

Acts 28**Lesson 26
Arrival and Work in Rome****Outline****I. On the Island of Malta** (vv. 1-10)

- A. *Paul was treated well on the island* (vv. 1-2, 7, 10)
- B. *A viper bit Paul* (vv. 3-6)
 1. The people first thought that he was a murderer (vv.3-4)
 2. Paul was not harmed (v. 5)
 3. The people then concluded that he was a god (v. 6)
- C. *Paul healed some* (vv. 7-9)
 1. Healed the father of Publius (vv. 7-8)
 2. Healed others who had diseases (v. 9)

II. Arrival in Rome (vv. 11-16)

- A. *Sailed to Syracuse and stayed three days* (vv. 11-12)
- B. *Sailed on to Puteoli and stayed seven days* (vv. 13-14)
- C. *Brethren from Rome met them in Appii Forum and Three Inns* (v. 15)
- D. *Came to Rome* (v. 16)

III. Preaching in Rome (vv. 17-31)

- A. *Paul talked to the leaders of the Jews* (vv. 17-22)
 1. Informed them why he was a prisoner and going before Caesar (vv. 17-20)
 2. The Jews stated what they had heard (vv. 21-22)
 - a. Nothing evil against Paul (v. 21)
 - b. But they knew that the "sect" was evil spoken of (v. 22)
 - c. Desired to hear more (v. 22)
- B. *Preached to the Jews about Christ* (vv. 23-29).
 1. Paul preached about Jesus from the Law and Prophets (v. 23)
 2. Reaction (vv. 24-28)
 - a. Some believed (v. 24a)
 - b. Some disbelieved (v. 24b)
 - c. They departed when Paul spoke of the hardening of the Jew's hearts and turned to the Gentiles (vv. 25-29)
 - d. Disputed among themselves (vv. 25, 28)
- C. *Continued preaching for two years* (vv. 30-31)
 1. In his own rented house (v. 30)
 2. Allowed visitors (v. 30)
 3. Preached and taught (v. 31)

Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter

Acts 28:30-31

*30 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.*

Chapter 27 closes with all 276 people aboard the ship either swimming or floating on pieces of the wreckage to the shore. They are not sure where they are at first. This chapter opens with them learning that this is the island of Malta (v. 1).¹

As the chapter ends, Paul is in prison in Rome (vv. 30-31). Paul has planned for some time to go to Rome. While on his third journey he writes to the church at Rome saying he plans to visit them (Rom. 1:10-15; 15:22-24). He plans to go after he visits Jerusalem (Acts 19:21). Well, he goes to Rome! And, it is after he went to Jerusalem. But, it is not as he planned.

After Paul's arrest, God has promised him that he would appear before Caesar (Acts 23:1). God fulfilled his promise. He makes it to Rome at last. It took years and some unexpected twists and turns, but through God's providence he was led to Rome.²

On the Island of Malta (vv. 1-10)

Paul was treated well on the island (vv. 1-2, 7, 10). The natives³ showed unusual ("extraordinary" NASV) kindness⁴ toward all who came ashore. They built a large fire because of the rain and cold, making all feel welcome (v. 2). A second occasion of kindness was shown at the estate of Publius who showed hospitality toward Paul and his companions for three days (v. 7). A third occasion of kindness was at the end of the three months stay as they sent Paul and his travelers off to Rome (v. 10). They honored them in many ways showing their love and appreciation. Then, they provided them with necessities for travel.

A viper bit Paul (vv. 3-6). While gathering sticks for the fire, a poisonous snake came out of the bundle and fastened on Paul's hand (v. 3).⁵ The people at first concluded that he was a murderer and this was the gods' way of executing justice though he escaped from the

¹ Malta (or Melita) was a small island approximately 8 miles wide by 15 miles long.

² "Paul's life is a reminder that God is good, He watches and provides for His people, though at the time our faith may be tested when it seems that He is not near" (Mark Copeland, http://executableoutlines.com/acts_so/ac28_1.htm).

³ Barbarians, not as we use the term, but those who did not speak Greek. Thus, foreigners.

⁴ The word for kindness means "love of mankind, occurs in the New Testament only here and Titus 3:4 (adverb in Acts 27:3)" (A. T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press).

