

BIBLE STUDY.

**Acts 28:1-19;
Paul from Malta to Rome.**



Introduction.

In our last study, the Alexandrian ship Paul had been on was wrecked on a sandbar off the coast of Malta.

All hands made it to shore safely. In this chapter 28; this is the final part of our story. Paul spends three months on the island healing the people and preaching the gospel.

Then he and his company will catch a ship to Italy.

***Paul's Journey to Rome so far.
Acts 27:13-44;***



Acts 28:1; *"When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta."*

"brought safely through" In Acts 27:43 this same expression appeared. It was the regular way of stating the idea of passing through extreme danger and still being alive.

They have **drifted for two weeks** without any reckoning where they were; the storm was so violent they have had to take precaution after precaution just to keep their ship afloat;

It was little more than a hulk when they made final efforts to run her aground; after it was stuck on the mud bar and was beginning to break up, they had to swim the last several hundred yards to safety, but they made it and **all 276 were still alive!**

Acts 28:1; "When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta."

When all 276 were safely ashore, they learned that the island was called **Malta**. It reads as if it was the answer to their question to the natives, **"What is this land called?"**

The island of Malta was originally a **Phoenician colony**. It is about 20 miles long from east to west, and about 10 or 12 miles wide from north to south.

The island is an immense rock of white sandstone, with a covering of earth about one foot in depth, which has been brought from the island of Sicily.

Malta



Acts 28:1; "When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta."

*The **name Melita** was given originally by the Phoenicians.*

It might come from a word which means "**refuge**" and be a reference to the shelter that the Phoenician sailors found at this island as they sailed back and forth between Phoenicia & straits of Gibraltar.

Luke, perhaps looking back on the experience, is saying the Island was named well, for he and Paul and the others found it was a refuge indeed.

Acts 28:2; "The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all."

Along a seashore, when ever dawn reveals a foundering vessel off the shore, everyone who lives close to the place hurries to the site of the wreck in order to help rescue survivors.

The Maltese may even have watched the desperate run for the shore that this ship made; in any case, they are at the place in crowds by the time the people from the ship are wading ashore.

There may not have been enough houses nearby to take care of that many people, but they did their best to make the 276 shivering refugees comfortable. (The word translated "**kindness**" is the same word (philanthropia) used at Acts 27:3;)

Acts 28:2; "The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all."

It was one of those chilling October or November rains. The plight of the shipwrecked people must have been lamentable, soaked to the skin, without a thing in the world but what they were wearing, and a chill wind blowing.

It would take considerable work to kindle a fire out of rain soaked wood and brush they could find nearby, and it would have to be a huge fire if 276 men are to get near it.

Too, it would take some work to keep it going. These men were soaked during their swim ashore, and the rain that was falling would prevent their clothes from drying out.

Acts 28:3; "But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out of the heat and fastened itself on his hand."

It would take considerable help to gather enough wood to keep **a large fire like this** from going out.

He had been such a helpful person on board the ship, that we think **it would be natural for Paul to join the natives** as they spread out over the area in search of more fuel for the fire.

"He did not stand by the fire which others had kindled, and allow others without his help to keep it burning. He took his turn bringing the wood along with the barbarians and the sailors."
(McGarvey, op. cit., p. 275.)

Acts 28:3; *"But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out of the heat and fastened itself on his hand."*

The snake had been torpid.

The viper was doubtless in a bundle of sticks which someone had brought to the fire.

When the bundle was laid on the fire, the **viper** became warmed by the heat, and ran out and **fastened on the hand of Paul**, just as he was throwing the bundle of sticks he had collected onto the fire.

What kind of snake was it? The Greek echidna is the regular word for **"viper"** a very poisonous snake.

The poison of **the vipera Espis** that lives in the Mediterranean area is quite severe, about **4% of all untreated bites are fatal.**

Acts 28:4; "When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

Luke uses the regular word for poisonous snake in verse 4, Luke calls it a "viper!"!

Due weight must be given to Luke's identification of the snake, for as Ramsay has well said, "A trained medical man in ancient times was usually a good authority about serpents, to which great respect was paid in ancient medicine and custom." (Ramsay, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 63ff.)

The snake fastened its fangs in Paul's hand. Lenski suggests that this was God's way of turning all eyes on Paul right from the first moment on Malta. (Lenski, op. cit., p. 1102.)



Acts 28:4; “When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, “Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.”

They knew, evidently, that he was a prisoner from the fact that he was constantly guarded by a soldier.

The Maltese, in harmony with their typical pagan and mythological notions of the divine government of the world, rushed to the conclusion that they were looking at another example of the work of Justice.

Justice was a mythological goddess whose responsibility it was to see that **men got the proper justice** that was coming to them.

The fact that the viper had fastened on Paul and that, as they supposed, he must now certainly die, was the proof from which they inferred his guilt.

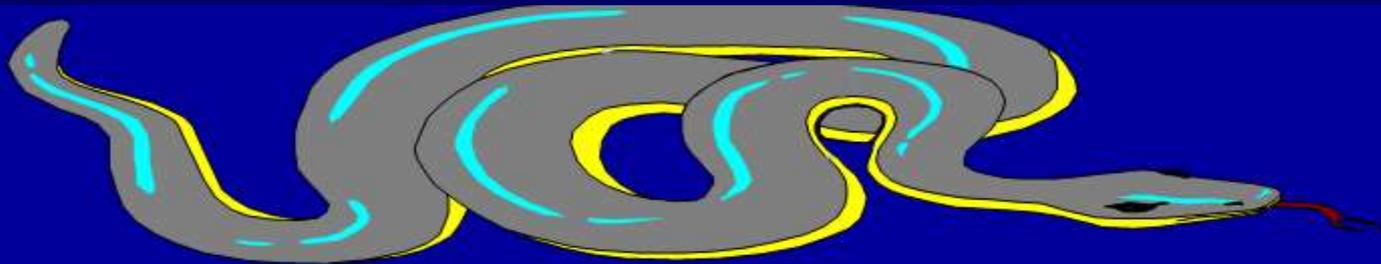
The Viper (snake) hangs on Paul's hand.



Acts 28:4; "When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

We need to remember calamity besetting a man in this life does not necessarily mean he is guilty of some sin," (Acts 12:23; 14:22;) nor is it true that justice is always meted out here in this life.

In their mythology, "Justice" was a goddess, the daughter of Jupiter; and it was her duty to take vengeance and to inflict punishment for crimes. "Allowed" is a past tense in the Greek and indicates that the natives regarded Paul as already a dead man. A bite from a viper was to them certainly fatal that they could speak of him as already dead.





Acts 28:5; "However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm."

This was a natural enough reaction. The snake will not be able to bite another person around this fire.

“suffered no harm.” Ordinarily after a snakebite, there are certain first aid precautions that are taken to counteract the venom.

None was taken in Paul's case, nor did he begin to swell up, nor did any red streaks begin to show running up his arm.

Jesus had promised his apostles that they would take up serpents and the serpents would not harm them. Mark 16:18;

Acts 28:6; “But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.”

Clearly the reason Paul suffered no harm is that something miraculous was done, and this produced a strong impression on the natives of Malta.

At another time, Paul had been thought of as a god because he worked a miracle; he was thought to be Mercury, the messenger of the gods. (Acts 14:8-16;)

Perhaps this time the Maltese think of one of the mythological gods who was famous for subduing serpents, namely, Apollo or Aesculapius, quickly jumping to the conclusion that that is who Paul really is.

Acts 28:7; "Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days."

Near to the place where the shipwreck had occurred. Tradition locates the lands belonging to **Publius** at **Civita Vecchia**, the old capital city of Malta, located five miles southeast of St. Paul's Bay.

The island of Malta was a **part of the province of Sicily**.

Since Sicily was ruled by a procurator (governor),

Publius was the **"legate"** under the Sicilian governor.

"Leading man" was an official title.

The hospitality of Publius is extended to a chosen few, among whom would have been the centurion Julius, Paul, Luke, the ship's pilot and captain, and perhaps a few others.

Acts 28:7; “Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.”

