

Acts 28 - Final Leg on Journey to Rome; Arrival in Rome; Imprisonment

III. Outreach to the remote parts of the earth (Acts 13:1—28:31)

- (5) Paul's journey to Rome (21:17—28:31)
 - (C) Paul's voyage to Rome (27:1—28:10)
 - (b) Ministry on Malta (28:1-10)
 - (D) Paul in Rome (28:11-31)
 - (a) Journey to Rome (28:11-15)
 - (b) Paul underhouse arrest (28:16-31)

Acts 28

(b) Ministry on Malta (28:1-10)

1 When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.

1 When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.

1 When we were safely on shore, we learned that the island was called Malta.

1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 The **natives** showed us extraordinary kindness, for they kindled a fire and took us all in because of the rain that had started and because of the cold.

2 The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.

2 The people who lived there were unusually kind to us. It had started to rain and was cold, so they started a bonfire and invited us to join them around it.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

- "...natives" - people who didn't speak Greek or Latin

3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

3 Paul gathered a bundle of sticks and put it on the fire. A poisonous snake was forced out by the heat and attached itself to Paul's hand.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

- Paul made himself useful by gathering firewood, not expecting others to take care of him

- There are no snakes on Malta today, which has been a stumbling block for some.

However, remember that this event was 2,000 years ago; as things get cultivated, the snakes become extinct.

4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they *began* saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they *began* saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

4 When the people who lived there saw the snake hanging from his hand, they told one another, "This man must be a murderer! He may have escaped from the sea, but Justice won't let him live."

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

- The Maltans believed calamity was proof of guilt

5 However, Paul shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

5 However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

5 But he shook the snake into the fire and wasn't harmed.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

- Luke recorded this incident to show that God would miraculously heal His servant in order to enable him to fulfill God's purpose that he bears witness in Rome

- The promise of God in Mark 16:18 and Luke 10:19 was fulfilled in Paul's experience

6 Now they were expecting that he was going to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and *began* to say that he was a god.

6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and *began* to say that he was a god.

6 They were expecting him to swell up or suddenly drop dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

- People had mistaken Paul for a god previously (Cf. 14:8-18)

The Healing of Publius' Father

7 Now in the neighboring parts of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us warmly for three days.

7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.

7 The governor of the island, whose name was Publius, owned estates in that part of the island. He welcomed us and entertained us with great hospitality for three days.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it happened that the father of Publius was lying *in bed* afflicted with a *recurring* fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him, and after he prayed, he laid his hands on him and **healed** him.

8 And it happened that the father of Publius was lying *in bed* afflicted with *recurrent* fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him.

8 The father of Publius happened to be sick in bed with fever and dysentery. Paul went to him, prayed, and healed him by placing his hands on him.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

- "...healed" - the Greek word here implies an instantaneous healing

9 After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and being **cured**.

9 After this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured.

9 After that had happened, the rest of the sick people on the island went to him and were healed.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

- "...cured" - a different word in the Greek than v8, implying a gradual healing

10 They also showed us many honors, and when we were *about to* set sail, they supplied *us* with everything we needed.

10 They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied *us* with all we needed.

10 The islanders honored us in many ways, and when we were about to sail again, they supplied us with everything we needed.

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

(D) Paul in Rome (28:11-31)

(a) Journey to Rome (28:11-15)

11 After three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the **TwinBrothers** for its figurehead.

11 At the end of three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead.

11 Three months later, we continued our sailing onboard an Alexandrian ship that had spent the winter at the island. It had the Twin Brothers as its figurehead.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was **Castor and Pollux**.

- Paul still had about 210 miles to go before he reached Rome

- "...Twin Brothers" - Castor and Pollux [see KJV], twin sons of Zeus in mythology and were revered as protectors of men on the sea

— Perhaps Luke mentioned them to contrast God's real protection (Cf. Acts 27) and this one, with the protection the pagans superstitiously thought these gods provided

12 After we put in at **Syracuse**, we stayed there for three days.

12 After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.

12 We stopped at Syracuse and stayed there for three days.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

- "...Syracuse" - the main port of Sicily, on the east coast of the island

13 From there we sailed around and arrived at **Rhegium**, and a day later a south wind came up, and on the second day we came to **Puteoli**.

