



# Paul Is an Example of Christ

*Acts 20–23 (Selected Scripture)*



## LESSON GOAL

The child will follow Paul's example of obedience to Christ.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- Paul wanted to spread the Gospel
- Paul served the Lord with humility, obedience and joy
- Paul is an example for believers to imitate as he imitated Jesus Christ

## KEY VERSE

"But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, 'Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.'"

—Acts 23:11

## APPLICATION

- Be eager to see Christ's name glorified.
- Don't let difficulty stop you from obeying Christ.
- Be an example to others of how to obey Christ (1 Tim. 4:12).

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

4

# Teacher Planning Sheet

## PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Application

*As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Three ways students need to apply this passage are...*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## POINT

*Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCLAIM

*Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.*

### Presentation Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Praise/Music Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE

*Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials  
Needed:**

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## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

#### Introduction

Following Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel in Athens (Acts 17:16–34), Paul spent the rest of his second missionary journey in Corinth (Acts 18:1–17). After ministering in Corinth for eighteen months (18:11), Paul decided to return to Antioch in Syria (18:18). On the way to Antioch, Paul briefly preached in the synagogue at Ephesus (located on the western coast of Asia Minor) (18:19–21) and visited the church in Jerusalem (18:21–22).

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul began his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23). On his way to Ephesus, Paul traveled through Asia Minor “strengthening all the disciples” (18:23). Paul spent three productive years in Ephesus (20:31) where “the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (19:20).

While in Ephesus, Paul wrote back to the struggling Corinthian church. In his letter, Paul commanded the Corinthian saints, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Because of his obedience to Christ, Paul could call on the saints to follow his example. Even though his obedience was not perfect, Paul could confidently but humbly command the saints to be like him. Anyone who desires to follow Christ’s commands today has a powerful model in Paul’s obedience.

#### Paul’s Eagerness to Obey Christ

Because he was always eager to spread the Gospel in an area where the name of Jesus had not yet been proclaimed (Rom. 15:20), Paul ultimately desired to go to Spain (Rom. 15:24). Before going to Spain, Paul planned first to return to the churches in Greece (“Macedonia and Achaia”), where he hoped to collect an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem (Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:26–27; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8:1–4). After delivering the offering in Jerusalem, Paul knew he “must also see Rome” (Acts 19:21). While in Rome, Paul hoped to preach the Gospel (Rom. 1:13–15), visit the Roman saints (Rom. 15:23–24), and receive help from the church so he could continue his mission toward Spain (Rom. 15:24).

After disgruntled idol makers stirred up a riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:21–41), Paul embarked on his plan. He first went to Greece where he encouraged the churches and collected the offering for the Jerusalem saints (20:1–16). Because Paul was hoping to arrive in Jerusalem “if possible, on the Day of Pentecost” (20:16), he sailed past Ephesus to Miletus. While in Miletus, a coastal city thirty miles south of Ephesus, Paul sent for the Ephesian elders (20:17).

#### Paul’s Commitment to Obey Christ

When the elders arrived, Paul reminded them how he had served the Lord while among them and proclaimed that he was committed to serve the Lord in the future

(20:18–24). Paul had been faithful from the first day he had come to Ephesus (20:18). His ministry was characterized by “serving the Lord with humility” (20:19). While in Ephesus, he proclaimed to both Jews and Greeks “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (20:21).

Paul had faithfully obeyed his Lord Jesus in Ephesus and would continue in obedience no matter what the Lord had planned for him. On the one hand, Paul didn’t know what would happen in Jerusalem (20:22), but on the other hand, the Holy Spirit had revealed that “chains and tribulations” were waiting for Paul in every city (20:23). Even though Paul knew that he would be persecuted (although the specifics were unclear), Paul did not let the prospect of suffering interfere with his obedience. Referring to the possibility of persecution, Paul said, “None of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.” Just as Paul had faithfully obeyed Jesus in Ephesus, he was committed to obedience wherever he went. Even if it cost him his life, Paul would finish his race.

After challenging the Ephesian elders to be faithful to their own ministry (20:25–35), Paul “knelt down and prayed with them all” (20:36). The elders wept when they thought about Paul leaving (20:37). Worse of all were Paul’s words that they would never see his face again (20:25,38). After the Ephesian elders accompanied Paul to his ship, Paul continued his journey toward Jerusalem. Along the way, they found and encouraged the saints whenever they could.

