

Acts Chapter 28

- Paul is on his way to Rome courtesy of the Roman Empire, he's been given favor with the centurion who's been placed over him. The ship, crew, and passengers have been through an incredible storm which at last has broken their ship up as they've come to land.
- The crew, the soldiers, prisoners, and other passengers have made their way to shore in various ways which is where we pick up the narrative.

V: 1-2 (Map) They came ashore on Melita or Malta. (Refuge)



- The “barbarous” people (KJV), or the natives showed them much kindness.
- When we think of “barbarous” people, we think of “barbarians” - people that don't know how to use a table napkin, or who talk with their mouth full of food, or the “un-civilized.”
- In Greek the phrase “Bar-bar” from which we get the English word “barbarous” was used to identify those who didn't speak Greek.
- Fortunately this shipwreck happened in the day time and the locals responded to help those that were coming to shore, building fires and warming them up.

V: 3-7 Paul didn't just lay there by the fire and relax, he got to work, ministering to others by gathering firewood.

- The function of a “minister” is to serve people, serve the flock. Too many think they've arrived in a position to be served - which is not at all the Biblical model.

Matthew 20:27-28 “²⁷And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: ²⁸Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- As Paul was gathering wood and tossing it into the fire, being watched by some of the locals, a poisonous snake came out of the wood and latched onto him, biting him.
- The locals then formed a conclusion; that Paul was a bad man whom God would now judge, having survived the ship wreck, now God would take him out, judge him with a snake.
- These natives / locals obviously don't know Paul, that he's a Godly man, just trying to serve God with all his heart, but they've certainly mis-judged him.

We're cautioned about this ourselves:

Matthew 7:1-2 “¹Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

- We're told not to judge others because so often like with Paul here, we don't have all the facts and can easily come to the wrong conclusion.

Mark 16:15, 17-18 “¹⁵... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” - “¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing (water in Mexico) it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (Like Publius' dad, and others)

- I believe there are those times where God protects His angels, His messengers and it looks like at this point Paul is an example of that.
- Some have tried to interpret this passage as a way of testing their faith and have gotten involved with poisonous snakes and the drinking of poison and died as a result, apparently they weren't the messengers of God, or in God's will.
- Paul wasn't looking for a snake to play with, or tempting God with poison, he was just seeking to honor God, and God protected him.
- As Paul simply shakes the snake off into the fire and then seems not to suffer any ill effects they change their opinion; he must be a god. They seem both superstitious and fickle at the same time. They were wrong both times.

V: 7 The locals seem to reflect the attitude of their leader, who is described as a kind and considerate man, given to hospitality as he provides lodging and presumably food to those who were ship wrecked, which when you consider that there were 276 men on the ship is no small thing.

Hebrews 13:2 “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

- Angel = messenger. Paul is God's messenger, angel - which Publius has now taken in and shown hospitality to.

V: 8-10 Publius invited Paul & company into his home not knowing too much about Paul, certainly not expecting a miracle.

- Paul prays for Publius's dad who is healed of his fever and dysentery. Luke being a doctor gives us a specific diagnosis.


- When other people heard of this miracle, they came to be prayed for as well - and were healed.

Just as Jesus said:

Mark 16:17-18 “¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; ¹⁸They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

- When God allows miracles like this it is both for His glory, and to validate His messenger.
- Through this, Paul gained great favor with the people, and no doubt with Publius as well and they gave them the things that they needed to complete their journey - which for many probably included clothes and food.
- Though it's not stated I would assume because God allowed these miracles of healing to be done through Paul he no doubt shared the Gospel with Publius and with the people of Malta.
- Secular history records that Publius became a follower of Jesus Christ and the first Bishop of the church on Malta, he was later martyred for his faith by the Roman government.
- Paul is headed to Rome, but God also wanted to bring the Gospel to Malta, to the hungry hearts there, so the Lord detoured Paul's ship with a storm and dropped them off in front of the Governor's house, and it just so happened that the Governor's father was sick. What a crazy coincidence! (Not!)

V: 11-15 So after 3 months, waiting for the season to end and better weather they boarded another Alexandrian ship who's name was the "Twin Brothers" or the "Twin gods" - "Castor & Pollux" both of whom were "sons of Zeus" and the patron gods of sailors, otherwise know as the "Gemini" twins.

- Paul left Malta better than he'd found it - there was probably a tearful departure with everyone looking forward to being re-united in heaven.
- (Map) Travelogue: Leaving [Malta](#) - [Syracuse](#) - [Rhegium](#) - to the main port of [Puteoli](#) (modern day Naples) then overland 125 miles along the coast by way of the [Appi-i forum](#) and the [Three Taverns](#). 
- They met brethren, fellow Christians along the way who ministered to Paul, and he was encouraged.
- It is always encouraging to be around fellow believers:

Hebrews 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting / encouraging one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

- The believers from Rome heard that Paul was coming and they came from Rome and met Paul at the Appi-i Forum.