13 From there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.

13 Then we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. A day later, a south wind began to blow, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

- "...Rhegium" - modern Reggio di Calabria, near the tip of the "toe" of Italy, 75 miles from Syracuse

- "...Puteoli" - modern Pozzuoli, 200 miles north of Rhegium (on the "shin" of Italy)

14 There we found *some* brothers *and sisters*, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and that is how we came to Rome.

14 There we found *some* brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.

14 There we found some brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. After this, we arrived in Rome.

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from there the brothers *and sisters*, when they heard about us, came as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

15 And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

15 The brothers there heard about us and came as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and felt encouraged.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

- Julius and his party took the famous Appian Way and traveled 130 miles from Puteoli to Rome

— The first group of Christians met Paul at the Forum of Appius, about 43 miles from Rome; the second group met him at the Three Taverns, 10 miles closer



(b) Paul under house arrest (28:16-31)

16 When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

16 When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

16 When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with the soldier who was guarding him.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

- Paul had garnered the respect of his centurion escort, thus was able to reside in a private rented residence by himself, with a Roman guard

This is the end of the last "we" section of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1—28:16).

We know that Luke and Aristarchus remained with Paul for some time, and Paul had other visitors including Timothy, Tychicus, and Epaphroditus. Luke and Aristarchus were with him when Paul wrote his epistles to Philemon and to the Colossians (Philemon 24; Col 4:14), which he composed during his detention in Rome. This imprisonment probably lasted from 60-62 AD (Cf. v30). Thus Acts ends about 62 AD—29 years after the death and resurrection of the Savior and the day of Pentecost.

Paul's First Meeting with Jewish Leaders

17 After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he *began* saying to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was handed over to the Romans as a prisoner from Jerusalem.

17 After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he *began* saying to them, "Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

17 Three days later, Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. When they assembled, he told them, "Brothers, although I haven't done anything against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

- Paul began immediately to prepare to witness. He wanted to see the leaders of the Jewish community soon for two reasons:

— He wanted to preach the gospel to them as Jews first

— He also wanted to take the initiative in reaching out to them with an explanation of why he was in Rome, before they arrived at false conclusions

18 And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there were no grounds for putting me to death.

18 And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.

18 They examined me and wanted to let me go because there was no reason for me to receive the death penalty in my case.

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

19 But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

19 But the Jews objected and forced me to appeal to the emperor, even though I have no countercharge to bring against my own people.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, since I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel."

20 For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel."

20 That's why I asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the hope of Israel that I'm wearing this chain."

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

Paul emphasized these points in his explanation: He had "done nothing against" the Jews or their "customs" (v17). The Roman authorities in Judea had already declared him innocent (v18)—"no ground for putting [him] to death." He had "appealed to Caesar" because the Jews in Judea challenged ("objected to") the Romans' verdict, not because Paul had any grievance against the Jews (v19).

21 They said to him, "We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor has any of the brothers come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you.

21 They said to him, "We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you.

21 The Jewish leaders told him, "We haven't received any letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or mentioned anything bad about you.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for regarding this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."

22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."

22 However, we'd like to hear from you what you believe, because people are talking against this sect everywhere."

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

Paul's Second Meeting with Jewish Leaders

23 When they had set a day for Paul, *people* came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying

to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

23 When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

23 So they set a day to meet with Paul and came out in large numbers to see him where he was staying. From morning until evening, he continued to explain the kingdom of God to them, trying to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

- Paul was seeking a communal decision by the Jewish community that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jewish hope

24 Some were being persuaded by the things said *by Paul*, but others would not believe.

24 Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

24 Some of them were convinced by what he said, but others wouldn't believe.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they disagreed with one another, they *began* leaving after Paul said one *parting* statement: "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,

25 And when they did not agree with one another, they *began* leaving after Paul had spoken one *parting* word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,

25 They disagreed with one another as they were leaving, so Paul added this statement: "The Holy Spirit was so right when he spoke to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah!

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

- Paul's parting word was a quote from Is 6:9-10...

26 saying, 'GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, AND WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, AND WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

26 saying, 'Go to this people and say, "You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;

26 He said, 'Go to this people and say, "You will listen and listen but never understand, and you will look and look but never see!

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

- In this passage, God told the prophet that his Jewish hearers "would not believe" God's message through him (Cf. Matt 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40-41)

— Paul saw the words of Isaiah as applicable to his own time as it was to Isaiah

Tragic Words

Paul quoted the words of Isaiah to these men...words that described their tragic spiritual condition (Is 6:9-10). Jesus had used this passage in connection with His parables of the kingdom (Matt 13:13-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10). The Apostle John in his Gospel and applied them to Israel (John 12:39-40), and Paul quoted them in his Roman epistle (Rom 11:7-8).