Paul and his companions’ journey continued until they finally docked in Caesarea. While in Caesarea, Paul was challenged in his commitment to obey Christ. In Caesarea, Paul stayed with “Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven” (21:8). (This is the same Philip who preached the Gospel to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.) After Paul had stayed “many days” in Caesarea, a prophet named Agabus came to give Paul a message from the Holy Spirit. Before giving the verbal message, Agabus acted out the prophecy by taking Paul’s belt and tying up his own hands and feet. Agabus’ strange actions were clarified when Agabus told him God’s message: “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hand of the Gentiles’” (Acts 21:11). The prophecy revealed to Paul not only what would happen to him in Jerusalem but also that God was sovereign over those events. Even though both the saints in Caesarea and Paul’s companions begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem, Paul was adamant that he would follow God’s will. In response to their pleadings, Paul said, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (21:13). Regardless of the persecution he faced, Paul was ready and willing to obey Jesus, even if it meant his death.

### **Paul’s Obedience of Christ**

Not long after arriving in Jerusalem, Paul experienced the fulfillment of Agabus’ prophecy. After seeing Paul in the temple, Jews from Asia Minor (perhaps from Ephesus) “stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him” (Acts 21:27). These Jews opposed to Paul rallied the crowds against him by falsely charging Paul of teaching “all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place” (21:28). They also falsely charged Paul of defiling the temple by bringing Gentiles inside. Although Paul did have Gentiles traveling with him, the Jews only “supposed” that Paul had brought them into the temple (21:29). As the rumors against Paul spread, so did the size of the crowd. The crowd “seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple” (21:30). In a frenzied fury, the crowd began to beat Paul (21:32).

Although Paul was willing to die in Jerusalem, it was God's will for him to be first handed over to the Gentiles. The occupying Roman force stationed in Jerusalem received news that the city was in an uproar and intervened in order to keep the peace (21:31–32). Claudius Lysias (23:26), the commander of the Roman garrison (which consisted of 1,000 soldiers), "took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them" (21:32). The sight of at least two hundred soldiers was enough to stop the crowd from beating Paul. (Each centurion commanded one hundred soldiers.) The commander Lysias had Paul bound in chains while he tried to figure out what had caused the riot (21:33). Because the multitude shouted out different reasons (21:34), Lysias brought Paul to the barracks. The crowds were so violent that the Roman soldiers carried Paul to protect him. All the while the multitude shouted "Away with him!" (21:36).

Even though Paul had already been beaten by the mob, he had not yet had opportunity to testify about Christ. Before being led into the barracks, Paul bravely asked Lysias for a chance to address the crowds (21:37–40). Paul defended himself against the accusation that he was opposed to the people, the Law and the temple (22:1). He also proclaimed Christ to the crowd.

Paul began by explaining that he had been a zealous Jew who observed the Law and persecuted those who followed Christ (22:1–5). Paul proceeded to tell the crowd that while he was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth appeared and spoke to him (22:6–11). Paul obeyed his new Lord. In the next section of his address (22:12–16), Paul told how Ananias, a "devout man according to the law" (22:12), both healed his blindness and brought him a message from the "God of our fathers" (22:13–14). Paul repeated that God had chosen Paul to "know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth" (22:14). God commissioned Paul to "be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard" (22:15), a commission Paul was fulfilling as he spoke. Paul immediately demonstrated his new faith in Christ by being baptized in Jesus' name (22:16). Paul finished his address by telling how Jesus spoke to him again on the first trip back to Jerusalem (Acts 22:17–21). (Paul's first trip back to Jerusalem is recorded in Acts 9:26–30). While in the temple praying, Jesus told Paul to flee Jerusalem because the Jews would not accept his testimony and then commissioned Paul to go to the Gentiles (Acts 22:18, 21). In his speech before the mob, Paul not only demonstrated that he was innocent of the false charges but also proclaimed the resurrection and lordship of Christ.