⁵ Perhaps the Lord caused the viper to hang onto Paul long enough so all around could see that he indeed was bitten. Thus, it couldn't be argued that it must have just looked like he was struck, but was not.

sea (vv. 3-4). After time had passed that he should have died or at least swollen, they were amazed that no harm came (v. 5).⁶ They then concluded that he was a god (v. 6).⁷

Paul healed some (vv. 7-9). While staying at the estate of Publius, the father of Publius became sick with a fever⁸ and dysentery (v. 8).⁹ Paul healed him. As the word of that miracle spread across the island, others who had diseases came to be healed (v. 9).

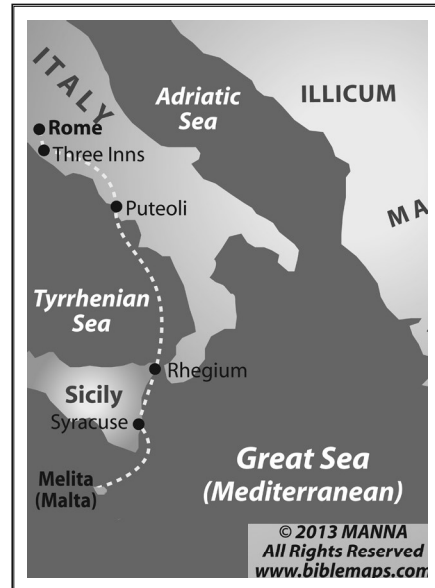
Arrival in Rome (vv. 11-16)

Sailed to Syracuse and stayed three days (vv. 11-12). After the winter had passed, they boarded a ship from Alexandria (Egypt) that had spent the winter at Malta (v. 11). The ship's figurehead (sign) was the twin brothers (Castor and Pollux, sons of Zeus).¹⁰ From Malta they sailed to Syracuse on the island of Sicily and stayed there 3 days (v. 12).

Sailed on to Puteoli and stayed seven days (vv. 13-14). From Syracuse they sailed to Rhegium (on the "toe" of the boot of Italy). The next day they sailed to Puteoli.¹¹ Here, the sailing ended and land travel began. They found brethren there who invited them (Paul, Luke and Aristarchus) to stay with them seven days (v. 14).¹² Then they headed toward Rome.

Brethren from Rome met them in Appii Forum and Three Inns (v. 15). When word got to Rome about Paul being in Italy, brethren from the church at Rome travelled 33 miles to Three Inns and some went 10 miles further to Appii Forum to meet Paul. They were not ashamed to be identified with Paul the prisoner. Paul was so encouraged by these brethren that he thanked God for them.

Came to Rome (v. 16). Finally, Paul and his companions reached Rome.¹³ The centurion (Julius) delivered Paul and the other prisoners to the captain of the guard. Paul was given special treatment which allowed him to dwell by himself with a guard. He was now waiting in prison for his trial before Caesar.



6 This, as with other miracles, confirmed the message preached (cf. Mark 16:17-20).

7 The people, though kind, were fickle. They go from one extreme (thinking he is a murderer) to the other extreme (thinking he is a god). This isn't the first time this has happened to Paul (Acts 14:11-19).

8 The NASV renders this "recurrent fever".

9 Dysentery is a disease of the lower intestine. Perhaps it was "Malta Fever" that was caused by a micro-organism found in the milk of the Maltese goats.

10 "This means that the ship carried a symbol of these gods, probably as the figurehead on its prow....who were patron gods of seaman" (Johnny Stringer, Truth Commentaries, Acts, 570).

11 200 miles or less north of Rhegium.

12 Seven days would give Paul and his companions an opportunity to worship on the Lord's Day with these brethren.

13 This is the last use Luke makes of "we" in the book. Paul is taken to prison, but Luke is not.

Preaching in Rome (vv. 17-31)

Paul talked to the leaders of the Jews (vv. 17-22). Three days after he arrived in Rome, Paul called the Jewish leaders together. There were two meetings with the Jews. The first was with these leaders. Paul informed them why he was a prisoner going before Caesar (vv. 17-20). He told them that he had done nothing against the Jews or the customs of the Jews (v. 17). Yet, he was taken prisoner in Jerusalem and placed in the hands of the Romans, who would have released him (since there was no cause for death), but he appealed to Caesar (vv. 18-19). He was forced to appeal to Caesar since the Jews opposed his release (v. 19). He did not plan to go before Caesar to accuse the Jewish nation of wrongdoing. The real reason he was a prisoner was the belief all Jews hoped for—the coming of the Messiah (v. 20). (v. 20).

