

Acts of the Apostles

Week 34: Acts 28:1-31

Paul on Malta (28:1-10).

- Paul and the others from the ship soon discover they are on the island of Malta (v 1).
- The residents of the island show them kindness by building fires for them (v 2) and later invite them into their homes (v 7).
- While gathering brush for the fire, Paul was bitten by a viper (v 3).
 - o At first, the islanders assume this means Paul was a murderer since it was assumed bad things happen to bad people (v 4).
 - o When Paul shows no ill effects from the bite, they change their minds and assume he is a god (v 6).
- Paul and his companions were welcomed into the estate of the chief official, Publius (v 7).
 - o Paul prayed over and healed Publius' father (v 8).
 - o This led to many coming to Paul for healing during their stay in Malta.
 - o Publius and other grateful people helped supply Paul and his friends with what they needed for the trip to Rome (v 10).

Paul's Arrival in Rome (28:11-16)

- After wintering in Malta, the centurion secures passage to Rome on another Alexandrian ship (v 11).
- The ship reaches the conclusion of its journey at Puteoli. From there, they would walk the Appian Way to Rome (v 13).
- Paul discovers that there are already Christians in Puteoli, and stays with them until the group moves on to Rome (v 14).
- Believers in Rome heard that Paul was headed their way, and they went out to meet them about a day's journey south of Rome at "the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns."
- The presence of these believers encouraged Paul (v 15).
- In Rome, Paul was allowed to live under house arrest and not put in prison (v 16).

Paul's Ministry in Rome (28:17-31)

- Since Paul was not allowed to go to the synagogue to preach, he brought the synagogue to him, inviting local Jewish leaders to his house (v 17).
- There Paul gave his testimony to them, stressing the fact that Roman officials have found him innocent, and hoping to have a chance to visit with them about the gospel, which he calls the "hope of Israel."
- The leaders claim ignorance concerning Paul and his troubles in Jerusalem, but they do show interest in wanting to hear about Christianity (v 22).
- They claim that "people everywhere are talking against this sect" (v 22).

- A few days later, an even larger group of Jewish leaders gathers to hear Paul out on the claims of Christianity (v 23).
 - o Paul witnesses to them all day long.
 - o He speaks about the kingdom of God.
 - o He uses the Hebrew Scriptures to point the way to Jesus.
- Like in other instances, some were convinced by Paul, but others refused to believe (v 24).
- As they begin leaving, Paul quotes from Isaiah 6:9-10 and then announces the fact that God's salvation is moving among the Gentiles (vv 25-28).
 - o The quotation is a word against those who refuse to believe.
 - o Paul's words should be seen as one more warning against disbelief – it is not a closing off of an offer to Jews.
 - o Paul will continue to visit with all who came to see him (v 30), both Jews and Gentiles.
- Paul remains under house arrest for two years – this now makes four plus years in confinement.
 - o The entire two years he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus.
 - o The book ends with the declaration that Paul preached “unhinderedly” (v 31).
 - o Paul might be chained, but the gospel is not (see 2 Timothy 2:9).

Why end here?

- Luke ends his account without telling us what happened to Paul. Was he found guilty or innocent? Was he released or kept in prison until his death under Nero? We don't know.
- Some scholars suggest Luke may have been planning a third volume that was never finished.
- Luke may have wanted to end the book on a more positive note than Paul's (or Peter's, or James') death. As it stands, the gospel is still on the move, even if Paul isn't.
- The book leaves the reader with the unfinished task of seeing the gospel to the ends of the earth. Rome was not considered the ends of the earth, but it's main hub. From Rome, you could head out in any direction toward the ends of the earth.
- Will we pick up the task from the early apostles and continue carrying the gospel to others until all have heard?

Sources

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