Publius would have been officially responsible to care for the Roman soldiers and the prisoners, but "**courteously**" indicates **the duty** was performed **in an attitude of gracious generosity.**

We are to picture arrangements being made by **Publius** with the inhabitants of the island for lodging for the refugees for the winter months.

McGarvey suggests that **“many found accommodations in the homes** of those on the island **whose sick were healed by Paul and Luke during their three-day stay at the home of Publius.”**

Acts 28:8; "And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him."

A combination of recurring fever and dysentery would make the case more than usually critical, according to Hippocrates. (Hippocrates, Aphorismi, VI. 3.)

"Malta has long had a peculiarly unpleasant fever of its own — **'Malta Fever'** — due to a microbe in goat's milk." (Bruce, op. cit., p. 523.)

As Paul works this miracle we see him following the same general course of action as Peter did in the case of Dorcas. (Acts 9:36ff;)

Compare, too, the comments at Acts 20:10; on Paul's actions in the raising of Eutychus.

Acts 28:8; "And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him."

The prayer evidently concerned whether or not a special healing was to be performed in this particular case. the miracle is done as Paul lays his hands on the sick man.

We are reminded of the instructions given in James 5:14;

Paul was given miraculous power on this occasion to heal Publius' father. Here is another case where the account of the miraculous is part of the warp and woof of the narrative.

**Such healing was in accordance with the promise made by Jesus, recorded in Mark 16:18;
Both Luke and Mark are simply relating the facts which just happened to be similar.**

Acts 28:8; “And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him.”



Acts 28:9; *“When this had happened,
the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.”*

The news that **Paul**, the one whom **viper bites did not harm**, had miraculously **cured Publius' father** of his very serious sickness soon spoken about.

In consequence, everyone on Malta who was suffering from any physical ailment came to receive suitable treatment.

“Were coming” pictures a continuous stream of people, from all over the island, coming to Publius' estate to benefit from the apostle's gift of healing.

Luke was able to help. The word **“heal”** in verse 8 is **hiaomai**, while the word **“cure”** here is **therapeuo**, a **regular word** for a physician's work of healing sick.

***Acts 28:9; “When this had happened,
the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.”***



Acts 28:10; "They honoured us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed."

The islanders, noting that **Paul and Luke had lost all their possessions** in the shipwreck, must have presented some very thoughtful and some very acceptable gifts to these men, so that they were clothed and looked after.

The Maltese supplied all the provisions necessary to their comfort for the rest of the voyage."

The thoughtfulness of the natives of Malta seems to stem from more than their sick being healed.

We can only suppose there is gratitude to God for the salvation brought to the island by the preachers of the Gospel.

Acts 28:11; “After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.”

It is now late February or early March of 61 A.D.30. (The following information is compared in order to arrive at the approximate date of sailing from Malta:

The Fast September 23 and 60 A.D.) had already passed — we are not told how long ago — while the ship was still at Fair Havens (27:9).

Then 14 days of Acts 27:27, which brought us to the end of October or the beginning of November.

Sometime after **three months had been spent on Malta, **they sailed for Rome,** which carries us to late February or early March.**

Acts 28:11; "After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux."

The **three months after the shipwreck** would have been the winter months during which the Mediterranean was closed to shipping. Acts 27:9;

It apparently was one of the ships of **the grain fleet**, Similar to the one which had wrecked. Acts 27:6;

It was the practice of the age to put an image of the person or thing after which the ship was named on the prow (and sometimes also on the stern).

Luke is telling us this **Alexandrian ship** had the name **Dioscuri** ("twin brothers"). (**Dioscuri** is the Greek name; **Gemini** is the Latin.)

Acts 28:11; “After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.”

The Gemini Twins, Castor and Pollux. (Rome)



Acts 28:11; “After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.”

Here is another place in Acts where we cross the **mythological ideas** of the time.

According to mythology, **Zeus** and **Leda**, the wife of **Tyndarus, king of Sparta**, had twin sons, whose names were **Castor** (he was a **horse tamer**) and **Pollux** (he was the **prince of boxers**).

After their death, so the fable goes, because of their brotherly love, they were translated by Zeus into the heavens where they became **the constellation we call Gemini**.

Neptune also wanted to honour them, and so **gave them power** over the **winds and the waves** so that they might **assist shipwrecked sailors**.

After **three months in Malta** (also known as Melita), Paul and the others are taken to another ship heading to Rome. The ship stops at a handful of ports along the way, including **Syracuse**. Acts 28:11-12;



Acts 28:12; **Syracuse** is on the island of Sicily.



Acts 28:12-13; *“We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.”*

The ship left the island of Malta and **sailed** nearly due north **to Syracuse**, the capital city of the **isle of Sicily**.

The distance was about **80 miles**, and would have been a day's journey. **Ships** bound from **Alexandria to Puteoli** commonly put in at this port.

“for three days” The three days may have been spent in **transacting ship's business**, or more probably, in **waiting for favourable winds** to continue the journey.

After three days in Syracuse, the ship sails for Rhegium, on the way to Rome. Acts 28:12-13;



Acts 28:12-13; *“We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.”*

We can suppose that **the wind** was in the **northwest**, and that they **sailed east** from Syracuse, **then north** till they were in the shelter of the toe of Italy, and then took advantage of the coast to work their way windward **till they came to Rhegium.**

Since the **northwest wind** was still blowing, they could not proceed **through the straits of Messina**, and were forced to put into the **port of Rhegium.**

“arrived at Rhegium” This town, now **Reggio**, was in **Italy** on the toe of the boot, and was on the **southern end of the straits of Messina.**

Acts 28:12-13; *“We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.”*

They had to **wait at Rhegium** for a suitable wind to take them through the three-mile-wide straits, **but they did not have to wait long,** for a **favourable wind** sprang up the **next day.**

“wind sprang up.” The form of the Greek verb implies a change of wind.

Such a south wind was what they needed if they were to sail without undue danger between the famous **rocks of Scylla** and the **whirlpool of Charybdis.**



Acts 28:12-13; *“We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.”*

The distance from Rhegium to Puteoli is about **180 miles**, the ship clearly was making good headway before the south wind.

Earlier in the voyage it had taken **“many days”** to cover the 150 miles **from Myra to Cnidus.**

Acts 27:6-7;)

Puteoli, modern **Pozzuoli**, **“Puteoli”** is derived from the Latin word for the **“springs” (putei)** which abound there.

The place was celebrated for its warm baths as well as for the mineral springs.) is located on the northern shore of the Bay of Naples.

From Rhegium, Paul is taken to **Puteoli**, where Paul is permitted to visit friends. Acts 28:13-14



Acts 28:12-13; *“We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.”*

Cape Misenum stretches out into **the bay** on the **west side** of **Puteoli** and forms one side of a smaller horseshoe-shaped cove which opens on the south.

This was the harbour for unloading the Alexandrian grain ships.

The reason they went no closer to Rome is that this was the nearest harbour to Rome that would take the deep draft of these heavily laden grain ships.

As the ship came in toward the harbour, **Paul** would have seen some of the well-known **beauties of the bay of Naples**. The **imperial fleet** had its anchorage at **Cape Misenum**, and just to the west of the cape were the **isles of Ischia and Procida**.

Acts 28:12-13; “We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.”

To enter the bay from the south they would have sailed past the **isle of Capri**; and if Paul looked to the east at that moment, he could see **Mt. Vesuvius** and the **city of Pompeii** to the south of the volcano.

Since the people of Italy depended so heavily on the grain from **Egypt** for their bread, the arrival of the grain ships was eagerly awaited and welcomed.

All other ships, except the grain ships were required to strike their topsails as they entered the harbour.

The grain ships were allowed to keep their up so were easily recognizable. **The whole population of Puteoli** went out to see them sail into the harbour and to celebrate the arrival of more grain from Alexandria.

Acts 28:14; *“where we found some believers! They begged us to stay with them seven days. Then we went on to Rome.”*

There are Christians in Puteoli! How much the teachings of Jesus have been spreading through the empire is indicated by notes like this.

Who had been the evangelists who brought the Gospel here and planted the congregation, we can only speculate.

Some people think that **Apollos** mentioned in Acts 18; wrote the book of Hebrews? And think he wrote it from Puteoli.

