

Commentary on Acts chapter 28 by Chuck Smith 7.30.23

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Reminder, Memorial Service for Marilyn InDelecatto, today at 2:30 PM

July memory verse Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV) Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

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Tonight we'd like to just go through the twenty-eighth chapter of Acts, this fascinating, interesting final chapter to the story of the beginning of the church and the ministry of Paul the apostle.

You remember last week, we were left in a very exciting and dramatic place. Paul was on the ship that was being torn up by the waves. Those that could swim went first to shore, the rest of them grabbed logs or planking that was being torn off the ship and they floated on into the beach. As Paul had declared, "All of the souls would be saved, though the ship would be destroyed" ([Acts 27:22](#)). Verse one,

And when they were escaped ([Act 28:1](#)), That is, from the ship that was being destroyed by the waves.

then they knew that the island was called Melita ([Act 28:1](#)). This is the same is the same island known today as Malta, which is south from Sicily. The ship finally ended here at the island of Malta having been driven by the storm for fourteen days.

And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness ([Act 28:2](#)):

This translation "barbarous" is unfortunate because of our use of the word today "barbarian." The word is "barbar" and the Greek called anybody who couldn't speak Greek a "barbar" because your language sounds so funny. It isn't the beautiful flowing Greek language, and so if you spoke English you were a "barbar." It was their slang term for someone who didn't speak Greek, thus was not cultured, and thus, he was known as a "barbar" or a barbarian as it came to be known, or here translated the barbarous people. But really just the natives of Malta, the native people on Malta. They were not really barbarians, but just native people of Malta. "Showed us no little kindness:"

for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold ([Act 28:2](#)).

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There was still this storm raging that they had been enduring for fourteen days and fourteen nights. And now they've had to come through the surf. It's wintertime. The Mediterranean is cold. They came up on the beach, some of them holding on to planks, some of them swimming to shore. And so the natives there built a fire for them so they could warm themselves and dry out.

And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks ([Act 28:3](#)),

This gives us, I think, a very interesting insight into Paul. He is the kind of fellow who just couldn't sit still. He had to always be doing something. Paul was a doer. So they're building a fire, so he, rather than just letting the people gather and build the fire for him, he has to join in and go out and gather a bundle of sticks to throw into the fire. He was just the kind of a guy that had to always be doing.

and he laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand ([Act 28:3](#)).

That would be a poisonous snake.

And when the barbarians saw the poisonous beast hanging on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet vengeance [or the gods] will not allow him to live ([Act 28:4](#)).

Paul, gathering the wood, throwing it into the fire, the viper jumps out and fastens itself onto Paul's hand. And immediately the natives, recognizing that poisonous viper, figured this guy must really be a murderer, some serious crime. The gods are not allowing him to live.

And so he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm ([Act 28:5](#)).

Again, insight into Paul, he didn't start screaming and yelling for help. Just shakes the thing back off into the fire and makes no big deal over it.

Howbeit as they stared at him when he should have swollen up, or fallen over dead suddenly: but when they had looked for a long time, and they saw that no harm had come to him, they changed their minds and they said, This man is a god ([Act 28:6](#)).

In the same place [there in Malta] were the possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us for three days courteously ([Act 28:7](#)).

It is interesting to me again how that the Lord is watching over Paul. True, he is a Roman prisoner, but the centurion took an immediate liking to Paul, the one who was in charge of bringing him to Rome, and showed him many favors. Now he is shipwrecked on the island and the natives treat them with great kindness. And now the leader, the headman of the island, receives them into his house and treats them very courteously.

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And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux ([Act 28:8](#)):

Luke is a physician, and so he is giving you a diagnosis of the fellow's illnesses.

to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed, they loaded us down with such things as were necessary ([Act 28:8-10](#)).

The treatment that they received on the island of Malta was very good, and God worked among the Maltese people His healing powers through Paul the apostle and Luke the Doctor.

Now after three months ([Act 28:11](#))

They spent then the rest of the winter months there on the island of Malta, but after three months,

we departed in a ship of Alexandria ([Act 28:11](#)),

Another one of these wheat ships that took the grains from Egypt to Rome. They caught another ship of Alexandria,

which had wintered there in the island, whose sign was Castor and Pollux ([Act 28:11](#)).

