

Scripture: Gal 4:4, Acts 23:12-35 (summary); Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14-16; Romans 10:14-15; John 14:27; John 20:21; Acts 24.

Opener: “Why Greek?”

To me, studying Scripture is a fulfilling challenge: something worthy that demands effort and gives back substance. It’s a holy synergy: my sweat and attention meeting a wisdom beyond my imagination.

Take time, for example. We tend to think of time as a straight line—linear, measurable, chronological. The Greeks had a word for that: *χρόνος* (*chrónos*)—the countable march of minutes, hours, and years.

But God works in time a little differently. When He weaves our ordinary *chronos* into a decisive, meaningful moment of action, Scripture uses another word: *καιρός* (*kairós*)—the opportune or appointed moment. Jesus speaks this way at Passover week: “My time is near” (Matt 26:18); that’s *kairos*. God’s right moment, not just another tick on the clock. And in John’s Gospel, He often says, “My hour (*ὥρα*, *hōra*) has not yet come...The hour has come” (John 2:4; 12:23); another way Greek helps us sense God’s timing ripening toward the cross and resurrection.¹

Paul adds a third word that pulls it all together: *πλήρωμα* (*plérōma*)—fullness or completeness. In Galatians 4:4 he writes, “When the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son...” (*τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου*). That’s not random history—it’s God’s perfect timing: the right roads, the right languages, the right peace and the right Savior... all converging.²

Now listen to how our English translations try to carry that richness:

- NIV: “But when the set time had fully come...”
- NLT: “But when the right time came...”
- ESV: “But when the fullness of time had come...”

Each one is reaching for the Greek rhythm and flow: *chronos* (counted time) taken up into *kairos* (God’s appointed moment), brought to *plérōma* (fullness). When you compare translations, chase a footnote, or pencil a margin note... guess what? You’re already studying Greek. And you’re letting Scripture shape how you see your day: not just as hours to spend, but as moments to be met; God’s moments.

[NOTE: **chrónos** (crow-noss), **kairos** (ky-ross), **plérōma** (PLAY-roh-mah), **hōra** (HOH-rah)]

¹ On *kairos* in Matt 26:18 (“my time is near”) and *hōra* (“hour”) in John 2:4; 12:23, see NIV (2011). Greek terms: *καιρός* (appointed time/season) and *ὥρα* (hour/appointed hour).

² Gal 4:4 reads *τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου*—“the fullness of time”; *πλήρωμα* conveys fullness/completion; *χρόνος* is chronological/quantitative time. For a canonical echo, see Mark 1:15 (*πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρός*—“the time is fulfilled”). All Scripture quotations NIV (2011); Greek forms per NA28.

This ties into the central theme of our entire series (400 Years of Silence): it is precisely about God's timing—how, in the fullness of time, He used synagogues, roads, and Rome's peace (Pax Romana) as the stage for Jesus and Paul. That's *plérōma* in motion."

Introduction

In the fullness of time, God used ordinary networks—synagogues, roads, and Rome's fragile peace—to carry the extraordinary news of Jesus, the risen Lord. Now, the risen Lord sends us into our everyday networks as a calm, holy presence.

Scripture Reading (Acts 23:12-22, NIV)

Please grab your bible and turn to page _____.

These are Words of God for the People of God (Praise Be to God)

Our story begins in Jerusalem, where Paul has just spoken with the Sanhedrin...

Acts 23:12-22, with the plot exposed and the nephew dismissed, the roads will write the next moves and passes. It is nighttime in Jerusalem, the time is 9 pm, and the tribune musters up the escort, and the land guides safely to Caesarea Maritima.

The Night March to Caesarea

This is the story of Tribune Lysias in Jerusalem, the third hour of the night: I am Claudius Lysias, tribune of the cohort in Fort of Antonia. Word of a forty-man oath reaches me: daggers are drawn, and there is a plot to ambush the prisoner Paul of Tarsus. I sign the order: two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, two hundred spearmen. We will move at once (cf. Acts 23:23).

Jerusalem sits slightly off the watershed road and is hemmed by steep ravines; you do not blunder out of this city... You have to think with the land. We slip from the barracks to the northern gate. The column climbs to the ridge, to the Patriarchs' highway. Under my horse's hooves, the limestone is dry; the night air is cool.

Soon, the tight folds of the Judean hills relax into the Benjamin Plateau. This is a rare "saddle" in the land where roads multiply. Here, the north-south ridge route meets the only east-west outlets that drop down toward the coast or down to the wilderness: it seems as if "everything is down from Jerusalem." It is an important area, whoever holds Benjamin's saddle holds the country's options.

You see, the terrain shapes our tactic: descend early off the spine, pick up the byways that gather toward the international coastal road (the Via Maris, the "Way of the Sea"), and ride the open plain by night, out of reach of alley ambush. Or ride the ridge where the narrow narrows in spots great for ambush...

We make for Antipatris, a hinge town where hill-country tracks meet the coastal corridor. Through the dry season, the Sharon Plain carries weight like a promise; in the rains, the shallows can sponge and slow you. Tonight, the ground is firm. We push hard.

Stars still burn when we reach Antipatris. At first light, as planned, the infantry returns to the barracks, and the cavalry presses on with Paul to Caesarea (Acts 23:31-33). Northward, the land narrows where Mount Carmel pinches the fields against the sea. Hmm, places on this road where a small group can gather a crowd. Once past those choke-holds, the road runs like a string toward Herod's port.