“stay a week.” These seven days, like those before at Troas (Acts 20:6;) and at Tyre (Acts 21:4;) would have included **at least one Lord's Day.**

Acts 28:14; *“where we found some believers! They begged us to stay with them seven days. Then we went on to Rome.”*

The brethren invited Paul to stay with them, that they might hear Paul teach them (we suppose); and **Paul would have been pleased** to have opportunity to observe the Lord's Supper with these brethren.

That the centurion Julius consented to so long a delay indicates a high degree of sympathy with Paul. Perhaps he also had become a Christian.

“went on to Rome.” Preserves a sequence that takes from **Puteoli (verse 14) to the gates of Rome (verse 16)** with an account of several delightful **meetings on the road** between the two cities.

Acts 28:14; “where we found some believers! They begged us to stay with them seven days. Then we went on to Rome.”

Rome was approximately **150 miles** by the Appian highway from **Puteoli**. The journey would take them from **Puteoli to Capua**, a distance of **33 miles**.

Here they would come upon the **Appian Way**, which ran **from Rome to Brundisium**.

At **Capua** they would turn north, passing through **Formica** (modern Formia), **Fundi** (modern Fondi), and come to **Terracina**, a distance of 57 miles.

At **Terracina** they would have to choose between two possible ways to continue their journey northward. They could take the circuitous road **around the Pontine Marshes**, or they could take one of the **mule drawn boats down the canal** through the Marshes.

Acts 28:14; *“where we found some believers! They begged us to stay with them seven days. Then we went on to Rome.”*

Both routes came out at **Appii forum** (government offices" in the larger cities. Acts 19:21; Rom 15:23;

This was about **18 miles from Terracina**. From there they would continue up the Appian Way until they reached Rome.

We may think of the great **‘Appius Claudius**, who, as censor in 312 B.C., planned the road, supervised the building of part of it, and after whom the road is named; and so is the Appii forum.’(Livy, IX. 29)

Or we might remember that **Horace** wrote about the overcrowded canal boat, with its brawling sailors, the coarse vice and rude revelry and the scoundrel innkeepers at **the wretched little town of Appii forum**. (Horace. Odes, III. 29. 62-64.)



Acts 28:15; “The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us.”

Ruins of the Forum.



Acts 28:14; *“where we found some believers! They begged us to stay with them seven days. Then we went on to Rome.”*

For Paul, however, as he comes up the road toward Rome, his mind is filled with thoughts about how he will be received. Will the brethren there be ashamed of him because he is a prisoner?

Will his opportunity to preach there and to share with the Christians he knows be greatly curtailed or prohibited altogether?

Entering Rome as a prisoner was not exactly what **Paul** had anticipated when he wrote to them, some years earlier, about his desire to visit them.

Paul wanted to be helped by them as he departed to enter a new field of evangelism.
Acts 19:21; and Romans 15:23;

Acts 28:14; *“where we found some believers! They begged us to stay with them seven days. Then we went on to Rome.”*

“Thus we went to Rome,” Luke writes, meaning “after the seven day visit with the brethren at Puteoli.” The long journey that began with his being grabbed and nearly killed by some Asian Jews.

That included two years of imprisonment at Caesarea and the perils of the storm and shipwreck, now would take only a few days longer, and they would be there.

The hearts of both **Paul and Luke** beat quicker as they begin **the final leg of the journey to Rome.**

Acts 28:15; "And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage."

The seven days at Puteoli had given ample time for word to be taken to Rome that the apostle had arrived in Italy, and soon would be on his way up the highway toward Rome.

Now a messenger comes from **Puteoli** saying that he is getting close. Two different groups of Roman Christians immediately southward along the Appian Way to meet Paul and escort him back to Rome.

Among these "**brethren**" we would expect to find **Aquila and Priscilla**, and some of the other Christians addressed by name in the 16th chapter of Romans, Epanaetus, Andronicus and Junias, some of the household of Narcissus, and others.

Acts 28:15; “And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.”



Acts 28:15; "And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage."

The practice of going some miles from the city to meet one whom men delighted to honour was a common one. (Josephus, Antiquities, XVII. 12. 1; Tacitus, Annals, III. 5; Cicero, pro Sext. 63; in Pison, 22. 48 1933)

One group of Christians got as far as **Appii forum**, some **45 miles** from Rome; **The other group** got as far as **Three Inns**, about **33 miles** from Rome.

The Appii forum was a convenient place for travellers on the Appian Way to stop for refreshment.

(that's why it was called the "**Market of Appius.**")

The day when the Christians from Rome and **Paul met there**, the wretched little town, notorious for its general vileness, was the scene **of a prayer meeting, with thanksgivings and praises pouring forth from rejoicing hearts.**

Acts 28:15; “And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.”

It has been some time since Paul has heard any word from the brethren at Rome. Would the friends he addressed in the Roman letter welcome him, or would he have to enter Rome as a criminal, with no one to escort him but the soldiers under the command of Julius?

Were those **Roman disciples still sound in the faith**, or had persecutions driven them from their homes, or had the Judaizers (about whom he warned them in the Roman letter) perverted their beliefs?

To questions like these the coming of the brethren from Rome gave a full and satisfying answer, and **Paul resumed his journey with an eager and buoyant hope.**

Paul is taken from **Puteoli to Rome**. In Rome, he is permitted to live in a rented home, under the watch of a Roman guard.



Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

Luke is accompanying **Paul from Puteoli to Rome;** this is seen in the use of the pronoun **"we."**

Travelling the Appian Way from Three Inns, they would have come to **Arica (now Ariccia)**, where they would probably have stopped for the night.

From that point as they neared the city of Rome, the Appian Way would have presented to Paul and Luke some of the features that modern visitors to Rome still are shown.

There were the tall milestones, the stately tombs (one example of which is the tomb of Caecilia Matella, the wife of Crassus) lining either side of the road and giving the traveller the feeling he is walking through one long cemetery,

Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

Then they would pass **the cemetery of the Jews** of Rome, lying on the east side of the Appian Way (and which has been discovered and explored in the last 100 years).

Off to the east, too, he could see the beginnings of **the Catacombs** where in later years the Christians, who would not burn their dead and who were excluded from the cemetery of the Jews, laid their dead to sleep in peace and to await the final resurrection.

Continuing their journey, they could look across about a half-mile of flat land to the west, and see the **pyramid of Caius Cestius** near **the Ostian Gate**.

Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

Next they would have passed through **the Appian Gate (also called the Porta di S. Sebastian)** which pierces the outer of the **two walls** around the southern part of the city of Rome.

Walking on toward the centre of the city, they would have passed through the **Arch of Drusus**, and after a while would have come to the **Capuan Gate (Porta Capena)** which pierces the inner wall.

On their right, once through this gate, they would have seen **the Caelian Hill** rising above them.

On their left was the **Circus Maximus**.
(where in just a few years many Christians will be dying as they are torn by the lions).

Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

Immediately in front of them was the **Palatine Hill**, with **the Palace of the Caesars** crowning its top. Just beyond the Palatine Hill was **the Roman Forum**.

Luke did not leave Rome, as we see from the fact that he is present with Paul when the letters to Philemon and to the church at Colossae were written, (Philemon 24; Colossians 4:14;) and those letters were, according to all indications, written from this first Roman imprisonment.

The KJV at this place reads, "When we entered into Rome, the centurion handed his prisoners over to the **Captain of the Guard (stratopedarche)**, but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with **a soldier** that kept him."

Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

By the time **Paul** arrives in Rome, **the personal service of the Apostles of Christ** has been growing less and less important.

Many congregations have been established throughout the Roman world and many preachers and teachers are doing the necessary work.

There are still inspired letters to be written and preserved for future generations.

The inspired history, the inspired letters and the great book of prophecy that closes out the New Testament are still to be written.

Acts 28:16; “When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”



Acts 28:16; “When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”

The personal service provided by Apostles has diminished in importance but the writings will never lose their importance.

The Apostles live on in their writings and their authority as representatives of Christ is irreplaceable and will never diminish.

Two centuries after the last New Testament book has been written, Christianity will replace Paganism as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

“allowed to stay by himself” Paul was treated differently than the other prisoners.