When the crowd heard Paul testify that Jesus (whom they had crucified) desired the Gentiles (whom they hated) to be saved, they erupted in anger. Although they had been listening quietly to his testimony, "they raised their voices and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live'" (Acts 22:22). The Jerusalem Jews had not changed. Just as Jesus had said the first time the newly converted Paul came to Jerusalem, "they will not receive your testimony concerning Me" (Acts 22:18).

### **Paul's Encouragement from Christ**

Two nights after Paul's testimony before the Jewish mob, the Lord encouraged Paul for his faithfulness in proclaiming His name. Jesus said to Paul, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness to me at Rome" (23:11). God's will for Paul's life was not yet finished. Paul had faithfully testified to His Savior in Jerusalem and now would have the opportunity to do the same in Rome. The rest of Acts records Paul's journey to Rome where Paul continued to testify to the name of Jesus.

## Conclusion

God blessed the church when He gave it Paul's obedient life as an example of how to obey Christ. Even though it meant certain persecution, Paul was eager to proclaim Christ in new areas where the Gospel had not yet advanced. He had faithfully obeyed Christ in Ephesus and was committed to obey Him in Jerusalem and beyond. While other saints begged Paul to change his course and escape persecution, Paul was determined to obey even if it meant his suffering. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, he passionately testified to Christ before the same crowd which had just beaten him and still wanted him dead. The Lord Jesus blessed Paul's obedience by encouraging him. Paul was not finished testifying to the Lord. He had set his face to Jerusalem and, having accomplished God's will there, Paul eagerly awaited the opportunity to obey Christ in Rome. Paul's exemplary obedience to Christ needs to be modeled by every believer.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."  
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

Where was Paul in last week's lesson?

*Paul was in Athens.*

What did the people think when they heard Paul's message?

*They said that this was something new that they had never heard.*

What object in the city did Paul use to teach about God?

*Paul used an idol that was to the unknown God. He told them about the true and living God.*

What does God command all people to do?

*God commands all people to repent.*

What will God do to all people?

*He will judge the world.*

What did the people do because of Paul's message?

*Some mocked while some wanted to hear more and others believed.*



### Difficult Concepts

**Commitment:** Commitment is loyalty to a task or person. Figure skaters are committed to training for the Olympics. They get up early, eat a healthy diet, and work hard. Skating is the one thing they care the most about. People who are committed to their jobs go faithfully to work every day, even when they don't really want to.

**Eagerness to Obey:** People who are eager to obey are always thinking about how they can obey. When they are told, they obey happily and quickly. They are always ready to obey. When a mom or day asks someone to take out the trash, a child who is eager to obey quickly puts the book down they were reading, answers “Yes ma’am,” and hurries out to obey.

**Riot:** A riot is a crowd of people who are out of control. They break things, hurt people, and run around in a big group. Show a picture of a mob with police in riot gear. Emphasize that riots are out of control and violent.

**Role Model:** A role model is a person other people imitate. They look up to that person and try to be like them. If any of your students are wearing a sports jersey, ask them about the player’s name on the back. Describe ways moms and dads are role models, like when the students play dress-up with mom’s clothes or play with a hammer like dad works with.

### Encourage Eagerness

Ask for a volunteer to do a simple class chore, like cleaning up some paper. Point out a student who eagerly raises his hand and show that he was a good example. Encourage the other students to follow his example.



### Simon Says

Play a game of Simon says to teach imitation. The students must pay careful attention to what is said and done to be good imitators.



### Charades

Prepare several charades to act out, such as writing a letter, washing a car, and eating an ice cream cone. Have the students guess what you are doing. Point out that they can tell what you are doing by observing how you move and what you do.



### Follow Me

Walk your students step by step through the process of building a paper airplane or an activity that takes multiple steps. Make sure they imitate every fold you do carefully. Let them throw their planes when finished, then discuss what a role model is. Ask them which people they like to imitate or would like to be.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

### Bible lesson

Paul had spent a lot of time traveling around to different cities preaching the Gospel and encouraging the believers in the churches that were already there. He spent an extended time, three years, in the city of Ephesus strengthening the believers and teaching them the Word of God.

