

A Study in Acts

Chapter Twenty-Eight – Paul’s Journey to Rome.

ACTS 28:17-31:

In our previous lesson, we have completed our journey to Rome and the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord to Paul –

Acts 23:11 *“But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”*

In this lesson, we will begin to see Paul fulfill his part in the Lord’s promise and **“bear witness at Rome.”**

In a side note: Paul stated that he wished to come to the brethren in Rome, in his letter to them, to bestow spiritual gifts to them that they may be established.

Romans 1:10-12 *“making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. ¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— ¹² that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”*

Paul would now be able to fulfill this promise to the brethren as well.

Text #1

Acts 28:17-20

“And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: “Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, ¹⁸ who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. ¹⁹ But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. ²⁰ For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”

Paul’s Defense Before the Jews in Rome: It is interesting to note that when Paul was assembled together with the leaders of the Jews in Rome, he began to share in a defense to what has brought him to Rome as a prisoner. He believed that the Jews in Jerusalem would have sent word concerning him.

Text #2

Acts 28:21-22 *“Then they said to him, “We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you.” ²² But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.*

Concerning This Sect: First, there were no charges following Paul, the Jews in Jerusalem that were so intent on killing him have not pursued their desires to Rome. It is, it seems, that his removal from their area was enough.

Second, is the request from the Jews in Rome to know about what he thinks of the sect they have heard he speaks for. It is interesting that they do not refer to it as heresy, or false, but simply a division of Judaism. No matter the reality of their misconceptions, Paul is not going to spend time blaming the Jews in Jerusalem for his dangerous journey, instead, he is going to follow the command of the Lord and testify of Him.

Text #3

Acts 28:23

“So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.”

His Lodging: We must remember that Paul is dwelling with the soldier who guarded him (Vs. 17), this is due to the fact that Paul is still a prisoner of Rome, and having appealed his case to Caesar, must stay that way until his case is decided. Later, (Vs. 30) we will see that Paul will rent his own dwelling and stay there for two entire years.

Thus, the Jews wishing to hear from Paul would have to come to him.

Explained and Solemnly Testified of the Kingdom of God: First, you cannot speak to the existence of a kingdom, until it is agreed that there be a recognized **Monarch – Jesus the Christ**.

Acts 2:30 “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne”

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

If then, the Monarch is recognized, the **nature of His kingdom** must then be recognized.

John 18:36 “Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

Luke 17:20-21 “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

With the nature of the kingdom established, it is then imperative to know **what it takes** to become a citizen of this kingdom and **how**.

Matthew 5:3 *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

Acts 2:38 *“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Colossians 1:13 *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and ^lconveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”*

The testimony, much like the brief peek into the Gospel’s message that we have just looked at, would be established as fact by eyewitness testimony, signs from God, prophecy fulfilled. All adding up to perfect fact-based truth concerning the existence of the kingdom of God, His King on the throne, and citizens in the kingdom if they come to God through His Christ (**John 16:8**).

Text #4

Acts 28:24 *“And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.”*

All would be convicted to the same two outcomes that has been evident since the Gospel was first preached in **Chapter 2** of our study; some would believe and some would not. This going to cause Paul to close out this teaching session with something that Jesus would speak to the Jews He was sent to prepare for the coming of the kingdom, note:

Text #5

Acts 28: 25-29 *“So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, ²⁶ saying, (**Matthew 23:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40-41**)*

‘Go to this people and say:

“Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;

And seeing you will see, and not perceive;

²⁷ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them.” ’

²⁸ “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” ²⁹ And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.” Commentary on **Romans 11:11-36**.

This final statement by Paul is symbolic to all the work of the prophets of God for the people of Israel, whom they would kill, including the Lord Jesus Himself whom they killed –

Matthew 23:34-36 *“Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”*

The lesson that is vital for you and me, is that Israel is not the Israel of the flesh any longer! But it is those who are of the Promise (**Romans 9:8**), but are the fulfillment of the prophecy of God’s Great Servant (the Messiah), in the He would save all men, note:

Genesis 22:18 *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”*

Galatians 3:16 *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.”*

Isaiah 49:6 *“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”*

Text #6

Acts 28:30-31 *“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”*

We can review **Colossians 4:7-15**; **Philemon 23-25**; and **Philippians 1:12-18**; **2:19-26**; to gather a sense of Paul’s time and attitude for the two years of his imprisonment. The idea that his confinement was easy and without concern would be against his own words and uncertainty hanging over him of his imminent death if Caesar would so decree it.

Very little is revealed by Luke or Paul concerning his imprisonment (a little insight is given concerning the uncertainty of life or death, as a sentence by Paul in **Philippians**), but historically we know that while he was here for the two years, he would write the four prison epistles, in this order:

Ephesians

Colossians

Philemon

Philippians