

Paul's Defense Speeches

Acts 21:11: "The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for entrusting us with GLEF 2025. Thank You that, through studying the book of Acts, we could reflect on Your sovereign counsel for our lives. Thank You that You want to use us as witnesses of Your Word to the ends of the earth. Please use me today as your voice, so that I may give a clear testimony of Your grace in my life. I thank You and pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

After Paul had experienced the power of the Holy Spirit during his third missionary journey, an even greater vision came into his heart: to challenge world mission through the Rome mission. However, his presence in Jerusalem stirred up such great anger among the Jews that he had to be taken into Roman custody. Yet, it was precisely in this painful persecution that he was used, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to testify before the people as a witness of Jesus Christ. He testified how, through the wonderful love of Jesus, he was transformed from Saul—a fanatical persecutor of Christians—into Paul, God's chosen instrument to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth.

When the Jews rejected his testimony—especially his reference to the Gentile mission—the Roman commander brought him before the Sanhedrin. There, too, Paul testified how the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed his conscience and filled him with deep peace and God's vision. But even the Jewish leaders refused to listen, and the hearing had to be stopped.

Originally, Paul had come to Jerusalem to strengthen the unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians and to prepare for the Rome mission. He had not expected to end up in prison, and he became unsure whether God would still fulfill His counsel for the mission to Rome.

In this situation, Paul heard the voice of the Lord say:

"Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

These words gave Paul firm assurance of victory—that God would surely fulfill His plan for the Rome mission according to His sovereign counsel.

Thus, even in the face of a murder plot, under fierce attacks from the Jews, and during unjust imprisonment, Paul was able to follow God's guidance and overcome all adverse conditions.

Although Governor Felix delayed his trial for two years, those years were not wasted. Rather, they became the best preparation for the Rome mission. Paul even served the governor with Bible study and testified to him about God's grace—until Felix was succeeded by Festus about two years later.

Again, Paul was accused by the Jews, but he recognized that this moment was a decisive opportunity to take the next step toward Rome in accordance with God's counsel.

He actively chose God's to follow God's plan and appealed to Caesar. As a result, he had to be sent to Rome—even though he could have been set free.

A few days later, Paul was brought before Festus and King Herod Agrippa for a hearing. Once more, he spoke about his conversion through his encounter with the risen Jesus. He even challenged both of them to accept God's love and God's counsel, so that they too might be used preciously for world mission. At the end of the hearing, everyone agreed that Paul was innocent. But since he had appealed to Caesar, they decided to send him to Rome anyway.

Thanks and praise be to God for the Acts Bible study, through which we could once again reflect on God's counsel for our lives.

I thank God that I also came to know His plan for me. God called me through Genesis 12:2 and Acts 1:8 to be used as a mother of faith, a Bible teacher, and a witness of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. He called me to be a shepherdess, to serve young people in Germany, Europe, and even in the M-countries with the Word of God and the gospel.

I thank God that His servant and my parents helped me not to lose sight of God's sovereign plan for me after my final school exams. Through their servanthip, I could recognize that God's plan for me was not to quickly build a career, but rather to be raised up as a mother of faith and Bible teacher according to His will.

I thank God that He helped me not to be overwhelmed by feelings of loss or uncertainty. He encouraged me through His Word: **"Take courage, Sarah G. Chang! Just as you have testified about me at your school, so you must also testify about me in Germany, Europe, the M-world, and the online world—to the very ends of the earth."**

By God's grace and love, like Paul, I was allowed to make a clear and active decision for God's counsel. I did not appeal to Caesar—but through the obedience of faith, God helped me to make a clear decision to receive spiritual training with a learning and humble heart. I thank God that I have since been able to joyfully and thankfully bear His love through spiritual training and grow into a co-worker for world mission. Now, I may cowork with my parents, grandparents, fellow servants of God, and the next generation—studying God's Word deeply and receiving practical training as a shepherdess and Bible teacher through IWBS, LS, Daily Bread, Master Course, and more.

Even now, I stand again at a crossroads:

Will I follow my own will for my life, or will I follow God's guidance—even if it's not what I imagined for my life?

I thank God that He granted me spiritual insight in this inner struggle, as I was reminded of my key verse from Acts 20:24: **"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."** These words give me great comfort and strength to actively choose God's counsel.

I am praying with the following prayer topics for the coming months:

1. **That I may follow God's guidance regarding my future.**
If it is God's will for me to study medicine, I pray that I may be used not only as a physical but also as a spiritual healer and Bible teacher. But even if God leads me another way, I pray to follow His guidance with obedience of faith. Through Acts 20:24 and 23:11, I may hear His encouragement daily and live by faith in Romans 8:28: **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."**
2. **That I may continue to make an active decision every day to prioritize God's counsel,**
—for example, by supporting my mother in the business mission, helping my grandmother in common life, or assisting my grandfather in the work of God.
3. **That God may use me as a Bible teacher for my friends—Hannah, Lea, Marieke, Luise, Gina, and Nelika.**
Just as Paul served Felix faithfully with Bible study, may I serve them with Genesis 1:1, so they too may come to know the Almighty Creator God personally in their lives.

May God fulfill His sovereign counsel in me—that I may grow into a mother of faith like my mother and grandmother, according to Genesis 12:2. I decide to accept the vast spiritual heritage of my parents and grandparents as my own, and I pray to cowork for the M- and O-mission and be used as a witness of God's Word to the ends of the earth.

One Word: *"Take courage, Sarah G. Chang! Follow God's guidance for the fulfillment of His counsel—to the very ends of the world."*