

History in the Making
Understanding the Book of Acts-Part Forty

Introduction: After a tumultuous and nearly fatal journey and shipwreck, Paul and all on the ship landed safely.

I. Malta Discovered (1-6)

A. As they landed they found out the islands name—"Malta"—refuge (apropos)—v. 1

NOTE: Same translate—we recognized it was well-named

B. Hospitality of the natives (2)

1. Spoke a Phoenician dialect
2. Considered Barbarians by Romans and Greek
3. Showed warm hospitality to 276 refugees
4. Cold, rainy morning—made a warm fire

C. Paul helps out—snake fastens on his hand (3)

NOTE: He serves

D. Assumptions of the natives

1. Assumed the goddess "justice" was judging him
2. Shook off poisonous snakes—no harm
3. Continued to expect death
4. When he didn't die—assumed he was a god!

TWO IMPORTANT TRUTHS

- ✓ It is a faulty/unbiblical worldview to think that "bad things happen to bad people."
- ✓ A faulty worldview is not corrected by a sign. Must have a sign and Word.

II. Malta Experiences God's Power

In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. 8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. 9 So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. 10 They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary. Acts 28:7-10 NKJV

- A. The healing of Publius' father
 - 1. A leading official in Malta
 - 2. Became very ill-dysentery (goat's milk) average of 4 months or 2 to 3 years
 - 3. Paul laid hands on him and cured him
- B. News spread and many others were healed too
- C. Such an impact was made that they honored and blessed Paul as he left

Two thoughts:

- ✓ Paul made sure they understood the source of healing

And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. Acts 28:8 NKJV

NOTE: They had misunderstood miracle of the snake

- ✓ Paul reveals the principle of sowing spiritual and reaping physical things

If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? 1 Corinthians 9:11 NKJV

III. The Last Lap

After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. 12 And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. 13 From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, 14 where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. 15 And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. Acts 28:11-15 NKJV

- A. Stayed in Malta for 3 months-was winter

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- B. When west winds began to blow (approximately February 8) they set sail (Twin brothers-deities of sailors)
- C. Map (Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Three Inns, Rome)

- 1. Found Christians at Puteoli (14)-7 days

D. Sight for sore eyes

And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. Acts 28:15 NKJV

- 1. 3 years before wrote:

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 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. 13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. Romans 1:9-13 NKJV

- 2. Seeing them refreshed his heart

NOTE: They came out to greet Paul. Irony is triumphal procession of the Gospel

NOTE: Acts 1:8-130 mile track

IV. Paul Handed Over to be Guarded

Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him. Acts 28:16 NKJV

- A. Note Philippians 1:12, 13

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ. Philippians 1:12-13 NKJV

- 1. Private lodging
- 2. Guests would come
- 3. Chained likely to a guard-4 hour shifts

B. Paul preached the Gospel to them

V. Paul and the Roman Jews (28:17-28)

A. First interview

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." 21 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." Acts 28:17-22 NKJV

1. As he always did, Paul sought an audience with the Jewish leadership (40-50,000 Jews in Rome)
2. Couldn't go to a synagogue-they would have to come to him
3. Explains to them the situation-it is for the hope of Israel (resurrection) though I am chained
4. Very diplomatic answer-they knew about Christianity-a church already existed there
5. Chose not to comment until Paul had shared his side

B. Second interview

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. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25 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, '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. Acts 28:23-29 NKJV

1. A second and large group of Jesus came to Paul's prison to hear him speak

- a. Spoke of kingdom
 - b. Spoke of Jesus from both Moses and Law
 - c. Tried to persuade them that the Gospel of Christ was the fulfillment of all Hebrew prophecy
 - d. Likely an impassioned debate with Jews in Rome
2. Some believed/some rejected
- a. Same pattern as in almost every city before
 - b. Some Jews believed/most rejected
 - c. Always preached to Jew-first-but mostly rejected

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Romans 1:16 NKJV

- d. This final rejection in Rome fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah-the Gentiles will hear it
- (Happened in Pisidian Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and more, finally in Rome)

VI. The Gospel Advances Without Hindrance in Rome

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. Acts 28:30-31 NKJV

A. Two more years Paul stayed in Rome

- 1. Could not go wherever he wished
- 2. But anyone who wished could come see him
- 3. Two years-slow court system? Clemency could sometimes relieve that but God had promised Paul he would go before Caesar (27:24-dream)

B. Luke doesn't tell us the outcome

- 1. Some think he was executed here (started the riot/persecution)
- 2. Others think he was released-later imprisoned/executed and wrote 2 Timothy (my belief)
- 3. Can't be sure

C. What was important-during during 2 years-Gospel was proclaimed through the lips of Christ's messenger-unhindered

1. The Map of Christ laid out in Acts 1:8 is later fulfilled
2. Rome didn't try to stop him
3. Began at Jerusalem-carried to Rome

Conclusion:

1. Preaching and Teaching-Pattern

- a. Preaching appeals to will-calls to decision
- b. Teaching-appeals to mind-requires growth in knowledge and understanding

Stott: All Paul's preaching had a doctrine context while all of his teaching had an evangelistic purpose. Proclaiming the kingdom of God must always be accompanied by teaching about its Sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his saving work in his death and resurrection.

2. Preached with freedom

- a. Ironically-with boldness (confidence v.36) by the power of the Spirit
- b. Outwardly-"no one forbidding him"- unhindered=aklyt s-
 - ✓ Sure it was Rome
 - ✓ More importantly a God who had a plan He would fulfill
 - ✓ Though incarcerated-the Word of God was not bound

3. History in the Making-No end

- a. Still today-regardless of our circumstance
- b. Promise to build His church-Matthew 16:18
- c. Proclaimed to World with great boldness