

Connect timeless truths with today's news.

A TRIAL OF IDENTITY

This summer an old story has reentered popular culture with Christopher Nolan's cinematic retelling of *The Odyssey*. In Homer's verse, Odysseus faces challenge after challenge on his journey home from a long war. He uses his wits to escape the cyclops, faces an army of giants, and evades the clutches of mythical monsters. But Odysseus returns to find that he has been presumed dead, and over a hundred suitors are vying for his wife's hand in marriage. Odysseus faces one final challenge: he must convince the crowd of his identity and right to his own home. The trial seems simple enough: whoever can restring Odysseus's old hunting bow will marry the queen. Odysseus alone can restring his bow and prove his identity to the skeptical crowd.

A TRIAL OF TESTIMONY

Paul has been arrested for causing a riot in the temple of Jerusalem, all over a misunderstanding. He receives permission to speak, and he treats this as an opportunity to share the good news of Jesus. He tells the following story of his encounter with Jesus, focusing on his Jewish faith. Paul had been “blindly” persecuting Christians, when he became physically blind from a light shining from heaven. Paul responded with submission to Jesus, who directed him to wait in the city. Ananias, a Jewish Christian, comes to Paul and restores his sight. Ananias declares that Paul's mission will be as a witness to all people about what he has seen and heard—that Jesus is “the Righteous One,” God's Son.

1. Have you ever had a longer-than-expected trip home? When?
2. When has an experience changed the way you see everything else?
3. When has someone's testimony about Jesus strengthened your faith?

Additional Resources

Any videos or web materials are for your personal use. If you play any media files in class, be sure to have the necessary rights to do so.

Playlists

[Contemporary Worship Weekly](#)
[Echoes Worship Weekly](#) (featuring African-American music artists)
[Traditional Worship Weekly](#)

Study Resources

Commentary: [Thomas L. Constable's "2. Ministry in Jerusalem 21:17–23:32"](#)
Podcast: [BibleProject on "Saul and Subversive Christianity"](#)
Devotion: [Theology of Work on "4 Attributes of Paul's Leadership as Witness \(Acts 20-28\)"](#)