

*Nine Jewish Attempts
To
Kill Paul*



*Bible Study Series
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All what we know about Paul is recorded in the book of Acts as narrated by Luke. His name was first mentioned in Acts 7:58 at the stoning of Stephen and at that time he was known by Saul which was his Jewish name. Then he was mentioned again in 8:1; then practically the whole Scripture starting from chapter 9 till the end of the book of Acts is about him describing the power of the Holy Spirit which worked in him and through him that enabled him to spread the word of God all over Asia Minor and Europe; but it also described how the Jews attempted to kill him several times and failed till at last they succeeded at the hands of Nero as we shall see later.

In this article we shall discuss each attempt by the place where it happened and what had happened supported by the biblical references:

In Iconium: (Acts 14:4 - 6)

That was during Paul's and Barnabas' first missionary trip in Asia Minor.

After preaching the good news some of the Jews and of the Gentiles believed, but the Jews who did not believe gathered the Gentiles and their rulers in a violent attempt to abuse and stone both Paul and Barnabas who knowing about the plot left and moved to Lystra.

In Lystra: (Acts 14:19, 20)

But the Jews of Iconium went after them in Lystra and aroused the crowds against them and stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city thinking that he was dead, but the disciples gathered around him and he regained his strength and went back into the city and the next day left to Derbe.

In Thessalonica: (Acts 17:1 - 10.)

That was during Paul's and Silas' second missionary trip accompanied by Timothy and Luke.

After been shamefully beaten and imprisoned in Philippi they went to Thessalonica passing through Apollonia where they preached the good news (the gospel) to both the Jews and Gentiles; but some of the Jews who did not accept the message became envious and gathered a mob from the market place and attacked the house of Jason, but the brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.

In Berea: (Acts 17:11 -14)

The Bereans were more fair-minded and they received the word with all readiness, but the Jews from Thessalonica came after them and ran them off from Berea. So the brethren sent Paul away by sea to Athens while Timothy and Silas remained there.

On his way back to Jerusalem: (Acts 20:1 - 3)

After completing his third missionary trip, he was in Achaia from which he went to Macedonia planning to sail from there back to Jerusalem. He stayed there for three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return by land to Macedonia, and from there he completed the journey back to Asia Minor by land, then sailed from there to Syria.

In Jerusalem: (Acts 21:17 - 36)

That was after finishing his third missionary trip. After arriving to Caesarea he went to Jerusalem to report to the apostles and elders who advised him to take four of the men who had taken vows to purify with them and pay their expenses to have their heads shaven and to offer the proper offerings according to Moses; to show the Jews that he is still observing Moses and the traditions of the fathers. And when the seven days of purification were almost ended, some Jews from Asia seeing him in the temple stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, charging that he is the one who teaches against the people and Moses everywhere and had brought Greeks into the temple defiling the Holy place. Then there was a great disturbance in the city, they dragged him out of the temple and were seeking to kill him (Acts 21 :28 - 31). The commander of the Garrison heard about the commotion, took his soldiers and saved Paul out of their hands.

Still in Jerusalem: (21 :37 - 22:22)

But Paul asked the commander to permit him to speak to the people.

So Paul told them his story from the very beginning how he used to persecute the church killing and dragging Christians bound to prisons both in Jerusalem and other cities; and when he was on his way to Damascus for the same reason, how the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a very bright light brighter than the sun, then he heard His voice telling him **"Why do you persecute Me? It is difficult for you to kick against goads."** Then the Lord told him to enter Damascus and there he will be told what to do. And as he was blinded from the bright light he was led by the hand into Damascus, and stayed three days without eating or drinking. Then a disciple called Ananias was sent to him by the Lord, who when entered the house told Paul that the Lord who appeared to him on the road sent him that he may receive his sight and immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he received his sight, had some food, and was baptized. Then he was told about the mission that the Lord commissioned him to do.

And they heard him till he said that the lord told him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and then they shouted out, away with such a man from the earth for he is not fit to live, and they tore their clothes and threw dust in the air.

Still in Jerusalem: (Acts 23:17 - 35)

Arrangements were done for hearing the case against Paul, but when the commander heard that the Jews lay in wait to kill him, he sent him secretly by night under heavy guard with a letter to Governor Felix in Caesarea who kept him in Herod's Praetorian.

In Rome: (Acts

Paul was put under house arrest in a house which he rented for two years till he was heard by Augustus Caesar who set free as per what he wrote to Timothy that he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion (~d Tim. 4: 17).

Then when Nero came into power and after he burned the city of Rome, he blamed the Christians for his evil doing and stretched his hand out in a campaign of persecution against them, add to that, the Jews through the Jewesses who were married to Romans in power succeeded in bad-mouthing Paul to Nero who imprisoned him again and beheaded him about 68 A.D. (This is not mentioned in the Holy Scripture but mentioned in the history of the early church.