He was given the unusual courtesy, instead of being placed in the common military prison, of being permitted to dwell in whatever home he wished, with no restraint other than that of having **a single soldier to guard him.**

Paul was no ordinary prisoner, brought to Rome to entertain the bloodthirsty crowds by fighting wild beasts or the gladiators in the Circus Maximus.

He came as an uncondemned Roman, who had appealed to Caesar.

Acts 28:16; *“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.”*

The presentation of his case in **the letter from Festus**, as well as **a good word from Julius** concerning Paul's conduct on the voyage to Rome, contributed to Paul's relatively mild bonds.

Paul first retired to a friend's house (verse 23; was it Aquila and Priscilla's house?), and then later rented an apartment for himself (verse 30).

The arrangement where he was **chained to a soldier**, but yet had the freedom of living in the dwelling of his choice, was technically called **custodia libera**.

Paul speaks of his **"chain,"** (Acts 28:20;) of his being a **"prisoner,"** (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1;) **"an ambassador in chains."** (Ephesians 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 13, 17; Colossians 4:18;)

Acts 28:17; “Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews.

When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.”



Acts 28:17; “Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.”

He has hardly settled in his temporary quarters before he begins his missionary activities. Here is Paul, a man now perhaps in his early sixty's, going at a pace that would keep many a younger man hurrying to keep up.

In these few hours since his arrival he has renewed acquaintances with his old friends and brethren who had been requested, more than three years before, to strive together with him in prayer to God that he might come to them.”(Romans 15:24, 30-32;)

Paul instead of coming as a free man, able to move about through the streets of the city to visit in homes and reason in the synagogues, he had been marched in between files of soldiers, presented to the authorities as a prisoner awaiting trial, and was now kept under military guard night and day.

Acts 28:17; "Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans."

Those old friends of his here in the imperial city can be his arms and legs and **help Paul reach out** to the masses in the city who need the Gospel.

In harmony with his regular practice of **preaching to the Jews first.** (Romans 1:16;) **Paul immediately** begins efforts to contact these, **beginning with their leaders.**

The expression "**leading men**" would include such people as the rulers and elders of the synagogues.

(There were no less than seven different synagogues in Rome), and the heads of the principal Jewish families that had settled in Rome.

Acts 28:17; "Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans."

We suppose that some of Paul's friends had served as messengers to carry the invitation to the Jewish leaders. They have responded, have arrived where Paul is staying, and Paul now begins his teaching.

"Brethren" He uses the same opening address that he had used when addressing the leading men at Jerusalem. Acts 23:1;

There would be several reasons Paul would have to establish his innocence in their eyes.

One is that unless he does, he can hardly expect the Jewish leaders and people to pay any attention to his message about Christ.

Acts 28:17; "Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans."

The other is that he doesn't need any Jews at Rome putting pressure on the government leaders against him, like had been done at Caesarea.

Paul may be a prisoner, but he insists **he had done nothing to deserve such treatment**, either against the Jewish people or in violation of the customs that have been observed by the Jews for generations. (Acts 6:14 and 21:21;)

What Paul is doing basically is disclaiming the substance of the rumours which James tells him have been spread about him. (Acts 21:21, 28;)

Acts 28:17; “Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.”

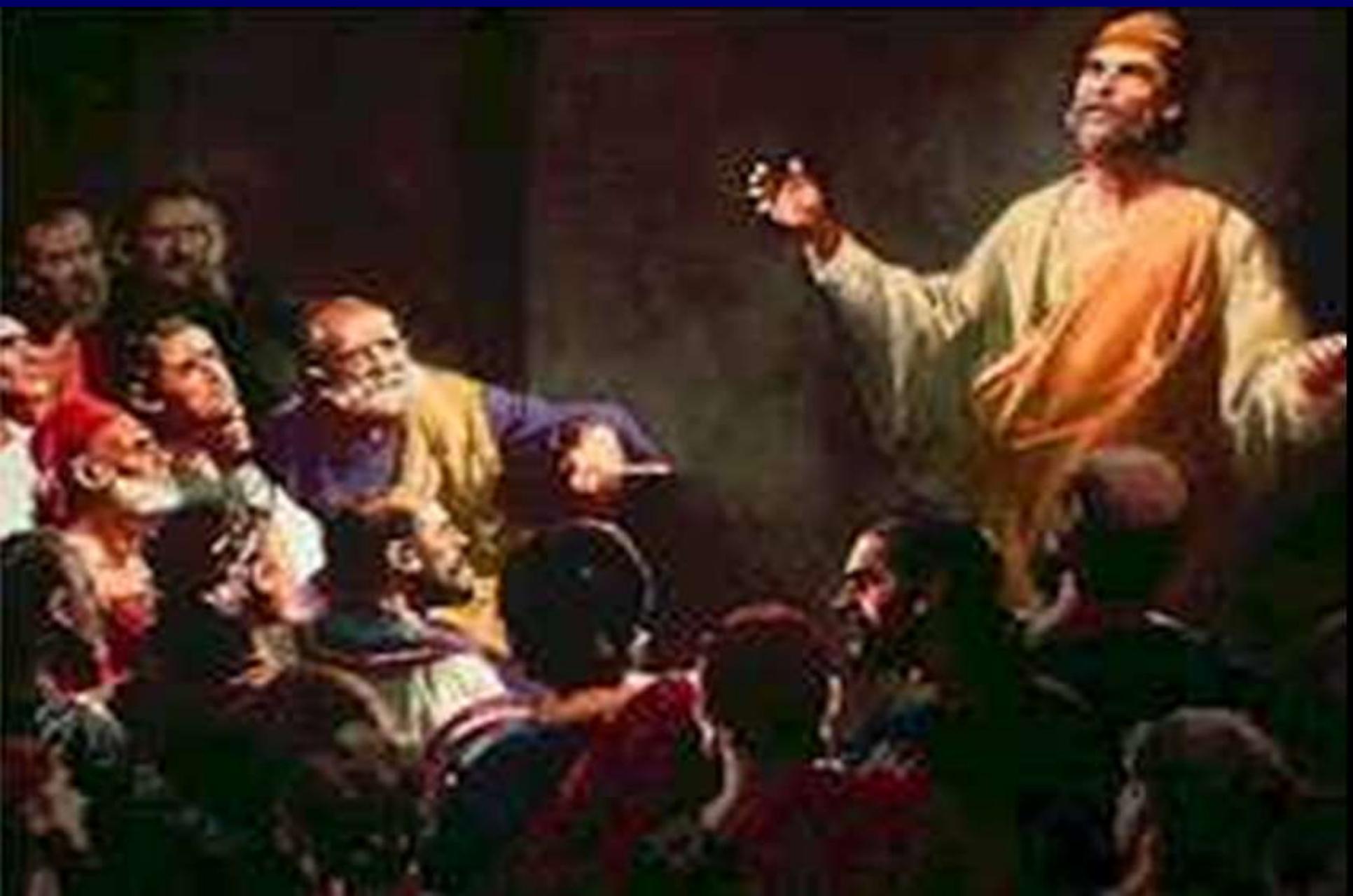
What had Paul done to illustrate the fact that he was willing to live according to Jewish custom? (21:26;)

“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.”

20 “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. . . .”

22 “ I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” **1Cor 9:19-22;**

**Acts 28:17; “Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews.
When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers.”**



Acts 28:18; “And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.”

Paul here summarizes the judicial proceedings that transpired under both Felix and Festus.

It is possible that Luke gives only an abbreviation of a much longer explanation by Paul of all that had happened between his arrest in the temple, and his appeal to the emperor.

These words are strictly true of Festus and Agrippa, (Acts 26:32;) who decided that he might have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.

Perhaps they are true of Felix, too, who we are told left Paul in custody to please the Jews. (Acts 24:27;)

Acts 28:18; “And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.”

“was no ground for putting me to death”

No Roman magistrate in Judea, neither Lysias, nor Felix, nor Festus, nor Agrippa II, had ever condemned Paul.”

They could not find him guilty of the things the Jews charged. Paul had used the same expression concerning Jesus as he spoke to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch. (Acts 13:28;)

Acts 28:19; *“But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—not that I had any charge to bring against my own people.”*

The verdict of the Roman authorities in each case was that Paul was not guilty of any crime worthy of death or imprisonment.

