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Acts 27-28 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

I. The Church = At Jerusalem Chs. 1-7=

II. Persecution & Peace Chs. 8-12

III. Launching Out Chs. 13-28

As we come to ch. 27, Paul has been in prison in Caesarea for well over 2 years.

2 Roman governors have heard his case – Felix, then Festus, but had failed to render a final verdict.

Desiring to appease the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, they'd kept Paul incarcerated.

Knowing he'd get no justice in Israel, Paul appealed to Caesar, which was his right as a Roman citizen.

Festus delayed Paul's departure as long as possible because he knew the case would make him look incompetent back in Rome & might lead to his recall & public shame.

But eventually, the time came when he could delay no longer.

H. The Trip to Rome • Ch. 27-28

1. The sea route • 27:1-8

¹ And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy,

Luke, who wrote Acts, as well as a few others of Paul's friends, are with him as they set out.

they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.

This centurion, Julius, showed favor to Paul throughout the long & arduous journey to Rome.

He was a commander of a hundred men in the Augustan Regiment, which was an elite military unit which acted as liaisons between Rome & her provinces.

These guys served a dual function; they were both a diplomatic corps & an intelligence service.

They represented the military command in Rome as well as being agents of the Emperor.

Though their political power was small, their real power was great because they had Caesar's ear.

As a centurion in this special regiment, Julius was in all likelihood present when Paul had given his defense before Festus & King Agrippa; so he'd heard Paul's testimony & the Gospel.

When it came time for him to return to Rome, Festus saw it as a great opportunity to send Paul & some other political prisoners with him.

² So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia.

This ship was too small to brave the open sea so it hopped along the coast from port to port.

This would make for a very long journey, so no doubt Julius was hoping to find another, larger ship that could take a more direct route, in one of the ports this first ship would visit as it made its way along the coast of Asia.

Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.

Aristarchus was one of Paul's converts who'd accompanied him to Jerusalem over 2 years before.

He'd stuck with Paul all throughout this time.

Because this is the only other person Luke mentions, it seems their party was made up of these 3.

³ And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care.

It only takes a day to reach Sidon from Caesarea, and when they arrived, the centurion in charge allowed Paul to go ashore on his own to visit his friends.

This is an amazing trust Julius is placing in Paul. For if a prisoner escaped, the soldier guarding him would more than likely be executed.

But Julius had come to know Paul as a man of integrity. If he said he'd return to the ship, he would.

Paul's word was as good as gold; better than gold – Julius was willing to stake his LIFE on it!

How many people do you know would be willing to stake = their lives on your promise, your word?

We ought to endeavor to be = that kind of people, that trustworthy – that others would be so sure of our simply uttered promise, they'd be willing to trust us even with their lives.

Julius had that kind of confidence in Paul because he'd seen his integrity time & again.

All Paul had to do to get out of prison was to recant his faith in Christ.

All he had to do was ask his many supporters to put together a nice bribe and Felix would have let him go.

All he had to do was play a simple political game, and Festus would have released him.

But if Paul had done any of these things, he would have been disloyal to Christ & unethical in his behavior, so he refused.

Julius had seen over time how Paul's commitment to Christ was unwavering even though it cost him greatly.

And that built a respect for Paul in Julius that allowed trust to flourish.

People are watching you. = They're watching how YOU deal with trouble, how you respond to moral & ethical challenges.

If you cheat, cut corners, = dabble in deceit, play loose with ethics, then really, they don't see any difference between you & the rest of the world.

Be different! Be loyal to Christ as Paul was. Julius is still watching.

⁴ When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

They were sailing now in a time of year when the weather became difficult so they used the island of Cyprus as a wind break.

⁵ And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city of* Lycia.

They sailed along the southern coast of Asia Minor.

⁶ There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

This was a much larger ship able to sail the open sea and make a straighter route to Rome.

Alexandria was in Egypt, which was the granary for Rome.

Rome's need for grain was great & most of its imports came from the Nile Valley.

There was a steady stream of ships filled with grain moving between Egypt & Rome.

This was one of them.

But as I mentioned a couple weeks ago, there are certain months when sailing this area of the Mediterranean was extremely dangerous.

From Late September to Early November only the experienced captains would do it.

After mid-November it was suicidal for anyone less than the most skilled to attempt it.

