

ACTS CHAPTER 28

VS 1 WHAT IS "BROUGHT SAFELY THROUGH" REFERRING TO? WHAT IS THIS ISLAND CALLED? THE TRANSLATION OF MALTA MEANS "REFUGE", WHICH IT PROVED TO BE FOR PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS. IT IS A SMALL ISLAND 60 MILES SOUTH OF SICILY, MALTA HAD GOOD HARBORS AND WAS IDEALLY LOCATED FOR TRADE. MALTA HAS A LENGTH OF 18 MILES AND A WIDTH OF 8 MILES. IN TWO WEEKS THE STORM HAD CARRIED THEM 600 MILES WEST OF FAIR HAVENS, CRETE. THEY WILL REMAIN HERE FOR THREE MONTHS OF WINTER.

VS 2 SOME TRANSLATIONS CALL THE NATIVES "BARBARIAN". AT THIS TIME OF HISTORY ANYONE WHO DID NOT SPEAK GREEK WAS CONSIDERED A BARBARIAN. THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT SAVAGES OR UNCULTURED "NATIVES" AS IS CLEAR FROM THEIR HOSPITABLE TREATMENT OF THE SHIPWRECK VICTIMS. THEY ARE KIND AND FRIENDLY. WHAT DID THE NATIVES DO?

1. _____ AND _____
_____. WHY?

VS 3 WANT TO BE A DISCIPLE LIKE PAUL? THIS PASSAGE SHEDS VIVID LIGHT ON THE CHARACTER OF PAUL. LET'S SEE WHAT WE LEARN. WHAT DID PAUL DO? WHAT HAPPENED TO PAUL? THIS IS THE THIRD LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION THAT PAUL FACED ON HIS JOURNEY TO ROME, THE OTHERS BEING THE STORM AT SEA AND THE SHIPWRECK.

VS 4 WHAT IS THE PEOPLE'S REACTION?

VS 5 WHAT WAS PAUL'S REACTION? WHY DO YOU THINK PAUL REACTED THIS WAY? LOOK AT ACTS 23:10-11 **10** And when a great dissension occurred, the commander was afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, and he ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks.

11 But on the following night, the Lord stood near him and said, "Be courageous! For as you have testified to the *truth* about Me in Jerusalem, so you must testify in Rome also."

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT PAUL'S FAITH? READ ACTS 27:22-25 **22** And *yet* now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. **23** For this *very* night an angel of the God to whom I belong, whom I also serve, came to me, **24** saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has graciously granted you all those who are sailing with you.' **25** Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that [] it will turn out exactly as I have been told. DO YOU HAVE FAITH LIKE PAUL? WHY?/WHY NOT?

VS 6 WHAT IS THE PEOPLE'S REACTION? WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS VERSE? THIS SHOWS US WHY WE REST IN GOD'S WORD AND NOT MAN'S OPINION.

VS 7 WHAT DOES GOD PROVIDE? THE CHIEF MAN OF THE ISLAND HOSTS THEM FOR THREE DAYS. 1. THE LORD PROVIDES _____

VS 8 WHAT DOES GOD PROVIDE? 2. THE LORD PROVIDES _____

VS 9 WHAT DOES GOD PROVIDE? 3. THE LORD PROVIDES _____

VS 10 PAUL WAS NO "GOD", BUT HE WAS A MESSENGER OF THE TRUE GOD. HIS MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE OF MALTA BENEFITED THEM PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY AND THEY EXPRESSED THEIR GRATITUDE BY HONORING HIM IN MANY WAYS. EVEN THOUGH PAUL WAS A PRISONER, HIS SERVICE FOR GOD RESULTED IN BLESSINGS FOR OTHERS AND FOR HIMSELF. HOW CAN WE FOLLOW IN PAUL'S FOOTSTEPS IN BEING A MESSENGER OF THE TRUE GOD-BLESSING OTHERS? THE ACCOUNT OF PAUL'S HEALINGS ON MALTA IS QUITE SIMILAR TO THE ACCOUNT OF JESUS' HEALING AT CAPERNAUM AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS MINISTRY.

THIS SCENE FROM THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY IS ECHOED IN THE LAST DESCRIPTION OF HEALING IN ACTS-JESUS' WORK CONTINUES.....

LUKE 4:38-40 **38** Then He got up and *left* the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him [] to help her. **39** And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and served them.

