

2/10/08

### Acts 28

The final chapter of the book of Acts provides for us a clear picture of a man who not only believed and trusted God but was committed to Him, regardless of the circumstances or consequences to his life.

The apostle, though a prisoner, became the leader in the midst of this horrendous storm, on his journey to Rome by God's doing.

Having beached the ship on the shore, after two weeks of stormy seas, now they find themselves shipwrecked on Malta.

This journey of Paul to Rome is usually not considered a missionary journey but I believe it is as much a one as the first three.

1. The mission was revealed to Paul by God. Acts 19:23
2. The time in Jerusalem turned out to be as dangerous as those to the Gentiles but the Lord Jesus protected Paul.
3. The opportunity for Paul to preach the gospel was made possible by the Lord Jesus; first to Felix and the Sanhedrin, Drusilla, Festus, Herod and Bernice.

4. The apostle of the Gentiles now is on his way to preach the gospel to many at Rome but in particular to Nero.

5. But before arriving at Rome, God has some mission work at Malta.

### 28:1-10     The activities at Malta.

28:1-6     The initial landing.

28:1     The location of their shipwreck.

- 1) The Island Malta "Melite" is located in the Mediterranean, 60 miles from Sicily and 180 miles from Africa.  
\* Melite means refuge.
- 2) The Island was originally colonized by the Phoenicians and spoke a dialect close to the Hebrew, the Punic dialect of the Maltese.
- 3) The Island is 18 miles long and 8 miles wide.

28:2     The warm hospitality imparted.

- 1) The word natives "barbaros" is barbarians but it does not mean they were uncivilized savages, rather it meant they didn't speak the Greek language. Rom. 1:14; 1Cor. 14:11
- 2) The unusual kindness was due to compassion as they saw them shipwrecked.

- a) They kindled a fire for them, making the welcome.
- b) The reason was that the rain was falling on them and the cold temperature.

**28:3** The apostle Paul is bitten by a serpent.

- 1) Paul made himself useful, he was not lazy nor wanting everyone to serve him.
- 2) The serpent fasten to his hand as he laid the wood in the fire.

**28:4-5** The natives consciousness of absolute justice.

- 1) The conclusion of the islanders was that he was a criminal, so vile, that the gods would not allow Him to escape justice, though he had escaped the sea. vs. 4  
\* The word for creature “therion” is one that medical writers employ for a venomous serpent.
- 2) Paul shook the viper off into the fire, without any harm coming to him. vs. 5
- 3) The serpent is symbolic of Satan and sin.
  - a) The enemy will at times try to tempt us to fear because of the circumstances.
  - b) The enemy will at times attempt to condemn us about our past sins and we need to shake him off, knowing we are in Christ and new creatures.

**28:6** The expectation of the natives.

- 1) They were waiting to see Paul fall dead but it did not affect Paul. vs. 6a
  - a) They definitely knew that it was a poisonous viper.
  - b) The word swell up “pimpremi” is a medical term for inflammation.
  - c) The word looked “prosdokao” is also a medical term denoting expectation of fatal results regarding the illness.
- 2) They came to the opposite conclusion, they thought he was a god. vs. 6b-c
  - a) Much like at Lystra. Acts 14:11-15
  - b) This is not a promise that we can handle snakes but God’s loving provisions for His servants who are serving Him in the mission field or anyone whom He chooses to protect. Mk. 16:18

**28:7-10** The miraculous healing on the island.

**28:7** The benevolent care of the men.

- 1) The leading citizen “protos” was a title, meaning the first, the head man, the chief representative of the of the Roman government on the island. vs. 7a
- 2) His name was Publius “Poplios”, which means popular. vs. 7b
- 3) He provided for the 276 with all kindness for three day. vs. 7c

**28:8** The healing of the father of Publius.

- 1) The father of Publius was in the house sick of a fever and dysentery. vs. 8a
  - a) The word for fever “puretos” is in the plural and is another medical term, used for the fever of Peter’s mother-in-law. Matt. 8:15; Mk. 1:31; Lk. 4:38-39; Jn. 4:52
  - b) The diagnosis has been called “Malta fever”, which was common in the Mediterranean locals.
  - c) The micro-organism, which causes it, was identified in 1887 and traced to the milk of Maltese goats.
  - d) A vaccine has been developed but the condition in Paul’s days was fatal.
- 2) Paul went to him, laid his hands on him and God healed him. vs. 8b-c
  - a) God sovereignly manifested this miracle for His glory. Ja. 5:14-15
  - b) Interesting that Paul healed the father of Publius not Luke the physician yet Paul had a thorn in the flesh.
  - c) Without doubt, Paul used this to preach Christ.
  - d) Interesting that regardless of how much money you have when your health is gone nothing is of any value.