They wished to release him, but the Jews “objected,” Paul says, using a very mild word to describe their bitter enmity against him.

Festus apparently had determined to free the prisoner (as we have stated in the notes there); but the Jews cried out against it so, that his proposal in **Acts 25:9**; was made in consequence of their opposition, in an effort to conciliate them, or meet them half-way.

Acts 28:19; *“But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar— not that I had any charge to bring against my own people.”*

“appeal to Caesar” There is emphasis on the word **“forced,”** **“I was forced to appeal to Caesar,”** *says Paul. 25:8-11;*

To appeal to Caesar was something distasteful to the Jews, for they were turning away from their own **“religious”** court and asking a heathen judge to decide their case. **It was a surrender of Jewish independence in religious matters.**

So Paul emphasizes that he was forced to appeal to Caesar; it was something quite unavoidable, but the only way to avoid being handed over to a prejudiced tribunal, (the Sanhedrin,) or to the plots of assassination.

(Similar to Acts 25:3;)

Acts 28:1-31; Malta to Rome.

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**Next in the series:- Acts 28:19-31;
Paul at Rome.**

BIBLE STUDY

**Acts 28:19-31;
Paul at Rome.**



*Acts 28:19; "But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar-
not that I had any charge to bring against my own people."*

In these words **Paul is assuring his Jewish audience** that when his case is **heard by Caesar**, he will not say anything inflammatory against the Jews, for that would only cause the government to bring more hardships on the Jews.

Paul speaks with kindness and courtesy to these Jews in Rome about the opposition of the Jews in Judea against him.

He uses conciliatory words and phrases such as "brethren," "our people," "our fathers," "the hope of Israel," and "not that I had any accusation . . ."

Acts 28:20; *“For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the **hope of Israel** that I am bound with this chain.”*

Paul exhibits that sweetness and lack of retaliation that Jesus expects of his followers as he tells how he cherished no unkind feelings towards those who had done him wrong.

Paul now shares with them the exact reason he invited them to come speak with him.

He desired to clear himself of whatever false reports may have been sent to Rome, or that the Jews visiting Jerusalem from Rome might have heard about him there.

Paul's is a prisoner in chains; he must explain why he is a prisoner to their satisfaction before they will ever listen to the Gospel.

Acts 28:20; *“For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the **hope of Israel** that I am bound with this chain.”*



“the hope of Israel” This is not the first time in these closing chapters of Acts that we have heard this refrain; it was spoken on at least **two previous occasions.**

Acts 23:6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my **hope in the resurrection of the dead**"

Acts 26:6-8; “And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today.”

“This is the promise **our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled** as they earnestly serve God day and night. O King, it is because of **this hope** that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that **God raises the dead?**”

Paul is emphasizing that **the message** which he proclaimed, far from undermining the cherished beliefs and customs of Israel **was its divinely appointed fulfillment**

How much the Jewish audience permitted him to enlarge on this statement before they reply to the feeling of a need to defend himself, we do not know.

On another day, when they return, Paul will have opportunity to explain that what **they still look for in the future.**

Paul knows has already happened, namely that Messiah had come, has set up his kingdom, and now offers life and immortality to all.

Acts 28:20; *“For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the **hope of Israel** that I am bound with this chain.”*

This whole presentation was **calculated to win the sympathy** of the Jewish leaders. It was **no uncommon thing for Jews to be persecuted**, especially because they cherished their hope.

Paul even speaks of **“this chain”** to show that he is sharing the common experience of many a Jew.

In passing, the mention of **“chain”** in the singular agrees with the fact stated in **verse 16** that he was entrusted to the keeping of **a single soldier**.

Acts 28:20; “They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.”



Acts 28:21; *“They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.”*

“they said to him” After hearing Paul's explanation of his own personal situation, some of them spoke up and assured him that they had little information about him, and no official information against him had come to them.

“Letters” grammata, and in this case must mean **“official documents from the Sanhedrin”** containing charges against Paul.

They do not say that they have never heard of Paul, or of Paul's religion”; what they do affirm is that no official charges have been sent out against him by the Sanhedrin.

Such **official letters** were often sent by the Sanhedrin to outlying Jewish communities, to inform them of official decisions or to warn them of doctrinal deviations or teachers to be avoided.

Acts 28:20; “They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.”



Acts 28:21; "They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you."

At first sight it may seem surprising that no letters have been sent about Paul, either before or after his departure from Caesarea to Rome.

During his two years' imprisonment, Perhaps the Jews in Judea felt secure in the thought that if he ever walked out of Roman custody and protection, he would not walk far until he was dead, so they sent no warning letters to the synagogues.

When he did finally appeal to Caesar, it was late in the sailing season, and the Jews would have had difficulty getting a letter to Rome before Paul himself got there.

Acts 28:22; *“But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”*

That is, though we have heard nothing against you that would invalidate your statements of the cause of your imprisonment.

Paul, we have heard of the religion which you have been preaching.

The word **"desire"** literally means **"we think it right."**

"Your views" must not be pressed to mean that Paul taught a special **"view"** of Christianity different than, say, Peter or John taught.

But Christianity was different than the views the synagogue and community leaders among the Jews at Rome held. These Jewish leaders are certainly being very open and fair with Paul.

Acts 28:22; *“But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”*

Paul did not regard Christianity as a **"sect"** in the way that the Jews regarded it. To him it was not a split off the Jewish religion, but was the **rightful fulfillment of their whole religion;**

Paul had introduced this whole subject by his reference to **"the hope of Israel"**; and now the Jews say, **"We want to hear what you have to say about the predicted Messiah having come and having set up His kingdom."**

The Jewish leaders mean that Christianity is spoken against by Jews.

There is a further possibility that **"everywhere spoken against"** is true of **what many Gentiles** thought of Christianity.

Acts 28:22; *“But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”*

We know some of the things Gentiles were saying about the Christians.

When the Christians are suffering under **Nero**, **Tacitus** describes them as holding **"a detestable superstition,"** and guilty of **"atrocious and shameful crimes, convicted by the hatred of mankind."** (**Tacitus**, Annals, XV. 44.)

Suetonius writes that the Christians are **"a race of men holding a new and criminal superstition."** (**Suetonius**, Nero, c. 16.)

A caricature of a Christian convert named **Alexamenos** kneeling before a figure hanging on a cross (**the figure of a man with the head of an ass**) has this inscription, **"Alexamenos worships his god."** (**Tacitus**, History, V. 4)

Acts 28:23; “They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”



Acts 28:23; *“They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”*

Paul's explanation of his being held in custody had been satisfactory in the minds of the Jews, and so they have no hesitation from that account **to hear Paul's explanation of the hope of Israel.**

The Greek for **"large numbers"** is a comparative adjective, implying a larger attendance than might have been expected.

Perhaps the **"leading men"** have done some advertising, sharing at synagogue services an announcement about an opportunity to hear Paul.

"Explained" is a verb we have had before in Acts 11:4; 18:26;
In this case, as before,
it implies a detailed and comprehensive explanation.

Acts 28:23; "They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets."

Luke does not give us anything more than **the barest outline** of the **things** which were **discussed** that day, or the **evidences** that Paul **presented** to the Jews.

It is to be assumed that Paul used the same line of argument we've seen before in the book of Acts, (Acts 13:17ff; 17:2ff; 26:22ff.) which argument also is given in fuller detail in some of Paul's letters, namely, Romans, Galatians.

Some say Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews. Because many of the same kinds of arguments presented in that book, which was directed to Jews, are the same as he would have used to convince these Roman Jews.

Acts 28:23; "They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets."

By solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God. Included would be an explanation of how the church is the fulfilment the prophecies of a coming kingdom. (Daniel 2:44, Acts 1:3; and chapter 2;)

Included would be the great doctrines of justification, sanctification, and glorification through Jesus Christ. (Romans 3-8;)

As Paul spoke of the "kingdom of God" he would not be speaking of any of those carnal notions that many Jews held,

Paul would have been telling about the spiritual nature of the Kingdom, (as is the case all through Acts, with the exception of Acts 14:22; which refers is to the church triumphant).

Acts 28:23; "They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets."