Because of the decreased supply, grain shipments reaching Rome during this time fetched a lot more money.

⁷ When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of Crete* off Salomone. ⁸ Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

As they made their way west, the weather grew worse. Their progress became slow as they faced a strong headwind.

With much difficulty they managed to reach the island of Crete & passing along the southern coast they eventually reached the port of Fair Havens. [Map x2]

2. Shipwrecked! R= 26; 27:9-44

⁹ Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

“The Fast” was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which falls in mid-October, so this is now well past the season of fair sailing. Remember, only the most skilled captains attempted to sail at this time.

The captain of this ship wasn't up to the task. But he was anxious to make a killing in selling his grain in Rome.

Because Paul was walking in the Spirit, he sensed disaster lay ahead & warned Julius & the captain.

Though Paul was a missionary tent-maker, he'd spent a LOT of time sailing and knew a thing or two about safe sailing practices.

The decision to press on was foolish and he knew it, so he spoke up.

¹¹ Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship = than by the things spoken by Paul. ¹² <= span lang=3DEN style=3D'mso-ansi-language:EN'>And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and winter there*. =

When Julius contracted with the owner of the ship to transport his prisoners to Italy, as a military agent of the Emperor, in effect he commandeered the ship, so = the decision was his.

As much as he respected Paul, he didn't put much stock in his knowledge as a sailor.

It seemed wiser to trust the instincts of the ship's crew.

So at their urging, they set out from Fair Havens toward the port of Phoenix which was only 40 miles away.

Phoenix would offer much better protection from the winter winds.

Though Paul urged them to remain at Fair Havens, there wasn't much of a town there for the crew & soldiers to enjoy while they waited.

Phoenix would provide a much more interesting place to stay if they had to hole up for a while.

¹³ When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete.

Being led by the Spirit, Paul had given them good & ; godly advice.

Rejecting it, they'd = set sail when favorable winds seemed to confirm their choice

to reject Paul's counsel.

And so it often is when **WE** turn from God's Word to our own desires or thoughts.

The enemy engineers the circumstances to make it appear we're right & know what's best for us.

Fair winds blow, confirming we **ARE** the captain of our own ship.

But sure enough – as soon as we hit the open water, a storm of trouble descends.

There's an important lesson to learn from these verses. It's an especially important lesson for us who live in a post-modern age where truth is determined by majority vote.

As the commander, Julius was the decision-maker in this situation.

His counselors fell into 2 categories –

On one side was Paul, all by himself, a tent-making rabbi who was a prisoner.

His counsel was made with reference to his spiritual sense that disaster lay ahead if they sailed.

Julius knew of Paul's deep commitment to God & of his profound moral excellence.

He had every reason to believe & no reason to doubt Paul's word was backed by spiritual insight.

On the other side was the ship's crew which voted for setting sail.

Though they appeared to have more sailing experience, there was no pretense of spiritual insight that framed their advice & urging.

When Julius broke it down to the simplest terms he had one vote from Paul who represented God & several votes from the "sea-experts."

The majority won & Julius gave the order to set sail.

It didn't take long before he & everyone else realized that truth is not determined by majority vote.

A short time later everyone realized with special force that this world's so-called experts cannot trump the Word of God.

Listen, when you're faced with making a decision about what to do in life, look to God's Word & seek advice from those who demonstrate a consistent walk in the Spirit.

It doesn't matter if = the entire world lines up on the other side &= ; its experts cast their vote for some other course of action—**Go with God!**

¹⁴ But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.

This was a raging northeaster – a hurricane force wind that bore down on them, driving them off course and out to open water.

¹⁵ So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her drive*.

¹⁶ *And running under the shelter of an island called Claudia, we secured the skiff with difficulty.*

The wind was so fierce they couldn't sail into it, all they could do was let it carry them along with it.

They had just enough steering to be able to stay off the rocks & sail under the leeward side of an island south of Crete where they then hauled the skiff aboard lest the mounting waves swamp it.

The skiff was a little row boat towed behind the main = ship.

It served as a lifeboat & as a guide when entering port.

¹⁷ *When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven.*

The waves battering the ship were so fierce, they feared it would come apart, so they used cables to surround the ship's hull & hold it together.

