



Acts: The Power of the Gospel





	Week	Topic
1	6/07/2026	Introduction to Acts/Review Chapters 1-14 Chapter 15: Jerusalem Council
2	6/14/2026	Chapter 16: 2 nd Missionary Journey: Philippi
3	6/21/2026	Chapter 17: Thessalonica, Athens
4	6/28/2026	Chapter 18: Corinth, Returning to Antioch
5	7/05/2026	July 4 th Weekend
6	7/12/2026	Chapter 19: 3 rd Missionary: Paul at Ephesus Chapter 20: Journey to Greece
7	7/19/2026	Chapter 21: Paul returns to Jerusalem
8	7/26/2026	Chapter 22: Paul Addresses Jerusalem Mob
9	8/02/2026	Chapter 23: Plot against Paul
10	8/09/2026	Chapter 24: Paul accused of Seditious
11	8/16/2026	Chapter 25: Paul appeals to Ceasar
12	8/23/2026	Chapter 26: Paul testimony before Agrippa II
13	8/30/2026	Chapter 27: Paul sent to Rome Chapter 28: Paul's ministry on Malta and Rome

1





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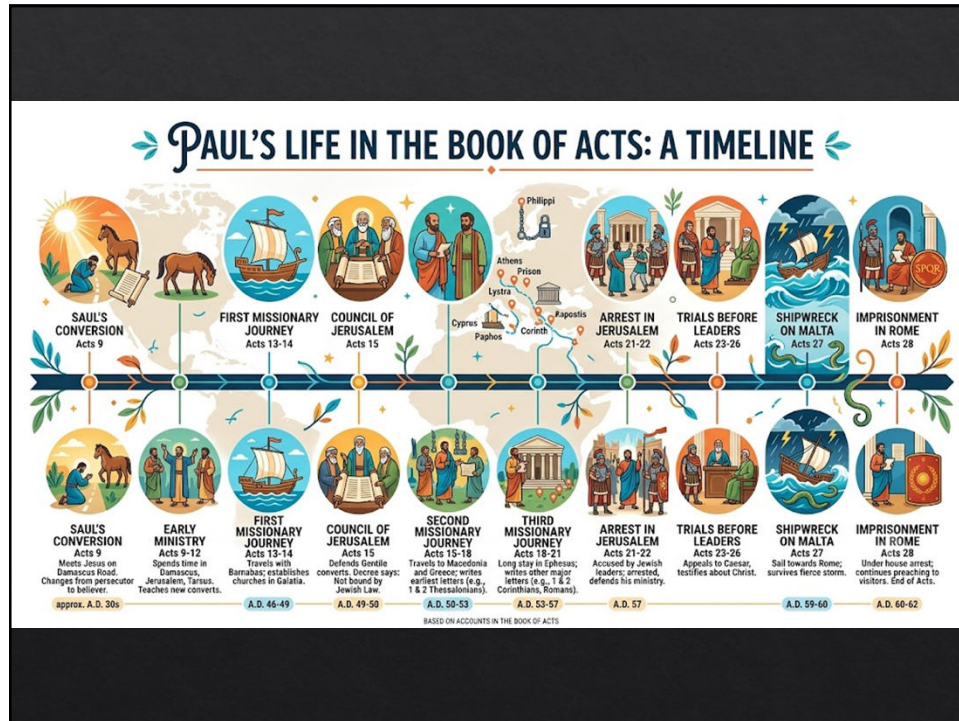
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3

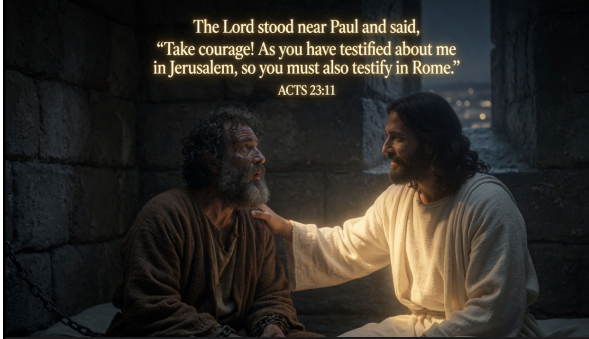
Chapter 24: Paul Before the Romans



4



Ananias ben Nebedeus (AD 47-59)