**28:9** The healing of many other natives.

- 1) The news spread and others sick came to Paul.
- 2) The diseases were diverse and they were all healed.
  - \* God’s sovereign work through Paul, according to His own will. Heb. 2:4

**28:10** They demonstrated their gratitude in a tangible way!

- 1) They also honored them in many ways. vs. 10a
- 2) When we departed, they provided such things as were necessary. vs. 10b-c

**28:11-16** The continued journey to Rome.

**28:11-12** The departure from Malta to Syracuse.

- 1) The men spent three months of winter at Malta, then sailed on an Alexandrian ship that had wintered in one of Malta’s safe harbors. vs. 11
  - \* If they wrecked in mid-November, this is about mid-February.
- 2) The figurehead of the Twin Brothers is a reference to the sons of Zeus, Castor and Pollus, deities of seamen as good omens in times of storms. vs. 11
- 3) Their route was north-easterly, landing at Syracuse. vs. 12a

- a) Syracuse was the capital of Italy, on the east coast of Sicily.
- b) The distance was 80-90 miles from Malta.
- 4) Their stay at Syracuse was for three days. vs. 12b

**28:13-14** The departure from Syracuse to Puteoli.

- 1) They circled around reaching Rhegium, about 70 miles from Syracuse. vs. 13a
  - \* The reference to circled “perierchomai” means “by tacking” a nautical term, meaning, changing positions or direction, they went in a zig-zag course, due to poor winds.
- 2) After the first day the favorable winds of the south started blowing. vs. 13b
- 3) The result was that the next day arrived at Puteoli, on the Gulf of Naples. vs. 13c
  - a) The trip covered 180 miles, in less than two days, with favorable winds in early spring.
  - b) Puteoli was 130 miles from Rome by land.
- 4) Paul, Luke and Aristarchus found some Christian brothers. vs. 14a
  - \* Without doubt they had heard or read a copy of the epistle to the Romans.
- 5) They stayed for seven days by invitation. vs. 14b

- 6) They then headed towards Romans. vs. 14c

**28:15** The route overland to Rome.

- 1) Some Jewish brethren heard of their arrival, so they sent a delegation to meet them at Appii Forum and the Three Inns. vs. 15a-c
  - a) They traveled a distance of 43 miles to Appii Forum and others 33 miles to Three Inns.
  - b) The word meet “apantesis” is a technical word for officials welcoming newly arrived dignitaries. as a deputation to escort them back.
- 2) Paul, seeing them thanked God and took courage. vs. 15c
  - a) God had been faithful to get Paul to Rome, this was Paul’s longing for so long.
  - b) The famous Appian Way led straight north to Rome, called ‘the oldest, straightest and most perfectly made of all the Roman roads’.
  - c) The brethren came to escort Paul to Rome, for they had heard of him, read his letter but never set eyes on him.

**28:16** The arrival at Rome.

- 1) The arrival to Rome is the climax of the journey. vs. 16a

\* The pronoun “we” appears for the last time, identifying Luke’s presence. vs. 16a

- 2) The centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard, for the entertainment at the Coliseum. vs. 16b
- 3) Paul was permitted to reside by himself, with a guard next to him, at all times. vs. 16c
  - \* Paul was distinguished from the other prisoners.

### **28:17-31    The ministry at Rome.**

**28:17-20** The apostle met with the Jews.

- 1) Paul called the meeting of the Jewish leaders. vs. 17a
  - \* We are told there were at least 39 synagogues in Rome.
- 2) Paul declared his innocence against anything against the Jew or customs of the fathers. vs. 17b-e
- 3) Paul declared his false arrest by the Jews and handed over to the Romans. vs. 17f
- 4) Paul declared they knew his innocence of a capital crime, after they examined him and would of released him. vs. 18
- 5) Paul declared he was compelled to appeal to Caesar. vs. 19a-b
- 6) Paul declared he was not accusing Israel. vs. 19c

- 7) Paul declared he had summoned them, because he was a prisoner for the hope of Israel. vs. 20
  - \* He was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, never of Rome!

**28:21-22** The response of the Jews to Paul.

**28:21**    The Jews at Rome were ignorant of Paul’s situation at Jerusalem.

- 1) They had not received letters from anyone. vs. 21a-b
  - a) The Sanhedrin, without doubt did not pursue the matter any further.
  - b) The Sanhedrin knew they would be called in question to the charges.
- 2) They had not had anyone come to relate Paul’s situation. vs. 21c
  - \* It is difficult to understand this silence.
- 3) Nor anyone speak evil of Paul. vs. 21c
  - \* The hatred was from the men in authority.

**28:22**    The Jews requested to be informed about Christianity.

- 1) They desired to hear from Paul about the sect “haireisis”, means of a different opinion, Christianity. vs. 22a-b
  - \* The word later came to be understood as heresy.

