

Acts Volume 4 - The Visual Bible (Acts 21-28)

When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island." Acts 27:20-26 NIV

A prophet took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" Acts 21:10-11 NIV People pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. He asked, "Why are you breaking my heart?" He continued that he was willing to be not only bound but even to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. Years before, as Saul, he beat and imprisoned people for believing in Jesus, now he was willing to give his life because he loved Jesus. How could a man change so dramatically? Read Acts 9:1-31 and Acts 22:1-21

The commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?" Acts 22:24-25 NIV The Romans were the ruling power during this time. Paul knew that anyone who beat a Roman citizen would have to answer to the Roman authorities. We are children of God. When we claim that title, anyone who does evil against us will be accountable to Him.

Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him. Acts 24:24-26 NIV Felix kept Paul in prison for over two years. Paul was imprisoned because he preached about Jesus. People are being imprisoned in many countries today for preaching about Jesus. Do you think this could ever happen in our country?

The ruler Festus said, *"When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive." Acts 25; 18-19 NIV* Paul was previously one of the men who demanded that followers of Jesus be punished. After God opened his eyes to the truth of the Gospel Paul knew that Jesus was alive. Paul spent the rest of his life living for Him. What do you believe?

"Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house (in Rome) and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 28:28-31 NIV Paul was a prisoner in Rome, but was allowed to rent a home with a soldier to guard him. Even as a prisoner He continued to do what he loved best, tell others about Jesus.

Paul lived a colorful life, at first trying to stamp out the Christian faith because he believed it was corrupting the church. When Jesus revealed Himself on the road to Damascus, Saul, who became Paul, made a complete change and devoted his life to his faith in Christ. There are times in our lives when we are wrong. Sometimes we believe things that aren't true. Sometimes people teach things that aren't true. When we see the truth our lives should change. Like Paul, we should devote our lives to the truth of God's Word.

Dear Lord, we thank You for the gift of Jesus, our Savior. There are so many voices clamoring for our attention. Show us the truth. Teach us how to live for You in humbleness and gentleness. Take away our selfish actions and replace them with kindness and goodness for Your name's sake. Bless and strengthen Your church on earth. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.