August 1

In Jerusalem

Arrested

 Paul had been around almost a week when he went to the Temple and was recognized by some Jews from Asia – Read: Acts 21:27b-28a. After seizing Paul, they removed him from the Temple and the doors were immediately closed. The mob attacked Paul but soon the Roman soldiers arrived, breaking up the crowd and they hauled Paul away to their fortress. Paul spoke to them in Greek which surprised the officers because they thought he was an Egyptian terrorist! Paul set them straight – Read Acts 21:39.

 Paul see Paul again in a very difficult position, a mad crowd on one hand and soldiers on the other, but this time he has settled the crowd and is given the opportunity to tell his side. We should be ready to tell our side for the Lord too, that takes study, prayer and meditation.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 21:40

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, never to be caught off guard when an opportunity to witness for you, O Lord, comes up fill me with the Holy Spirit to be able to speak.

August 2

Paul’s Speech

In Self-defense

 The fact that Paul spoke in their language quieted the crowd down – Paul began: Read: Acts 22:3. Here we have Paul more or less outlining his back ground and his past exploits against the Christians, the Damascus encounter with the Lord, reverting even farther back to how he held the coats when Stephen was stoned. Paul had attentive audience until the part of how God himself sent Paul to the Gentiles – Read: Acts 22:21-22.

 Then the crowd became violent, and the soldiers took Paul away, tied him for whipping and questioning, but finding him a Roman citizen neither whipped nor questioned him.

 We too, are members of a larger kingdom of God, which is protection for us, just for the asking.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 22:16

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, praise be to you for the forgiveness of sins, and especially for your Son that made it possible.

August 3

Paul

Before the Council

 In search of what the Jews were accusing Paul of, the commander took Paul before the entire council. First of all Paul insults the high priest, then apologies for it but – Read: Acts 23:6-8. This was of no help for the situation. An argument broke out between the two factions, one Pharisee tried to speak – Read: Acts 23:9. The soldiers were afraid for Paul’s life so the soldiers took Paul back to the fortress.

 As we know arguments never settle anything, when an argument of theology breaks out, one should graciously retreat and hope for more favorable attitudes at another meeting.

 The next night – Read: Acts 23:11. Paul was at peace knowing he would get out of Jerusalem alive, we too can have peace only the Lord can give by trusting in him.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 23:1

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, O Lord, for the peace of mind and heart only you can give.

August 4

Paul

Plot Against Paul

 A group of over forty Jews planned to trick the commander into bringing Paul down for more questions and they would be waiting to kill Paul, after making their plans – Read: Acts 23:14. They were serious in their intent to eliminate Paul.

 God was with Paul, Paul’s nephew overheard the plans these men had made and told Paul. Paul sent him, with a guard to the commander, who heard and believed the plot! The commander arranged for soldiers, horses and guards to take Paul, after dark, safely to Caesarea. The plan worked and Paul was safely transported to Governor Felix with a letter of introduction. Paul was then put in Herod’s palace until his accusers arrived.

 Paul once again was rescued from a dangerous situation; the Lord was on his side. He will be on our side too if we allow him into our hearts and then let him guide us in our daily lives, not just in the big stuff but our every day troubles and needs.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Psalm 33:20.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, O Lord, for all the safety you have given me and those I love. Help me always to depend on you for safety and health.

August 5

Paul

Just Waiting Around

 Five days passed before the High Priest Ananias, some elders and Terullus, a lawyer arrived to accuse Paul- Read: Acts 24:5, 6.

 Paul then, before Felix had his chance to defend himself, he denied their accusations –Read: Acts 24:12, 13. Paul went on to say – Read: Acts 24:14-16, 19 and 21.

 Now Felix was aware of the Way that Paul was part of and continued to bring Paul before him to hear more Jesus but became afraid when Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and judgment. He would dismiss Paul, then bring him back days later and discuss the Way with him again. This went on for two years. Paul was under guard but yet had enough freedom that his friends could bring him his needs.

 Paul had limited freedom, we have total freedom to accept or reject the Ways of the Lord, and the choice is ours.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 24:24b.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me never to become afraid of your second coming, O Lord, but view it with joy and an ultimate beginning with you.

August 6

Paul

A New Governor

 Felix was replaced by Festus as governor, and on a trip to Jerusalem the Jews begged Festus to have Paul brought to Jerusalem for trial because they still wanted to kill him. But Festus did not give in – Read: Acts 25:4, 5.

 Paul was brought before Festus and the accusing Jews and Festus asked Paul a question – Read: Acts 25:9. Paul answers – Read: Acts 25:10-12. Paul gets his wish and Festus declares that to Caesar!

 While Paul was waiting to go to Rome, King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Festus tells Agrippa about Paul and his story of Jesus dying and yet living. Agrippa asked for a hearing with Paul and gets it.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 25:19.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Praise be to you, O Lord, for coming and giving yourself to die that I can have eternal life through your resurrection.

August 7

Paul

Defending and Witnessing

 Paul went before King Agrippa defending himself, saying that he was on trial because of the accusations of the Jews, Paul could not understand – Read: Acts 26:8. Paul goes on to explain how he opposed Jesus at first, putting saints in prison and dragging people out of the synagogues to persecute them. Then he tells King Agrippa how he saw the vision from heaven and how God spoke to him and how he had not disobeyed what he was told to do. Paul concluded - Read: Acts 26:23. Festus had had enough – Read: Acts 26:24. Paul continued to point out things about the Jewish religion that Agrippa was familiar with and the king saw what Paul was trying to do – Read: Acts 26:28 and Paul’s reply – Read: Acts 26:29. With that the King, Bernice and Festus got up and left the room.

 Paul didn’t let the King’s position stop him from witnessing to him; we must not let rank or position keep us from witnessing about the Lord either.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 26:31-32

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, I pray that all who hear the Word of God proclaimed will become Christians.

August 8

Paul

Sails for Rome

 Paul and other prisoners were handed over to Julius, an officer of the Imperial Regiment Paul was treated well by Julius – Read: Acts 27:3.

 From Sidon they sailed on the sheltered side of Cyprus, then onto Myra. Here Paul changed boats, from there they sailed, slowly against the wind to Cnidus, then down to Crete, staying on the sheltered side opposite Cape Salmone to Fair Havens, it was at least late September, to go any farther would be dangerous so Paul advised – Read: Acts27:10. They did not listen to Paul and sailed on for Phoenix to spend the winter there but the wind blew off the island, forcing the boat away from the island, with only brief shelter from Cauda, where they tied down the life boat, then back to sea again.

 Our lives sometimes are like this ship in the wind, tossed, then sheltered, only to be tossed again. Christians have a safe secure harbor, not only for the winter but for eternity, if we put our lives in the Lord’s hands.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 27:13

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to always be sheltered in your love, thank-you for never leaving me to the elements.