



# Bethany Bible Study & Discussion

## ACTS 28

### Paul's Voyage to Rome (Part-II)

Wednesdays  
7.30-8.30PM

**Paul at Malta: Hospitality, Hostility & Honor (1-6):** How were the prisoners received by natives in Malta? How does their attitude change when Paul is struck by a viper?

**Miraculous healing (7-10):** How did Paul heal? Does it open door for greater ministry

**Travel to Rome, Ship #3 (11-16):** How long did they stay in Malta island? How does arrival in Rome mark the fulfillment of God's promise and Paul's desire, and what do we learn? (19:21, 23:11) How were the prison conditions for Paul?

**Gospel to Jews and Gentiles (17-31):** What does Paul tell the Jewish leaders (17-20), What is 'hope of Israel'? (20) How did they respond, what did Paul preach to them and what was the effect? (21-24) What is the reason for unbelief (26-27) What inspired preaching to the gentiles, and have we seen this pattern before? (28-29) How long did Paul preach? What did he preach? Was there any objection (30-31)?

**Personal Reflection:** *Paul found opportunities to witness as a prisoner ... what's hindering us from witnessing, despite enjoying freedom?*

# Paul at Malta (1-6)

How were the prisoners received by natives in Malta?  
How does their attitude change when Paul is struck by a viper,  
and not harmed?

# Hospitality At Malta

Barbarous people (Foreigners speaking their own language instead of Greek)

How were the prisoners received by natives in Malta?

Received warmly, faced with rain and cold (2)

- ✓ (Hebrews 13:2-3) Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourself also in the body

# Hostility and Honor at Malta

## Changing attitude when Paul is struck by a viper

- Initially, hostile attitude when struck by Viper: Paul deserved to die (divine justice by their God)
- When Paul escapes unharmed, attitude changes: Paul is God
- ✓ Similar to Acts 14 (Lystra) ... Paul worshipped, and then stoned!
- ✓ We must not fall victims to flattery or be disturbed by false allegation ... abiding in the unchanging truth is the safest place!

# Miraculous healing (7-10):

How did Paul heal?

Does it open the door for greater ministry?

# Physical Healing in Malta opens door for greater ministry

- Publius, chief man of the island, showed hospitality for 3-days
- His father is sick ... Paul prayed, laid hands, and father healed (8)
  - ✓ Is any sick among you? Solution: James 5:14-15
- Others came and received healing (9)
  - ✓ Good deeds attract attention
- ✓ Paul likely took this opportunity to share the gospel to the sick

# Healing is in much demand, even today

In today's broken world, many are looking for emotional healing

- By being channels of encouragement and emotional healing, Lord can open doors to bringing the gospel message of hope and spiritual healing
- Human heart responds to love
- ✓ Believers are called to love “ By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35)

# Travel to Rome, Ship #3 (11-16)

How long did they stay in Malta island? How does this mark the fulfillment of God's promise and Paul's desire, and what do we learn?  
(19:21, 23:11) How were the prison conditions for Paul?



# Ship #3 route

How long did they stay in Malta island? 3 months (11)

## Ship of Alexandria Route:

Malta to Syracuse (capital of Sicily) (stayed 3-days) (12)

→ Rhegium (13) → Puteoli (stayed for a week with believers) (13,14)

Paul is thankful for Christians coming to meet Paul

... the Christians may have been converted through the ministry of Peter (Acts 2)  
and other disciples scattered after the persecution began

# Paul arrives in Rome (16): God's will and Paul's desires in perfect harmony

## God's will and Paul's desire

Paul's desire: I must visit Rome (Acts 19:21)

God's will: Paul must testify in Rome (Acts 23:11)

Paul's journey began in Jerusalem and he is now finally in Rome ... was it an easy journey?

# Not an easy road from Jerusalem to Rome

Filled with anxious moments, obstacles, and setbacks

- Arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21)
- Trials and unsuccessful defenses (Acts 21-26)
- 2 year imprisonment by Felix (Acts 24)
- Stormy sea and shipwreck (Acts 27)
- Stranded in Malta island (Acts 28)
- Poisoned by snake (Acts 28)
- Two more years in prison (Acts 28)

# Our dreams can come true

Paul's desire was fulfilled ...

