

“VOICE OF PAUL-x-LUKE” SERIES

This series shows how the writings of the apostle Paul and his traveling-&-writing assistant Luke, all tie in together to construct “the basic frame of the entire New Testament” from 16 of its books. Under Paul’s unique influence, all these writings emphasize *God forging His People into a new kind of Followership whose “growth policy” involves embodying every kind of people & heritage.* It is within the framework of this people-building endeavor that (1) the Forgiving-&-Restoring Power of Jesus especially gets to be displayed, and where (2) its best participants are those whose lives have God’s Presence “pouring forth” within them.

study #29: Paul’s 2-Year Turn of Ministry-Focus

— covering Acts 20 – 26 —

ACTION #1. The yellow highlighted sentences below are 4 major experiences Paul had over a 2-year period in which God redirected his ministry work towards Rome. As a group read these and then discuss: which one of these phases do you think might have caused Paul to either *reflect upon the past* or *imagine the future* the most?

ACTION #2. ¹ Journeying from Corinth all the way to Jerusalem, Paul has a lengthy “traveling farewell” with numerous churches he had planted and discipled for years all throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Read **Acts 20:17-38**, (which is just 1 of Paul’s many stops en route to Jerusalem), and then re-describe his speech in your own words and also which verse stands out the most to you.

ACTION #3. ² Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Paul is confronted with the tough fact that his ministry’s care for “Gentile outsiders” had hurt his reputation among the Jews, and he seeks a way to repair the peace. Read **Acts 21:17-26** and then discuss:

- since Paul was Jewish and had been sharing the gospel with Gentiles for years, what exactly did the Jews suspect about his view of their religion and culture?
- what was Paul’s and the Church’s solution to repairing Paul’s peace with Jerusalem Jews, and do you think it was a good idea?

ACTION #4. ³ A prisoner for 2 years, Paul has numerous “mini-trials” where he shows his opponents are just always in a rage, and that his Gospel preaching actually honors & enlivens both the Jewish religion & the empire. Read about Paul’s final mini-trial in **Acts 25:23 – 26:1-22** and then discuss:

- how did Festus describe Paul’s situation to King Agrippa... did he think his charges were exaggerated?
- what were Paul’s major points in his defense-speech?
- In **26:9-11** what do you think Paul was trying to point out in describing the anger-&-rage of his past?
- In **26:19-23** how did Paul make *the Gospel* sound like it was not really a massive new idea?

ACTION #5. ⁴ En route to Rome for his trial, Paul’s reputation (with soldiers, sailors, & fellow prisoners) increases greatly as his extraordinary relationship with God leads them through a terrible storm and frightening shipwreck. Next week’s study will cover this story in **chapters 27-28**. Who in the group is willing next week to read ahead and look for all the “technical sailing language” Luke uses to describe their ship adventure?

EXTRA... FOR THOSE MOTIVATED, DEVOTED, & WITH SOME SELF-COMMAND:

GOLD CHALLENGE ...read ahead (& maybe journal about) for next study: **Acts 27-28**

PENGUIN CHALLENGE ... (=daily reading + cover full NT+Psalms during series): read **GC** plus **John 18-21**