The Lord stood near Paul and said,
"Take courage! As you have testified about me
in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."
ACTS 23:11

Review of Acts 23

- Paul is questioned before the High Priest and Claudius Lysias
- Paul appeal as a Pharisee draws division in the Sanhedrin
- Jesus appears to Paul; reassures him, he will go to Rome
- A plot to kill Paul is discovered
- Paul is sent by Lysias to Felix in Ceasera, escorted by 470, then by 70 Horsemen

5



Ananias ben Nebedeus (AD 47-59)

The High Priest

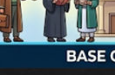
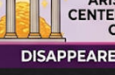
He was appointed to the office around A.D. 47 by **Herod of Chalcis** (brother of Agrippa I).

Notorious Greed and Bribery: The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus painted a dark picture of Ananias, describing him as a ruthless tyrant. Josephus records that Ananias used his violent servants to forcibly confiscate tithes directly from the threshing floors, leaving ordinary priests to starve, while using his immense wealth to bribe both Roman officials and Jewish factions to maintain his political dominance.

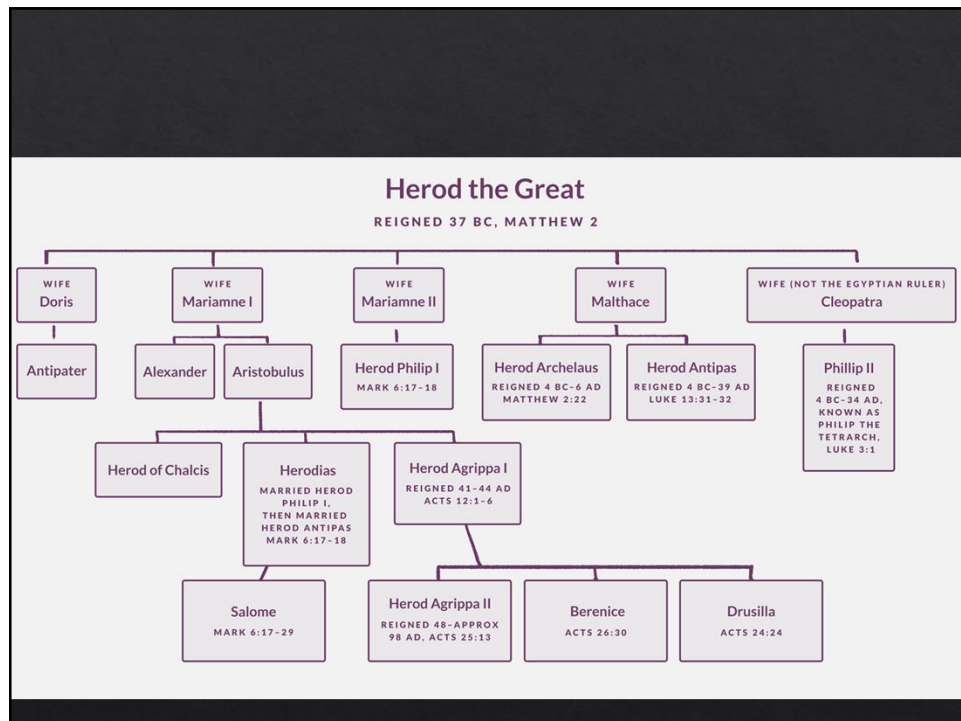
His Violent Death (A.D. 66): Because of his heavy pro-Roman allegiances and extreme corruption, Ananias became a primary target for Jewish nationalists (*Sicarii* / Zealots).

At the outbreak of the First Jewish–Roman War in A.D. 66, anti-Roman rebels burned his palace down. He hid in an aqueduct at the royal palace grounds, where he was discovered and assassinated alongside his brother, Hezekiah. Irony played out in his family line: his own son, **Eleazar**, was the Temple Captain who helped spark the rebellion against Rome.

