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Paul's Witness before the Jews 21:17 to 23:22

57 AD

In a sense all of **21:17** to **26:32** could be described as **Paul's** witness before **the Jews**, since even in the **Caesarea** trial scenes of **Chapters 24** to **26, Paul** appeared before a **Jewish** legal team and a **Jewish king**. However, the Roman officials have a more conspicuous presence in those chapters. First, **he** appeared with **the elders** of the Messianic community in **Jerusalem**. There **he** experienced something of a mini-trial even before **them**, as **they** urged **him** to demonstrate **his** faithfulness to those **Jewish** believers who were **zealots on behalf of the Torah** (**to see link click Cn – Paul's Advice from Jacob and the Elders at Jerusalem**). To comply with **their** wishes, **he** sponsored **four Jewish men** completing **their Nazirite vows** at the Temple. There **Paul** was falsely accused of some Asian **Jews** of having violated **the middle wall of separation** between **Jews** and Gentiles, and a riot ensued (see **Co – Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem**).



Rescued from certain death at the hands of **the mob**, **Paul** requested from the arresting Roman commander permission to address **them**. When permission was granted, **Paul** delivered a moving speech before **his** hostile **Jewish** audience (see **Cp – Paul's Testimony on the Temple Steps on Fort Antonia**). They listened intently as **Paul** spoke of **his Jewish** background and of being **Torah** observant. But then **he** told them about **his** experience on the Damascus road. Only when **he**

mentioned **Yeshua's** commission for **his** witness to the Gentiles did **they** become **a mob** again, and **Paul** had to be quickly taken away again by the Romans.

In an attempt to find out more about the causes of the riot, the Roman commander instead learned of **Paul's** Roman citizenship (see **Cq – Paul is Protected by Roman Law**). The commander then led **Paul** to **the Sanhedrin** in **his** attempt to ascertain the **Jewish** complaint against **him**. With **Paul's** mention of the resurrection, **the Sanhedrin** session ended in utter chaos, with Sadducee pitted against Pharisee (see **Cr – Paul's Defense Before the Great Sanhedrin**). When **Paul's** nephew learned of a plot by forty **Jews** to ambush **Paul,** he warned the Roman commander of it (see **Cs – The Conspiracy to Kill Paul**).

The narrative is long and given in considerable detail. That **Luke** considered this material especially significant is demonstrated by the slowness of the time in the narrative. Less than twelve days elapsed between the time between **Paul** received advice from **the Jerusalem elders** about sponsoring **four Jewish men** completing **their Nazarite vows**, and **his** being escorted to Caesarea to face the Roman Governor Felix. In contrast, the events of the next three chapters cover **two years (24:27).**[496]