

Presentation 10—Acts 27-28

Paul journeys to Rome and ‘the Ends of Earth’



The First part of Paul's Voyage to Rome (Acts 27.1-26)¹

- Acts 27.1-27—*Paul begins to Sail to Rome.*
 - v3-13. Leave Caesarea. Sail to Sidon as Julius treats Paul with kindness, on to Cyprus, to Asia Minor to Myra, later on to Crete, to ‘Fair Havens’ and the town of Lasea. Sail on to Phoenix and harbour there for winter.
 - v14-26. The shipwreck at Cauda and its surrounding drama. Paul's encouragement to his companions. Paul's vision (v 23-25) affirms their safety and God's presence despite the danger. . . . he representatives arguing against Paul and his fidelity to his Jewish Faith.
- Acts 27.27-44 *The rescue: salvation through the Ship's community.* A meal is shared, reminiscent of the Eucharist. Ship runs aground. 5-6: Religious authorities malign Paul's faith. All are saved.
- Acts 28.1-10— *Paul at Malta.* The locals welcome Paul and companions. Paul, bitten by viper, thought to be a murderer, but later the locals see him like a god. Publius welcomes them. Paul heals, like Jesus, Publius' father.

¹¹¹ https://bible.ueliisa.net/bible_atlas/map_s3/Pauls_Travels.jpg (Public Domain)

Others come to Paul for healing. Jesus' presence still acts through Paul. The Maltese generosity frames the story.



The Final Stage of Paul's Voyage,
arriving into Italy and at Rome (Acts 27.27-28.14)²

- Acts 28.11-16—*Paul and companions leave Malta for Italy.*
 - v12-16. Sail for Syracuse, then arrive in the harbour of Puteoli, Italy, via Rhegium. Greeted by Jesus followers and then ‘we came to Rome’ (v 14). Greeted by community at Forum of Appius and ‘Three Taverns’ (v 15). Thanksgiving is offered. Paul is under house arrest in Rome.

²²² https://bible.ueliisa.net/bible_atlas/map_s3/Pauls_Travels.jpg (Public Domain)

- Acts 28.17-28—*Paul in Rome*. Paul meets the Jewish leaders and explains to them (with another *apologia*) why he is not compromised his Jewish roots. He proclaims, ‘it is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain’ (v 20) – a Lukan summary of Acts and Paul’s mission. They affirm that they have not received any negative news about Paul from Judea.
 - v23-The Jewish leaders come to Paul’s lodgings, a domestic setting, to listen to his message. Paul offers his witness to the God’s Kingdom (*basileia*), his affirmation of the Torah and the Prophets: The Gospel story of Jesus is in harmony with Jewish traditions and Scriptures.
 - v25-28. Disagreement occurs in response to Paul’s final words: Paul’s words link to the Parable of the sower in the Gospel (Lk 8.4-10), to explain the failure of the Gospel and the resistance of those who listened to the preaching.

These are the last words of Paul in Luke’s story in Acts,

‘The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah,

²⁶ “Go to this people and say,
You will indeed listen, but never understand,
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.

²⁷ For this people’s heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
so that they might not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and understand with their heart and turn—
and I would heal them.”

²⁸ Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has
been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.’ (Acts 28:25-28—
NRSV)

Luke seeking theological reason for the rejection of the Gospel by some.

- v30-31—*Luke’s Conclusion to Acts*. This is an important summary of Acts and Paul’s mission: Paul,

lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him,³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God and

teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (NRSV)

- Important verses: reveals the domestic context for the future of the Gospel; Paul portrayed as generous; Paul is hospitable; Paul's focus: The Kingdom of God and teaches about Jesus.
- The last image of Paul, preaching openly and 'unhindered' = the mission of God will continue despite the experience of tension and trial as the story of Jesus spreads universally.



The Remains of the Harbour of Ancient Caesarea (Photo: Michael Trainor)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION & CONVERSATION

- Paul arrives in Rome and placed under house arrest. The domestic setting has now replaced the Temple, as the place of teaching. How might the church enhance the household gathering of Jesus followers today, to enable its domestic spirituality to grow and deepen?

- Paul reflects on the present situation with the Jewish leaders to explain what is happening. He draws on Scripture and specifically the Prophet Isaiah. How might Scripture become a source of reflection, prayer and discernment in our local faith communities? What is needed to promote the Word of God?
- To get to Rome, his destination, Paul experiences a hazardous sea voyage that also leaves him shipwrecked. Have you ever experienced personal ‘shipwrecks’? What do you think are some of the ‘shipwrecks’ that have affected the church?

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