

Two Year Bible Trek  
Week 96  
Acts 21:15-28; 31; Titus, Philemon

**Key Concepts:** The key concept in this section of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is that it is appropriate to avail one's self as a Christian of legal protections. In Titus, it is that there are moral boundaries for Christians. In Philemon it is that a relationship with Christ affects all areas of life, including that of master and slave..

**Background:** In Acts we engage the story of Paul's arrest, trial, and journey to Rome. In Titus we have a letter from Paul to Titus, an aide of Paul's, concerning various roles within the early Christian community. In Philemon Paul addresses the issue of a Christian slave who ran away from his Christian master.

**Brief Summary: Paul's pledge (Acts 21:15-29))** When Paul arrives in Jerusalem he is made aware of accusations against him and he attempts to deflect those criticisms by taking a Nazarite vow.

**Paul Arrested (Acts 21:27-22:29)** Paul's vow does no good and the religious leaders attempt to rally a crowd in order to kill him. The Roman garrison, fearing a riot, intervenes by arresting Paul and then allowing him to address the crowd. Paul explains his conversion and his call to preach to the Gentiles. At the mention of the Gentiles the crowd erupts and the Romans bring Paul to the barracks in order to whip him into some kind of a confession. Paul then mentions that he is a Roman citizen and the guards almost panic.

**Paul and the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30-23:25)** Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin (Jewish ruling body) for trial. He manages to divide them so they cannot render a verdict. Because of this his opponents plot to kill him. Paul gets wind of this and is secreted away by the Romans.

**Paul and his trials (Acts 24:1-26:32)** Paul is brought before Felix the governor and then requests that his trial occur in Rome (which all citizens could do). Paul's case is then set before King Agrippa, before whom Paul defends his call and his faith. Even though both Felix and Agrippa believe Paul to be innocent they still have to send him to Rome.

**Paul's Journey to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:31)** The book concludes with Paul's adventures on his journey to Rome. It concludes with his ministry to the church in that city.

**Instructions to the Church (Titus 1:1-3:15)** Titus is composed of three sections. The first describes the character of church leaders, which are called both elders and bishops (the terms are interchangeable). The second section focuses on personal traits which ought to be exhibited by believers. There are instructions for older and younger men and women. In addition instructions are given to slaves. The bottom line is to be zealous for good deeds. The third section focuses on the theological rationale for these behaviors; that Christians have been saved by the grace of God in Jesus Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit so that they may be heirs of eternal life.

**A slave and a Master (Philemon 1:1-1:25)** Onesimus is a runaway slave of a Christian master, Philemon, whom Paul knows. Onesimus has come to serve Paul in Rome. In the process he has become a Christian. The question becomes what to do with Onesimus. Paul's efforts focus on reconciliation. He wants Onesimus to return to Philemon and Philemon to receive Onesimus back as a "beloved brother" in Jesus Christ. While this response may appear to be less than what we would want, it is a remarkable request in the first century. Under normal circumstances Onesimus would be severely punished.

1. What is your favorite part of Paul's journey?
2. What do you think of Paul's instructions as to the requirements for being a church leader?
3. How do you think of Paul's sending Onesimus home rather than trying to set him free?