

Acts Chapter 28 Continued

Acts 28:16 "And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him."

“Dwell by himself ... soldier that kept him”:

Possibly through Julius’ intervention, Paul was allowed to live under guard in his own rented quarters (verse 30).

“Rome”: According to tradition, was founded in 753 B.C., organized as the republic in about 510 B.C., and had its first emperor, Caesar Augustus, before the birth of Christ.

Rome is located on the Tiber River 15 miles from the Mediterranean.

During New Testament times, it enjoyed the height of its splendor.

The population far exceeded one million and represented nations from Arabia to Britain.

Close to half of these people were slaves; and the others, free citizens who thought it degrading to do manual labor.

Decadence was setting in; Rome desperately needed the gospel.

Scripture does not state how Rome first received the gospel.

That an apostle (like Peter or Paul), began the work is most unlikely.

In Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, the church there appears unstructured and ungrounded in the basic doctrines, which no apostle would allow.

Also, Paul declares to these very believers that he avoided building on another man’s work (Rom. 15:20); yet he would be doing exactly that if another apostle had established it.

From the information that Scripture proves, it is likely the visitors from Rome who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:10), began the work.

That Paul did get to Rome and did minister there evidently is important to the development of Acts, since this occupies the last several chapters (23:11; 18:30-31).

This centurion named Julius, has put in a good word for Paul, and Paul is not put into the common prison.

He is allowed a room by himself, at possibly a soldier's home or in a soldier's quarters here at the prison.

It does appear, in a later Scripture, that Paul rented a house and the soldier stayed there with him.

I'm sure Julius has brought a letter from both Festus and Agrippa, as long as it had not been ruined in the shipwreck.

If it was, Julius can certainly tell of Paul on this most eventful journey.

Paul had actually gotten special privileges for Julius back with the barbarians.

Verses 28:17-29

Paul's sixth and final defense has been recorded in Acts (see 22:1-21; 22:30 – 23:10; 24:10-21; 25:1-12; 26:1-29).

Acts 28:17 "And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men [and] brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."

"Chief of the Jews":

The most prominent men from Rome's synagogues (see note on 6:9).

"Customs of our fathers":

Paul had begun by denying that he was guilty of any infraction against the Jewish people or of their traditions.

Someone might ask how in the world could Paul, a prisoner, call these Jewish leaders together?

The truth is that Luke is still with Paul and many others who are not imprisoned, but can see Paul any time they wish.

They are free to come and go, and some of them have set up this meeting.

Paul wants the Jews to believe and receive Jesus.

He defends his feelings toward the Jews in the verse above.

Acts 28:18 "Who, when they had examined me, would have let [me] go, because there was no cause of death in me."

Paul is telling them the truth.

The captain at Jerusalem found no fault in him.

Felix found no fault, when he examined him.

Festus and Agrippa found no fault in him.

Acts 28:19 "But when the Jews spake against [it], I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of."

“Appeal unto Caesar”:

See note on 25:11.

Paul says here, that he was not trying to get the Jews in trouble.

He had to appeal to Caesar to save his life.

Acts 28:20 "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see [you], and to speak with [you]: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

“The hope of Israel”:

See notes on 24:15; 26:6.

Paul's persistence in trying to win the Jews to Christ is what got him in trouble.

The Gentiles received the Lord Jesus Christ freely, but the Jews did not.

When Paul tried to teach in the synagogues and in the temple in Jerusalem, they stoned him and wanted to kill him.

Acts 28:21 "And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee."

It appears that these Jews of Asia and also the Jews from Jerusalem did not know that Paul had made it to Rome.

They had not sent any messages ahead.

Acts 28:22 "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."

They are saying here to Paul, that they have not heard anything bad about Paul as an individual, but they have heard of Jesus of Nazareth and his followers and all they have heard is that Jews are opposed to His teachings.

Acts 28:23 "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into [his] lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and [out of] the prophets, from morning till evening."

“Kingdom of God”:

See note on 1:3.

“Persuading them ... law of Moses ... prophets”:

Paul’s method of Jewish evangelism throughout Acts was to prove from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah (13:16-41).

We see from this, that these Jews had not already made their mind up, but came and listened.

It appears that Paul taught of Jesus' grace, love, hope, and resurrection at least eight hours.

He showed them the prophecies from Moses' writings and from the prophetic books, the promise of a Savior, born of a virgin, who would die for the sin of the world, be entombed and rise again on the third day.

He shows them how Jesus fulfilled these prophecies and many more.

He told them of the miracles, how He raised people from the dead, and he surely told them of his own personal experience with Jesus Christ.

Acts 28:24 "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

This is always the case.

You will never be able to convince everyone.

Verses 25-29

As it was with the “Jews” in Jerusalem, so now in Rome.

