



Acts 22-26 | January 5-10

Acts 22 (ESV) | Monday, January 5

1 “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:

3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ 11 And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

12 “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. 14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

17 “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ 19 And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ 21 And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

22 Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” 23 And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, 24 the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. 25 But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?” 26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.” 27 So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.” 28 The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.” Paul said, “But I am a citizen

by birth.” 29 So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

30 But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

Take time for reflection each day after your reading. Grab your journal!

Refer to the Resource page for more information.

- 1) OBSERVATION | What does the Bible say?
- 2) INTERPRETATION | What does the Bible mean?
- 3) APPLICATION | How should I respond?
- 4) PRAYER | Communion with God

Acts 23 (ESV) | Tuesday, January 6

1 And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” 4 Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God's high priest?” 5 And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

6 Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” 7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. 9 Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” 10 And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.

11 The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”

12 When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. 14 They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. 15 Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near.”

16 Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him.” 18 So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, “Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you.” 19 The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?” 20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. 21 But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent.” 22 So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of these things.”

23 Then he called two of the centurions and said, “Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. 24 Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.” 25 And he wrote a letter to this effect:

26 “Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. 28 And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. 29 I found that he was being accused about questions of their

law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. 30 And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.”

31 So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. 33 When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. 34 On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

Acts 24 (ESV) | Wednesday, January 7

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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.” 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.

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.” 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.

Acts 25 (ESV) | Thursday, January 8

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, 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. 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.”

6 After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. 7 When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. 8 Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” 10 But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. 11 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 to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

13 Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. 14 And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, “There is a man left prisoner by Felix, 15 and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. 16 I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. 17 So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. 18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. 19 Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. 20 Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.” 22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” said he, “you will hear him.”

23 So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. 27 For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”

Acts 26 (ESV) | Friday, January 9

1 So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense:

2 “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, 7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

9 “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

12 “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

24 And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” 25 But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. 26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” 28 And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” 29 And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

30 Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. 31 And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." 32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Saturday, January 10

Catch Up & Reflection:

Well done reading the Bible this week. Today catch up on your reading and meditate on what the Spirit has revealed to you during your daily readings.



THE BIBLE JOURNEY

FOUNDATION

1. The Bible is God's written Word to us. God spoke to and guided the human authors to record His words.

(16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16–17

2. The Holy Spirit serves as a guide and teacher as we read and study God's Word.

(26) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:26

STEP 1) OBSERVATION | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The practice of observation is simply seeking to understand what the text says. This is a good time to pepper the passage with questions.

- Who are the people involved?
- Do I understand all the words used?
- What is the setting or context?
- What is the literary form?
- What is repeated?
- Is there a figure of speech used? Etc.

STEP 2) INTERPRETATION | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN?

Interpretation is the practice of determining what the original writer meant when he wrote the words. Think in terms of paragraphs. A paragraph is one unit of thought. Context is king. Take notice of what happened before and what happens afterward. A good rule to follow is, "When the plain sense of Scripture makes sense, seek no other sense."

STEP 3) APPLICATION | HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

This is when we ask:

- What should I do or become in response to the text?
- Is there a command to obey? A sin to forsake? A character trait to embrace? An example to follow? A promise to claim?
- How does the truth impact my relationships, work, etc.?
- How does my view of God and praise of Him increase?

STEP 4) PRAYER | COMMUNION WITH GOD

Conclude by talking with God about what you have discovered. This can guide your thoughts throughout the remainder of your day.