

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit**  
**Paul's Journey to Rome: The Appointment and The Arrival**  
**Acts 28**

Last time...the Ship, God's Vessel by which the people were saved from death  
God's terms for survival, to be saved – abide in the Ship!

The Ship was broken to save men's lives  
Ps 31:12b      I am like a broken vessel.

This time...Paul's Divine appointment (Acts 27:26) and his “on time” arrival into Rome

v1      That certain island was the island of Malta  
         [ map ]  
Paul's journey to Rome is navigated by God for a Divine appointment on Malta.

All 276 passengers have escaped the terrible storm unharmed,  
         they have all been saved from death by the broken Ship/Vessel  
The Living God Who so promised made good His infallible Word

All who are suffering thru a long, fierce storm, the Living God will also make good His  
         Word to see you thru it...if you abide in the Ship that is broken for your  
         deliverance!

v2      “Washed up on shore” in the fierce storm, the shipwrecked are received with open arms  
         by the locals and given caring hospitality to comfort them from their terrible  
         ordeal and the continuing cold winter rain

The people are called “barbarous” because they are “barbars”...non-Greek-speaking

Are these people believers in the God of Israel, are they serving the King of all the earth?

No

Are they seeking God?

Not likely but God knows

Is God seeking them?

Yes

Can we see people who have “washed up on the shore” in our lives, having endured a  
         terrible storm?

Has the Lord brought shipwrecked people into our lives?

What are we to do?

Welcome and comfort them with the loving open arms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

v3 In the cold winter rain, warmth is the greatest need  
A fire is needed

Paul is a prisoner of Rome  
He need not do anything but leave everything to the Roman soldiers

But first and foremost Paul is a servant of God  
So what is Paul doing?

Serving  
Meeting the need he sees  
Ministering to others and in so doing, serving the Lord Who saved him  
Col 3:23-24 And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and  
not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the  
reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.  
His motive is Love/action of the will...for God and neighbors

Such is the servant's heart: See a need, meet the need  
A heart after God's own heart, the heart of Jesus Christ  
Matt 20:25-28 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, *Ye know that  
the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them,  
and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it  
shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great  
among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will  
be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the  
Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,  
and to give his life a ransom for many.*

A heart desiring that God be praised and glorified, not him/her Self  
A heart rare among men, even among Church brethren

We have some servant hearts in our fellowship  
I need not name them – you know who they are, and so does the Lord!

Paul is doing the cold, lowly job of gathering firewood to help fuel the comforting fire  
needed by others  
And in the bundle of sticks is a poisonous snake that bites and clamps onto Paul's arm

1. How many of us would scream
  - like a school girl?
  - Marv in *Home Alone*?
2. Who is still feverishly, relentlessly working to keep Paul from Rome?  
The dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan (Rev 20:2)

- v4     The locals see the snake bite of course and have a very human response
- a.   Murmuring amongst themselves
  - b.   Judging Paul
- Obviously this (prisoner of Rome) is a very bad man, a criminal,  
no doubt a murderer  
He may have survived that storm but Justice prevails!
- v5-6   Without screaming like a school girl or like Marv, Paul casually shakes off or brushes off  
the snake into the fire, suffering no ill effect

Because Acts 27:24a, standing by faith on the Word of God

btw...

1.   for us, Satan's bite has no power!  
     Heb 2:14b     through death he might destroy him that had the  
                         power of death, that is, the devil;
2.   Satan ends up in the fire!  
     Rom 16:20a    And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your  
                         feet shortly.  
     Rev 20:10     And the devil that deceived them was cast into the  
                         lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the  
                         false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and  
                         night for ever and ever.

