



## Paul Before Rulers

**Bible Passage: Acts 24-26**

**Main Point: Paul was willing to do hard things to share the gospel.**

**Key Passage: Philippians 1:6**

**Big Picture Question: What will happen for all Christians in the future? One day, all Christians will see Jesus in His glory and live with Him forever.**

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### Leader Fuel

Paul was in custody in Caesarea, the capital of the Roman province of Judea. The Jewish leaders had brought serious charges against him, so Paul now stood before Felix, the governor. Felix listened to Paul's defense but delayed a ruling. He met with Paul off and on for two years. When his time as governor ended, Felix left Paul in prison because he did not want to upset the Jews. Festus succeeded Felix as governor. The Jews presented their accusations against Paul and asked Festus to bring him to Jerusalem. They hoped to ambush Paul as he traveled and kill him. But Festus invited Paul's accusers to make their case in Caesarea. When Festus heard Paul's case, he asked if Paul wanted to be tried in Jerusalem. Paul, knowing his rights as a Roman citizen, appealed to be heard by Caesar. Several days later, King Agrippa visited Festus and heard about Paul. He asked to listen to Paul's defense himself. Festus wasn't sure how he would justify his sending Paul to Caesar without substantiated charges, and he hoped this hearing would provide stronger evidence against Paul. Festus told Paul he was out of his mind, but they determined Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar. With these events, Paul was positioned to go to Rome, just as God had said he would. (See Acts 19:21; 23:11.) God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. (See Acts 9:15-16.) 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. As you teach kids, prompt them to consider how Paul might have felt as he spoke before rulers and remained in custody for two years. Lead them to consider how God was at work to keep His promises.

*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.*

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### Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time they were accused of doing something they didn't do. How did they feel?



## Activity Page

Invite kids to complete “Truth Acrostic” on the activity page. Guide kids to use the letters T-R-U-T-H to begin sentences describing things that are true about God. **SAY • In today’s Bible story, we will hear about what Paul said when he stood before Roman leaders. He wanted them to know the truth so they might believe in Jesus.**

### “Jesus Is ...” mural

Lay out a long piece of paper or poster board for kids to gather around. Prompt kids to think of how they would finish this sentence: “Jesus is ...” **SAY • Paul told the truth even when it was hard because he wanted everyone to know that Jesus is Lord. That means that Jesus is in charge of everything. What other words describe Jesus? Provide markers and invite kids to write their responses on the paper. Encourage kids to fill up the paper. Provide Bible verses for kids to reference if they need ideas: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, Luke 19:10; John 1:29,41; 6:35; 8:12; 10:11, Hebrews 4:14; Revelation 1:8; 22:13**

## APPLY THE STORY

### Big Picture Question

What will happen for all Christians in the future? One day all Christians will see Jesus in His glory and live with Him forever.

Believers will see Jesus in His glory. That means we will see His greatness and understand Him in ways we don’t now. And believers will live with Him forever!

Can you share your faith with an adult? Why or why not?

What questions or concerns do you have about sharing the gospel?

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Acts 24. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 24:10. Point out that some of the Jews accused Paul of being a troublemaker. They wanted the Romans to kill Paul, so Paul defended himself before rulers. He was a prisoner for years. Paul was willing to do hard things to share the gospel.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Acts 24:10 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. How do you think Paul felt when he was a prisoner?

*Guide kids to recall that Paul was treated unfairly and falsely accused. However, his friends were allowed to visit him in prison, and he was able to speak with governors. Prompt them to share how they might have felt if they were Paul.*



(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 6:19-20.)

2. If you could talk to any leader in the world, who would you want to talk to? What would you say?

*Remind kids that Paul met with Roman rulers. He talked to Felix the governor, Festus the governor, King Agrippa, and Queen Bernice. Paul told them about Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 21:1.)*

3. What are you willing to do to share the gospel?

*Is there anything you aren't willing to do? Encourage kids to share and explain their answers. Acknowledge any fear or hesitation about sharing the gospel, and reassure kids that they can ask the Holy Spirit for help and boldness in telling others about Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 3:12.)*

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#### KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Mix up the key passage phrases pages and distribute them to volunteers. Instruct the volunteers to stand in front of the group. Challenge the rest of the group to direct the volunteers how to move to get in the correct order. For an added challenge, tell kids they may only use hand gestures and no words.

#### PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, asking God to help kids believe the truth about Jesus and boldly share their faith with others.

# Journal Page



- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

## FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Where could you go this week to share the gospel?
- Who could you share the gospel with this week?
- Why might that be difficult?

## Paul Before Rulers

Acts 24–26

**STORY POINT: PAUL WAS WILLING TO DO HARD THINGS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL.**

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.

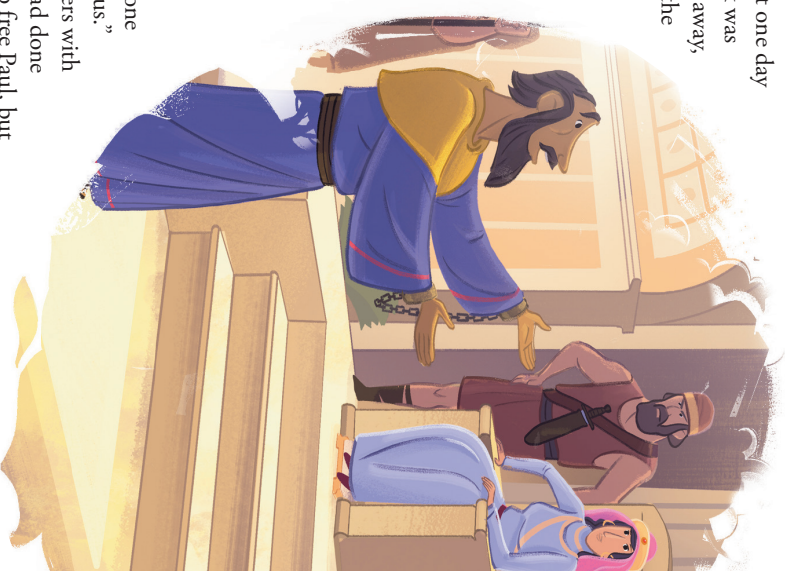
First, Paul met with Felix the governor. Paul talked about faith in Jesus. He explained that one day God is going to judge the world. Felix was afraid of what Paul said. He sent Paul away, but he met with him many times for the next two years. When a new governor came into power, Felix did not release Paul from prison.

The new governor was named Festus. Paul stood before Festus. "I haven't done anything wrong," Paul explained. "I want to see Caesar!" 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 that Jesus died to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles. "You are out of your mind!" Festus said.

Paul said, "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.*



**Truth Acrostic** | Use the letters T-R-U-T-H to begin sentences describing things that are true about God.

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R  
U  
T  
H

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Paul



Felix



Caesar



Festus



Agrippa



Bernice

**Finish Strong** | Draw a line between each name with the correct description.

- the Roman governor of Judea who refused to release Paul from prison
- the emperor of Rome
- the wife of King Agrippa
- a Christian missionary in the early church whose letters to churches are found in the New Testament
- the Roman governor of Judea after Felix
- the son of Agrippa II and great-grandson of Herod the Great