

Acts 28 - Ministry From Malta to Rome

I. Ministry In Malta and Italy (1-15)

A. The Travelers Find Hospitable Natives in Malta (1-2)

1. The Island is identified as Malta (1)
2. The Natives (Barbaroi) Care for the Travelers (2)
 - a. These are not islanders walking around with bones in their nose
 - b. Barbarians were used of those who did not speak Greek or hold to Greek culture – they were basically civilized
 - c. The storm is still going on
 - i. It is cold and raining and the natives build a fire for the men
 - ii. They were no doubt soaking wet, tired, and probably grateful for the fire
 - iii. With 276 men, it was probably a big fire.

B. The Natives Encounter the Power of God (3-9)

1. Paul's Supernatural Calling is Misunderstood (3-6)

- a. Paul's misfortune is noticed by the natives (3-4)
 - i. Paul gathers sticks for the fire (3a)
 - Notice Paul is aiding in the work
 - He is not above working and serving for the sake of the men
 - ii. Paul is bitten by a viper (3b)
 - The snake doesn't just bite him but fastens itself on his hand
 - The word viper (*echidna*) is usually used for poisonous snakes
 - NOTE: Today there are no poisonous snakes on Malta so some people doubt this account – but today there are no poisonous snakes in Ireland either and we know there were at one time
 - iii. The natives supposed Paul is receiving cosmic justice (4)
 - Because this bad thing happened, the natives think justice has caught up with him.
 - Justice here refers to the goddess of justice named *Dike* (deekay) – she is the daughter of Zeus and Themis
 - They believe that Paul escaped the shipwreck but he must be a murderer because justice has found him

b. Paul's Power is Lauded by the Natives (5-6)

- i. Paul suffers no effects from the snake bite (5)

- Paul shakes the snake off from his hand into the fire
 - The natives expected Paul to get sick and die from the bite. They waited and watched for a long time
 - The fact that Paul is unharmed from the snake should be no surprise
 - Luke 10:19 - Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
 - Paul has also been promised to stand before Caesar in Rome
 - ii. The natives suppose Paul is a god (6)
 - Because the snake has no effect, the people now think that Paul is a god
 - Paul is protected by the providence of God and the natives realize that there is something different about him.
2. Paul Conducts Ministry On the Island (7-9)
- a. Publius receives and entertains the men (7)
 - i. Publius is the chief official of the island
 - ii. He probably took the Greek name Publius when the Romans placed him as governor
 - iii. Possible that he is a Roman but unlikely
 - b. Paul heals Publius' father (8)
 - i. Publius' father has fever and dysentery
 - ii. This was a serious illness in those days. The young and the elderly often died from this type of sickness
 - iii. Paul visits the man, prays for him, lays his hands upon him, and heals the man
 - The signs of an Apostle are still with Paul
 - The power of God is upon him as he ministers wherever he goes
 - c. Paul heals many on the island (9)
 - i. Many people hear of Paul's healing and bring their sick
 - ii. Paul heals their sick and we can be assured that Paul took every opportunity to preach the gospel and explain the power of God in Christ to the people of Malta
 - iii. Now we see why Paul has endured the shipwreck and the storm instead of being brought straight to Rome safely.

3. The People Aid Paul on His Journey (10)
 - a. The people have been aided by Paul and the gospel
 - b. The people invest themselves in the ministry of helping Paul and his companions
 - c.

C. The travelers Encounter the church in Italy (11-15)

1. The Journey to Italy (11-13)
 - a. They winter there in Malta for three months (11)
 - b. They set sail on another Alexandrian ship (11)
 - i. The ship is adorned with the twins of Jupiter, Castor and Pollux
 - ii. These are known as the twins of Leda (the Gemini)
 - iii. They were called upon for help in distress particularly by sailors – its ironic that God saved Paul through the shipwreck and Luke mentions these false gods on the ship they take to Rome
 - c. From Syracuse to Puteoli (12-13)
 - i. Puteoli is the port city at the base of Italy
 - ii. They have arrived in Italy
2. The Church in Italy (14-15)
 - a. They stay with the church in Puteoli (14)
 - i. Even as far as Italy, there are brethren in Christ
 - ii. Paul is unknown in Rome except for the letter to the Romans he wrote while in Corinth.
 - b. Paul is encouraged by the church at Rome (15)
 - i. Believers from the area of Rome hear of Paul's arrival and travel as much as thirty miles to come and see him
 - ii. They come to minister to Him and he is greatly encouraged by them.
 - iii. Even in the heart of the empire, God has his people.