Now the locals of Malta are looking for sweet Justice to prevail  
But...after watching Paul for a long time, he neither swelled up nor fell down dead!  
In fact, nothing bad happened to him  
So the locals swing to the other end of the spectrum,  
from "He is a murderer" to "He is a god!"  
(Presumably amongst themselves again for there is no repeat of Acts 14:8-18)

We see human nature on display in the folks on Malta

People (man-kind)

- are murmurers
- have an innate sense of judgment and justice (untaught "It's not fair!")
- are quick to judge someone else, seeing the faults of others while blind to theirs
- are prone to swing between extremes, have no moderation
  - Peter when Jesus came to wash his feet
  - the "worshippers" in Lystra (Acts 14:19)
- think good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people
  - Job's friends
  - Jesus' disciples (John 9:1-3)
- prone to worship the creation that is seen rather than the invisible Creator

Let us who are new creatures in Christ (Jesus-kind) hear the Word of God

John 6:43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, **Murmur not among yourselves.**

Matt 9:13 **But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.** (quoting Hosea 6:6, seek mercy, not justice!)

Matt 7:1-2 **Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.**

Ps 73:1-22 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end...Thus my heart was grieved...So foolish *was* I, and ignorant

Also understand that Jesus is keeping His prophetic Word

Mark 16:17-18 **And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall **take up serpents**; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall **lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.****

so that we would believe that Jesus is I AM (John 13:19)

Which takes us right to what happens next

v7 In the area where the saved from death by the shipwreck came ashore

- the centurion and his soldiers
- the captain and his crew
- Paul and his companions

were plots of land belonging to the leader of the people, a man with a Roman name, Publius

He too was very hospitable to the needy strangers that were washed up by the storm  
Hospitality and good will start at the top and trickle down  
So do rancor/ill will and bitterness

People follow the leader (e.g. kings of Judah and the people of Judah)  
Be a godly leader...follow Jesus the Good Shepherd, be Christ-like

v8-9 “It just so happens” that at this time Publius’ father is sick with a fever and dysentery, according to Dr. Luke who is recording these words

And herein lies

- more fulfillment of Jesus’ prophetic Word (Mark 16:17-18)
- the Divine appointment for the storm and the shipwreck

Motivated by Love/agape (Matt 22:36-40)

- to glorify the God Whose he is and Whom he serves
- to help his neighbor

Paul, a minister of God, is faithful to his Spirit-led ministry:

- visited the sick...undoubtedly went in with boldness vs trepidation
- prayed to the Lord Who heals us...coveting the very best gift (gift of healing)
- laid hands on the sick...demonstration of faith in the One with power to heal

Matt 10:8     **Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils:  
freely ye have received, freely give.**

Luke 9:2     And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

And God healed the sick father of Publius

Good News spread like wildfire on Malta and soon others who were ill or diseased  
come to Paul...come to Paul's God by coming to His servant...and are healed  
The power of the Living God, the Lord of all the earth, is on display to the entire island

God saw the sick and diseased of Malta in their need

He loved them

He reached out to them, using a violent storm and a shipwreck to bring His  
servant to touch them

He sees each of us in our need

He loves us

He reaches out to us, sometimes using great trials and tribulations in order to  
touch us

Who is watching and listening as Paul's God worked on Malta thru Paul?

- the centurion and his soldiers
- the captain and his crew

Who is watching and listening as your God works in/thru your life?

- family...saved and unsaved
- friends...saved and unsaved
- unknown others...saved and unsaved

v10     The people of Malta expressed their gratitude to Paul's God in word and in deed,  
blessing God's servant and those with him by providing material provision for the  
remainder of their journey

Rom 15:27-like, which started the whole chain of events of Acts 20 to this point

Now Paul's journey to Rome continues and concludes

- v11 Winter has passed, during which season Paul ministered to the people of Malta  
How many heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Paul?  
How many were saved from eternal death by grace thru faith?

Spring has arrived with is good sailing conditions

So “we”...at least Paul, Luke, Aristarchus, the centurion, and his soldiers...  
secure passage on another Alexandrian ship, having the markings of

- Castor and Pollus
- the twin sons of Jupiter thrust into the sky
- together named Gemini, the point of orientation for sailors

- v12-13 From Malta to Syracuse on Sicily  
circling the island to Rhegium on the tip of the “boot”  
to Puteoli, the port of Rome now known as Naples

- v14 On the mainland (PTL!!!), the followers of Jesus Christ find friendly faces, brethren,  
and fellowship with them for a week...obviously with the consent of the centurion  
(interesting...)