Paul's great desire was to spread the Gospel to areas where it had not been proclaimed before. He made plans to continue his missionary journey on to these kinds of places. He needed to gather some support and encourage a few more churches before he went though. First he went to Greece where he encouraged the churches and collected an offering for the Christians in Jerusalem who were very poor. Paul continued on his way to Jerusalem and met up with the elders of the Ephesian church at one of his stops. Paul told the elders that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would suffer in Jerusalem, but just as he had faithfully obeyed God during his time in Ephesus, he would faithfully obey God while he was in Jerusalem, even if it meant suffering or even dying. Paul was determined to obey, even at such a high cost. He challenged the Ephesian elders to be faithful to their own church, and then he prayed with them. They all cried together as Paul left, because Paul had told them that he would not ever see them again.

He continued on in his journey toward Jerusalem, and when he came to the city of Caesarea, he stayed with his friend Philip. While there, a prophet came and told Paul that the Holy Spirit had given him a message: Paul would be taken by the Jews and handed over to the Gentiles when he went to Jerusalem. Paul's friends begged him not to go to Jerusalem, but he insisted, saying, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (21:13) Paul was ready and willing to obey Jesus, even if it meant his death.

Not long after arriving in Jerusalem, the prophecy from the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. After seeing Paul in the temple, some Jews got the whole crowd angry with Paul and they attacked him. They falsely accused him of being against all people, against the law, and against the temple. They also falsely charged him of defiling the temple by bringing Gentiles inside. They dragged him out of the temple and began beating him.

The Roman soldiers who were in charge of Jerusalem heard that the city was in an uproar. They came to the place where the riot was happening, and when the people saw the soldiers coming, they were afraid so they stopped beating Paul. The commander of the army, named Lysius, had Paul bound in chains while he tried to figure out what had happened. The crowd was shouting all different reasons why they were beating Paul, and not finding out a real answer, Lysius decided to bring Paul to the army barracks to keep him from the crowd. The crowd



was so violent that the soldiers had to carry Paul away to keep him safe. Paul stopped Lysius and bravely asked him for permission to address the crowd. He had never even had the chance to proclaim Christ before the crowd attacked him, and he wanted to opportunity to do that and to defend himself.

Lysius allowed Paul to speak, and Paul addressed the crowd. He started by telling them that he had once been a zealous Jew who persecuted Christians, but one day Jesus Christ appeared to him, and he repented of his sins and obeyed Jesus. God had chosen him to be a witness of Jesus Christ to all men. He told the crowd how Jesus had come to him again when he had first come to Jerusalem, and told him to leave the city because the Jews would not accept his testimony, and so Jesus had told him to bring the message of salvation through Jesus to the Gentiles.

The crowd erupted in anger when Paul told them the Jesus wanted the Gentiles to be saved. They were so angry, they wanted Paul killed. Once again, the Jews of Jerusalem refused to hear and believe the testimony of Paul about Jesus Christ.

Two nights later, Jesus once again came to Paul to encourage him, saying, "Be of good cheer Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness to me at Rome" (23:11). God's will for Paul's life was not yet finished. Though Paul did not yet know how, he knew that God would provide an opportunity for him to preach the Gospel in the city of Rome.



## Lesson Questions

What did Paul tell the elders when he arrived in Miletus?

*Paul reminded the elders that he had been faithful to serve the Lord in the past and that he serve God in the future.*

What did the Ephesian elders do when they thought that Paul would be leaving and might never return?

*They were so sad that they wept because they would miss Paul.*

Where did Paul travel to next?

*Caesarea*

What did the Holy Spirit, through the prophet Agabus, tell Paul?

*Agabus tied up his hands and feet with Paul's belt then told Paul that he would be tied up and turned over to the Gentiles.*

What did Paul do because there would be persecution in the future?

*Paul didn't change what he was doing because there would be persecutions. Instead he continued to be faithful and obedient to the job of sharing the gospel.*

What happened to Paul when he arrived to the temple in Jerusalem?

*The Jews became very upset with Paul and they began to beat him. They stopped when they saw the many soldiers come and take Paul away.*

What did Paul tell the Jews who were trying to hurt him?

*Paul told the Jews about his life and God's good news of salvation.*



## Presentation Ideas

### A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



### Skit

Teach the students that they are to obey quickly, sweetly, and completely.