40 Now while the sun was setting, all those who had *any who were* sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He was laying His hands on each one of them and healing them.

ALTHOUGH THESE STORIES ARE SIMILAR WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE TREATMENT OF PAUL AND JESUS? AS CHRISTIANS WHAT SHOULD OUR RESPONSE BE WHEN OUR PRAYERS ARE FAITHFUL ANSWERED? WHEN THEY ARE NOT ANSWERED?

FROM MALTA TO ROME- VERSES 11-15

VS 11 PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS SPENT THE WINTER ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA. SHIPS BEGAN TO SAIL AGAIN TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY. WHAT DOES LUKE REFER TO IN THIS VERSE? _____. THIS IS UNUSUAL AND THE ONLY SHIP'S NAME THAT HE RECORDED IN ACTS. SO LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND OUT WHY LUKE WAS STRUCK BY THIS SHIP'S FIGUREHEAD-THE TWIN BROTHERS. THE TWIN BROTHERS WERE CASTOR AND POLLUX, WHO WERE TWO GREEK GODS THOUGHT TO GUARD THE SAFETY OF SAILORS. THEY WERE THE SONS OF ZEUS AND LEDA, QUEEN OF SPARTA, WHOM ZEUS TRANSFORMED INTO GODS, ACCORDING TO GREEK MYTHOLOGY. CAN YOU IMAGINE PAUL SAYING TO LUKE, AS THEY BOARDED THIS SHIP, "WE HAVE A BETTER PROTECTOR THAN THE TWIN BROTHERS".

VS 12 "SYRACUSE" STOOD ON THE EAST COAST OF THE ISLAND OF SICILY. IT WAS A BUSY PORT AND THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY ON THE ISLAND.

VS 13 "RHEGIUM" WAS NEAR THE TIP OF THE "TOE " OF ITALY'S "BOOT". OPPOSITE SICILY, ABOUT 75 MILES FROM SYRACUSE. IT WAS AN IMPORTANT HARBOR AS ITS SITE OCCUPIED THE MOST PROTECTED PART OF THE BAY OF NAPLES. WHERE DO THEY ARRIVE? _____

VS 14 WHAT DO THEY FIND? IT IS NOT STRANGE THAT A CHURCH EXISTED THERE. IT HAD A JEWISH COLONY. PERHAPS ROMAN CHRISTIANS HAD PLANTED THIS CHURCH OR PERHAPS JEWISH CONVERTS. HOW DID THESE CHRISTIANS REACT WHEN THEY LEARNED ABOUT PAUL AND HIS PARTY HAD ARRIVED?

HAVING REACHED THE END OF A LONG EVENTFUL TRIP, THEY TOOK TIME TO REST ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE FIVE-DAY WALK TO ROME THAT LAY AHEAD OF THEM. "AND THUS WE CAME TO ROME" EXPRESSES LUKE'S EAGERNESS TO REACH PAUL'S GOAL CITY EVEN THOUGH PAUL STILL HAD 130 MILES TO TRAVEL. FROM WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT PAUL, WHAT DO YOU THINK HE WAS DOING THOSE SEVEN DAYS IN PUTEOLI?

HOW DO YOU THINK IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR PAUL TO STOP IN THE MIDST OF A JOURNEY AS A PRISONER?

VS 15 WHAT HAPPENED WHEN ROME RECEIVED THE NEWS THAT PAUL WAS IN PUTEOLI? THE FIVE DAY WALK WAS BY MEANS OF TWO WELL-TRAVELED ROADS, THE CAMPANIAN WAY AND THE APPIAN WAY. THE LATTER ROUTE, WHICH ENTERED ROME FROM THE SOUTH WHERE MANY JEWS LIVED IN ANCIENT ROME. THE APPIAN WAY WAS THE OLDEST AND MOST FREQUENTED IN ITALY. KNOWN AS AN AREA OF LIGHT FOREST, THE END OF THIS ROUTE LATER BECAME THE LOCATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CATACOMBS, WHERE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS WERE BURIED IN UNDERGROUND GRAVES.

HERE PAUL MET HIS FIRST ROMAN CHRISTIANS. HE HAD SENT THEM HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS THREE YEARS EARLIER FROM CORINTH, DURING HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

VS 15 HOW DOES PAUL REACT WHEN HE FINALLY MEETS THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS?

