

2 June 2025



## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### “Conclusion of the Acts of the Apostles”

Shortly after Paul was taken to Caesarea, the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and the lawyer Tertullus to bring their charges against him before the procurator Felix (Acts 24:1). However, Paul defended himself, and Felix found no grounds for condemning him, so he postponed the case (v. 22). So Paul remained in Caesarea for two years, under guard but with certain liberties. Felix's successor, Porcius Festus, left Paul in prison to please the Jews (v. 27).

As soon as he took office, Festus had to face the accusations of the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews against Paul (Acts 25:1-2). They asked him to transfer him from Caesarea to Jerusalem, ‘planning an ambush to kill him on the way’ (v. 3). But Festus refused and replied that they should go down to Caesarea (vv. 4-5). When they arrived and presented their accusations, Festus asked Paul if he wanted to go up to Jerusalem to be tried there (v. 9), to which Paul replied:

*"I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried; to the Jews I have done no wrong, as you know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death; but if there is nothing in their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go" (Acts 25:10-12).*

With these words, Paul's path was set, and he already knew that he must go to Rome. When King Agrippa II and Bernice came to visit Festus, he explained Paul's case to them, and the king wanted to hear him in person (vv. 13-22). So Paul took the opportunity to give testimony of his conversion (Acts 26:1-23). The Acts of the Apostles recounts that, once Paul had finished his speech, the reaction of those present was as follows:

*'Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them; and when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar"' (Acts 26:30-32).*

This was followed by the long, tedious and dangerous voyage to Rome. They had to face a violent storm at sea, which grew so violent that there was no hope of being saved (Acts 27:1-20). However, Paul encouraged the crew and said to them:

*"Men, you should have listened to me, and should not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. I now bid you take heart; for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and lo, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we shall have to run on some island" (Acts 27:21b-26).*

And so it happened: they landed on the island of Malta and everyone survived because they had followed Paul's instructions (v. 44b). The natives welcomed them warmly and allowed them to spend the winter there. While he was there, Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake, but to the surprise of the islanders, the poison did not harm him (Acts 28:3-5). In Malta, he also healed many sick people and worked many signs of the Lord (vv. 7-9).

After three months, they set sail again in an Alexandrian ship and, after passing through Syracuse, finally arrived in Rome (vv. 11-14). There, Paul was allowed to stay in a private house with a soldier to guard him (v. 16). Thus he had the freedom to call together the leading Jews to explain to them why he had been sent to Rome (vv. 17-20). The Jews in Rome were not hostile towards Paul and listened openly to his teachings. Some embraced the faith, while others remained unbelieving (vv. 21-24). Paul left them with these words of the prophet to ponder:

*"Go to this people, and say,  
You shall indeed hear but never understand,  
and you shall indeed see but never perceive.  
For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and their ears are heavy of hearing,  
and their eyes they have closed;  
lest they should perceive with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their heart,  
and turn for me to heal them" (Acts 28:26-27).*

And he concluded by saying to them, *'Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen'* (v. 28).

Paul remained in that house for two years and was able to proclaim the Gospel without hindrance (vv. 30-31).

With this summary of the last chapters, I conclude this series in which we have systematically reviewed the Acts of the Apostles. Tomorrow I will move on to a new topic, but not before briefly reviewing the last few weeks, in which we have learned more about the apostles, with their tireless zeal to fulfil the mission entrusted to them by the Risen One and received by Paul in a vision.

The Lord rewarded them for all they did for his Kingdom. Thank God for these wonderful witnesses to salvation in Christ, and thank them for remaining faithful to Him until death!

---

**Meditation on the day's Gospel:**

<https://en.elijamission.net/the-gospel-of-st-john-jn-1625-33-i-have-overcome-the-world/>