There it is, Caesarea Maritima rises in the distance. A piece of Rome, this city by the sea, with a harbor poured where no natural harbor should be. Massive concrete moles bite into the Mediterranean holding the vast sea back, and storehouses line the quays; the aqueduct strides majestically from the Carmel foothills so the city drinks when the sky withholds its rains. Trade is brought here from around the world, taxed, and sent along Rome's arteries. We pass the Hippodrome and swing towards the praetorium. With the prisoner, we carry a letter to His Excellency, the governor Felix. Paper can move empires, just as a quiet word can move a man.

And here is the prisoner Paul, calm as iron but without iron. In Jerusalem, they say that he split the Sanhedrin with his words, and they called him a resurrectionist. Here with us, he did speak in such a way. Paul spoke of righteousness, self-control, and God's judgment to come. He is Felix's problem now.

Back to the Text

Back to the text: **Acts 23:25-35.**

Exposition: Networks God Used

1) Synagogues — Street-Level Launch Pads

“As was his custom,” Jesus entered synagogues (Luke 4:16). Paul does the same: “On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down... ‘Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen!’” (Acts 13:14-16). Synagogues are not the gospel; they are community nodes—Scripture, memory, relationships—ideal places for seed to take root.

Our “synagogues” are ordinary rooms—break areas, school hallways, sideline bleachers. In anxious spaces, the church's non-anxious presence (calm, steady, truthful love) lowers the temperature and raises the capacity to care (cf. 1 Thess 4:11-12). Holiness is communal light, not a solo spotlight (Matt 5:14-16).

2) Roads & Passes reach to places they are the Network: “How can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? ... ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Rom 10:14-15).

Feet presume paths; news presumes movement. In the land between, passes and valleys act like bandwidth, control the corridor, and you amplify the message.

Map-moment: The Benjamin Plateau is the hinge: one of the only places where the hill-country ridge route meets workable east-west exits. Toward the north, the Carmel pinch and the Jezreel crossings show why junctions matter; on the north shore of the lake, Capernaum sits where road traffic, lake economy, and synagogue life overlay—perfect launch pads for good news to run far.

Place and Practice: Name three nodes you travel weekly: (1) home/household, (2) a workplace/school corridor, (3) one “digital road” (a thread or platform). Pray Roman 10:14-15 in that node or over it. Take one faithful, relational step this week.

3) Pax Romana: Rome’s Courtroom & Christ’s Peace

Rome’s order provided safer travel, common language, coinage, and courts—a framework God repurposed as a megaphone for witness (Luke 2:1; Acts 23-24). But Rome’s “peace” rides on steel. Jesus offers a different peace: “My peace I give you” (John 14:27). In Caesarea, that contrast is clear: imperial process and a prisoner whose peace isn’t borrowed from steel.

Then / Now / Not Yet

Then: Roads, synagogues, and Rome’s order became prepared paths for the message of Jesus.

Now: God has placed you at a crossroads: a classroom desk, a warehouse aisle, a community Facebook group. These are your nodes. The Spirit sends you there: calm, faithful, truthful to carry Christ’s peace where broken lives live.

Not Yet: One day every road converges on the Lamb’s throne (Rev 21-22). Until then, we walk the routes before us with resurrection steadiness.

Gospel Invitation

Friend, the roads and rooms of your week are not accidents; they are appointments. The Son came in the fullness of time, died for our sins, and rose again. “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9). Receive His peace; be reconciled to God; and be sent (John 20:21).

Call: Turn to Jesus in faith today; be baptized into His people (Acts 2:38); and step into your three nodes with the light of holy love (Matt 5:14-16).

Closing Prayer: “Lord Jesus, You walked the synagogues and roads of Galilee; You stood in Rome’s courts with calm authority. Send us now into our everyday networks. Grant us Your peace, Your courage, and Your words. Make our life together a lamp on a stand. Amen.”

Bibliography

The Holy Bible. *New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

The Holy Bible. *English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

Greek New Testament. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (NA28). Edited by Barbara Aland et al. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

Parker, Cyndi. *Listen to the Land: Student Guide*. BS600 “Listen to the Land (Biblical Geography).” Vancouver, WA: BiblicalTraining.org, 2021. Also, cf. the course video lectures and the student guide.

<https://www.biblicaltraining.org/learn/institute/bs600-listen-to-the-land-biblical-geography>.

Stedman, Ray C. “The Four-Hundred Silent Years.”

MacArthur, John. “Providential Protection” (Acts 23:12–35). *Grace to You*. Sermon, October 13, 1974. Accessed November 9, 2025.

_____. “Paul’s Trial Before Felix, Part 1: The Case Against Paul” (Acts 24:1–9). *Grace to You*. Sermon, October 20, 1974. Accessed November 9, 2025.

_____. “Paul’s Trial Before Felix, Part 2: Paul’s Defense Begun” (Acts 24:10–16). *Grace to You*. Sermon, October 27, 1974. Accessed November 9, 2025.

_____. “Paul’s Trial Before Felix, Part 3: The Tragedy of Postponing Salvation” (Acts 24:17–27). *Grace to You*. Sermon, November 3, 1974. Accessed November 9, 2025.