6

COMPARISON: PHARISEES VS. SADDUCEES (SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD)	
PHARISEES	SADDUCEES
 SACRED SCRIPTURE: FULL HEBREW BIBLE (TORAH, PROPHETS, WRITINGS)	 SACRED SCRIPTURE: ONLY THE WRITTEN TORAH (BOOKS OF MOSES)
 ORAL LAW & TRADITION: ACCEPTED ORAL TORAH & TRADITIONS	 ORAL LAW & TRADITION: REJECTED ALL ORAL TRADITIONS
 RESURRECTION & AFTERLIFE: BODILY RESURRECTION, FINAL JUDGMENT, LIFE AFTER DEATH	 RESURRECTION & AFTERLIFE: DENIED RESURRECTION, NO AFTERLIFE (SOUL DIES WITH BODY)
 ANGELS & SPIRITS: ACTIVE SPIRITUAL REALM: ANGELS, DEMONS, SPIRITS	 ANGELS & SPIRITS: DENIED EXISTENCE OF ANGELS OR SPIRITS
 DIVINE FATE & FREE WILL: BALANCE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE & HUMAN CHOICE	 DIVINE FATE & FREE WILL: EMPHASIZED ABSOLUTE HUMAN FREE WILL; NO DIVINE INTERVENTION
 SOCIAL & POLITICAL: MIDDLE CLASS, MERCHANTS, SCHOLARS; CENTERED IN SYNAGOGUES; ANTI-ROMAN	 SOCIAL & POLITICAL: ARISTOCRATIC ELITE, PRIESTS; CENTERED IN JERUSALEM TEMPLE; COOPERATED WITH ROME
BASE OF RATIONAL JUDAISM (POST-70 AD)	DISAPPEARED AFTER TEMPLE DESTRUCTION (70 AD)

7



8



9



Auxiliary Troops (1st Century CE): Rather than full legionaries (heavy Roman citizen infantry), the permanent troops headquartered at Caesarea were primarily **auxiliaries**—recruited locally or from non-citizen provincial populations (such as Samaritans, Syrians, and Greeks).

Composition:

5 Infantry Cohorts: Each cohort typically consisted of about **500 to 1,000 men**.

1 Cavalry Regiment (*Ala*): A cavalry unit of about **500 horsemen**.

10



11



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Acts 24:1

1 And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one **Tertullus**. They laid before the governor their case against Paul.

12



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Acts 24:2-3

2 And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: "Since through you **we enjoy much peace**, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, **reforms are being** made for this nation, 3 in every way and everywhere we accept this **with all gratitude**.

13



Felix and Drusilla

His Downfall

In A.D. 58/59, severe ethnic riots broke out between Jewish and Greek residents in Caesarea. Felix responded with heavy-handed brutality, leading Jewish leaders to formally accuse him of corruption and tyranny before Emperor Nero in Rome. Nero recalled him from Judea, though Felix managed to avoid execution due to his brother Pallas's remaining political connections. He was succeeded as governor by **Porcius Festus**.

Former Slave Turned Ruler: Felix was unique among Roman governors because he was born a Greek slave. He was freed by Empress Antonia (mother of Emperor Claudius). He gained high political office primarily through his powerful, influential brother, Pallas, who served as the treasurer and favorite court advisor to Emperor Claudius.

Notoriously Cruel and Corrupt: Roman and Jewish historians painted an exceptionally dark picture of Felix. The Roman historian Tacitus famously wrote that Felix "*exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave*," marked by extreme cruelty, lust, and greed. Josephus noted that Felix frequently used violence to put down unrest and even hired assassinations (*Sicarii* / dagger-men) to eliminate political rivals.

High-Society Marriage: Felix was married to Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I and sister to Herod Agrippa II. She left her previous husband, King Azizus of Emesa, to marry Felix.

14



Felix and Drusilla

Historical accounts (primarily from the 1st-century historian Flavius Josephus) detail her dynamic youth and high-profile marriages:

First Marriage: Around age 14, Drusilla was given in marriage to **Azizus, King of Emesa** (in modern Syria), who agreed to convert to Judaism and be circumcised to secure the match.

Second Marriage (Felix): Famous for her exceptional physical beauty, she caught the attention of **Antonius Felix**, the Roman Governor of Judea. Encouraged by Felix—and partly to escape the envy and rivalry of her older sister Bernice—Drusilla deserted her husband and married Felix around AD 54. This violated Jewish law regarding unlawful divorce and remarriage outside the covenant.