Are our dreams aligned with God's will?

“Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him,  
And He shall bring *it* to pass” (Psalms 37:5)

# Prison conditions for Paul

- Private home imprisonment (16) ... rented home (30)
- Paul was watched by a soldier (16) but seems like he had significant freedom
  - ✓ similar to Acts 24:23 (Felix) 27:3 (Julius)
- His prison privileges can be seen as God's grace; Also Paul has not been declared guilty yet so given more freedom.

# Gospel to Jews and Gentiles (17-31)

What does Paul tell the Jewish leaders (17-20), How did they respond, what is the 'hope of Israel' (20)? what did Paul preach to them and what was the effect? (21-24) What is the reason for unbelief (26-27) What inspired preaching to the gentiles, and have we seen this pattern before? (28-29) How many years did Paul preach from his rented house? What did he preach? Was there any objection (30-31)?

# Paul's ministry to Jews

Again, Paul goes to Jews first

**Romans 1:16** ... For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: **first to the Jew**, then to the Gentile.

What does Paul tell the Jewish leaders (17-20)?

## Paul and Jewish elders (17-20) ...

- Committed nothing against the people or customs of the fathers
- Roman justice system found no fault in him deserving death
- Because of Jewish opposition, he was forced to appeal to Caesar
- He is today in chains because of testifying of the 'hope of Israel'

### What is the 'hope of Israel'?

- Coming of Messiah and hope of resurrection



# Content of Paul's preaching

Jewish leaders expressed surprise & wanted to hear more (22)

Paul continued preaching from morning till evening, about (23):

- **Kingdom of God** ... not Political but Spiritual; not temporal but eternal
- **Christ** ... birth, death, resurrection, second coming

# Response to Paul's preaching

- Some believed and some didn't (24)

## Reasons for unbelief

- hardened hearts, dull ears, blind eyes (26-27) Prophesied (Isaiah 6:9-10)
  - Conditions are no different today
- ✓ “But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;”  
(Matthew 13:16)

# Shift in focus from Jews to gentiles

Salvation of God is sent unto the gentiles and they will hear it (28)

- ✓ Jews continue to reject the Messiah and gospel, and Paul goes to gentiles, as before, with the good news:
  - 13:46 in Antioch (“we turn to the gentiles”)
  - 18:6 in Corinth (“I will go unto gentiles”)
  - 19:8-9 in Ephesus (taught in school of Tyrannus, Jews and Greeks)
- ✓ On rejection of gospel, we should seek the guidance of the Holy spirit to know whether we should persevere or move on

# Paul's prison ministry

- Paul spent two years and received all that came to him ... preaching Kingdom of God and Lord Jesus Christ (30)
- Preached with confidence with no man forbidding him (31)
- **What else did Paul do during his prison time?**

# Paul's 13 epistles

## In Chronological Order

I and II Thessalonians

I and II Corinthians

Galatians

Romans

Philemon

Colossians

Ephesians

Philippians

I Timothy

Titus

II Timothy

## Prison Epistles

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

Philemon

# What happens next in the life of Paul? (not mentioned by Luke in Acts)

- Paul released after two years
- Paul continues his ministry for two more years
- Arrested again, executed
- Paul's ministry following conversion lasted for approximately 33 years (35 AD – 68 AD)

“I have fought the good fight, I have **finished** the race, I have kept the faith”  
(II Timothy 4:7, NIV)

# Personal Reflection

Paul found opportunities to witness as a prisoner ...  
what's hindering us from witnessing, despite being free in a free world?

# Praise God for leading us through 28 chapters ...

## God willing, Bethany Bible Study will continue in 2021

- **Homework for Blessing...** Take time to read through Acts (Dec 24 – Jan 5<sup>th</sup>)
- **Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>:** Reflections on Acts (open Group Sharing)  
  
It will be great to hear:
  - lessons YOU have learnt
  - what we can apply @ Bethany as a church
  - anything else that you would like to share
  - your feedback on how to improve future bible studies
- **Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>:** Restart regular bible study @ Zoom