The twins.

And so we landed at Syracuse, and there we stayed for three days. And from there we circled around we came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind was blowing, so we came the next day to Puteoli ([Act 28:12-13](#)):

Which was the major cargo port from the east to Rome. North of that was the harbor of the Roman navy which could be seen from Puteoli. And Paul was probably impressed with the Roman navy, as he could see those ships from there.

Now when we found brethren there, and they desired us to stay with them for seven days: and then we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as the Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns ([Act 28:14-15](#));

The Appii Forum was forty-three miles from Rome, and the Three Taverns is thirty-three miles from Rome.

whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage ([Act 28:15](#)).

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No matter where you go in the world, if you can find a body of believers, suddenly you feel at home and you feel strengthened and encouraged. There's just a warmth of God's love and you realize that you're among friends; and among the family of God.

And so here is Paul on his way to Rome, a prisoner of the Roman government, and yet, as he meets the brethren who came all the way out from Rome on the Appian way, his heart was warmed. He was comforted when he saw the brothers. "I'm at home among the family of God."

Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him ([Act 28:16](#)).

Paul was allowed to dwell in his own house. He was able to pay his own way, and there were soldiers that were with him constantly and chained to him. He was in bonds, and yet, he was not put in the common prison in bonds, but was allowed a certain amount of freedom. Only always chained. As much freedom as you can have chained to a Roman soldier.

And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem to the hands of the Romans: who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spoke against it, I was constrained [or I was forced] to appeal to Caesar; not that I had anything to accuse my nation of ([Act 28:17-19](#)).

Paul is wanting to assure the Jewish leadership in Rome that he is not there to speak against the nation of Israel. That is not his purpose. He is there because of this political situation and he had to make his appeal, but he wants to assure them that he's not going to be making any derogatory accusations against the nation.

For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because it's for the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain ([Act 28:20](#)).

The hope of Israel, of course, was the hope of the coming Messiah. That is still the hope of Israel that the Messiah might come. "And it is for this hope," Paul said, "I am bound with this chain."

And they said unto him, We did not receive letters from Judea concerning you, and neither any of the brethren that came showed us anything about you or spoke any harm against you. But we want to hear from you what you think concerning this sect, which we know that every where it is spoken against ([Act 28:21-22](#)).

What do you think about this sect, this Jesus that they're talking about?

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And so Paul appointed them a day, and many came to him to his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening ([Act 28:23](#)).

A great number of the Jews gathered together at Paul's lodging there, and Paul began to go through their scriptures, pointing in their scriptures to the promised kingdom, pointing in their scriptures to the promised King. For you cannot have a kingdom without a king. And he, no doubt, showed to them those many prophecies not only relating to the kingdom of God and the glory of that kingdom of God, but of the King that would come and reign over the kingdom of God.

And then he went on, no doubt, to tell them the other scriptures that this child that was born was actually God's Son that was given to man. "For unto us a child is born, but unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to order it, and establish it in righteousness and in judgment from henceforth even for ever" ([Isaiah 9:6-7](#)). "A Son is given, His name to be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. He shall sit upon the throne of David." Paul rehearsed to them the kingdom of God and that King that was to come.

And then he probably went to show them how that He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, for as Zechariah said, "And they measured thirty pieces of silver, a good price of which I was priced of them. And I said, Cast it to the potter in the house of the Lord" ([Zechariah 11:13](#)). And Paul again pointing out their scriptures and then sought to persuade them that Jesus was the King that was promised. He fulfilled all of these prophecies.

He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem. Herod ordered the death of the babies at that time. And on down the line. He was betrayed. He was "numbered with transgressors in His death. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" ([Isaiah 53:3,12](#)). And Paul, going down their scriptures, sought to persuade them that Jesus was the King.

And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not ([Act 28:24](#)).

Always that's the result of the preaching of the Gospel. Some believe, some believe not.