The reaction to Paul's first meeting was the Jewish report saying they had not heard any reports of evil by Paul (v. 21). However, they had heard about the "sect" with which he was identified and knew that it was spoken of as evil (v. 22). They wanted to hear more about that from Paul (v. 22).

Preached to the Jews about Christ (vv. 23-29). Their desire for more led to a second meeting. The Jews came to where Paul was staying and listened to him explain about the Christ from the Law of Moses and the Prophets (v. 23). Ample evidence was given to these Jews that Jesus was the fulfillment of those prophecies. Jesus was the "hope of Israel" (v. 20). This was a thorough study from morning till evening (v. 23).

The reaction at this meeting was mixed (vv. 24-28). Some believed (v. 24a). Here we have another progress report. Some disbelieved (v. 24b). They left after Paul applied Isaiah 6:9-10 to them (vv. 25-27). The point of the passage in Isaiah was that his hearers would turn a deaf ear and become hardened in sin. Jesus applied that passage to the Pharisees (Matt. 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40). Here Paul applied it to these Jews in Rome who rejected the gospel. He then added that the salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles and they would hear it! (v. 28). With that, they left and disputed among themselves (v. 29).

Continued preaching for two years (vv. 30-31). Paul was given freedom while he was in prison. He dwelt by himself with only a guard with him (v. 16). He had his own rented house (v. 30). Visitors were allowed to see Paul (v. 30). Among the visitors who came to Paul were Timothy (Philem. 1; Col. 1:1; Phil. 1:1), Epaphras (Col. 1:3-8; 4:12-13; Philem. 23), Onesimus (Philem. 10-12), Tychicus (Col. 4:7-9), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30; 4:18), John Mark (Col. 4:10), Aristarchus (Col. 4:10), Demas (Col. 4:14), Luke (Philem. 24), and Justus (Col. 4:11).

Paul continued to preach and teach the gospel with boldness in spite of his chains (v. 31; cf. Col. 1:23-29). It was during this time that he converted Onesimus (Philem. 10). He was able to take the gospel to the Palace guard (Phil. 1:12-20). He even had some success with Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22).

During this imprisonment Paul wrote his prison epistles (Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon).¹⁴ The book of Acts closes with Paul still in prison waiting to go before Caesar.

¹⁴ Some suggests Hebrews should be added to the list.

What Happened to Paul?

Did he go before Caesar? There is no record in the text of it. However, God said he would go before Caesar (Acts 27:24). Like Paul's reaction (Acts 27:25), I believe God. He must have gone before Caesar. During this imprisonment, Paul planned on being released. He was not expecting to stay in prison or be killed (Phil. 1:23-27; 2:24; Philem. 22). He was released. After his release he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. He was imprisoned a second time (66-67 A.D.) during which he wrote 2 Timothy. This time he was not expecting to be released (2 Tim. 4:6-7).

From Paul's trials and imprisonment came good, and he knew that (Phil. 1:12-14). What a fascinating book showing how the gospel was spread!

Questions

1. What were the three acts or occasions of kindness shown to Paul and fellow travelers by the natives of Malta? _____

2. What is the significance of the viper being fastened to or hanging on Paul's hand? _____

3. List the miracles found in this chapter. _____

4. What happened on the island of Malta to suggest some of the people were fickle? What other occasion did something similar happen? _____

5. What special treatment did Paul receive while in prison and why did he receive such treatment? _____

6. What did Paul say to the Jewish leaders when he called them to come to him at Rome? _____

7. What did the Jewish leaders say they had heard about Paul? _____

8. Why did the Jews leave the study Paul was having with them? _____

9. How effective was Paul's preaching while in prison for two years? _____

10. What epistles did Paul write while in prison in Rome? _____
