why the uproar?

2. Lysias orders the soldiers to bring Paul inside to be scourged in order to make Paul confess his crime.

Scourging was done with the Roman flagellum (a wooden handle to which leather strips with bits of metal and bone were attached). This was a series of whippings inflicted to get **information or a confession-admission of a crime. This is what they used on **Jesus**. This was a fearful ordeal that many would die from - bleeding out or from infection.

B. Acts 22:25-28 - 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? Acts 22:26 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 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. Acts 22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

1. Paul, remaining calm and at the right moment, plays his **trump** card. It was illegal to submit a Roman citizen to this type of brutal examination. Paul had the law on his side in this particular instance. But more importantly, he had **God's** purpose for him to fulfill!

2. Also important, Paul mentions he was condemned **with**out a trial. Because Paul was a Roman citizen, his question was instantly addressed. The centurion who had been placed in charge of the scourging, upon hearing Paul, immediately went to the captain and told him to be **care**ful for Paul was a Roman.

3. The captain asked Paul if he was a Roman citizen and how did he accomplish that, being a **Jew**? The captain had become a Roman citizen, but only after paying a **lot** of money. Paul simply tells the captain that he was born a Roman. Lysias had **mis**judged his prisoner (Hebrew-Greek-Roman).

C. Acts 22:29-30 - 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.

1. All those who stood by to examine-scourge Paul were brought to an immediate **halt** in the proceedings upon discovering that Paul was a **free**-born Roman citizen. If they had gone on with the scourging, they all (including the captain) could have suffered serious consequences by law.

2. Dispensationally, this is showing the Jewish religious leaders' and the nation's rejection of the **king**-dom gospel and the **grace** gospel as a whole.

*Paul, being a Jew and Roman, is the one man who naturally represented the Body of Christ comprised of both Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesians 2:13-16 - But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Eph. 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Eph. 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; Eph. 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

3. The next day, unbound, Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin so that the formal charges might be made against him. The captain (Lysias) was still in the dark as to why the Jews had attacked Paul. He ordered the Jewish priests and council to gather in order to find out why, so justice could be served.

*It was the Sanhedrin's responsibility to interpret and apply Jewish law to the affairs of the nation, and to try those who violated the law. Lysias brings Paul in and then steps aside to watch the proceedings. Being a Roman soldier, he could not afford to lose his prisoner because he could then lose his own life.

D.

Acts 23:1-11 - 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 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Acts 23:3 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 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Acts 23:5 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 23:6 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. Acts 23:7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. Acts 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. Acts 23:9 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. Acts 23:10 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.

1. Paul looks straight into the eyes of his accusers. He addresses them as brothers and states that he has a "clear conscience" about his spiritual life before God - up to that very day! Wow! Paul knows he is innocent of any of the Jews' accusations.
2. The high priest orders someone close by Paul to smack Paul across his mouth and one did. Paul answered that action with a stinging rebuke by calling whoever judged him a "whited wall".
 - a. *When a dead body was found in the field, it was buried on the spot where it was found. At times, pilgrims going to feasts in Jerusalem would come into contact with one of these graves, which would have made them ceremonially unclean. To avoid this, it was ordered that all such graves should be whitewashed a month before the feasts so that the pilgrims could avoid coming into contact with them. To call one "whitewashed" was not an expression of respect.

- b. Paul did not realize that it had been the high priest who had given the order to strike him. Remember that Paul had poor **eyesight**. But Paul does **not** apologize. He quotes the law and how they ordered him to be smitten - that was contrary to the law. Why? Paul had **not** been tried, **nor** convicted, of any crime up to this point.

*Paul, however, immediately acknowledges his error, yet it was in ignorance (Ex. 22:28). Paul even quotes the passage to show **respect** for the **Word** of God. But Paul also saw Ananias and how **bad** he was. Paul knew that Israel, as a whole, had apostatized. This was **an indictment** against the spiritual leaders of Israel, especially their high priests who had **allowed** their fall.