These Jews listen until Paul mentions that God has sent him to the “Gentiles”.

The Jews have corporately rejected the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.

The pattern is established; the church is becoming a largely Gentile entity.

Acts 28:25 "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers,"

Isaiah was prophesying that these Jews would not receive Jesus. The Scriptures say that the whole Bible is from holy men of God being moved upon by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16), which is a good Scripture to read.

Verses 28:26-27

Quoted from Isaiah 6:9-10; see notes there.

Acts 28:26 "Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:"

For a person to be healed, he must first understand that he is sick.

You must humble yourself to receive Jesus.

They are satisfied with the law and don't want grace.

Their hearts are hardened and this is their real problem.

They are full of the law and will not believe that God has a better plan.

Acts 28:27 "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

The hearing that is needed is not with the ear, but with the inner man.

Their religion is of the flesh and leaves no room for the Spirit.

Jesus called them stiffnecked, too proud to learn anything.

Acts 28:28 "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and [that] they will hear it."

“Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles”:

See 11:18; 13:46-47; 14:27; 15:14-17; 18:6.

The difference in the Jews and Gentiles is that the Jews are self-satisfied, and the Gentiles know they need a Savior.

Just one more time, Paul has tried to bring the salvation message to the Jews, but they have rejected it.

Acts 28:29 "And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves."

Many ancient manuscripts omit this verse.

Half believed and half did not.

They had been given the truth.

Perhaps, some of it will be received.

At least they did not try to kill Paul for what he believed.

Verses 30-31

During Paul's two-year confinement at Rome he associated with many coworkers.

Along with Luke and Aristarchus the following men spent some time with Paul in Rome: Onesimus and Tychicus (Col. 4:7-9), Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8), Epaphroditus (Phil. 4:18; Mark and Demas (Col. 4:10, 14), and Timothy (Col. 1:1).

Paul's ministry, though limited in its breadth, was not limited in its depth.

Paul continued to preach, winning men to "Christ."

He also wrote four epistles: Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Luke closes the document with the westward spread of the gospel to Rome, not with the end of Paul's life.

Paul's two-year detention may have ended in a trial in which Paul was acquitted.

More likely, though, the matter ended in default without ever coming to trial.

Since early church tradition refers to a later ministry by Paul in the west (Spain) and the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), refer to a later ministry in the Aegean Sea area, Paul no doubt was released and several years later rearrested (2 Tim. 1:16; 4:6-18), and martyred.

If indeed, Paul had been acquitted, Luke the apologist would have sought to exonerate Paul.

Luke's silence concerning a trial or its outcome strongly suggest there never was one.

The best explanation for this rather abrupt ending to the book is that Luke wrote Acts before Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment.

Acts 28:30 "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,"

It seems that Paul was allowed the freedom of preaching, even though he was not allowed to leave his house.

As we said before, having his own home was certainly different from the housing of the other prisoners.

For two years, he preached in his own home in Rome.

Acts 28:31 "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

"With all confidence, no man forbidding him":

Helped by his loyal fellow workers (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24), Paul evangelized Rome (Philippians 1:13; 4:22).

God always tells the truth.

The angel that stood before him and told him he would bring his message in Rome was correct.

This is what Paul has done the last two years here in Rome.

It was better, now that there was no open opposition to the message Paul was teaching.

If I have learned one thing from Paul in Acts, it is that even though the Jews were so violently opposed to Paul, he still loved them and would suffer almost anything to bring them the good news of the gospel.

Even though many times he almost gave up on them, that he would still go back and try to help them again.

Acts Chapter 28 Continued Questions

1. Paul dwelled by himself, with whom guarding him in Rome?

2. What was the centurion's name?
3. Julius, the centurion, had probably brought a letter from _____.
4. What had Paul done for this centurion on this trip?
5. Who did Paul call together after three days?
6. What does Paul say, in verse 17 about himself?
7. Whose hands had Paul been delivered into?
8. What fault did the captain in Jerusalem find in Paul?
9. Who had Paul appealed to?
10. For the _____ of Israel Paul was bound with a chain.
11. In verse 21, what did these men think of Paul?
12. In verse 22, what did these men ask Paul to tell them about?
13. Where was the meeting between Paul and these Jews held?
14. Name four things Paul taught about Jesus.
15. What results did this bring in these Roman Jews?
16. Who did Paul say had prophesied this?
17. In verse 26, what did Paul say was wrong with their seeing and hearing?
18. What was wrong with their heart?
19. For a person to be healed, what must he first realize?
20. What is the real problem with these people?
21. What did Jesus call this type person?
22. In verse 28, who does Paul say will accept salvation?
23. When did the Jews leave?
24. How many years did Paul live in his own house in Rome and minister?

25. The author realized in these lessons that Paul never gave up on whom?

26. What is the Book of Acts, really?