Can you as a child of God and a follower of Jesus Christ recognize others in the family of  
God?

If they bear the Family Resemblance we can recognize them...

and if we bear the Family Resemblance they can recognize us!

How glorious is it when a stranger instantly becomes a brother/sister!

Don't be an “undercover” Christian, let your Light shine!

- v15 After a sweet time of fellowship in “Naples”, Paul and Co resume their journey to Rome  
Appii Forum...43 miles from Rome  
The Three Taverns...33 miles from Rome

And who greets them?

The Church at Rome, to whom Paul has previously written a letter

And in keeping with Rom 1:8-12, Paul

- thanks God for giving him a desire of his heart (Rom 15:27)
- is encouraged; The Lord did it, He heard and answered my prayer!

Those who are encouraged are they who are

- discouraged
- doubt
- waiting upon the Lord

Are you discouraged?

Look up and not around

Keep your eyes on Jesus

Be encouraged!

Ps 46:1            God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Ps 46:10-11      Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge.

The Biblical “giants” of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, etc took courage from the Word of God

We are to do the same, every day, by spending time alone with the Lord in His Word

v16    And when we came to Rome

Paul and Co have arrived at last, safe and sound just as God promised!

And they arrive right on time, even though it took about 7 months

the prisoners of Rome are “processed” by Julius

- handed over to the captain of the guard of a Roman prison
- except Paul, who was given the blessing of being put under house arrest

Julius

- Acts 27:3 at the start of this journey
- impacted by the words and deeds of Paul during what became a demanding and dangerous 7 month long journey

Will we meet him in the kingdom of God?

How many of the Roman soldiers on that journey will we meet in heaven?

While under house arrest, Paul will still be chained to a Roman soldier,

6 hour shifts, 24/7

How many of these Roman soldiers would have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ while being chained to Paul?

How many of these Roman soldiers will we meet in the kingdom of God?

Since all that matters is eternity, let the Lord God Almighty “drive” your life  
There is no such thing as luck or coincidence or happenstance or karma in a  
universe governed by an all-knowing, all-powerful, Sovereign Creator  
He has a plan for your life...a wonderful adventure that includes faith-increasing  
storms and trials to conform you into the image of His dear Son

By accepting and embracing reality

- God is in control and you are NOT
- God is able and you are NOT
- you are weak but God is strong

you will

- meet people you otherwise would not
- see things you otherwise would not
- do things you otherwise would not

ALL for God’s glory, the good of others, and your own eternal good

Relish being in the back seat, do not covet the driver’s seat!

v17-20 Settled in to his new living arrangements in the “center of the world”, Paul calls the prominent Jews of Rome to come see him, and they do  
He tells them all that happened, starting in Acts 21:27

And he is not telling them this account to speak badly of the Jews,  
he will not accuse the Jews of anything to Nero  
But he is telling them all this because of “the hope of Israel”...the promised Messiah,  
the Son of David, Jesus the Christ the Son of the Living God

v21-22 The Jews tell Paul that

1. they have not received any advance communication from Judea/Jerusalem concerning him
2. none of his accusers have come to Rome to bad mouth him
3. they desire to know more about this sect...Christians...who are spoken evil of by Jews everywhere

The Lord Who opens doors no man can close and closes doors no man can open has...  
opened another door for Paul to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to his beloved  
brethren the Jews, a desire of his heart toward his people of whom he wrote in  
Rom 9-11

Acts 23:11 will start with...the Jews (Rom 1:16)



v23 When the Lord opens wide a door, what do you do?  
Drive a Mack truck through it!

