

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6k: Acts 27:1 – 28:31 – Voyage to Rome

Introduction

Our study of Acts will close with Paul's voyage to Rome and his early ministry in that city. While Paul has experienced many trials, he's also experienced great blessings from the hand of God. I am reminded of his words in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;". This was Paul's perspective throughout all he endured. In these last chapters, Paul again faces trials and sees God's intervention; all of this working to promote the cause of Christ, whom Paul preached.

Acts 27:1-12 – To Fair Havens

For the voyage to Rome, Paul and some other prisoners were delivered to a centurion named Julius. He worked for Caesar as part of the Augustan cohort and probably received assignments that involved transporting special prisoners to Rome. The ship and crew were from the home port of Adramyttium, on the Northwest shore of Asia Minor. We notice that Luke¹ (the writer Acts), and Aristarchus of Thessalonica also accompanied Paul on this trip. Aristarchus was with Paul on some of his earlier journeys (Acts 19:29, 20:4) and remained with him for at least part of his imprisonment in Rome (Colossians 4:10).



Did Paul have a good relationship with Julius? How can we tell?

The Alexandrian ship to which the voyagers transferred in Myra was probably a grain cargo vessel. Myra was the chief port for the Imperial grain fleet that traveled between Egypt and Italy. Their routes were usually run between the months of March and November. In addition, all sailing between the months of September and November was very treacherous.

Why did they stay in Fair Havens so long?

What was Paul's advice to the centurion and his crew?

What was Julius' decision and what was his reasoning behind the decision?

Acts 27:13-20 – Trouble at Sea

What was it that prompted them to leave Fair Haven?

¹ We know that Luke was with Paul because of the use of the pronoun "we" in Acts 27:1

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A Euraquilo is a Nor'easter (Northeasterly wind), a powerful windstorm that was dreaded by all who sailed on the Mediterranean. It eventually made the crew abandon the possibility of steering the ship. While catching a small break under the shelter of Clauda, they under girded the ship with ropes to prevent the hull from breaking apart from the relentless crash of the waves. They also lowered the sea anchor to prevent the ship from running aground, especially on the shallows of Syrtis, which were to the South of them. Syrtis was a graveyard of ships along the North African coast. The crew eventually began to throw the ship's cargo overboard to lighten the load and then threw out the tackle (equipment that was not necessary to sail the ship).

What was the mood of the crew, soldiers, and prisoners on board the ship? Why?

Acts 27:21-44 – Shipwrecked

What was the prophecy given by Paul?

Why did God give Paul this prophecy?

What practical lesson do we learn from this prophecy and Paul's circumstances?

The soundings taken by the crew were measurements of the depth of the ocean. As the measurements decreased, they were able to tell that they were getting closer to land. The anchors were cast so that the ship would stop before it landed in shallow waters.

What did the sailors attempt to do and why did Paul try to stop them?

What does the reaction of the soldiers tell you about the change in Paul's position of leadership?

Why did Paul encourage everyone to eat?

By lightening the load of the ship, it was able to ride higher in the water and thereby get them in closer to shore. However, the reef that the ship hit prevented further progress and the crashing of the waves against the bow began to tear the ship apart.

What was Satan's last attempt to stop Paul's progress towards Rome?

What were some of the things the Lord accomplished in this situation?

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Acts 28:1-16 – *Wintering in Malta*

The island that Paul and the others landed upon was Malta. It is a small island about 17 miles long and 9 miles wide, south of Sicily. The bay in which they came ashore is now called St. Paul's bay. They were immediately shown hospitality by the people of the island. They are described in the KJV as "barbarous". This word does not mean that they were uncivilized, but rather that they did not speak the Greek language.

What does the hospitality of the natives teach us? (See Romans 2:14-16)

How did the natives react to Paul's encounter with the snake? What else do we learn from this?

What does the healing of Publius' father and others on the island indicate about what the Lord was trying to accomplish on Malta?

Church tradition tells us that a church was established on Malta during Paul's three months there and Publius was its first pastor. We cannot verify the accuracy of this tradition, but it would be consistent with the evidence we see in Scripture. What other evidence do we see in verse 10 that indicates that a church may have been established at this time?

They sailed from Malta upon an Alexandrian ship, probably another imperial grain vessel, that had the Twin Brothers, Castor and Pollux as its figurehead. They were revered in Greek mythology as the gods who protected sailors. They stopped in Syracuse for three days and then moved on to Rhegium and then to Puteoli. From Puteoli, they traveled the rest of the way on foot upon the Appian Way. As the local Christians heard about Paul's arrival, they traveled in from miles around to meet him.

How did the Lord bless Paul upon his arrival in Rome?

Acts 28:17-31 – *Paul's stay in Rome*

What does Paul do after three days in Rome? Why?

Why did Paul say he was a prisoner? What does this mean? (See 2 Timothy 1:8)

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What was the response of the Jewish leaders to Paul?

Why did the Jewish leaders call Christianity a “sect”? Were there other Jewish sects that existed? What were their differences? What does their hatred of Christianity reveal?

What opportunity was given to Paul by the Jewish leaders?

What was their response?

What is the meaning of Paul's quotation from the Book of Isaiah? (See Isaiah 6:9-10)

How did Paul finish his discourse to them?

How did Paul spend the next two years in Rome?

Next Time: *The Rest of the Story & The Lesson Summary*