1. _____ AND 2. _____
HOW DO YOU THINK THESE BELIEVERS GAVE PAUL COURAGE? HOW CAN WE GIVE EACH OTHER COURAGE? NOTE: ON THIS ROUTE PAUL WOULD HAVE PASSED THE TOMB OF THE ROMAN POET VIRGIL. IN HIS POEMS, VIRGIL ANTICIPATED A SAVIOR AND PAUL CAME WITH THE MESSAGE THAT GOD HAD PROVIDED ONE. GOD IS FAITHFUL!

THESE LAST VERSES BRING LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL TO A CLIMAX. IT HAD GONE FROM JERUSALEM TO JUDEA AND SAMARIA AND NOW TO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH. PAUL WAS NOW ABLE TO BEAR WITNESS IN THE CAPITAL OF THE EMPIRE.

MINISTRY IN ROME 17-20

VS 16 PAUL WAS A ROMAN CITIZEN WHO HAD APPEALED TO CAESAR AND HAD GAINED THE RESPECT OF HIS CENTURION ESCORT. THEREFORE HE WAS ABLE TO RESIDE IN A PRIVATE RENTED RESIDENCE WITH A ROMAN GUARD.

VS 17 WHO DOES PAUL CALL TOGETHER? (PAUL MAY HAVE UNABLE TO GO TO THE SYNAGOGUES BECAUSE OF HIS PRISONER STATUS). IT SEEMS THAT PAUL HAD TWO REASONS FOR WANTING TO SEE THE LEADERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

1. HE WANTED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS FIRST. WHY? MATTHEW 10:5-7
5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go on a road []to Gentiles, and do not enter a city of Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, []preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven []has come near."

ROMANS 1:16 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

2. PAUL WANTED TO EXPLAIN WHY HE WAS IN ROME BEFORE THEY ARRIVED AT FALSE CONCLUSIONS. THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE PRECEDING TRIAL NARRATIVE IN ACTS 22-26. IT PRESENTS THE MAIN POINTS THE NARRATOR WANTS THE READER TO RETAIN IN VERSES 18-20.

VS 18 WHAT DOES PAUL SAY? 1. _____ 2. _____
_____ 3. _____

VS 19 WHAT HAPPENS?

VS 20 WHY WAS PAUL WEARING CHAINS? WE HAVE SEEN THIS PHRASE BEFORE. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

VS 21 WHAT DO THE JEWISH LEADERS SAY?

VS 22 WHAT DOES THE "BUT" SHOW US? WHAT DID THEY SPECIFICALLY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT?

VS 23 WHAT DID PAUL'S WITNESSING LOOK LIKE? LET'S SEE.... WHAT WAS PAUL DOING? WHERE DOES PAUL GO TO EXPLAIN JESUS?

VS 24 WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE TO PAUL'S TEACHING? LUKE RECORDED FOR THE THIRD AND LAST TIME WHAT HAD BECOME THE JEW'S CHARACTERISTIC RESPONSE TO HEARING THE GOSPEL. ARE RESPONSES THE SAME TODAY?

VS 25 WHAT WAS PAUL'S PARTING STATEMENT?

VS 26-27 PAUL SAW THAT THIS WORD TO ISAIAH WAS AS APPLICABLE IN HIS OWN DAY AS IT HAD BEEN IN ISAIAH'S. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HEARTS BECOME INSENSITIVE? WHAT DOES GOD TELL US ABOUT THE HEART?

LOOK AT PSALM 24:3-4 Who may ascend onto the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 One who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to deceit And has not sworn deceitfully.

AND PSALM 73:1 God certainly is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!

AND THE NEW TESTAMENT TELLS US:

2 TIMOTHY 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, *and* peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

MATTHEW 5:8. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

DO YOU THINK THE CONDITION OF OUR HEARTS IS IMPORTANT TO THE LORD?

VS 28 WHERE WILL HE GO? WHY? THIS VERSE SUMMARIZES THE MAIN THEME OF THE BOOK. HAVING PRESENTED THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS IN ROME, AND HAVING WITNESSED THEIR REJECTION OF IT, PAUL NOW FOCUSED HIS MINISTRY AGAIN ON THE GENTILES. UNTIL "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES" RUN THEIR COURSE, AND MESSIAH'S SECOND ADVENT TERMINATES THIS ERA, GENTILES WILL BE THE PRIMARY BELIEVERS OF THE GOSPEL.