II. Ministry in Rome (16-30)

- A. Paul is Placed Under House Arrest (16)
 1. He is under a light guard but still in custody
 2. He is chained to a Roman guard at all times
 3. It is during this time that he writes the prison epistles, including Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon
 4. He is allowed visitors in his imprisonment
- B. Paul First Reaches Out to The Jews in Rome (17-22)
 1. Paul calls the Jewish leaders together (17)
 - a. Paul calls the leaders of the synagogues in Rome together
 - b. He continues his practice of preaching the gospel to the Jews first

- c. Since the Jews are his main accusers, these Jews would be helpful in his trial
- 2. Paul explains his situation (17b-19)
 - a. Paul asserts his innocence (17b)
 - i. Paul refers to these Jews as “brethren”
 - ii. Paul is adamant about the fact that he has not forsaken the Jews or the customs of their fathers
 - iii. He continues to assert that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises to the fathers
 - iv. Despite this, Paul was delivered into the hands of the Romans by the Jews
 - b. The Romans knew Paul is innocent (18)
 - i. He tells them that the Romans know full well that he is innocent of all the charges
 - ii. He is here in Rome not because the Romans think he is guilty
 - c. The Jew’s objection Forced Paul to appeal to Caesar (19)
 - i. The Jews objected to Paul being released and that is why he was forced to appeal to Caesar
 - ii. The Jews would have assassinated him or made a sham trial to have him executed
 - iii. The Jews influenced the Roman governor so that Paul couldn’t get a fair trial and he was forced to appeal to Caesar
 - iv. He wants them to know that he is not hear to accuse his nation of anything
- 3. The Jews Desire To Hear About Christianity (20-22)
 - a. Paul is in chains for the hope of Israel (20)
 - b. The Roman Jews have no information about him (21)
 - i. The Jews say that they have heard nothing about Paul
 - ii. This is amazing because Paul thought the Jews from Jerusalem would have definitely sent word about the crimes they say Paul committed
 - iii. More than likely, the Jews in Jerusalem were just glad to get Paul out of the area
 - c. The Roman Jews want to hear more about the sect (22)
 - i. The Jews in Rome have heard much about this sect that follows Jesus
 - ii. In fact, ten years earlier, Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome because of disputes over the Christ.
 - iii. They desire to hear more of what Paul has to say regarding this new sect
- C. Paul Expounds the Scripture To the Jews at Rome (23-29)
 - 1. Paul continually testifies to the fulfillment of the Kingdom (23)

- a. The Jews come to Paul in great numbers on an appointed day
 - b. Paul testifies to them about the kingdom of God
 - i. Notice that the gospel Paul preaches is the fulfillment of the kingdom of God
 - ii. Paul teaches them that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises of Israel and he is not forming a new religion
 - c. Paul attempts to persuade them about Jesus from the Scriptures
 - i. Paul uses the Old Testament itself to show that Jesus is the Christ
 - ii. Jesus is spoke about throughout the entire Bible, including the law and the prophets
 - iii. Paul speaks about these things from morning to evening (the Roman soldier guarding him every day was probably evangelized from top to bottom.)
- 2. The Jews were divided about Paul's message (24)
 - a. Just like today, some believed his message and some refused it
 - b. There is no such thing a neutrality – there is only acceptance or rejection
 - c. They couldn't agree and so they departed
- 3. Paul pronounces Judgment on the unbelieving Jews (25-28)
 - a. Paul says the Spirit has spoken about them (25)
 - b. Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9 regarding the Jews (26-27)
 - i. This is the same verse Jesus quoted about the Jews in every one of the gospels
 - ii. They will not hear and be converted – this still happens today
 - iii. We cannot make people convert – it is a work of God within them. God told Isaiah that he would go preach and they wouldn't listen but he was called to be a witness anyway.
 - c. Paul asserts that the Gentiles will now hear (28)
 - i. This was the most offensive thing Paul could say
 - ii. This is what caused the riot in Corinth and Jerusalem
- 4. The Jews leave reasoning (Note: this is a textual variant)
- D. The Gospel is Proclaimed to All in Rome (30)
 - 1. Paul remains there two years
 - 2. Paul welcomes all who come to him
 - a. All manner of people come to Paul to hear the gospel

- b. All roads lead to Rome so there is no telling how many people heard the ministry and gospel from Paul during these years.
 - c. Paul was placed by God in Rome to spread the gospel throughout the empire.
- 3. Paul taught about the kingdom unhindered
 - a. The last word in the book of Acts is unhindered
 - b. We leave the book of Acts as the gospel continues to go forth unhindered
 - c. The gospel has been set loose and is still going forward today – the story has not ended.