Herod Agrippa I

Historical records note that Drusilla and Felix had a son named **Agrippa**. According to Josephus, both Drusilla and her son perished during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79.

15

Tacitus: "The Mind of a Slave"



The Roman senator and historian Tacitus viewed Felix with absolute contempt. Because Roman elites despised the idea of former slaves holding high political office, Tacitus's writings focus heavily on Felix's lack of nobility and character.

The Famous Verdict: In his *Histories* (Book V.9), Tacitus summarizes Felix's rule with one of his most famous, biting criticisms: "**He exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave**" (or "with all the instincts of a slave").

Cruelty and Lust: Tacitus notes that Felix governed Judea through sheer cruelty and unchecked lust (*per omnem saevitiam ac libidinem*).

A Trail of Royal Wives: Suetonius and Tacitus note that Felix was married three times, each time to a royal princess, which was a strategic way for the former slave to secure elite social status.

16

Josephus: A Reign of Anarchy



The Jewish historian Josephus (in both *Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Jewish War*) details the day-to-day chaos of Felix's administration. According to Josephus, Felix's term was practically a reign of anarchy.

Marrying Drusilla: Josephus records that Felix lured the Jewish princess Drusilla (the sister of King Agrippa II) away from her husband, King Azizus of Emesa, convincing her to divorce Azizus and marry him instead.

Using Assassins: While Felix publicly crucified rebels, he secretly aligned himself with the *Sicarii* (cloak-and-dagger assassins). Josephus reports that Felix grew tired of the Jewish High Priest Jonathan (who frequently criticized Felix's administration) and bribed the Sicarii to murder Jonathan in the Temple.

The Egyptian Prophet: Josephus documents that Felix ruthlessly crushed a popular uprising led by an unnamed "Egyptian false prophet" who gathered thousands of followers on the Mount of Olives, promising that the walls of Jerusalem would fall on his command. Felix sent heavily armed cavalry to slaughter or capture the followers, though the Egyptian himself escaped.

The Caesarea Riot: A violent civil dispute broke out in Caesarea between its Jewish and Syrian inhabitants. Felix ordered his troops to violently suppress the Jewish population, plundering their homes.

17

His Recall and Escape from Justice



Felix's mishandling of the Caesarea riot was the final straw. Around 60 CE, Emperor Nero recalled him to Rome. The Jewish leaders of Caesarea traveled to Rome to formally accuse Felix of mismanagement and extortion.

According to Josephus, Felix would have faced severe punishment or execution, but he was saved at the last minute because his brother Pallas still held enough sway in Nero's court to negotiate a pardon. He was replaced by Porcius Festus, but the damage was done; the radicalization and hatred fostered during Felix's rule had set Judea on an irreversible **path to the Great Revolt six years later.**

18



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The Charges Against Paul:

1. Rebellion against Rome
2. Leader of Jewish Sect
3. Profaning the Temple

Acts 24:4-6

4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly.

5 For we have found **this man a plague**, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is **a ringleader** of the sect of the Nazarenes.

6 He even tried to profane **the temple**, but we seized him.

19



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Paul's Defense

- He went to Jerusalem to worship God, he was not involved in civil disobedience (Acts 24:10-13)
- Only 12 days since he arrived in Jerusalem (5-days Captive)
- The Way: Consistent with Jewish Faith; Law and Prophets, Resurrection

Acts 24:8-10

8 By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about **everything of which we accuse him.**"

9 The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

10 And when **the governor** had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: "Knowing that for many years you have been a **judge over this nation**, I cheerfully make my defense.

20



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Acts 24:11-13

11 You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem,

12 and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city.

13 Neither **can they prove** to you what they now bring up against me.

21



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Acts 24:14-16

14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which **they call a sect**, I worship the God of our fathers, **believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,**

15 having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that **there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.**

16 So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

Job 19:24-27

24 Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

26 **And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,**

27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

22

The Resurrection

Isaiah 26:19-21

19 Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by.

21 For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.

Daniel 12:1-3

1 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

23



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Acts 24:17-19

17 Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings.

18 While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some

Jews from Asia—

19 they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me.



24



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Paul:

The real issue: The Resurrection of the dead

Acts 24:20-22

20 Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council,
21 other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: 'It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.'"