ROMANS 11:17-23 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. 22 See then the kindness and severity of God: to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; for otherwise you too will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.

VS 29 HOW DO THE JEWS REACT TO PAUL'S WORDS?

VS 30-31 PAUL'S OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED INNOCENCE OF ANYTHING WORTHY OF PUNISHMENT IS CLEAR FROM HIS LIVING A RELATIVELY COMFORTABLE LIFE IN ROME FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS. PAUL WAS ABLE TO PREACH AND TO TEACH ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. PAUL COULD DO THIS OPENLY AND WITHOUT HINDRANCE BY THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES.

IN SEEMING TO LEAVE HIS BOOK UNFINISHED, LUKE WAS IMPLYING THAT THE APOSTOLIC PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE FIRST CENTURY WILL CONTINUE

UNTIL THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. THE UNFINISHED CHARACTER OF THE BOOK OF ACTS IS DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO TEACH US THAT UNTIL FULFILLMENT OF THE ANGEL'S PROPHECY THAT "THIS SAME JESUS" SHALL RETURN EVEN AS HE WENT AWAY, THE WORK OF EVANGELIZING WILL NOT BE COMPLETE. LUKE'S ACTS IS BASICALLY A STORY ABOUT A MISSION (VS 28 Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.")
WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR MISSION IS?

IN ACTS THE GOSPEL SPREAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND NOW TO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH. LUKE'S PURPOSE IN RECORDING PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ROME INCLUDED VINDICATION GOD'S PROMISE TO PAUL THAT HE WOULD BEAR WITNESS THERE. (23:11; 27:24). THE "APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES" WAS NOW ABLE TO MINISTER IN THE HEART OF THE GENTILE WORLD.

WHAT HAPPENED TO PAUL FOLLOWING THE EVENTS RECORDED IN ACTS. THERE IS DISAGREEMENT AMONG SCHOLARS. SOME BELIEVE THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES CONDEMNED PAUL AND PUT HIM TO DEATH. MOST BELIEVE THEY RELEASED HIM AND HE LEFT ROME. IN SUPPORT OF THE LATTER VIEW ARE REFERENCES IN NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS TO PAUL'S ACTIVITIES. WE CAN ONLY EXPLAIN THESE ACTIVITIES IF HE CONTINUED HIS MINISTRY. IT IS TRADITIONALLY BELIEVED THAT PAUL'S CONDEMNATION AND EXECUTION OCCURRED DURING THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS UNDER THE ROMAN EMPEROR NERO. THERE IS NO REASON TO DOUBT THE PLACE OF HIS BURIAL MARKED NEAR THE BASILICA OF ST. PAUL IN ROME. THERE, BENEATH THE HIGH ALTAR, IS A STONE INSCRIPTION GOING BACK TO AT LEAST THE FOURTH CENTURY: "TO PAUL, APOSTLE AND MARTYR.

ACTS ENDS ABOUT AD 62-29 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF OUR SAVIOR AND PENTECOST.

PAUL'S WRITINGS FROM ROME:
LETTERS OF PHILIPPIANS, EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON.

WHAT HAS PAUL TAUGHT YOU AS WE STUDIED ACTS? HOW DO WE REACT TO TRIALS? DO WE LOOK FOR GOD'S PURPOSE IN TRIALS, BLESSINGS? WHAT HAS PAUL TAUGHT YOU ABOUT FAITHFULNESS TO OUR SAVIOR?

A POEM- YOU SPOKE AND IT BECAME, YOU CREATED AND BLESSED. YOU FASHIONED AND FORMED. YOU PLANTED AND PLACED. YOU COMPLETED AND RESTED. IT WAS SO, AND IT WAS GOOD.

SO GOES THE STORY OF CREATION: AN ACTIVE CREATOR, DELIGHTING IN THE CREATED. BREATHING LIFE, PROVIDING PURPOSE, GIVING GIFTS, SEEKING OBEDIENCE. AND SO IT IS TODAY STILL ACTIVE IN MY LIFE, PROVIDING PURPOSE, GIVING GIFTS, SEEKING OBEDIENCE AND SEEKING MY ALLEGIANCE. MAY IT BE SO THAT ON THAT DAY, WHEN YOU COMPLETE IN ME THE WORK BEGUN-- DECLARE OF MY LIFE, "IT WAS GOOD! WELL DONE!