

**What Trials Occurred in Luke & Acts?
An Overview of the Record of Trials Recorded by Luke**

I. Trials as a Major Part of the Record in Luke & Acts

A. The Trials of Jesus in Luke

Only Luke documents all four legal proceedings against Jesus prior to the crucifixion: (1) Sanhedrin trial (Luke 22:66-71); (2) first Pilate hearing (23:1-7); Herod's interrogation (23:8-12); and (4) second Pilate hearing (23:13-25).¹

B. Trials of the Apostles in Acts

In Acts, Luke records 16 trials or proceedings by the Sanhedrin, Agrippa, and various other officials against the apostles.²

- Sanhedrin vs. Peter & John (Acts 4:1-21).
- Sanhedrin vs. Apostles (Acts 5:17).
- Sanhedrin vs. Stephen (Acts 7:1-60).
- Herod Agrippa I vs. Peter (Acts 12:6).
- Jerusalem Council vs. Paul & Barnabas (Acts 15).
- Philippians' magistrates vs. Paul & Silas (Acts 16:19).
- Thessalonians' city officials vs. Paul, Jason & others (Acts 17:6-9).
- Athenians vs. Paul in *Areopagus* (Acts 17:18-34).
- Proconsul Gallio vs. Paul (Acts 18:12)
- Ephesus city clerk vs. Paul & others (Acts 19)
- Jerusalem temple Roman commander vs. Paul (Acts 21:33-4).
- Sanhedrin vs. Paul (Acts 23:1-10).
- Felix vs. Paul (Acts 23-24).
- Festus vs. Paul (Acts 25:1-12)
- Agrippa/Festus vs. Paul (Acts 25:13-27).
- Rome/Nero vs. Paul (Acts 28) – appeal made, but not yet decided.

¹ John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, p. 43 (2001).

² *Id.*, pp. 85-86.

II. Evidentiary Record in Luke & Acts

A. Luke's Reliance Upon Eyewitnesses

In writing the Gospel of Luke, he expressly states that he relied upon eyewitnesses. Luke 1:2 (“those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses”). In Luke and Acts together, Luke identifies nearly 100 people (most by name) who would be potential eyewitness sources.³

B. Luke's Reliance Upon Other Records

In the beginning of the Gospel, Luke specifically refers to pre-existing sources. Luke 1:1 (“many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us.”). Written records would include not only accounts about Jesus in the Gospel, but also official written records of the events described in Acts.

- Sanhedrin Proceedings. For Sanhedrin proceedings, two scribes prepared a written record.⁴
- Charges & Indictments. Serious charges (*inscriptio*) and indictments against Roman citizens would be in writing.⁵
- Trial Records. “As [a] speech was being presented in court it was taken down in shorthand . . . these proceedings were being thus recorded no later than about A.D. 50.”⁶
- Prison Records. Roman prisons maintained written records for all prisoners (including names, homeland, dates & other personal information).⁷
- Civil Unrest Reports. “Major incidents of civil unrest in provinces or colonies were always reported to Rome.”⁸
- Letters. Acts refers to various letters that would support the facts cited by Luke. *See, e.g.,* Acts 15:23-29; 23:25-30; 25:24-27.

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³ John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, p. 43 (2001).

⁴ Brian Rapske, “Paul in Roman Custody, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, p. 105 (1994) *cited in* John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, pp. 77, 156 (2001).

⁵ John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, pp. 5, 15 (2001).

⁶ Bruce Winter, “Official Proceedings and Forensic Speeches,” *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, p. 307 (1994) *quoted in* John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, p. 16 (2001).

⁷ Brian Rapske, “Paul in Roman Custody, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, p. 250 (1994) *cited in* John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, p. 72 (2001).

⁸ John Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, p. 121 (2001).