27 FOR THE HEARTS OF THIS PEOPLE HAVE BECOME INSENSITIVE, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY HARDLY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM."

27 For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Otherwise they might see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them."

27 For this people's minds have become stupid, and their ears can barely hear, and they have shut their eyes so that they may never see with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn and let me heal them."

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

- The problem with these unbelieving Jews was not their inability to recognize and believe in the Messiah...the problem was they weren't interested in believing

-- The responsibility of belief for these Jews was not God's fault...it was their own fault

28 Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

28 You must understand that this message about God's salvation has been sent to the gentiles, and they will listen."

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

- The ultimate climax in Acts, summarizing the main theme of the book

— After presenting the gospel to the Jews in Rome, and having witnessed their rejection of it, Paul now focuses his ministry again on the Gentiles (Cf. 13:46-52; 18:6; Rom 1:16)

29 [When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

29 [When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

29 When he had said these words, the Jews left, arguing intensely among themselves.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

- During this time, he had Timothy with him (Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1), as well as John Mark, Luke, Aristarchus, Epaphras, Justus, and Demas (Col 4:10-14; Philemon 24)

— At least 26 are named in Rom 16

Gentile Response to the Gospel

30 Now Paul stayed two full years in his own rented lodging and welcomed all who came to him,

30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,

30 For two whole years Paul lived in his own rented place and welcomed everyone who came to him.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

- Paul's officially established innocence of anything worthy of punishment is clear from his living a relatively free life in Rome for the next two years (60-62 AD)

31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, **unhindered**.

31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

31 He continued to preach about the kingdom of God and to teach boldly and freely about the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

- "preaching the kingdom of God" - not a re-offer of the kingdom, as some suppose

— Paul was simply teaching the full counsel of God's Word, which is not only what Jesus did at His first coming, but also what He'll do at His Second Coming

- "...unhindered" - *akolutos*, no one stopped him; the last Greek word in Acts

- Paul's imprisonment for the next two years fostered tremendous growth of the Gospel (Phil 1:12-15)

Eight Numerical Progress Reports in Acts

(1) Acts 2:47: "...And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

(2) Acts 4:4: "But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand."

(3) Acts 6:7: "The word of God kept spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith."

(4) Acts 9:31: "So the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed peace, as it was being built up; and as it continued in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it kept increasing."

(5) Acts 12:24: "But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied."

(6) Acts 16:5: "So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily."

(7) Acts 19:20: "So the word of the Lord was growing and prevailing mightily."

(8) Acts 28:30-31: "Now Paul stayed two full years in his own rented lodging and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered."

The "Prison Epistles"

During these two years in Rome, Paul writes the letters to the Philippians, the Ephesians, the Colossians, and the letter to Philemon: the so-called "prison epistles." According to traditions (not found in the Bible), Paul did appear before the emperor and the case was dismissed. He went back to Crete where Titus was left in charge; he also probably visited Ephesus where Timothy was left in charge. There is some evidence that he visited Spain (Rom 15:24,28), and some scholars believe he even visited Britain.

[The Scottish Constitution makes reference to "the uttermost part (singular) of the earth" and maintains the view that Paul had visited Scotland, (which is literally consistent with Acts 1:8).] But Paul was arrested again and did some more time in prison in Rome (where he probably wrote 2 Timothy, his last epistle). One day he was taken outside the walls of Rome and beheaded.

The tradition from Clement to Eusebius favors two Roman imprisonments with a year of liberty between them. W.J.Erdman has pointed out that the leaving of Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim 4:20) could not have been an occurrence of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, for then Trophimus was not left (20:4; 21:20), nor of the journey to Rome to

appear before Caesar, for then he did not stop at Miletus. To make this incident possible there must have been a release from the first imprisonment, and an interval of ministry and travel.

Some Lessons From this Session

- Storms often come when we disobey the will of God (Jonah is a good example of this truth)
- Storms have a way of revealing character, yet even the worst storms cannot hide the face of God or hinder the purposes of God
- Paul received the word of assurance that they needed, and God overruled so that His servant arrived safely in Rome
- Storms can give us opportunities to serve others and bear witness to Jesus Christ