Thank you for agreeing to participate in my “Paul in Chains” presentation of Philippians.

I am asking you to read the following script as though you were the Prison Warden in charge of all prisoners who are being held in “Caesar’s household” in Rome. The purpose of your role is to help set the scene and provide a bit of the back story before the Apostle is brought up from his cell.

A note about how the script is laid out:

The portions of the script which are bullet points are simply the facts which you are highlighting from the prison records as you read them. I suggest you use a matter-of-fact tone of voice when reading these portions.

Otherwise the comments are yours to read with whatever emphasis or inflection you deem appropriate.

I will coach you a bit before the presentation. I ask that you and I meet for about ten minutes at least one hour before the program begins.

No costume is necessary but if you have a suitable one, I would like to approve it.

Again thank you, for your help.

Duffy

[addressing the group:]

So, you say you have come to see an old friend of yours. You are quite a large delegation. Hmm, I don’t know. Why have so many of you chosen to make the journey to see this, this … who is he? Let’s see what his documents tell us.

[reading and summarizing from prison records:]

* *His name, according to his Jewish heritage, is Saul of Tarsus. But he prefers to call himself Paul.*
* *… a citizen of Rome. His citizenship has been validated.*
* *… brought to Rome; extradited from Caesarea in Judea; sent to us by Governor Festus.*
* *… charged with sedition against Rome and for inciting riots throughout the eastern regions of the Empire.*
* *He caused quite a stir in Jerusalem which led to his arrest.*
* *… an adherent of the Jewish sect, the so-called “Christians”.*

Ah. I have heard about these Christians. They are an unusual lot, if you ask me.

* *And he thinks of himself as an Apostle, a man with a mission. He says his message is “good news”, a message which he claims to have received from God Himself.*

Oh, yes, I have heard about this fellow. I am told he is an unusual prisoner. My guards keep telling me about him. He is always singing hymns and writing letters and praying for his jailers. He has visitors, one or two regularly. They tell me he is a bit crazy, but otherwise he’s quite likable and agreeable. An easy-going inmate. No difficulties with him at all.

* *… exercised his right as a Roman citizen and appealed his case to Caesar.*

So, that is how he came to be in my care.

* *… arrived in Rome four years ago.*
* *… two years under house arrest while waiting for Caesar’s court docket to clear.*
* *… then transferred here into my prison and into the custody of the palace guard two years ago,*
* *… still waiting for his case to be called up which will then allow him to finally have his day in Caesar’s court.*
* *… no special privileges or treatment.*

[addressing the group:]

Hm! So here is my question for all of you, why have you traveled so far to come and see him? Do you really believe your God has given him such a powerful message? That he has a special mission?

[assessing your decision, shrugging:]

He seems like a harmless, old man to me. If he had not made his appeal to Caesar, I am sure that he would be free to go on his way with all of you. The fool! The idiot!

I normally would not allow such a large audience to meet with one of my prisoners. But I will permit it just this once. He may address you today, but only for a short time.

[to the guard:]

Go! Down into to the dungeons, the third level, the eighth cell and bring him to us; bring us this, this Paul … in chains!

[to the audience:]

I am curious though. What makes him and his message so compelling to all of you?