The captain began to fear the wind had driven them far enough south that they were nearing the Syrtis Sands. This sand-bar north of Africa was a well-known graveyard of ships.

So they took down the sail & tried to steer away from any further distance south.

Don't picture this ship as an 18th Century frigate, this isn't the Black Pearl.
[Ship pic]

These grain ships were large; 140 ft. long, 36 wide, & had a draught of 33 ft.

The bow & stern ended in a point, with the stern going up high like a gooseneck

There was no rudder; rather the ship was steered by 2 oversized oars on each side in the stern.

This made maneuvering in a storm very difficult because the oars were often out

of the water was the waves rolled by.

The ship had a single mast in the center of the ship, with 1 large square sail made of linen or leather.

The sail was for forward movement only; it was not rigged for steering.

In a strong wind, the danger was that the sail would tear the mast right out of the ship.

So these guys took down the sail and used oars only to steer westward.

The problem was, with no stars to steer by, only having the general direction of the sun to navigate by, it wasn't always easy to know which way was which.

They might very well be headed toward the Syrtis Sands rather than away from them.

Their anxiety grew day by day.

¹⁸ And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship. ¹⁹ On the third day we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands.

Each hour saw the storm grow worse, so to keep the waves from swamping them, they first threw out the deck cargo, then the ship's tackle to lighten the ship & raise it higher out of the water.

²⁰ Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

In a bit we'll see that the storm lasted 2 weeks; 14 days of unrelenting terror!

It got to the point where they gave up & resigned themselves to death. The sea would take them.

They'd soon be joining Davey Jones' crew on the Flying Dutchman.

²¹ But after long abstinence from food,

Fear & seasickness combined to ruin their appetite. They'd not eaten for 2 solid weeks.

This would put them all in a weakened state.

then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.

Paul isn't gloating here. He rightly reminds them that he'd called it.

It was important they be confronted with the fact that he'd spoken the right word before so they must listen to him now.

Over the years, Charley & I have had people come to us for counsel.

We show them what God says & point out the principles that ought to guide them.

Then they go out & do the very thing the Word said they ought NOT do.

It blows up and they return all remorseful & sorry & ask what they should do now.

So again we take them to God's Word & show them what to do.

They leave, & go do the exact same foolish thing as before.

I've known people who seem to have the gift of foolishness.

They act as though they've been called to the ministry of disobedience.

They just keep choosing to go in the opposite direction from what God says.

After a while, when they come crying for help because their rebellion has stung them yet again, you have to say, "No! We can't help you. We can't rescue you. We warned you not to do this, We showed you God's counsel & you made a clear choice to reject it. You have to bear the consequences yourself. That may be the only way you'll learn."

Paul reminded them of his warning about all this so they'd put more weight in his counsel now.

²² And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, = but only of the ship. ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁼⁴ saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island."

*In v. 20, Luke says **ALL HOPE** was lost. The unqualified discouragement mentioned before Paul's words in v. 21 mean Paul was tempted to give up hope too.*

It was in the temptation to despair that God dispatched an angel to encourage Paul & renew his hope.

This is ever the devil's aim when the storms of = life assail us – he tries to weaken our faith in God by tempting us toward discouragement.

The longer & harder the = trial blows the greater the force of the temptation.

The longer God's sun = of goodness is eclipsed by a moon of trouble, the easier it becomes to forget = what light is.

But the eclipse never lasts= , the moon always moves on, the storm always ends, and the light always comes out again.

The angel didn't just tell Paul to chipper up. H= e told him he had an appointment to see Caesar.

Not only that, but everyone= aboard ship would survive.

From the way the angel word= s the promise we can conclude Paul had been praying for their safety.

And while all the people would make it safely ashore, = the ship was destined to be lost.

²⁷ Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sail= ors sensed that they were drawing near some land.

There may have been birds flying overhead or they may = have heard the sound of waves breaking off in the distance.

²⁸ And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and when they= had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms.

²⁹ Then, fearing lest we should run aground on = the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come= .

IN the dark they could not see the shore looming befor= e them so they threw out anchors to slow the ship's approach to land.

³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down= the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow,

³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the rop= es of the skiff and let it fall off.

The ship's crew had had enough & decided to abandon ship.

They loaded into the skiff, ostensibly to drop an anchor from the bow, the front end of the ship, which makes no sense whatever.