22 But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, "When **Lysias the tribune** comes down, I will decide your case."

25



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Acts 24:23-25

23 Then he gave orders to the centurion that **he should be kept in custody but have some liberty**, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

26



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Acts 24:24-25

24 After some days **Felix** came with his wife **Drusilla**, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about **faith in Christ Jesus**.

25 And as he reasoned about **righteousness** and **self-control** and the **coming judgment**, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. **When I get an opportunity** I will summon you."

Felix was alarmed



ἐμφοβος
emphobos
em'-fob-os

From G1722 and G5401; in fear, that is, alarmed: - affrighted, afraid, tremble.

27



Acts: The Power of the Gospel





Acts 24:26-27

26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. **So he sent for him often and conversed with him.**

27 When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by **Porcius Festus**. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, **Felix left Paul in prison.**

28



Riots of Caesarea
 ca. 35-39 AD) – During the time of Paul's imprisonment under Governor Antonius Felix (32–40 AD).
 Tensions between Jews and Gentiles erupted into violence. Felix's harsh response and corruption led to his removal by Emperor Nero.

The Riots in Caesarea

Caesarea Maritima, the Roman administrative capital of Judea, was a mixed city of Jews and Syrian Greeks. Toward the end of Felix's tenure as procurator, intense civic strife broke out:

The Conflict: The Jewish inhabitants claimed they should have equal or superior civic rights because the city was founded by a Jewish king, Herod the Great. The Syrian Greeks argued it was fundamentally a Greek city.

Felix's Brutal Response: When the dispute escalated from street brawls to armed conflict, Felix intervened. He commanded his Roman troops to attack the Jewish rioters, resulting in the slaughter of many citizens and the plundering of their homes.

29



30

Porcius Festus Takes Over

THE SICARII

WHOM PORCIUS FESTUS HAD HUNTED DOWN

During the procuratorship of Porcius Festus (circa 59–62 CE), the Sicarii—Jewish dagger-men who opposed Roman rule through stealth and assassination—were hunted down and suppressed. Many were captured, imprisoned, or slain.

From the hills and wilderness of Judea, they struck terror into friend and foe alike.



Bronze coin minted by Porcius Festus. Source: FORVM Ancient Coins

Porcius Festus was sent by Nero to replace Felix, with his term generally dated between 58 and 60 CE (most historians point to 59 CE). History describes Festus as a much fairer and more capable administrator than his corrupt predecessor.

Quelling the Sicarii: Festus immediately had to deal with the *Sicarii* (dagger-men)—extremist zealots who mingled in crowds to assassinate Roman sympathizers. According to Josephus, Festus successfully hunted down a massive group of bandits and an imposter who had led them into the wilderness.

31

Porcius Festus Takes Over



PORCIUS FESTUS MEETS THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST IN JERUSALEM
After replacing Felix, Festus conferred with the chief priests and leaders of the Jews, as recorded in Acts 24 and 25.

The Trial of Paul: Festus inherited Paul's unresolved case. Wanting to establish a good relationship with the local leadership, Festus suggested moving Paul's trial to Jerusalem. Knowing his enemies were planning an ambush on the road, Paul invoked his right as a Roman citizen and appealed directly to Caesar. Festus famously replied that since Paul appealed to Caesar, he must go to Rome (Acts 25:12).

A Short Tenure: Festus's attempts to restore order were cut short. He served only two or three years before dying in office around 62 CE and being succeeded by Albinus.

32



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**PORCIUS FESTUS MEETS
THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST IN JERUSALEM**
 After replacing Felix, Festus conferred with the chief priests
 and leaders of the Jews, as recorded in Acts 24 and 25.

Acts 25:1-3

1 Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

2 And the chief priests and the principal men of **the Jews laid out their case against Paul**, and they urged him,

33



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THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST IN JERUSALEM**
 After replacing Felix, Festus conferred with the chief priests
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Acts 25:1-3

3 asking as a **favor against Paul** that he summon him to Jerusalem—because **they were planning an ambush** to kill him on the way.



34



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Acts 25:4-6

4 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly.

5 “So,” said he, “**let the men of authority among you go down** with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.”