"Persuade" (peitho in the Greek) suggests he was reasoning with, trying to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah to which the Law and Prophets looked forward.

Paul certainly laboured to prove to them that the Gospel of Christ was the true and necessary fulfilment of Israel's religion, of Old Testament history and prophecy.

His text was the whole volume of Hebrew Scripture, interpreted by the events of the advent, passion, and triumph of Jesus of Nazareth.

Acts 28:23; “They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”

The same Old Testament passages that have been appealed to a number of times in Acts (Acts 2:16ff; 2:28ff; 2:34ff; 3:22ff; 4:25ff; 8:23ff; 13:13ff; 26:23;) would have been studied, and more as well.

We can imagine he appealed to the ordinances, sacrifices, priesthood, and prophecies of the Mosaic dispensation in their significance as preparatory for the coming of Christ.

Just as Jesus had done years before with two men on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:25ff;) and with the disciples in the upper room. (Luke 24:44ff;)

Acts 28:23; “They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”



Acts 28:23; “They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”

Paul now begins with Moses and the Prophets and expounds to them all the things concerning Jesus.

Jesus had said the law and the prophets testified of Him.

If a Jew will not believe and accept the teachings of the law and the prophets, he will never believe that **Jesus is the True Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world.**

Acts 28:23; “They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”

We would probably be mistaken if we assumed that Paul did all the talking through this whole day. Instead we must picture questions and answers, followed by further teaching, and appeals made to additional passages in the Old Testament.

Every separate proposition was supported by appeal to the proper verses of Scripture. we should remember that these people were not bound to clocks, and **the topic under discussion was one that had to do with both **time and eternity.****

Paul has sufficient time to place his whole teaching before them in some detail.

*Acts 28:24; “Some were convinced by what he said,
but others would not believe.”*

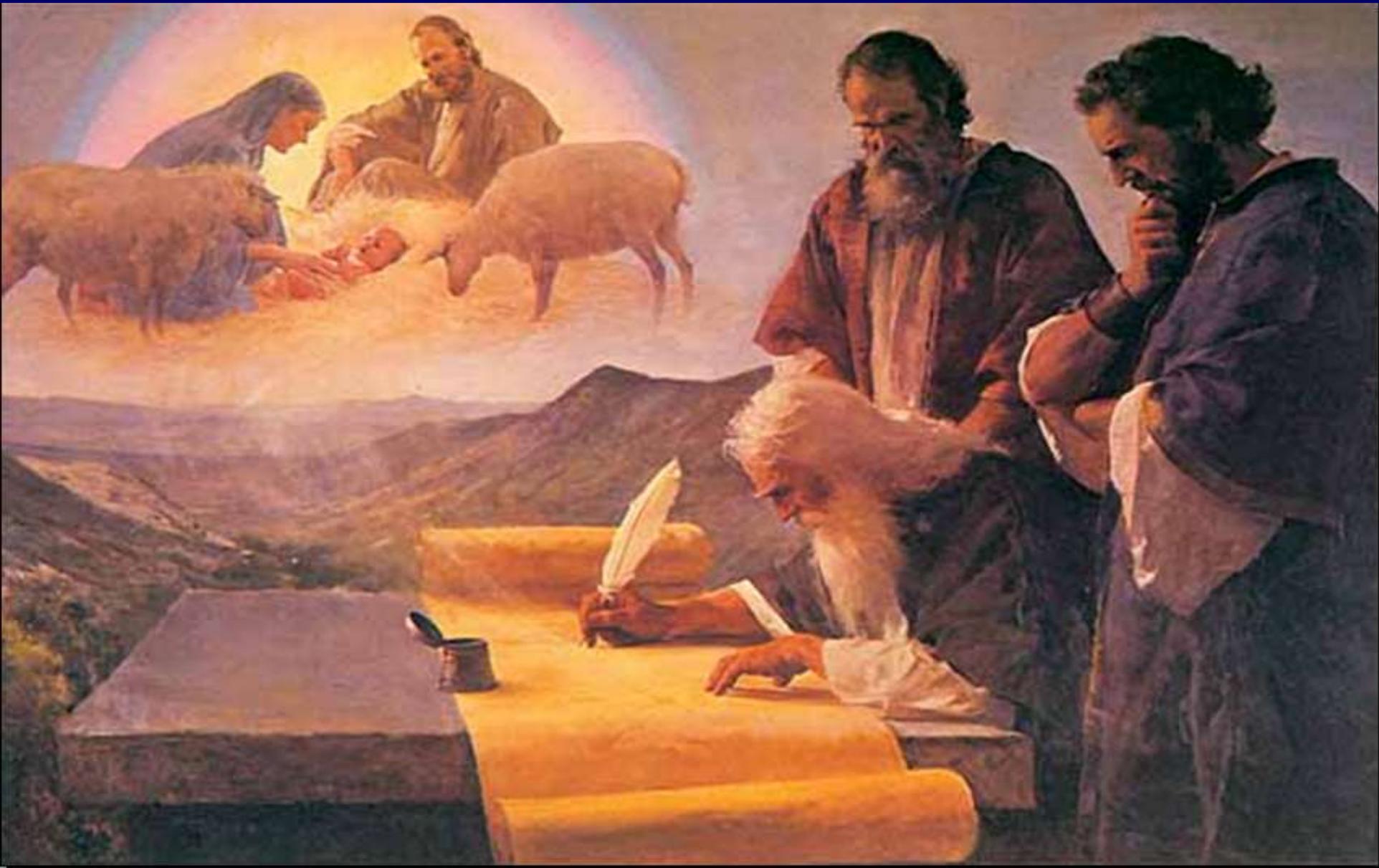
The Gospel made its customary division
between believers and unbelievers.

Some of Paul's hearers were receptive to the truth;
they were in the process of being persuaded.

It seems that the people who came
to hear Paul on this set day were
pretty evenly divided in their response.

The implication of the following verses is that
the ones who were being persuaded had enough
convictions to begin to argue with the unbelievers
that what Paul had presented must be right.

Acts 28:25; “They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:”



Acts 28:25; “They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:”

Perhaps we can picture the audience taking up the argument among themselves much as happened among the Pharisees and Sadducees at Jerusalem a couple of years earlier. (Acts 23:7;)

Then the unbelievers spoke with such heat that Paul applied to them the condemnation of God against those who refused His message.

It may even be that the disagreement led to some altercation, and to the exhibition of the usual bigotry and prejudice and bitter opposition on the part of the unbelieving Jews.

Acts 28:25; “They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:”

We can think of the words being addressed in particular to the unbelieving Jews.

Through this whole day, Paul has been turning to passages from the Old Testament to show that what had happened in the coming of Jesus and the beginning of the kingdom of God was just as God had predicted it would be.

Very appropriately, he turns to one more passage in their Scriptures, and shows that even what had happened this day was just as God had predicted it would be.

Acts 28:25; “They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:”

“The Holy Spirit rightly spoke”

Here the apostle Paul distinctly asserts
**The inspiration of the Old Testament prophet
Isaiah.**

“Rightly” represents **kalos**, **“well, beautiful.”**

What the Spirit led Isaiah to record
fits this situation beautifully!

Acts 28:25; “They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:”



Isaiah Scroll. (Dead Sea Scrolls)

Acts 28:26; *“Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”*

Paul is quoting the Septuagint almost word for word.

This passage is quoted a number of times in the New Testament. Jesus quoted it the day He preached his sermon in parables. (Matt 13 &14;) John the gospel writer, alludes to it just after he has recorded Jesus' last public sermon Before His crucifixion. (John 12:40;)

What had been the response of the Jews 700 years before Christ to a message from God.

Was the same response of the Jews to God's own Messiah.

There was a willful blindness and a willful deafness to that which ought to have produced conviction and conversion.

Acts 28:27; “For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”

There was a **willful blindness** and a **willful deafness** to that which ought to have **produced conviction and conversion.**

Paul is saying (in the words of God to Isaiah) that there are none so deaf as those who refuse to hear, there are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

If they were to see, and hear, and understand, **they would have to give up the pleasures of sin** they are currently enjoying, their selfish living, and their wicked ways.

Because this is the very thing they do not want to do, **they harden their hearts to the Gospel.** The words of Isaiah are true of numbers of men who are not Jews.