Tonight as we have gathered here, we gather together in two companies--those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, as the Lord and Savior, as the King that God had promised, and those who believe not. But "as many as believed, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to those who believed upon his name" ([John 1:12](#)).

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And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one further word, Very well did the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet say unto our fathers ([Act 28:25](#)),

Notice here that Paul recognizes that the Holy Spirit is indeed the inspiration behind the scriptures. He, writing to Timothy later, said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for rebuke, for reproof" ([II Timothy 3:16](#)). Now here Paul recognizes the Holy Spirit as the author of scripture. "Well did Isaiah speak by the Holy Spirit,"

Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing you will hear, and will not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them ([Act 28:26-27](#)).

Paul then said unto them, having quoted from their own prophet Isaiah,

Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt for two whole years in his own rented house, and received all those that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him ([Act 28:28-31](#)).

We see some interesting things here that we must make note of. Number one: Paul being cast up on the island of Malta, no doubt God's hand was in that because God wanted to bring the message of salvation to those on the island of Malta. To Paul it looked like a great tragedy being shipwrecked, having to swim to shore. The peril of his life. But yet God was using that disaster to bring His truth to these people.

Paul, while he is here in Rome sitting in this prison for two years, spent his time witnessing to those that came to him, but also writing some of his New Testament epistles. Had it not been for this imprisonment, we today probably would not have the epistle to the Ephesians, which Paul wrote from this prison cell. Or the epistle to the Philippians, or the epistle to the Colossians, or the little epistle to Philemon. For Paul wrote all of these during this two-year imprisonment time in Rome.

The book of Acts closes about the year sixty-three. Paul wrote II Timothy in the year about sixty-six. So Paul was probably freed after his appearance to Nero. In writing his second letter to Timothy, just before he was back in prison in Rome in 66 A.D., he makes mention that he left Trophimus sick at Melita. When Paul was returning to Jerusalem before this particular imprisonment, Trophimus was with him and went with him from Melita to Jerusalem. In fact, it was Trophimus who was with Paul in the temple when the Jews got excited and said, "This guy has brought Gentiles into the temple." It was Trophimus that was with Paul there in the temple at the time of Paul's arrest by the Romans and being beaten by the Jews.

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Writing to Timothy, it must be that Paul went back to Ephesus, back to Melita, and that time when he left Melita, had to leave Trophimus there because he was sick, as he mentions in his last letter, the second epistle to Timothy, chapter four.

Why is it that Luke stopped his record here? Why didn't Luke tell us of the future of Paul? Why is it that we have to look to men like Eusebius and other early historians to find out what happened to Paul after this imprisonment?

If you go back in the book of Acts to chapter one, as Jesus is promising the Holy Spirit to the apostles, He said, "You will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you: and you shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

Paul is now come to Rome, the heart of the world; and from Israel, one of the uttermost parts. And so the fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ is complete, and Luke did not see any necessity of carrying the record any further than just here in Acts. Words of Christ have been fulfilled and the Gospel, which began in Jerusalem, spread through Judea, and then by Philip into Samaria, and then by Paul and Barnabas to others, to the uttermost parts of the earth, has been fulfilled at this time. And Luke feels that, that is sufficient. We've covered the story of the spreading of the Gospel into the world during that first century of the church's history.

This comes to the end of church history from a biblical standpoint, except that as we get into the book of Revelation later on, we'll find John writing at a later period of history. Some almost thirty years after these events and the close of the canon of New Testament scriptures.

Open Door Bible Church Church Outing and Baptism 2023

Wednesday August 23th, regardless of weather

(No Bible study on Wed. Aug 23)

Baptism & Church outing at White Lake State Park

Come any time after 10 am and spend the day

Outing ends at dusk.

There will be no admission charge

Tell the attendant at the gate,

you are part of church group using the Pavilion

Please bring modest bathing suits.

Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm.

Church will provide hot dogs and hamburgers

with all the fixings and drinks.

Please bring salad or dessert to share.

Baptism will be at 6:30 pm.

Those wanting to be Baptized need to take a short instruction class,

Sunday August 13, after lunch.

Please bring something to be Baptized in and a dry set of clothes.

If you have any questions call Pastor John's cell phone

508-380-0471