

“Conclusion To The Book Of Acts”

Acts 28:1-31

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Teaching Aim: To journey with the Apostle Paul on the last leg of his trip to Rome following his shipwreck on the island of Malta. To recognize God’s hand on Paul every step of the way, from his miraculous healing of a snake bite to the miraculous healings Paul performed on others. To realize the importance of Paul’s friendship with the Roman Centurion Julius and to see the many ways God used Julius to help Paul. To recognize the Book of Acts suddenly ended before Paul met with Caesar Nero.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Shipwrecked on the island of Malta and the miraculous healings that followed (Acts 28:1-10)

1. As we come to the final chapter in the Book of Acts, we find Paul and the other 275 survivors from the shipwreck with him on the island of Malta (**vs. 1**). Malta is an island 18 miles long and 8 miles wide, it is located 58-miles south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea. In **Acts 27:42-44**, we learn *“...the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.”* How do we see a fulfillment of **Acts 27:23-26** in these verses?
2. The Greek word for “natives” literally meant, “barbarians.” Why did the Romans call the residents of Crete “barbarians” (**vs. 2**)? (See Commentaries) How did these so called “barbarians” respond to the survivors of the shipwreck? What did they kindly do for the victims to help warm them up?
3. What act of service do we find the Apostle Paul doing in **verse 3**? Paul too was a victim of the shipwreck, what can we learn about his character from his actions? What happened as he laid a bundle of sticks on the fire? Why didn’t he see the snake? What is “a viper” and what made it so dangerous?

4. What did the natives assume once the poisonous snake had bitten Paul who had just survived a shipwreck at sea (**vs. 4**)? How did Paul respond to the serpent's bite (**vs. 5**)? Who really saved Paul from the poisonous bite of the snake?

5. What did the witnesses expect to happen (**vs. 6**)? Did it? How did their thoughts change once they realize Paul wasn't going to die? How do you see the signs Jesus prophesied in **Mark 16:15-17b** demonstrated in the life and ministry of Paul?

6. What political office did Publius most-likely hold (**vs. 7**)? (See Commentaries) What act of kindness did he do for Paul and the other survivors, particularly those in leadership? Why for just three days? Who was laying sick in the house during this three-day period (**vs. 8**)? What twofold diagnosis did Doctor Luke give for the man's condition? It is likely that the father of Publius was suffering from "*Maltese Fever*." What was this unusual disease (See Commentaries) What animal was it related to?

7. How did the people of Malta respond when they heard about the miraculous healing of the father of Publius (**vs. 9**)? What happened as the people of Malta came to Paul with their various diseases?

8. By this time Paul had made quite a name for himself following his survival of the shipwreck, his survival of the snake bite, the healing of Publius' father, and the healing of so many residents of Malta from their various diseases. What did the people of Malta do for Paul and his companions as a result (**vs. 10**)?

Part II: Paul's arrival at Rome and his friendly discussion with the Jewish leaders (Acts 28:11-22)

1. According to **verse 11**, how long did Paul and the others stay on the island of Malta before it was safe for them to sail again? What kind of ship did they board for their trip to Rome? What was the significance of the figurehead of the twin brothers Castor and Pollux? (See Commentaries) What port do we find Paul's ship landing at (**vs. 12**)? How long did they remain there?

2. Where did the ship sail to next after leaving the port of Syracuse (which was located at the toe of Italy) (**vs. 13**)? After sailing around Rhegium, what was the destination of Paul's ship? Note: This city was the chief port for the city of Rome, Paul was now 150-miles from the city he had so long wanted to see.

3. What did Paul and his companions find once they arrived in Puteoli (**vs. 14**)? How long was Paul allowed to stay with these fellow Christians? It is important to remember that Paul was still a prisoner of Rome under the watchful eye of the Roman centurion Julius. Who do you think intervened to allow Paul to stay there seven days? Note: This shows us Christianity had not only reached Rome, but by **Acts chapter 28** had spread to other parts of Italy.

4. Once the party set out from Puteoli for Rome, they traveled to Appii Forum and Three Inns (**vs. 15**)? Who traveled from Rome to meet him? Note: This was the second group of Christians to meet with Paul along the way. How did Paul respond to the encouragement he received from this group of fellow Christ-followers?

5. Upon their arrival at Rome, who did the centurion turn the prisoners over to (**vs. 16**)? Did Julius turn Paul over with the others, or did he treat him differently? How would this move affect Paul's future ministry in Rome? (See **Phil. 1:13-14**)

6. It is important to remember that Paul was under house arrest in Rome. Since he was stuck at home, what do we find Paul doing in **verse 17**? How long did Paul wait before calling the Jews so that he could speak with them? What message did he share with the Jewish religious leaders in Rome according to **verse 17**? It is important to note here that the Jews were now allowed to return to Rome. (See **Acts 18:1-2**)

7. According to **verses 18-20**, what caused Paul to appeal to Caesar? Did he do so to bring accusations against the Jewish people? Who did Paul want to speak to Caesar about? Who was "*the hope of the Israel*" and is he still our hope today? If so, why? How can we know that bad things will turn out good for the Christian? (See **Rom. 8:28**)

8. Had the Jews living in Rome received any letters from Judea concerning Paul (**vs. 21**)? Had anyone traveling to Rome spoken negatively about Paul? Is it possible that the winter storms had kept travelers from arriving before Paul? What was the desire of the Roman Jews according to **verse 22**? What did they call Christianity?

Part III: Paul's testimony of the kingdom of God and his two-year ministry while under house arrest (Acts 28:23-31)

1. **Verse 23** refers to an all-day meeting that Paul held with the Jews at his rented house. What did Paul teach the Jews about during this time together? How did they respond (**vs. 24**)? Are people still responding the same way today? Why? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**)
2. When some of the Jews would not listen, Paul quoted **Isa. 6:9-10** to them (**vv. 25-27**). What unusual mission had the LORD called the prophet Isaiah to? (See **Isa. 6:9-13**) What was the most frustrating thing about Isaiah's ministry? Did the Jews reject Paul's message? **Isaiah 6:9-10** is quoted five times in the New Testament. What profound truth did Jesus reveal in **John 12:37-41**. Who had been the object of Isaiah's vision? (See **Isa. 6:1**)
3. What offensive message did Paul bring to the Jews in **verse 28**? Why would this have been offensive? What special mission had the resurrected Lord given to Paul? (See **Acts 9:15-16**) What was the attitude of the Jews as they walked away from this meeting (**vs. 29**)?
4. How long did Paul dwell in Rome for as he waited to be tried before Caesar (**vs. 30**)? How many visitors was he allowed to see? What message did he preach (**vs. 31**)? Was anyone forbidden from seeing him during this time? How do you think Paul's preaching might have affected the Roman soldiers who were guarding him?
5. The Book of Acts ended abruptly with Paul still under house arrest. Many people believe that Paul was released shortly thereafter and went on a Fourth Missionary Journey, this trip including Spain. (See **Phi. 1:21-22; Rom. 15:22-24, 28-29**) Why do many believe this?

6. As Paul approached the end of his life, he was once again imprisoned sometime around A.D. 66 or 67. This imprisonment was different, and Paul realized the end was near. (See **2 Tim. 4:6-8**) How did the believers treat Paul as he approached the end of his life? (See **2 Tim. 4:9-14**) Have you ever experienced Christian friends turning on you? How did it feel? Why does it hurt so much?
7. According to the writings of church historian Eusebius (A.D. 260-339), how did Paul's life end? Who else died at the same time as Paul? (See Ecclesiastical History chapter XXV)
8. As we come to the end of the Book of Acts, we have gone full circle from the commandment of Jesus in **Acts 1:8** shortly before His ascension. How do we see this command being fulfilled in the Book of Acts? What stood out the most to you in our study on Acts? What practical applications can you take from this study and apply to your own life?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The people whom the Romans called "*barbarians*" showed unusual kindness to the victims of the shipwreck; they were kinder to the shipwreck victims than the Romans were.
- Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake as he was helping to warm the other survivors; amazingly, the poison had no ill effect on Paul.
- By God's grace, Paul performed many miracles as he wintered on the island of Malta.
- God ministered through Paul everywhere he went, and Paul used every opportunity to minister.
- Paul was content in whatever situation he was in as an ambassador of Jesus Christ.
- Paul's relationship with the Roman centurion Julius paid big dividends as Julius protected Paul time and again while making his life a little easier and more accessible to others.