- 2) They knew it was spoken against everywhere. vs. 22c

**28:23-29** The apostle proclaims to the Jews about the kingdom of God.

**28:23** The appointed day for the meeting.

- 1) The Jews appointed him a day and came to Paul's rented house. vs. 23a-b
- 2) Paul proclaimed the Kingdom. vs. 23c
  - a) He explained "ektithemi" to set out, expose. vs. 23c
  - b) He testified "diamarturomai", to earnestly and religiously charge. vs. 23c
- 3) Paul persuaded them concerning Jesus from the Law and the prophets. vs. 23d
  - a) He persuaded "peitho" to induce one to believer.
  - b) Who Jesus was, in relation to the Law and Prophets.
- 4) Paul did it from morning to evening. vs. 23e
  - a) The need is great in this present and evil world.
  - b) The gospel is the only thing that can remove the spiritual blindness by Satan, the god of this world. 2Cor. 4:4

**28:24** The two responses to the gospel.

- 1) Some were persuaded "peitho" induced to believe the things spoken. vs. 24a
- 2) Other disbelieved, rejected the things spoken. vs. 24b

**28:25-27** The ongoing hardness of the heart of the Jews resulted in judgment by rejecting the Jews.

- 1) The Jews could not agree among themselves. vs. 25a
- 2) The Jew, before their departure heard Paul quotes Isaiah in accurate fulfillment, quoting the words of the Holy Spirit. vs. 25
  - \* Is. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:14-15; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10; Jn. 12:40; Rom. 11:8
- 3) Hearing they will not understand, seeing they will see but not perceive. vs. 26
  - \* The physical natural abilities were not sufficient to understand the spiritual truth of God's word! 1Cor. 2:9-16
- 4) Their hearts have grown dull "pahcuno" fat, thick, their hearts hard "bareos" and their eyes closed "kamuo" shut. vs. 27a-c
- 5) Lest they should see, hear and understand with their hearts and turn. So that God should heal them. vs. 27d-f
  - a) This is not God doing this to them but rather the result of their own free-will by constant rejection of the Gospel! Jer. 17:9

- b) Being spiritual blindness, due to their hardened hearts.
- c) Their ears, eyes and hearts are useless, fat heavy and dull.

**28:28-29** The apostle Paul applies the rejection of the Jews.

- 1) Paul rejects the Jews and declares that the gospel of salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it.
  - a) Paul saw it for himself in the three missionary journeys. Acts 13:46; 18:6; 19:8-9
  - b) Jesus rejected the Jew first, as he wept over Jerusalem. Matt. 23:37-39
  - c) Paul speaks of the fullness of the Gentiles first will take place, then the salvation of the remnant of Israel. Rom. 11:25
- 2) The Jews at this point departed from Paul and had many disputations among themselves. vs. 29
  - \* They did not want to hear the truth but rather were more interested in their traditional interpretations that contradicted the Gospel for the Age of Grace!

**28:30-31** The apostles two year imprisonment.

**28:30** The place of Paul's residence.

- 1) Paul resided in his own private house for two years. vs. 30a
  - a) He paid his own rent!
  - b) We have no specific details; if he paid for it, friends, family, etc.
- 2) Paul received all who came to him during those two years. vs. 30b
  - a) Tychicus who bore the Ephesian letter. Eph. 6:21
  - b) Epaphraditus who delivered financial and personal help to Paul without concern for his life. Phil. 2:25-27
  - c) Onesimus the run away slave crossed Paul's path and was restored to his master Philemon. Philem. 10
  - d) Epaphras who was a concerned Pastor over heretical teachings about Christ and His deity carried back the epistle to the church. Col. 4:12
  - e) And many others who benefited from the apostle Paul during the two years at Rome.

**28:31** The priority of the Paul's ministry conversation.

- 1) Paul preached the Kingdom of God.
- 2) Paul taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence "parrhesia" freedom of speech, unreservedness!

- 3) Paul saw members of the Pretorium Guard come to Christ. Phil. 1:13-18
- 4) Paul was not forbidden “akolutos”, without hindrance by anyone.  
 \* “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.” 2Tim. 2:9
- 5) The prison epistles were written at this time.
- a) For the furtherance of the gospel. Phil. 1:12
  - b) To reveal Jew and gentile one. Eph. 2:11-13
  - c) To declare the sufficiency of Jesus, alone, for salvation. Col 2:9-10
  - d) To plead reconciliation. Philem. 9
- 6) The book of Acts leave Paul in the service of the King, Jesus Christ.
- a) Without doubt Paul was released in view of this type of ending.
  - b) The epistle to the Romans and the Pastoral epistles certainly are clear evidence of his release and freedom, especially the letter to Philemon. Philemon 22

- c) Second Timothy clearly show Paul was rearrested and brought before Nero and killed 64 A.D. 2Tim. 4:6-8