Have a helper act out the part of a child playing a video game. Tell the child to brush his teeth. The helper continues to play until he finishes his game. Emphasize the failure to obey quickly.

Have two helpers respond differently about cleaning up their rooms. One grumbles and complains about how hard and unfair it is, while the other happily obeys in love to his parents. Emphasize the failure to obey sweetly.

Spread paper on the floor, and ask a helper to pick it up. Have the helper hide some of it under a desk instead of throwing it away and to leave other pieces on the floor. Emphasize the failure to obey completely.



### Obeying Parents and Obeying God

Make explicitly clear that God commands children to obey their parents. When children obey their parents, they are actually obeying God who told them to obey.



### Visual Aids

Use visual aids throughout the Bible lesson to help make the story come alive.

Show a map of the region and explain that the distance isn't going to stop Paul.

Tie up your hands or a helper's hands and explain that knowing that something bad would happen in the future wasn't going to stop Paul.

Bring in sticks or a sword to show that knowing that he was going to be beaten didn't stop Paul.

Hold up a pair of sneakers because Paul was intent on finishing the race.

Bring in several chains because Paul was in bondage and put in prison.

Bring in a bright yellow smiley face because Paul was of good cheer and he ordered others to be of good cheer as well.



### Learning Stations

Set up learning stations throughout your classroom. The first station is Ephesus. Walk your class Ephesus and explain that Paul traveled to Ephesus, where he decides to go to Jerusalem and Rome. Have money at the first station and ask the students to collect it all for you.

The second station is nearby. Walk through "Ephesus" and imitate Paul's encouragement of the Ephesian leaders by encouraging your class. Compliment their attentiveness or other good behavior. Discuss how Paul made himself the example for the Ephesian elders to follow.

Take a boat ride to the next station, Caesarea. Have the class pretend they are rowing with you as you walk. While there, act out the prophesy of Agabus.

Walk to your final station, Jerusalem. Have all the students talk at once to simulate

the riot. Quiet them, then share a synopsis of Paul's message to the crowd. Finally, have them pretend to sleep. Give the key verse and discuss how Paul was encouraged by the Lord.



### Can't Stop the Gospel

Bring in a picture of or make a stop sign. Use it during this lesson at every obstacle in Paul's life that he faced to remind children that the Gospel could not be stopped from spreading.



### Noise and Hush

When your hands are down, have the students make lots of noise, crying out "Away with him!" like the crowd in Acts 21:36. When teachers hands are up, children get quiet, like in Acts 21:40.

### Praise and Worship

*There Is a Redeemer*

*Create in Me a Clean Heart*

*Jesus Paid it All*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7*

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### Obedience Belt

Give each student the necessary materials to create a belt like Paul's. A long strip of fabric or even braided cord or yarn can be used. Tie together and attach a belt buckle that says OBEY with Acts 21:11 printed below. Discuss how Paul was not only willing to be arrested but even die for the cause of the gospel.



### What's Awaiting Paul

Print out a map of the area where Paul traveled and cut out flaps for various cities he visited. On underside, affix pictures of chains to show that everywhere Paul went, chains and tribulation awaited him. Include the title and the verse, Acts 20:22–23. Variation: On one side, print the map. On the other side, print the chains so that when the child holds the map up to the light, the chains show through.



### Race to the Finish Line

Have races with a big finish line and highlight Acts 20:24 and Paul's desire to finish his course.



### Acts of Love

Ask the students what actions they can do for the people they love. Suggest special favors at home for mom, or making a card to give dad to encourage him when he



comes back from work, or by sharing a toy with a friend. Encourage them to actually do that action that week.

### **Follow Me Race**

Set up a simple course around your classroom. Have the students weave in and out between chairs, crawl under a table, and climb over some blocks on the floor. Lead them through the course. When they are finished, discuss Paul's life and ministry. He referred to it as his race. It was full of hardship and challenges, but he worked hard to reach the finish line.

### **Coloring Pages**

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



### **MEMORY VERSE**

"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." — *1 Corinthians 11:1*



**“When he had come to us, [Agabus] took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hand of the Gentiles.’” —Acts 21:11**





**"...Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language."**

**—Acts 21:40**