V: 16-20 Arriving at Rome the centurion turned the prisoners over to the jailers, but Paul was allowed to be under house arrest along with a guard to watch over him.

- Paul had a soldier chained to him 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The soldiers rotated in 6 hour shifts, so he would have close contact with 4 different soldiers every day who got to hear the Gospel, who got to see how he lived out his life.

Paul writing to the Philippians:

Philippians 4:13 “All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

- Paul is saying that there are many within the palace that are believers, probably a bunch of the royal guards who took turns being chained to Paul!

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purposes.”

- God really does use “all” things, including imprisonment, ship wreck, and crooked politicians.
- If it weren’t for Paul’s imprisonment we would not have the “prison” epistles.

1. **Ephesians** describing the glory of Christ in the church.

2. We wouldn’t have **Philippians** which describes the joy that we can have in the midst of hardships and trials.

3. We would have missed out on **Colossians** which speaks of the excellency and the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

4. We would not have the letter to **Philemon** which describes the intercessory work of Jesus Christ in our lives.

- Being in chains he couldn’t travel about and preach and teach as he was accustomed to, so he did the next best thing, he began to write and I’m so glad that he did.

- This form of house arrest allowed Paul to entertain guests and speak freely.
- Paul invites the leaders of the Jews to come so he can explain himself to them, assuming they'd heard bad things, and also to assure them that he's not there to make accusations about the Jews to Nero.
- Paul declares to them that he is bound for the hope of Israel.
- Throughout Judaism, the Jews had looked forward to the promise of the Messiah, this is what Paul is talking about.
- Paul is trying to draw them in, demonstrating that they have the same hope, the same thing in common.

V: 21-22 The leaders of the Jews respond to Paul saying that haven't heard anything one way or the other about Paul.

- This is thought provoking, the Jews in Jerusalem were really wound up about Paul, they were really out to get him. There were other times in scriptures where they either sent ambassadors or at the least letter to Rome complaining about Felix and other issues.
- At the least you would think they'd have sent a letter - which they probably did. Too bad they put it on a ship that sank out from under Paul!
- The Jews in Rome have heard about this "sect" that it's being spoken against everywhere - presumably by the Jews.
- They didn't say they were against it, they were saying they'd like to know about it.
- This is an open door, a door that Jesus has opened for Paul.

Revelation 3:8 Philadelphia "... I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it..."

V: 23-24 At a set time the leaders of the Jews and many others, presumably Jews came to Paul's house and heard him out.

- He expounded on the scriptures from the Law of Moses, and the prophets how that Jesus was the One they were looking for, hoping for.
- As is always the case, some believed and some didn't.

1 Corinthians 12:3 "... no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

- They all heard the same teaching, they were all given the same evidences, yet they didn't all react the same way. This proves that believing, salvation is a matter of choice.

John 3:16 "... that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish..." describing those who choose to believe.

V: 25-27 The Jews heard Paul out, but couldn't really come to an agreement or a consensus of what they had just heard.

- They say that if you put two Jews together in a conversation there will be a least 3 opinions...
- Paul quotes a prophesy from **Isaiah 6:9-10** which again is fulfilled in Jesus, predicting that the people would reject Him, reject salvation.
- The Jews aren't the only ones who've rejected the truth over the years, a good many Gentiles refuse to believe the truth when they hear it as well, preferring the lies of the enemy and the comfort of their own sin.

V: 28 The focus is turning from the Jews to the Gentiles:

Paul & Barnabas preaching in Antioch of Pisidia:

Acts 13:42-46 ([Turn to / read](#))

Romans 11:11, 25 "11I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." - "25For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

- It's the same thing here in Rome, as the Jews refused to hear the message, Paul is declaring that the salvation of God is being sent to the Gentiles.

V: 29-31 Paul enjoyed a degree of freedom within his house arrest, and took advantage of it as much as he could to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness.

- Paul waited for a couple more years to have his audience before Nero. Nero was only 25 years old at this time, and he'd begun to show his true colors as an evil man.
- He had murdered his own mother, and his wife Octavia.

- Rome was on the decline in every way. About 2 million people lived in Rome, about 1/2 of whom were slaves. There were a very small number of rich and powerful people, and a large number of “middle class” Romans who were barely a step away from slavery, all of which was fertile ground for the Gospel to be spread.
- Now, although this is where Luke, the author of Acts, stops writing.
- Paul’s ministry and story continued. Paul was released from house arrest to stand before Caesar Nero, Paul witnessed powerfully for the Lord.
- Nero, however, rejected Paul’s message and proceeded instead to go on a rampage against Christians. Nero was a wicked man to begin with but historical records verify that he lost his mind at the very time he listened to Paul and rejected the gospel.
- Released by Caesar because there was no legal case against him, the Book of Romans and the writings of Eusebius tell us Paul preached the gospel in Spain and Europe before he was brought back to Rome under arrest once more.
- This time, however, it was no longer house arrest. He was thrown into a dungeon in the Mamertine prison then eventually executed.