Acts 28:27; "For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

This passage from Isaiah illustrates once more (from the book of Acts) that the **doctrine of irresistible grace is not found in the Bible.**

The doctrine would say these **Jews didn't believe** because there had been **no direct and immediate regenerative work by the Holy Spirit** on these men's hearts;

It would follow that some of Paul's hearers went away unbelievers **because a divine influence was withheld from them** while it was granted to others.

The text says the real reason some believed, and others disbelieved, is that those **who disbelieved deliberately plugged their ears and shut their eyes.**

Acts 28:27; "For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

Just as they closed them **voluntarily**, they had the power to keep them open; and it is implied that had they done so, **the result would have been reversed.**

The reason the Gospel was or was not received **rested with the will, of the hearer** rather than on a direct work of the Spirit on their hearts.

"Turning again" would include repentance and obedience. (Acts 3:19;)

They did not allow themselves to be convinced by what Paul was sharing with them about the Messiah **because they didn't want to repent.**

Acts 28:28; "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

Paul sadly sounds a note of warning to these willfully disbelieving Jews. We remember how he loved his Jewish kinsmen, how he had great sorrow and unceasing grief in his heart because of their refusal to come to Christ. (Romans 9:1ff;)

It is not that he's giving up on these Jews after only one sermon, but that by speaking of how the Gentiles will respond, he is hoping to provoke the Jews to follow also. (Romans 11:14;)

What Paul had said before **in Pisidian Antioch, (Acts 13:46;) **at Corinth,** (Acts 18:6;) and elsewhere, **he now says with reference to Rome.****

Acts 28:28; "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

The very method of deliverance which God gave in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy would be embraced by the Gentiles.

The Jews could reject this salvation for themselves, but **that would not destroy the kingdom of God or prevent Messiah from reigning over his kingdom!**

He would reign over the hearts of Gentiles who **responded to His gracious offer of salvation on the condition of an obedient faith.**

"They will really listen!" The Gentiles would **embrace God's means of saving men**, if only they were given the opportunity **to hear** about it.

Acts 28:29; “And when he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.”

This **whole verse** is **not found** in codices Aleph, A, B, E, and most modern critical texts; and hence, it appears in the margin of the NASB.

It does describe accurately, probably, what happened after Paul had his closing word with them.

Perhaps the verse was written on the margin of some ancient manuscript to relieve the apparent abruptness of the account between verses 28 and 30 if it is omitted.

Acts 28:30; “For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.”

If it be wondered where the money came from to pay the rent, we may look to help from his friends, like the missionary offering from Philippi that had been brought from the brethren there by **Epaphroditis**. (Philippians 4: 10ff;)

From these rented quarters during these two years will come five of the letters which are now contained in our New Testaments.

The letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians (a thank-you letter for that missionary offering), Philemon, and possibly Hebrews.

Acts 28:30; "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him."

It will be remembered that in the earlier lessons we said that this was the limit of time a man had to wait for his prosecutors to arrive to press charges.

We think that at the time Luke writes Acts, Paul's two years' wait are just over, his accusers haven't come, and he automatically has been set at liberty

Paul is a prisoner during these two years, and was **limited as to where he could go, but was **not limited** as to who might come and visit with him, just as the leaders of the Jewish community already had done.**

Acts 28:30; "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him."

Paul was not allowed to go to the synagogues, or to the "congregations," or to the houses of this or that disciple, or to homes where teaching was needed to win converts, might seem at first to be a hindrance to his evangelistic work.

But what at first seemed a hindrance, as he himself afterwards acknowledged, turned out **"for the greater progress of the Gospel."**
(Philippians 1:12;)

His presence in Rome stimulated others to renewed evangelistic activity. (Philippians 1:14ff.)

"All" indicates that both Jews and Gentiles were welcome, and it also implies he had many visitors.

Acts 28:30; "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him."

From his letters written during these two years, **we learn that Paul had a number of faithful co-workers and helpers** who carried his message to the city and brought many to receive preaching and instruction from him.

Luke the beloved physician, who shared the perils of the voyage from Caesarea to Rome, was his constant co-worker. (Colossians 4:14;)

Timothy, who was last mentioned by name during the carrying of the offering to Jerusalem, (Acts 20:4;) is united with him in the salutations of Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians, so must have come to Paul while he was in custody in Rome.

Acts 28:30; "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him."

Mark, who once quit as a helper during the first missionary journey, was back in Paul's good graces, had come to him in Rome, and was about to be sent off on a distant journey at Paul's request. (Colossians 4:10;)

Aristarchus has joined Paul in Rome. (Philemon 24;)

Demas, who some years later will forsake Paul because "he loved this present world," was as yet by Paul's side. (Colossians 4:14;)

Epaphras, a preacher who served with several congregations in the Lycus River valley of Asia, has come to Rome in the capacity of messenger for those congregations at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. (Colossians 4:12)'

Acts 28:30; "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him."

Tychicus, the Ephesian, who had gone with Paul to Jerusalem, had also found his way to Rome.
(Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7;)

While at Rome, or on the way to Rome,
Epaphroditus had become sick near
unto death. (Philippians 2:27;)

Someone who visited Philippi after this told the Philippians about his sickness, and news had also gotten back to Rome that the health of their messenger was a concern to the brethren at Philippi.

A Jew named **Jesus, who also was named Justus**, was also among Paul's fellow workers at Rome.
(Colossians 4:10-14;)

The **preaching** would be mostly **to unbelievers**, and the **teaching** would be especially to those who were **already Christians**. Even while a prisoner.

Paul fulfilled the preaching and teaching Functions commanded in the Great Commission. *(Matthew 28:18-20;)*

All the while in Rome Paul was saved the hardships, persecutions, and afflictions that had often attended his preaching in the cities of Greece, Macedonia, and Asia Minor.

Acts is brought to a close, then, on this triumphant note.

“The Kingdom of God and the story of Jesus are openly proclaimed and taught in Rome itself.”(Bruce, op. cit., p. 535.)

Paul's Activities Described:-

Paul preached the Kingdom of God.

Paul taught the things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul did everything with confidence.
(2 Tim 1:12;)

Paul did not allow anyone to forbid him
To Preach the Gospel. (20:23-24;)

Many guesses have been made about **Why Luke ends his history of Paul** and the early assemblies with **Paul's two years in Rome.**

But **every story must end** perhaps Luke thought this was as good a place as any to bring the story to an end.

There are clues in Paul's letters written from Rome to Timothy that hint that he was released for a short time, then rearrested and executed shortly thereafter.

Tradition says he was beheaded under Nero in about 65 AD.

Tradition says Paul was beheaded under Nero in about 65 AD.



**We may think it was a TRAGIC WASTE
For Paul to be placed in prison for so long.**

**Paul says in Philippians 1:12; “Now I want you
to know, brothers, that what has happened to me
has really **served to advance the gospel.**”**

**13 “As a result, it has become clear throughout
the whole **palace guard** and to everyone else
that I am in chains for Christ.”**

14 “Because of my chains,** most of the brothers
in the Lord have been encouraged to speak
the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.”**

**Phil 4:11; “Not that I speak from want;
for I have learned to be content
in whatever circumstances I am.”**

**12 “I know how to get along with humble means,
and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any
and every circumstance I have learned
the secret of being filled and going hungry,
both of having abundance and suffering need.”**

**13 “I can do all things through Him
who strengthens me.”**

After this imprisonment. Paul's Departure!

1 Tim. 4:6; “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”

7 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;”

8 “in the future there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also **to all who have loved His appearing.**”

Conclusion.

By the time Paul arrives in Rome, the **personal service of the Apostles of Christ** has been growing less and less important.

Many congregations have been established throughout the Roman world and many preachers and teachers are doing the necessary work.

There are still inspired letters to be written and preserved for future generations.

**Paul was able to preach
to the highest and lowest in the land.**



Conclusion.

This concludes the inspired histories of Luke, the beloved physician and constant companion of Paul.

We have no further biblical accounts of the characters mentioned in the New Testament except in the letters. We have no biblical accounts of what happened to any of them.

We must rely on uninspired histories written by those who knew them.

Eusebius an early church historian.



