

## Paul in Rome – Acts 28:11-31

### **Introduction:**

The Book of Acts opens with the ascension of Jesus back to His heavenly home. Before he leaves the disciples ask if this would be the time for him to restore the kingdom to Israel. Jesus says they do not get to know God's timetable, but this is what they will receive:

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

The rest of the book recounts how this is fulfilled. We see the Gospel start with a huge impact on Jerusalem at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit comes on the believers. Then we see the Gospel going out throughout Judea and even to Samaria. Finally we see the church commission missionaries like Barnabas and Paul and the Gospel spreads throughout the known Western world.

Now if the message is to continue to spread it must conquer the capital city of the western world, Rome. We see Paul making his way to Rome, and follow his journey there as a prisoner for the Gospel's sake. But always we see the Holy Spirit giving power in the form of direction, courage and signs.

Today's study sees Paul arrive at Rome. What will happen when the great Apostle and missionary of the early church fulfills the mission God has given him to go to Rome and represent him there? This is the focus of the last chapter of the Book of Acts.

### **Paul in Italy – Acts 28:11-16**

1. How long did Paul stay in Malta (v. 11)? Why so long?
2. Where was the ship from that they boarded (v. 11)? Compare that to 27:6. Describe this ship. What irony do we see in these circumstances?

The figurehead is likely the twin gods Castor and Pollux, sons of Zeus, and patron deities of ships believed to bring protection to sailors.

3. Verses 12-13 give us names of ports where the ship landed as it head northward to Rome. Why might we have these places listed?



4. In Puteoli what did Paul and the other Christians traveling with him find (v. 14)? What are we learning about the spread of the Gospel?
5. Verse 14 has these words, “And so we came to Rome.” Paul is about 200 km south of Rome at this time and the rest of the journey will be on foot. Paul is a prisoner, they have been shipwrecked and suffered losses. But what is the mood as Paul comes into Rome? (cf. v. 15) What brought him encouragement and raised a song of praise to God?
6. Do you think 2 Corinthians 2:14 could be applied to this scene in verse 15? *(But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and who makes known through us the fragrance that consists of the knowledge of him in every place.)*

7. Describe Paul's living conditions in Rome according to verse 16.

### **Paul Seeks an Audience – Acts 28:17-22**

8. Who does Paul call together according to verse 17? How soon after he arrives does he do this? Why might he do this?
9. In verses 18 and 19 Paul outlines how he got to Rome. On whose shoulders does he lay the blame for his arrest (v. 19)? What was the role of the Romans? What is Paul's feelings towards the Jews (v. 19)?
10. What is the reason, from Paul's perspective, that he is wearing chains (v. 20)? What does this mean? Why has he told this to the Jewish leaders of Rome?
11. What information do these Jewish leaders have about Paul (coming from Jerusalem)? (v. 21) So what is their opinion of Paul at this point?
12. According to verse 22 it is clear they have heard about the "Christian sect." And what was the opinion of this sect in the ancient world?

### **The Second Gathering – Acts 28:23-28**

13. Paul could not go to the synagogue, as a prisoner. So how does he get around this (v. 23)? How long does he share with them?
14. What were the things Paul taught the Jewish leaders (v. 23)? What was his purpose?
15. What was the response of the audience (v. 24)? How does this measure up against the other times he shared the Gospel?
16. What did Paul say that caused the meeting to come to an end (vss. 25-27)? What was the meaning of this quote?

17. What had Paul experienced and concluded about the Gospel (v. 28)?

### **The Conclusion of the Book – Acts 28:30-31**

18. How long was Paul in Rome before the book ends (v. 30)? What did he do during that time?

19. What was the message Paul shared (v. 31)?

20. Why does this book end without us knowing what happened to Paul?

### **Conclusion:**

The Book of Acts shares the account of life in the early church, and how that church expanded and grew to embrace the world around the Mediterranean Sea. It is an exciting story, filled with danger, miracles, life threatening situations and miraculous changes in people. It would be a great read whether you were a person of faith or not. It has great personalities, like Peter, James Stephen and of course, Paul. We marvel at the faith and courage of these men. And we also are introduced to strong women of faith and courage, like Lydia and Priscilla.

But in the end, the Book of Acts is not the story of the Apostles, nor the early church. It is the story of the Holy Spirit at work through the Apostles and the Church. And the story of the Spirit's work is not completed. This is why the book concludes with an open ending. The story continues, and what we are invited to see is that the story is continuing in and through us.

The Holy Spirit is alive and well, ministering in and through His people, so that the Gentiles and the Jews might know who Jesus is. The Holy Spirit still draws people to the Heavenly Father through faith in Jesus Christ. His Kingdom has come and we are invited to embrace the salvation Jesus has brought through his death and resurrection.

So today we are writing Acts chapter 29. How will it read?

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