- c. **Also, this was **not** a formal meeting, or convening, of the Sanhedrin - but an **informal** gathering outside Fort Antonia. Paul would have recognized the high priest had he been wearing his high priest garments and sitting in his official seat. But whatever the explanation for his failure to recognize the high priest, Paul did not offer an excuse. Paul admitted his error and accepted responsibility for his words. The high priest should have been more **afraid** of Paul's other words: "God shall smite thee".
3. We can respect that Paul **fights** for himself. After his run-in with the high priest, he proclaims himself to be a Pharisee. This, in turn, **splits** the crowd. Paul knew that the membership of the Sanhedrin was divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. Because of their differences of belief, Paul decides to turn the table upon them and not be so focused upon himself.
- a. **When Paul said he was a Pharisee, **sides** were taken! The Sadducees were materialists, denying both the resurrection and the existence of spirits and angels. The Pharisees believed in **all** three.
- b. The Pharisees even went so far as to side with Paul to a point, "we find **no** evil in this man". The meeting turned into a **mob** mentality and the captain feared for Paul's life. So he ordered the soldiers to rescue Paul and to take him back to the fortress.
4. I believe Paul knew that the Sanhedrin would **not** give him a **fair** hearing. He also knew they had been temporarily set aside. For sure, he knew that for him to get to Rome would never be through Israel, but through the **Romans** themselves.
5. As Paul sits alone in his cell, he contemplates how everything will turn out. He was trusting God but, no doubt, having some thoughts like: Would Lysias **free** him or would there be **more** trouble? If acquitted, how could he escape Jerusalem alive? What about the plan to go to Rome?
- a. **It does not show that any of his companions were with Paul, nor did he have any help from the Messianic church at Jerusalem. He is alone. But God-Christ stands by Paul in **person**! Jesus lets him know that he was **not** forsaken, that He would be with him, so be encouraged and comforted.
- b. The Lord again was placing His **approval** upon His servant's actions and heart. He tells Paul that his witness of Him in Jerusalem was completed (a **final** nail in their coffin). It was now time to turn toward Rome in order to testify there.

Note: Acts 19:21 - [After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.]

****It becomes clear that Paul's whole trip to Jerusalem and to Rome was God's purpose all the time.**

- c. Notice how God supernaturally was **with** this apostle and the need to fulfill the gospel of grace ministry.

Acts 22:17-18 - 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; Acts 22:18 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 18:9-10 - Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: Acts 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Acts 27:22-24 - And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship. Acts 27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Acts 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

II Timothy 4:16-17 - At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. 2Tim. 4:17 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.

E.

Some Lessons:

1. Paul's attitude - spirit - wisdom - and discernment during all this was unbelievable. We can be calm, positive, and yet firm **when** we need to be.
2. When we face opposition, even persecution, that never allows us to be **unfaithful** to God!
3. Our seemingly **simple** testimony is still powerful, even in the midst of angry unbelievers who are against the gospel.
4. In the midst of hostile people, we can **still** be courteous and take a stand (Rom. 12:17-21).
5. When we lift the Lord up, that encourages our own heart, and that puts the enemy in opposition to God. Then, if God be for us, **who** can be against us?
6. God's will and purpose for our lives is **beyond** our understanding and calls for us just to **trust** Him in our circumstances.
7. God has temporarily set Israel aside, but He is not done with her. God still loves her and has covenanted with her. If we have God's love, we **should** love her too.
8. We should be so **appreciative** of the mystery program that God had hidden for thousands of years, and then revealed its truths to Paul - down to us. Think of what it **cost**!
 - a. God had to act against His beloved nation for their unbelief. He sent His Son and they still did not believe! He raised His Son alive and they still would not believe in Him. So, he had to temporarily set them aside. For **2000** years, they have been mostly **hated** by the world.

††

- b. Paul was completely rejected by most of his own brethren, his own nation that he loved so much. They wanted him **dead!** So God used Paul to **go** to the nations with the gospel of grace and the Mystery Program. Paul **suffered** to get God's message out.

II Corinthians 11:22-33 - Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. 2Cor. 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 2Cor. 11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 2Cor. 11:25 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; 2Cor. 11:26 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; 2Cor. 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 2Cor. 11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 2Cor. 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 2Cor. 11:30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 2Cor. 11:31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. 2Cor. 11:32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 2Cor. 11:33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

II Timothy 4:2 - Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.