In Luke's history called "Acts of the Apostles," we have seen the establishment of the church in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and in the "uttermost parts of the earth."

Paul said the gospel had been preached to "every creature that is under heaven" in his lifetime. (Colossians 1:23;)

Now it is up to us and every generation to the end of time to keep the spirit and message alive, sowing the gospel seed into the hearts of each new generation.

The gospel is still preached everywhere.



Generations Come and Generations Go!

By Ellis Jones.

**Generations come
And generations go.
The earth's surface changes
And men move to and fro.**



**The famous and the not so
Are born and live and die.
And God's great net keeps gathering
As time keeps passing by.**



**The sorting time is coming
When He'll throw the bad away.
But think of all the good ones
He'll be keeping on that day.**



**Noah's there, and Abraham,
And maybe even Lot.
But some, like Cain and Judas.
Maybe so and maybe not.**



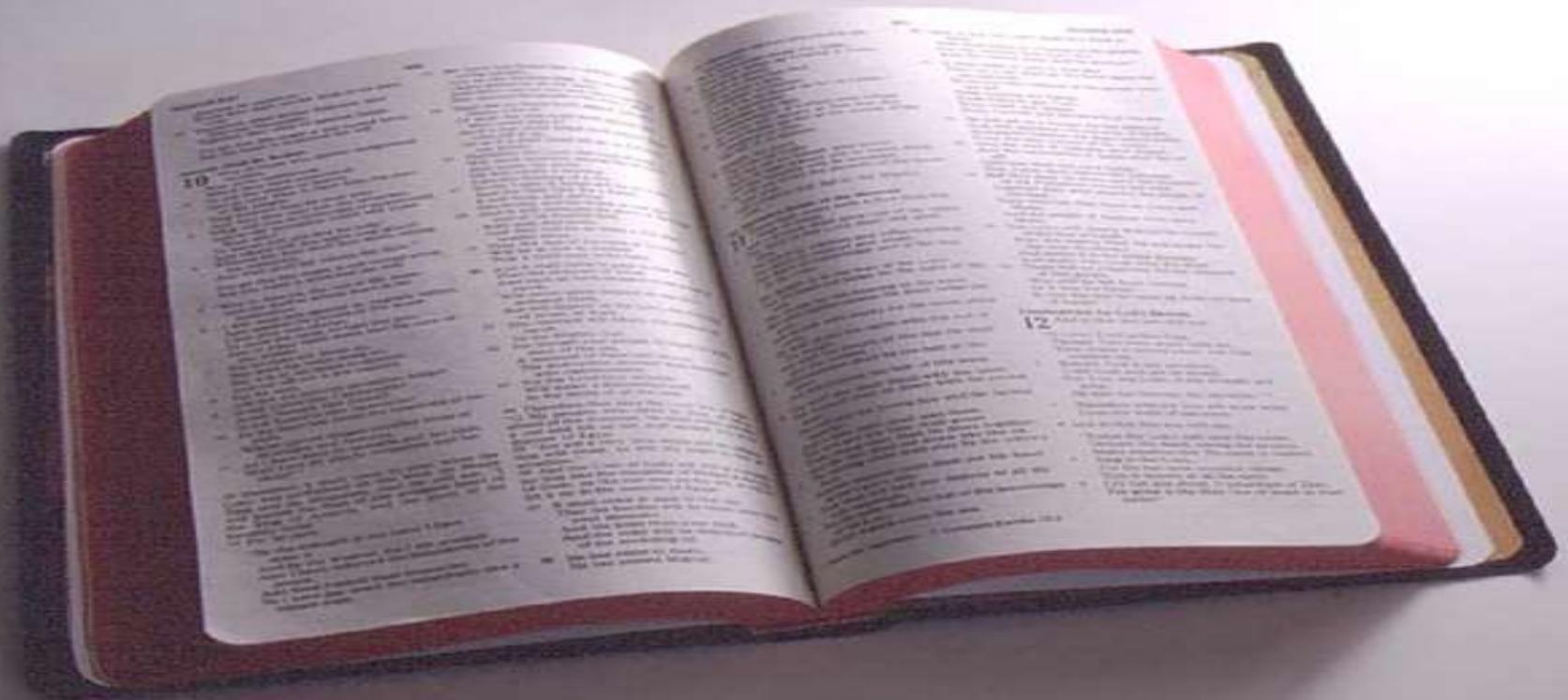
**I want to talk to Peter
And I'd like to visit Paul.
And since it is eternity,
I could see them all.**



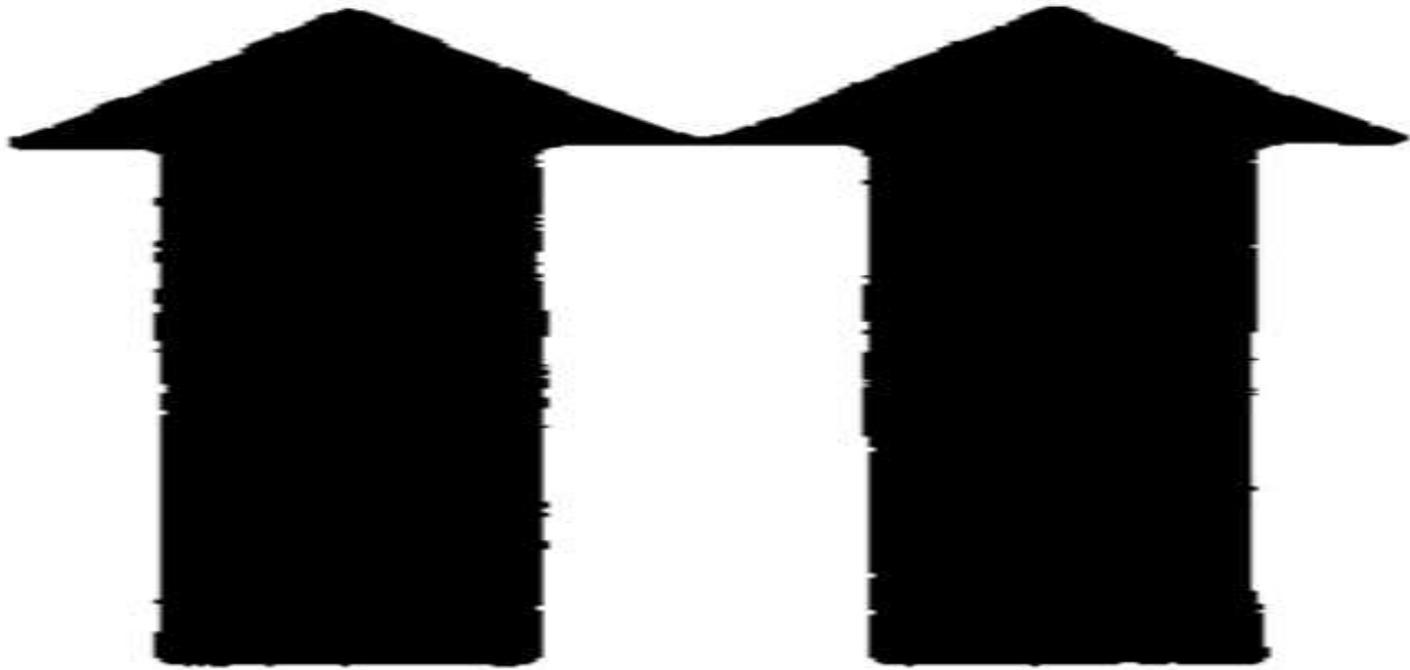
**But will I recognize them
When I see them there?
“We will know as we are known.”
And our stories we will share.**



**God left for us a road map,
One that all can follow.
But many of its teachings,
Some find hard to “swallow.”**



**There is just ONE highway-
The well-lit gospel way.
It's simple to get on it;
But on it we must stay.**



**It's also like a stairway
That goes from earth to heaven.
When you begin to climb it,
Your sins are then forgiven.**



**There's One who climbs it with you,
It's Jesus, always there.
But He will not be happy,
If His love you will not share.**



**So, bring a brother with you,
And bring a sister too.
You will feel much better
If they make that climb with you.**



**Yes, generations come
And generations go.
It's important how you live,
And also Whom you know!**



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