And so Paul did,

- doing with the Jews in Rome what he had hoped to do with the Jews in Jerusalem
- doing as Jesus did to
  - the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32)
  - the 11 disciples in Jerusalem (Luk 24:44-48)

The result of Paul opening their understanding of the Scriptures?

v24 Some believed, some did not  
They all heard the same expository preaching and teaching,  
but not all received/believed/understood

Such is always the case...from Gen 3 to Rev 20  
The Gospel is not a debate or an argument to be won, it is an invitation to be given

v25-27 The Jews of Rome were divided on Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the Living God  
Such is always the case

- Matt 10:34, seen in the Jews of Jerusalem (John 7, John 9, John 10)
- the Word of God divides

God's Plan of Redemption is for all people in the world  
The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is sufficient for all sins of all men of all time  
It is the desire of God's heart that all men be saved from eternal death and come to the knowledge of the Truth

But man...is given

- a choice to
  - believe or not believe the testimony of God
  - accept God's gift or to reject it
- the responsibility to exercise that choice (no decision is a decision)

To the Jews who exercised their choice to **not** believe the testimony of God, Paul echoes

- Isaiah the Messianic prophet (Is 6:9-10)
- Jesus the Messiah (Matt 13:13-15)

v28 Therefore, with boldness that comes from the Holy Spirit, Paul says,  
“Know this!  
The salvation (from eternal death and the wrath of God) of God (of Israel)  
is sent to the Gentiles  
and they will hear/understand/receive/believe it.

The Gentiles will accept the righteousness of God and not lean on their  
self-righteousness before God

Rom 1:16-17

v29 When the Jews of Rome heard Paul’s “pivot” and departed, they

- did not react as did the Jews in Jerusalem
- did reason among themselves
  - intellectual discussions?
  - “legal/Law” debates?
  - searching the Scriptures like the Bereans to see if what Paul shared was true?
  - coming to a hearing/understanding the Law and the prophets (Is 1:18, Matt 5:17, Rom 10:17)?

v30-31 Paul was left under house arrest for two (more) years, waiting his audience with Nero,  
He enjoyed the “freedom” of his “AirBnB”, receiving any and all who came

- brethren in the church at Rome
- the Jews that believed (v24a)
- perhaps the Jews that had not believed (v24b)

But to all, Paul

- preached the kingdom of God
- taught Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen

As this book starts,

Acts 1:1-3

so it ends

As in Jerusalem

Acts 5:42      daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach  
and preach Jesus Christ.

so now in Rome

with all confidence

Phil 3:3      worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have  
no confidence in the flesh.

no man forbidding him

given an open door by the Lord that no man could close

Where does this leave Paul?

NOT wasting away and NOT wasting time

v30-31 is not wasted time

Rom 8:28...God does not waste anything, including time

At this time,

a. Nero is about 25 years old

He is a most vile and wicked man,

even murdering both his own mother and his wife

b. Rome is in decline, its “glory days” are in the rear view mirror

c. living in Rome are about 2M people, half of which are slaves

very few have wealth

most are living below the poverty line

all are living in a great spiritual darkness...into which God has sent the

Light, Life, and Love of the Gospel, a message of hope and peace

to break the bondage of sin and eternal death

During this time, the Holy Spirit will inspire the Apostle Paul to write what are known as the “prison Epistles”

- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- Philemon

After Paul’s audience with Nero, he will be vindicated and released,

after cheerfully enduring by faith a harsh 4 year trial/tribulation

Then he will go to Spain, as he had also desired

Ps 37:4          Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Desires of Paul’s heart expressed in Scripture:

- to preach Jesus to his people
- to share a spiritual blessing with the Church at Rome
- to go to Spain

Check, check, and check!

At some point after that, he will be arrested again and imprisoned again...

and executed by Nero (after he had finished his course with joy!)

Where does this leave us?

We also are governed by vile and wicked men like Nero who want to burn down this nation

We also are surrounded by

- slaves...to sin
- the spiritually impoverished

America is also in decline, its “glory days” in the rear view mirror, as the nation turns its back on God and lives in rebellion against God

The spiritual darkness around us is rising

Hostility toward the followers of Jesus Christ is rising

Does imprisonment await us?

But God...has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son

We live “above” the nation in which we are planted during our sojourn in this strange land

We are blood-purchased citizens in the kingdom of God

And into the spiritual darkness around us we have been sent with the very same message of Light, Life, Love, hope, and peace

Because God sees, loves, and is reaching out to the “locals” in USA as He did the locals in Malta

Acts 1:3 continues

Acts 28:31 continues

Toward that end, we will study the “prison Epistles” of Paul next in our chronological study of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit