

# Acts 28: Paul Arrives in Rome

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Date: 26 May 2024

Preacher: Randy Hunter

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Acts chapter 28.

Paul and the people he was with have come to land on pieces of what once was a ship. They started out in sailing in a grain ship that was used to deliver grain from Alexandria to Rome.

And now they are floating in on boards because of the bad sea conditions, the bad weather, the storm. They are all floating in on just broken pieces of the ship.

But they all made it to land safely just as was promised. And so now they have landed and we'll find out that they're on an island called Melita.

And so we'll see what happens there. But Paul is on his way to Rome. He's going to get there in this chapter. He's going to finally make make Rome as the Lord promised him he would do.

[ 1 : 0 7 ] He would get there. He would have to testify before rulers and governors. He's done that already and he will even testify eventually as church history tells us before the emperor himself.

And so Paul will have the opportunity to give the gospel to not only the emperor but members of Caesar's household will be saved according to the book of Philippians.

And so we'll see that Paul actually gets the gospel to the most literally the most powerful man, the most powerful family in the world at that time. Because Rome ruled the world.

What was known about the world at that time was ruled by the Roman Empire. And so to be the emperor of the Roman Empire is to be the most powerful person on the planet.

And Paul's eventually going to get to give the gospel to him. And so we'll start in verse 1 of chapter 28. And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

[ 2 : 0 6 ] And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness. For they kindled a fire and received us everyone because of the present rain and because of the cold.

And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

And so we get the idea of who these people are. The term barbarian is used. Now barbarian does not refer to some savage, uncultured type person.

In fact, these were very hospitable people. They showed great kindness. They showed, they welcomed them. They showed great hospitality. But when you read the term barbarian in this culture, it referred to someone who did not speak Greek and someone who was not immersed in the Greek culture.

You were considered to be barbarian because Greek was the main, even though Rome was in charge, Greek was still the most common language of the world. And so if you did not speak Greek, you were considered barbarian.

[ 3 : 22 ] If your culture was not in line with that of the Greeks, you were considered barbarian. And so that's what these people were considered. But they were, nonetheless, they were kind people.

They were hospitable people. They received them, actually built the fire for them because they were wet and cold. And so they were, they were good, good people. But now Paul, who was helping put sticks on the fire, he has been bitten by a poisonous viper.

And now they're saying, hmm, these are superstitious people. The fact that, well, he had this trouble with the sea, but he survived. But justice is being served.

He must be a murderer. Therefore, he's going to die now. And so they watched him. They watched him to see, you know, poisonous snake, people die. This is the kind of thing that happens.

And so they're thinking, okay, justice is going to be served here. He's going to die. In fact, they personified justice in one of their deities. They believed that there was a female deity who was responsible for justice, carrying out justice on those who have committed wrong.

[ 4 : 29 ] And so they thought this was what was going to happen to Paul. He must have been a murderer. And so now his life is going to be taken in justice. And so they're going to watch.

So notice how, notice first opinion. They see him. He gets bit by a poisonous viper. He's a murderer. Verse five. And he shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm.

Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly. But after they had looked a great while and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. So they thought, well, he's been bitten by this poisonous viper.

He's a murderer. He'll die shortly. So they just watch. Imagine watching, literally sitting there watching somebody you think is going to fall over dead at any minute.

And he just keeps going and going and going and going. And he never falls over dead. And now they're like, okay, so he's not a murderer. Maybe he's a god. So that's quite a shift of opinion in a short amount of time, right?

[ 5 : 37 ] They went from, this guy's a murderer. Justice is going to happen. He's got bitten by this snake. He's going to kill over at any minute. But he never does. So now he's a god. So here's Paul.

Remember, he's not been formally charged. He's not been formally found guilty of a crime. But he is being held as a prisoner of Rome. He has some liberties that most prisoners are not going to have.

But in spite of all of that, he uses this time to minister to people. This person is going to be healed of a bloody flux and a fever. So this bloody flux would have been a type of dysentery caused by a parasite.

And so a very, very sick person here could lead to, you know, a lot of complications could lead to dehydration and severe cases could lead to death.

So this is something not to be taken lightly. And so he is healed by Paul through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul laid hands on him and healed him.

[ 7 : 00 ] Paul, again, this was a validation of Paul's apostolic ministry. Remember, when Jesus was on earth, he performed miracles. And those miracles were verification that he truly was the Son of God.

And now his apostles have been sent forth and they have been given the power to perform miracles. And that just validation that these are truly his apostles. And Paul, although his calling and beginning as an apostle was different than the other ones, he still had that same apostolic gift, that same apostolic commission.

And he was able to perform these miracles as well. And that was to validate their ministry, to validate their calling. And once you see the apostles kind of fade off the scene, you see these signed gifts kind of fade off with them.

Because it was for a specific time period. It was for a specific purpose. It was for a specific people. And once the apostles had passed off the scene, the foundation of the church had been laid no longer necessary for those signed gifts of healing and tongues and the different things.

And so Paul is validating his apostolic commission and ministry here. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, come and were healed.

[ 8 : 17 ] So just like everything, good news travels fast. Hey, come see this person. This person healed this person. So now all the sick people are coming to Paul and he is healing them. Who also honored us with many honors.

And when we departed, they laided us with such things as were necessary. And after three months, we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

Now Castor and Pollux are from Greek mythology. They are believed to be the twin sons of Zeus. In fact, if you are familiar with the star arrangements and constellations, there's a constellation known as Gemini.

And another reference to Gemini is called the twins. And the twins refer to Castor and Pollux, the two sons, the twin sons of Zeus.

Now these were looked at as beneficial to mariners. And there was a belief, there was a superstition and a tradition that if you were a mariner and you were out on the sea and you were involved in a storm, then if you could see the constellation, if you could see Gemini, the constellation of Castor and Pollux, that was a good omen that you were going to have good luck on your journey.

[ 9 : 36 ] So it was a very superstitious, a very group mixed up in Greek mythology and superstition that Paul was around here.

So they are sailing under the sign of Castor and Pollux, the two twin sons of Zeus. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass and came to Regium.

And after one day the south wind blew and we came the next day to Puteoli. And so now they are in the country of Italy. In fact, Regium, I believe it is, is actually on what's referred to as the toe of Italy.

Remember, Italy is kind of shaped like a boot. This Regium is on what you would say is the toe of the boot. So they have made it to the mainland of Italy.

So they are now south of Rome by about, once they get to Puteoli, they are 152 miles south of Rome. And so they're getting near their destination.

[ 10 : 41 ] Where we found brethren and we desired to tarry with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. It's interesting here that they're this great distance from Rome and they found, they're 152 miles south of Rome.

And they found brethren. They found believers. They found Christians. Commentators believe that maybe these people were converted as a result to, remember Acts chapter 2, all the people that would have been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Now they go back home, taking the message of the gospel with them. One of those places would have been to the area around Rome. And so they think that maybe even a church had been started there by this time.

And so these are believers from that area, maybe converted at Pentecost or maybe a direct result of others being converted at Pentecost and bringing the message of the gospel back to them.

But nevertheless, here's Paul sailing toward Rome. And now he finds believers. He finds people that he can fellowship with. And that's got to be, and we'll find out it was an encouragement to him a little bit later on.

[ 11 : 45 ] But think about what Paul's experienced. Two years in Roman custody for doing nothing wrong. He's been in custody for two years. He's been falsely accused by the Jews.

He's been taken into custody by the Romans. They don't want to release him because it's going to cause an uproar among the Jews. They really have nothing to formally charge him with, so they can't convict him.

They can't punish him as a prisoner. So you've got this kind of limbo kind of thing for two years. And here's Paul probably could use some encouragement. And so now he has a chance to meet up with these believers.

And now he's going toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appi Forum and the three taverns, whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and he took courage.

So Paul meets these brothers in the Appi Forum, or it's also known as the Market of Appius. It's 43 miles from Rome. And the three taverns are 33 miles from Rome.

[ 12 : 48 ] So he's meeting these believers from around the area of Rome, and they meet him. Now that word meet is an interesting word. It's used frequently in the New Testament.

It's the Greek word *aponteson*. And it's used in Greek literature of an entourage coming out of a city, going to meet an official or a dignitary, and greet them and welcome them to the city.

So they're going out to meet Paul just as like he was an official or a dignitary. They're going out to meet him and be the welcoming party that brings him into the city.

Interestingly enough, that same Greek word is used in 1 Thessalonians 4, 17, where it says, we shall meet him in the air. Same word. And then also in Matthew chapter 25, verse 6, where you have the parable of the ten virgins, and it says, the bridegroom cometh, go out to meet him.

Same word. It's a group of people going out to meet someone just like a dignitary or a very important person to welcome them to be their kind of like greeting party. And so that's what's happening here with these believers.

[ 13 : 54 ] They hear Paul's coming, so they go out to meet him. They go out to greet him like he's a dignitary, welcome him to their city. And so Paul saw them, he thanked God, and took courage.

Verse 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. And so here's Paul.

He's going to be basically on house arrest. He has more freedom than a lot of people do. He's going to have his own place. He's going to be separate from all the other prisoners, but he's going to have a guard assigned to him at all times.

And so Paul has made it to Rome, just as the Lord said he would. He has made it officially to Rome. So think about where we are in this time of Paul's life.

This is not going to be the imprisonment that leads to execution. We'll talk more about that later. That happens at a later time in his life. But so far, Paul has been on those three missionary journeys. At this point, he's written the books of, the first book was Galatians, and then he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

[ 15 : 04 ] A little bit later, he would have written 1 and 2 Corinthians. And a little bit later, he would have written Romans by this time. And so all of that, when we read those books in Scripture, those would have been written by Paul before this time.

And so now Paul is going to be in Rome for about two years, we're going to find out later. And he's going to be on house arrest. People are going to be able to come and go pretty much freely. He's going to have a lot of liberties that a lot of people would not have that were in his position because of his Roman citizenship, one, and also because he's not been formally charged with a crime yet.

He's not been accused of anything. He's kind of there. He's basically being held for protection as much as anything. And he's also appealed to Caesar. So he's got to get to there as well.

And so verse 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.

And so notice Paul calls for the chief of the Jews, the chiefs of the Jews, the Jewish leaders, those people that have given him so much trouble in all the other places.

[ 16 : 24 ] He's calling for them. Now notice Paul is having to adjust his method of operation here. Typically, Paul goes into a city, he goes into the synagogue first.

Well, he can't do that. He's on house arrest. And so now instead of him going to the synagogue, he's bringing the synagogue to him. And so he's just going to reverse the process where he would go to them.

Now he's having them come to him. Because he's in house arrest, he can't go to so many places. And first thing he tells them, I have committed nothing against the people.

Like I've not done anything to you. I've not done anything to violate your law. And he said, or customs of our fathers. He said, I've not done anything to violate Jewish law, Jewish customs.

I've not done anything. I've not committed any sin against you or our fathers, or the traditions of our fathers. He said, I've not done anything to do that.

[ 17 : 22 ] Yet, I was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. He said, I've not done anything wrong. But here I am in the hands of the Romans. Who?

The Romans. When they had examined me, would have let me go because there was no cause of death in me. So he said, I've not done anything wrong. And the Romans know it. That's basically what he's told.

Because remember, he's been before Festus, Felix, and Agrippa. They're all Roman rulers. They're all Roman leaders. None of them could find anything he's done wrong.

In fact, Agrippa says this man would have been set free had he not appealed to Caesar. So they could not find anything that he has done. But yet, here he is. They've not found anything worthy of death.

But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar. He knew that if they let him go, the Jews were opposed to it.

[ 18 : 18 ] He wasn't going to get treated justly. In fact, he was going to get taken out and beaten to death more than likely. And so he was not going to receive a fair trial from the Jews.

Because the court was already stacked against him. All right? So this has been going on for years, right? That courts not always depend upon them.

A lot of times we see a trial go on and justice is served and things are done. But sometimes you have these situations where things are kind of stacked against the person. Like in the case of Paul.

He knew that the Jewish court would be stacked against him. He knew that he would not get justice there. And so he appealed to Caesar so he could get what he felt like was a fair hearing as a Roman citizen.

He said, But when the Jews spoke against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar, not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. He said, I didn't appeal to Caesar in order to have an opportunity to accuse you.

[ 19 : 18 ] Think about that. They were after him, but he said, I didn't do this to get back at you. He said, for this cause, therefore have I called for you to see you, to speak with you.

Paul's saying, I have nothing against you. This is not about you. This is not anything against you. I appeal to Caesar not because I'm coming against you.

So why is he doing it? 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.

So Paul's saying it's not anything personal. It's the hope of Israel, the message of the Messiah. That's what's gotten me into this trouble. That's why I'm in this position, because remember, it was about the resurrection that the Jews almost started a riot in one of those times he's been before a ruler.

And so it's the hope of Israel. And that's Paul's way of saying the Messiah. The Messiah was the hope of Israel. And that's why I'm here, for his testimony of the hope of Israel, the Messiah.

[ 20 : 25 ] And notice verse 21. And they said unto him, We neither receive letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spoke any harm of thee. But we have not heard anything about this.

So apparently either the people were ignorant of all this that had happened and word hadn't got to them about everything that Paul had been through in the last two years, or they were being dishonest.

More than likely, they were truly ignorant because it took word a little while to get places back then. And they couldn't pick up their cell phone and text their friend, right? So this was a different time. And so maybe word had not got to them about all that was going on.

But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against. So they're like, We want to hear from you, because who you represent, this sect, this group of people, it's spoken of against everywhere we go.

So they knew at least, even though they may have not heard of him, maybe they've not heard of all he had been through at the hands of the Jewish leadership, of all the things he had went through as a result of being in prison as a Roman citizen.

[ 21 : 36 ] Maybe they've not heard of all that, but they heard about who he represented. And they wanted to hear more about that because they said, We've heard a lot of stuff against this. And the word sect is interesting.

It's the idea of a person having a chosen opinion. In other words, a sect is a person that kind of come up with their own thing, their own opinion. In fact, it's interesting, the word sect comes from is the Greek word where we get our English word heresy.

So we would say that if someone was saying, You're part of a sect, you would be, in English, we would say, You're part of people promoting heresy.

That's basically what we would be telling them. And it's all because he has said something that contradicted what the Jewish people were teaching. So in the idea of a sect was someone who opposed their system, their system of belief, their system of worship, their system of religious tradition and customs.

If you opposed that, you were a member of a sect. You have just chosen a different opinion or you are committing heresy. And so, but they want to hear what Paul has to say.

[ 22 : 51 ] And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him in 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.

So he expanded to them about the kingdom of God and about Jesus. Notice the sources, the law of Moses and the prophets, because that was what they were all about.

If you were to summarize the message of the whole Bible and break it down into a simple outline. The Old Testament said Jesus is coming.

The gospel said Jesus is here. The epistles say he's coming again. That's the message of the Bible. Jesus. That's it. The law and the prophets say he's coming.

The gospel say he's here. And everything else says he's coming again. It's all about him. It's all about Jesus. It's all about Jesus is coming.

[ 24 : 00 ] We need a redeemer. The redeemer is coming. The gospels, the redeemer is here. The Messiah has showed up. He's here. The epistles, he's coming again. Until then, take his message to the world.

That's the simple, that's about a simple breakdown of the message of the Bible. It's all about him. And so he goes back to the law. He goes to the prophets. He's using the Old Testament to preach to them Jesus, to teach about Jesus.

Those are the things because when he mentions the kingdom of God, Chuck Swindoll in his commentary says the kingdom of God is where the covenant's made to Abraham, to Israel, and to David all come together with the promises of the Messiah.

And so when Paul is mentioned in the kingdom of God, he's reaching back to Abraham, that covenant God made with him. He's reaching over to David, that covenant God made with him, the covenant that God made to Israel, and the promise of the Messiah, it all comes together.

And Jesus tells those people listening to him that day, the kingdom of God is in your midst. They're seeing the visible, living representation of the fulfillment of the kingdom of God right there in Jesus.

[ 25 : 13 ] And that's what Paul is going to tell these Jewish people, but they rejected him. Remember, the Jews, by and large, rejected him. They said, we have no king but Caesar. Because he was, Jesus was doing everything counterintuitive to their preconceived ideas.

Their preconceived idea was this coming Messiah, this coming king, was going to be this victorious warrior that's going to trample all the enemies under his feet. He's going to boot Rome out of control.

He's going to put the Jews back to the head of all the nations, and he's going to rule and reign from planet earth, and everything's going to be good for the Jewish people. That was going through their head. But here comes Jesus saying, no, actually, I'm going to die.

That was totally opposite of what they had in mind. When he said, the kingdom of God is in your midst, the kingdom of God is right here before you, I'm going to the cross, I'm going to die.

This has to happen. And so this was totally opposite of what the Jewish people were expecting. It wasn't deliverance from Rome that this kingdom was all about.

[ 26 : 23 ] It was deliverance from sin. It was deliverance from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son. And so this was totally against what the Jewish people had in mind.

But he was going to tell them about the kingdom of God from the law of Moses, the prophets, from morning till evening, all day. He talked to them.

And notice verse 24, and some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And so here we see the pattern again. There's been a pattern all through the book of Acts.

If you've been noticing this pattern, gospel presented to the Jews. Some believe, some reject. Turn to the Gentiles. The rejecting Jews persecute.

That's kind of the theme. That's the cycle going through the book of Acts. That's gospel given to the Jews. Some believe, some don't. Gospel goes to the Gentiles. The rejecting Jews persecute.

[ 27 : 21 ] That's kind of how things happen. And so notice what Paul says. Now don't read through that too quick.

You missed something. It says, Paul was acknowledging Isaiah was speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, what Isaiah said is scripture. So Paul is acknowledging the validity of Isaiah here. And so saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive.

For the heart of this people is wax 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.

This is a quote from Isaiah chapter 6. After Isaiah has had that vision of the glory of the Lord, and he said, Woe is me, for I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. A little bit later in that chapter, you'll read those words.

[ 28 : 35 ] Because, you know, Isaiah said, Here am I, send me. And so God says, Okay, I'm sending you to these people. Here's what you need to know about them. And that's what he said to Isaiah, what Paul has just quoted.

Verse 28, Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had great reasoning among themselves.

And so over and over through the book of Acts, we've seen Jewish rejection. Think about with Stephen. That was pretty significant rejection. And just like with anyone, you only get so many times of rejection, and then judgment is going to happen.

And so when Paul is speaking here, this is somewhere in the early 60s A.D., probably 62, 63. And so they're going to reject the gospel, by and large.

A lot of them are going to reject. They're going to turn to the Gentiles. All right, so let's, we'll come back to that in just a minute and see how this sums up. Verse 30, And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God.

[ 29 : 50 ] Notice he's turned to the Gentiles, but the message is still the same. Same message, kingdom of God. Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

His message is the same because how do you get in the kingdom of God? You got to be born again. Jew, Gentile, whoever you are, the only way into the kingdom of God is you must be born again.

And so Paul is going to serve under house arrest for like the next two years. It's during this time he's going to write the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Those are sometimes called the prison epistles. And so he's going to, that's going to happen during these two years. It's interesting, Luke is still with him and when he writes 2 Timothy, which is going to come even later down the road, Luke is still with him.



So Luke is going to be his faithful companion. But Paul is going to spend two years under house arrest. He's going to write the books of Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon. Eventually he's going to get his chance to appeal to Caesar.

[ 30 : 58 ] Church history says he is released. And then he has some time where he does some more traveling and then he will be imprisoned again. There was the great fire of Rome somewhere around 64 AD.

Nero in anger blames the Christians and he sets out an all-out persecution against the Christians to which Paul is one of those victims. Paul is later imprisoned again and he will write his remaining books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

And he will write those from his last imprisonment and then be put to death. And so shortly after that, shortly after Paul's death, you come to the year 66 AD.

Somewhere around the midpoint of the year 66, you're going to start to have the Jewish-Roman War. That's going to last about three and a half years, 42 months. At the end of that, remember the promise Jesus made in Luke when he said, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, go to the hills.

And so that's going to happen. They're going to be surrounded by armies. The Christians, those who believe the message of the Lord, are going to go find safety in the hills. The Jewish people are going to think Jerusalem, the beloved city.

[ 32 : 13 ] That's the city of God. The temple is there. We're going to be safe in that city. So they're going to go there and get destroyed. Close to thousands, hundreds of thousands of Jews are killed in the year 70 AD when the city is destroyed and burned.

This was after this rejection where they said, where a lot of them didn't believe and the gospel went to the Gentiles. It ultimately led to the destruction of Jerusalem, their temple, their way of life.

Jesus said, no stone will be left upon another. And if you read the writings of historians like Josephus and Eusebius, you'll find out that was literally fulfilled, that they went piece by piece and took stone upon stone down until the temple was completely flattened.

Originally, it wasn't Titus' plan, the Roman general, to destroy the temple. But the temple was lit on fire somehow and so he said, let it burn. So they did and destroyed it and flattened it just like Jesus said they would do.

And so this is how the book of Acts ends. It's right around that time where they have rejected. The message is now going completely to the Gentiles and Jerusalem, the temple, will be destroyed sometime a few years later.

[ 33 : 30 ] Paul will be executed by Nero but the church will continue to grow. The gospel will continue to go out. And so next week I have to be away for the school that I teach at.

We're having graduation next Sunday morning. So two weeks from today we will wrap this up for the review of the book of Acts. We'll tie it back into Luke and see how they are one connected thing and one is volume one the other is volume two and so we'll wrap it all up in two weeks.

Let's pray.