

## **ACTS 28**

***That the natives were kind*** (1–2, 7–10)? The natives may have been superstitious, but even unsaved people can show concern for those in need. The pagan sailors worked hard to save Jonah before they threw him into the sea (Jon. 1:11–16).

***That Paul picked up sticks*** (3)? If you had saved 276 people from drowning, would you feel it necessary to do menial labor like picking up sticks? Certainly the grateful passengers would have relieved Paul of the task! But Paul was a servant, and he did the job that needed to be done (Phil. 2:1–11).

***That Paul was bitten*** (3–6)? Had he not already been through enough suffering? When Satan cannot win as the lion (1 Pet. 5:8), then he comes as the serpent (2 Cor. 11:3). We must constantly be on guard and trust the Lord to care for us (Mark 16:18).

***That Paul welcomed encouragement*** (11–16)? Even an apostle needs to be encouraged at times, and the saints who met Paul did just that. The group at Appii Forum traveled about ten miles farther than the other group. How far would you go to encourage a fellow believer?

***That the Jewish leaders rejected the Word*** (17–31)? God’s chosen people should have known the Scriptures; yet when it was time to decide, the group was divided. But Paul kept witnessing and let God bless the Word as He pleased.

## **ROMANS 1**

***The gospel of God*** (1–17). God has good news! It is *promised* in the Old Testament and centered in Jesus Christ. He came to earth a Jew, died, and arose again; and He saves all who will trust in Him. He alone *purchased* salvation, and this message must be *preached* to the whole world. Why? Because the gospel alone is “the *power of God to salvation*” (v. 16, italics added).

Paul was gripped by the gospel; his whole life was controlled by it. Called to be an apostle (v. 1), he felt himself a debtor to the whole world (v. 14). Through His church, God is calling people to Jesus Christ (vv. 5–7). Has the gospel gripped you?

***The wrath of God*** (18–32). Paul’s main theme is the righteousness of God, but he presents it against the dark background of the judgment of God, *which is going on right now*. Men know God from creation and conscience (vv. 19–20) but refuse to honor Him as God. They live for the creature, not the Creator, and make themselves into gods (v. 25; Gen. 3:4–5). So, God gave them up (vv. 24, 26, 28) and let them suffer the consequences. *The greatest judgment God can inflict on us is to let us have our own way*.

But the same God who delivered up sinners to judgment *delivered up His own Son for lost sinners* (8:32)! That is the gospel. Do you believe it? Are you sharing it?

## **ROMANS 2**

If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, your sins have already been judged on the cross (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1). But are you ready for the judgment seat of Christ where your works will be judged (Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10)? Ask yourself the following questions.

***Do I judge myself or others*** (1–3)? How easy it is to cover up my own failures by criticizing others (Matt. 7:1–5)!

***Am I grateful for God’s goodness*** (4)? It is not the badness of man but the goodness of God that brings us to repentance (Luke 15:17–19). Do I take God’s many blessings for granted?

***Is my faith proved by works*** (5–11)? Paul was not teaching salvation by works but works that prove salvation. Do I obey God’s truth and persist in holy living? Do I have a hard heart or a tender heart?

***Am I hiding behind religion*** (12–16, 25–29)? The Jews boasted of their law, but it could not save them. External rituals do not produce internal changes. God searches the heart. What does He see in my heart?

***Do I practice what I profess*** (17–24)? Do I tell others what is right but then do what is wrong? Do I expect more of others than I do of myself?

God judges honestly (v. 2) and without partiality (v. 11), and no secret is hidden from Him (v. 16). Are you prepared?

### **ROMANS 3**

Paul, the attorney, summarizes his case.

***All are condemned*** (1–19). Both Jews and Gentiles (religious and irreligious) are guilty before God, and one is no better than the other (v. 9). Paul quotes from Psalms and Isaiah to show that, from head to foot, we are all lost sinners. Do you want to argue about this? Then your mouth has not been stopped! God cannot save you until you say, “Guilty!” and shut your mouth.

***We cannot save ourselves*** (20). The law is a mirror that reveals our sin; only the blood of Christ can wash away our sin. It is good to do good works, but good works are not good enough to save us (Eph. 2:8–9).

***God’s salvation is lawful*** (21–31). But how can a *holy* God forgive *guilty* people? Is that lawful? If our judges did that, society would fall apart. But God the Law Giver and Judge obeyed His own law, died for us, and paid the penalty for our sins. The Judge is now the Savior!

### **ROMANS 4**

***How was Abraham saved*** (1–4, 9–12)? Not by works, but by faith (Gen. 15:6). Salvation is not like wages that you earn or works that you can boast about. Abraham was not saved by keeping the law because the law had not been given, nor was he saved by obeying a religious ritual. It was all by God’s grace!

***How was David saved*** (5–8)? David wrote Psalm 32 after his great sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11). Can God forgive a man who commits adultery, deceit, and murder? Yes! When David repented and turned to God, he was forgiven, even though the Lord allowed David to feel the bitter consequences of his sins (2 Sam. 12). God justifies *the ungodly*, not the righteous (v. 5; Matt. 9:9–13).

***How can you be saved*** (13–25)? Simply by believing God’s promise as Abraham did. *Faith* and *promise* go together just as *law* and *works* go together. Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation physically, but he is the “father” of all believers spiritually (v. 16; Matt. 3:7–9). At Calvary, our sins were put on Christ’s account; when you trust Christ, God puts Christ’s righteousness on your account (2 Cor. 5:21). What can be more blessed than to know that your sins are forgiven?

