

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 78

### I. Exposition of Chapter Twenty Eight (Continued).

#### A. Verses 11-16 – Paul arrives in Rome.

##### 1. Verse 11- “After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island.”

a. They stayed on the island of Malta for three months until winter was over. This would have been somewhere around February or March.<sup>1</sup>

b. “...we sailed in an Alexandrian ship...” – This ship was probably docked there for the winter and was now preparing to go. Dr. Thomas Constable writes:

**“The centurion was able to secure passage on another ‘Alexandrian ship,’ perhaps another grain ship, that had wintered in one of the Maltese ports. Valetta was the largest of these ports. Paul still had about 210 miles to go before he reached Rome.”<sup>2</sup>**

c. “...whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers...” – Luke adds this strange detail. The “figurehead” was “an identifying emblem, possibly a carved figurehead at the prow of a ship”<sup>3</sup> Dr. Bob Utley gives us insight:

**“This refers to Zeus’ twin sons, Castor and Pollux. They were the patrons of sailors in the Roman pantheon. Poseidon had given them power and control over wind, waves, and storms. Their special constellation was Gemini. Apparently there was a carving of them on the bow, two little elf-like men.”<sup>4</sup>**

d. Dr. Constable suggests the following: **“Perhaps Luke mentioned them to contrast God’s real protection, as illustrated in the previous chapter and this one, with the protection the pagans superstitiously thought these gods provided. I can imagine Paul saying to Luke, as they got ready to board this ship: ‘We have a better Protector than the twin brothers!’”<sup>5</sup>**

e. **God our Protector** – Even though we live in very dangerous times, we can trust in God’s promises to keep us safe. There are many Scriptures that indicate this such as; **Psalm 34:7; Psalm 91; Proverbs 3:24-26; Romans 8:31.**

##### 2. Verses 12-15 – Stops on the way to Rome.

a. **Verse 12 – “And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days.”** – This was the Capital city of Sicily and was about 80 miles north of Malta. This was about one full day of sailing.<sup>6</sup>

b. **Verses 13-14 – “...reached Rhegium...and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren...”** Stanley Toussaint writes:

**“The journey was carefully traced by Luke: from Malta to Syracuse, Sicily; to Rhegium (today Reggio) on the ‘toe’ of Italy; to Puteoli (today Pozzuoli), 152 miles south of Rome; and finally to Rome itself. Puteoli was an important commercial seaport halfway between Rhegium and Rome. At Puteoli Paul and his companions found some brothers. This is significant because it shows that the gospel had already spread from Rome to this Italian seaport. No doubt a church had been planted in Rome by Roman Jews who had gone to the Pentecost feast, heard Peter’s sermon, were saved, and returned home with the good news (2:10).”<sup>7</sup>**

c. **Verse 15** – News of Paul’s arrival was spreading. The believers seemed excited about meeting

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 429.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019), 484.

<sup>3</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 58.

<sup>4</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 288.

<sup>5</sup>Constable, 485.

<sup>6</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 476.

<sup>7</sup>Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 429.

him, so much so, that there were delegations of them who came to meet him. It's worth noting that Paul's epistle to the Romans was written about three years before this. Dr. Stanley Horton writes:

**“After a week of rest and good Christian fellowship they went from Puteoli to Rome on foot, taking the famous Roman road the Appian Way. At the ‘Forum [‘Market,’ NASB] of Appius,’ about thirty-nine and a half miles south of Rome, and again at the village of the ‘Three Taverns’ (‘Three Shops,’ Beck; ‘Three Inns,’ TEV, NKJV, NCV), about thirty miles south of Rome, delegations of Roman believers met Paul and proceeded with him and his friends back to Rome in a procession whose numbers would have done credit to a visiting monarch. (It was a custom when an emperor visited a city for the citizens to go out and meet and escort him back into the city.)”<sup>8</sup>**

3. Verse 16 – **“Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.”** – Here we see the fulfillment of what the Lord had promised. Remember in **23:11**, **“...the Lord stood by him and said...you must also bear witness at Rome”** and then during the two weeks of the storm at sea, the angel encouraged Paul by telling him not to be afraid but that he must stand before Caesar (**27:23-25**). Note also that it seems like Paul was given special treatment by being separated from the other prisoners.

#### **B. Verses 17-31 – Paul's ministry at Rome.**

1. Verses 17-20 – Paul calls the Jewish leaders together and presents his case as to why he was brought to Rome as a prisoner. As we have seen in the past, whenever Paul went into a city where there was a synagogue, he would attempt to go and preach there first. In this case, Paul was not given freedom to go so he called the leaders to him. Concerning the phrase, **“...because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain”**, Dr. Bob Utley states:

**“Paul is addressing these Jewish leaders in such a way as to establish a relationship with his audience. He tries to find a common ground with these Jewish leaders in ‘the hope of Israel.’ For Paul, that referred to Jesus, for them, the Promised Coming One, the Messiah or possibly to the resurrection!”<sup>9</sup>**

2. Verses 21-22 – The Jews hadn't heard any evil spoken of Paul and were open to hear about this **“sect”**, which refers to Christianity, which is **“...spoken against everywhere.”** The word **“sect”** means; **“a division or group based upon different doctrinal opinions and/or loyalties and hence by implication in certain contexts an unjustified party or group”<sup>10</sup>**

3. Verse 23 – They set a day for them to come to Paul's lodging and Paul, **“...explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets...”** This sounds very similar to what Jesus proclaimed to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (**Luke 24:27; also cf. Luke 24:44**). Grant Osborne adds:

**“Luke stresses two items in particular here in verse 23: the kingdom of God, and Jesus. The Jewish people had long expected God's special reign over this world to be finalized with the arrival of the Messiah (Isa 9:7; 24:23; Dan 2:44; Zech 14:9), and this age arrived with Jesus (Mark 1:15; Matt 3:2; 10:7). In Acts the kingdom was at the heart of messianic proclamation (1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8), and Paul would be stressing how the concept of Jesus and the kingdom fulfilled Old Testament expectations.”<sup>11</sup>**

4. Verse 24 - **“And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.”**

This seems to be the case whenever the Gospel is preached. Not everyone believed Jesus either.

5. Verse 25 – Paul prepares to quote from **Isaiah 6:9-10**, explaining why some would not believe. When he spoke the Scripture, they departed from him.

6. Verses 26-27 – Paul quotes from **Isaiah 6:9-10**.

7. Verse 28 – **“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”** This is a very sad statement. Basically Paul is saying to the Jews, **“Even though you won't listen, the Gentiles will listen and they will be saved.”** Dr. Utley writes:

**“This is the truth of Rom. 9–11. The Jews rejected the Messiah because He did not fit their expectations and because the gospel opened the door of faith to all people. The NT issue really is not Jew vs. Greek, but believer vs. unbeliever. The issue is not who is your mother, but is your heart open to God's Spirit and God's Son?!”<sup>12</sup>**

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<sup>8</sup>Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 404.

<sup>9</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 289.

<sup>10</sup>Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 128.

<sup>11</sup>Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 482.

<sup>12</sup>Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 290.

8. **Verses 29-31** – Paul dwells there for two years in his own house preaching and teaching the “...**things pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ.**”