

Fourth Journey – Rome

Read Acts 27:1–28:31.

Paul had appealed to Caesar. The Lord had already promised that he would testify in Rome. The journey from Caesarea to the capital of the Roman Empire would not be easy. Paul traveled as a prisoner, facing dangerous seas, a devastating storm, and a shipwreck. Yet the Lord preserved his life and the lives of those sailing with him.

Acts closes not with Paul's release or death, but with the Word of God being proclaimed in Rome. Though Paul was under guard, the Gospel was not imprisoned. The message about Yeshua had reached the heart of the Roman Empire, just as the Lord had said. His witnesses would continue to go to the ends of the earth.

Talking Points

- Paul sailed toward Rome under the supervision of Julius, a Roman centurion. After changing ships at Myra, the voyage became difficult. Paul warned that continuing would bring danger, but the centurion followed the advice of the pilot and shipowner (Acts 27:1–12).
- A violent storm drove the ship off course for many days. An angel assured Paul that he must stand before Caesar and that God had granted him the lives of everyone aboard. Paul urged the passengers and crew to take courage and trust God's promise (Acts 27:13–26).
- As the ship approached land, sailors attempted to escape. Paul warned that the others could not be saved if the sailors abandoned the ship. After everyone ate, the vessel ran aground and broke apart, but all 276 people reached shore safely (Acts 27:27–44).
- On Malta, Paul survived a viper bite and ministered to the sick. After three months, the travelers continued to Rome. There Paul explained the hope of Israel and proclaimed the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Messiah while living under guard for two years (Acts 28:1–31).

Background

Paul's voyage was not an ordinary missionary trip. He was a prisoner traveling to Rome because he had exercised his right to appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:10–12). Luke's first-person language in Acts 27 indicates that he accompanied Paul on the voyage. The detailed account of ports, winds, and sailing decisions places the journey within the real dangers of ancient Mediterranean travel.

The storm did not mean God's promise had failed. The Lord had told Paul that he must testify in Rome (Acts 23:11), and an angel repeated that assurance during the voyage (Acts 27:23–24). Yet the travelers still had to act responsibly. They secured the ship, listened to Paul's warning about the sailors, and took food before reaching land. God's promise and human obedience were not presented as opposites.

Malta provided another opportunity for witness. When a viper fastened onto Paul's hand, the islanders first assumed he was a murderer under divine judgment. After he suffered no harm, they changed their minds. Luke reports that Paul later healed the father of Publius and that other sick islanders came and were healed (Acts 28:1–10).

In Rome, Paul first met with local Jewish leaders and explained that he was bound because of the hope of Israel. He reasoned from the Law of Moses and the Prophets concerning Yeshua. Some were persuaded; others did not believe. Acts ends with Paul welcoming visitors and teaching about the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Messiah "with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:30–31). Luke does not tell us the outcome of Paul's appeal to Caesar.

Bible Conversations

- Paul received a clear promise that he would reach Rome, yet he still warned the sailors and urged everyone to eat. What does this teach us about trusting God while taking wise, responsible action?
- In Acts 28, Paul explained Yeshua from the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Why was it important for him to show that the Gospel fulfilled the hope of Israel rather than replacing it?

- Acts ends with Paul under guard but freely proclaiming the kingdom of God. How does this ending fulfill the direction of Acts 1:8, and what does it teach us about faithfulness when circumstances remain unresolved?