



**THE GOSPEL PROJECT SR. UNIT 34 Lesson 22: Paul before Rulers**

**Date:** Sunday September 15th , 2019 **Teachers:** Susan D, Monica B

**Bible Passage:** Acts 24:22-27; 25:1-14; 26:24-32

**Main Point:** Paul preached about Jesus to governors and kings.

**Key Passage:** Philippians 1:20-21

**Big Picture Question:** When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.

**INTRO ACTIVITY: ( Monica) “Introducing...” (use index cards/pencils in bin)**

Instruct kids to form pairs. Distribute cards and pencils. Give partners a minute or two to tell each other about themselves. Partners may take notes on sticky notes.

Then invite kids take turns introducing their partner to the rest of the group. Suggest kids share their partner’s name, age, and favorite hobby.

Say• Thank you for those introductions! Talking about someone else is easier if you know that person well. The apostle Paul loved Jesus and dedicated his life to telling others about him. Today we will hear about a time he told some important rulers about Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *“ I eagerly expect and hope that ... Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ”Philippians 1:20-21*

Distribute the prepared word strips and challenge the kids to put the words in order by connecting the strips to make a chain. After kids complete the chain, say the key passage together.

Say• It didn’t matter if Paul was a prisoner or a free man; he believed in the power of Jesus with all his heart. He was willing to do whatever he could to share the life-changing gospel with others.

**INTRO TO LESSON: (Susan)** Last week we learned how Paul faced off with the religious leaders in the Sanhedrin.

The Jews disagreed so strongly with Paul’s message about Jesus that they wanted to kill him!

Thankfully even when Paul was arrested, God protected him so he could preach about Jesus. God was using Paul’s difficult circumstances for His glory. Paul was taken to Caesarea to see the Roman governor. That’s where our story picks up today in the Book of Acts. It’s called “Paul Before Rulers.”

**BIBLE STORY: (video)**

**BIBLE STORY REVIEW: (Susan)** God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. (Acts 9:15-16) Even when people were against him, Paul continued to tell the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Paul was confident that Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.

**BIBLE STORY REVIEW SKILLS: (Monica ) materials: (true or false sheets in the laptop box)**

Provide each kid with a sheet of paper labeled FALSE and a sheet of paper labeled TRUE. Designate one side of the room to be the "jail." Read the review statements for today's Bible story. For every correct answer, kids get to take one step away from the jail. If they answer incorrectly, they take one step back.

**Paul was a prisoner. (true, Acts 24:23)**

**Felix wouldn't allow anyone to visit Paul. (False, Felix allowed Paul's friends to visit him; Acts 24:23)**

**Felix never listened to what Paul said about Jesus. (False, he listened to Paul and he was hoping Paul would give him money; Acts 24:26)**

**Felix released Paul from prison. (False, he left Paul in prison to make the Jews happy; Acts 24:27)**

**Paul asked to be taken to Rome. (true, Acts 25:10)**

**Paul was too afraid to talk about Jesus in front of the kings and rulers. (False, Paul preached about Jesus to governors and kings.)**

**We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult. (true)**

Say• Great job, everyone! Paul preached about Jesus to governors and kings even when it was difficult or scary. He knew that knowing Jesus is more important than anything else, and he wanted to share the gospel with everyone! Even when the rulers decided Paul could be released, Paul remained in prison because he asked to see Caesar. Paul trusted God's plans even through difficult times.

**DISCUSSION VIDEO (Susan)**

How do you feel when things don't turn out the way you plan? Consider that question as you watch this short video.

Show the "Unit 34, Session 2" discussion starter video. Discuss how things turned out for Nigel. Ask the kids if Nigel's plans surprised them. Does God always keep His promises in the ways we expect Him to?

Leader• God always keeps His promises. However, His plans are not always easy for us to understand. Many times, God will surprise us with the way He keeps His promises. Paul preached about Jesus to governors and kings because God allowed him to stay in prison. The rulers that Paul faced were putting him on trial! God always works things together for His glory and our good, but sometimes what is best for us may not be what we think is best for us

**ACTIVITY: Word find materials: (see sheet provided)**

## **The BIBLE Story**

### **Paul Before Rulers**

**Acts 24:22-27; 25:1-14; 26:24-32**

Paul had narrowly escaped death in Jerusalem. The Jews planned to kill Paul, but the Roman soldiers took him away to Caesarea, where he would be safe. However, Paul was still a prisoner. The Roman leaders wanted to figure out why the Jews hated Paul so much. So Paul met with rulers to try to explain what was going on.

First, Paul met with Felix the governor. Felix knew what Paul believed about Jesus, and he agreed to listen to him. Felix ordered the Roman guard to watch Paul but to also give him some freedom by letting Paul's friends come and serve him.

A few days later, Felix and his wife came for a meeting with Paul. Paul talked about faith in Jesus. He talked about righteousness and self-control, and he explained that one day God is going to judge the world. Felix was afraid of what Paul said. He sent Paul away, but he met with him many times for the next two years. When a new governor came into power, Felix did not release Paul from prison.

The new governor was named Festus. He traveled to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders asked Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem. They were still planning to attack Paul and kill him. But Festus wanted Paul to stay in Caesarea. He invited some of the Jewish leaders to go with him to see Paul. Paul stood before Festus. "I have not done anything wrong," Paul explained again. "If I have done something that deserves death, then I will die. But these men can prove nothing. I want to see Caesar!" Caesar was the emperor of Rome, and as a Roman citizen, Paul had the right to take his case to him. Festus agreed.

While Paul was waiting to go to Rome, King Agrippa and Queen Bernice visited Festus and Paul. Paul told the king how he became a believer. He explained that Jesus died to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles.

"Paul, you are out of your mind!" Festus said.

"No," Paul said. "I am speaking the truth. I wish you—and everyone who is listening—might believe in Jesus." King Agrippa, Festus, and the others with them got up. They agreed that Paul had done nothing wrong. The king was ready to free Paul, but Paul had already asked to go to Rome.

*Christ Connection: God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. (Acts 9:15-16) Paul met with people again and again to tell the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Because Jesus has the power to save people from sin, Paul was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.*