Their real plan was to row = to shore and leave the ship to its own fate.

With no crew aboard, there&= #8217;d be no one to sail it in to shore when the dawn came.

Paul knew what their plan was & warned Julius. He gave the order & the soldiers cut the ropes to = the skiff before the sailors could climb in.

*An important lesson can be drawn from this – **Don't jump ship!***

When life is tough & a = storm of trouble descends on you, don't abandon your station. Stay the course.=

Is your marriage stormy? Don't jump ship.

Is your job tough? Don't abandon your station.

Listen, just like the people in the ship we're r= eading about here, God has a plan for your life.

Don't just seek to ge= t away & make your escape, seek God in the midst of your trial.

The best way out of trouble= is not to see escape but to seek God; He IS our escape.

Safety lies in staying with= Him.

So do what the soldiers did – cut the ropes to t= he little boat.

Don't leave yourself = an out, another way.

Cleave to the Lord and leav= e all other routes of escape.

If you're marriage is a mess & it seems like it's been a fierce storm of trouble for 14 days, weeks, months, years – don't look for solace in some blond, brunette, or red-hired <= span class=3DStyleBoldItalic>dinghy.

Don't flirt with some blue-eyed Skipf.

Cut the ropes to anything t= hat would tempt your heart to forsake your marriage.

Stay with it. Renew your co= mmitment to the Lord & ask Him to heal your marriage.

³³ *And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, sayin= g, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without fo= od, and eaten nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, fo= r this is for your*

survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.”³⁵ And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat.³⁶ Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.³⁷ And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship.

Paul knew they'd need strength to face what was coming so he urged them to eat then did so himself as an example.

I don't want to over spiritualize this, but just as they needed physical strength to face the ordeal ahead of them, we need to be drawing spiritual strength from a steady diet of God's Word in order to face the trials we do.

³⁸ So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.³⁹ When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.⁴⁰ And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes;

They knew this was the end of the ship so they cut the ropes to the anchors and the steering oars and let them fall into the sea.

and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore.

They unfurled the sail and just let it drive them straight on ahead toward the beach.

⁴¹ But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

The ship hit a reef that was still a ways off shore. The back end of the ship started to get torn to pieces by the waves that were breaking on the reef.

⁴² And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.⁴³ But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,⁴⁴ and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

The rule for guarding prisoners was that if you let a prisoner escape, you suffered his punishment.

So the soldiers thought it best to just slay all the prisoners then & there.

They could use the shipwreck as cover for the atrocity.

But Julius wanted to save Paul so he over ruled his men's action and commanded everyone to abandon ship & assemble on shore.

Those who could swim fared best as they were able to make it to shore without much difficulty.

Those who couldn't swim used pieces of debris from the ship to float to shore.

Some even surfed – it says they used boards.

In this way, they all came to shore safely – not a soul was lost.

3. Ministry in Malta • 28:1-10

a. Among the natives • vs. 1-6

¹ Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. ² And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.

³ But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. ⁴ So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." ⁵ But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

We looked at these verses 2 Sunday ago.

b. To Publius • vs. 7-10

⁷ *In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days.*

The island of Malta is about 60 miles south of Sicily. Along with everything else in the Mediterranean, it was controlled by Rome.

Caesar had given large estates on Malta to several of his most loyal military veterans.

The ruler of the island was given the title "first citizen" – so Luke's reference to Publius as the "leading citizen" here fits perfectly with what history tells us about

Malta.

Publius= would recognize in Julius someone to welcome & make comfortable while arrangements were made to continue the journey to Rome.

⁸ And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. ⁹ So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. ¹⁰ They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

Paul's ministry among the people of Malta was a repeat of Jesus' ministry & that of the apostles in the early days of the church in Jerusalem.

Although there's no mention of his planting a church on Malta, we can be sure he led many to faith in Christ.

4. The trip from Malta to Rome • 28:11-16

¹¹ After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. ¹² And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. ¹³ From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, ¹⁴ where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. ¹⁵ And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

The remainder of the trip to Rome was a breeze so Luke passes over it quickly.

Syracuse is on the eastern coast of Sicily. Rhegium is on the very tip of the boot of Italy.

A southern wind meant they made good time sailing to their last port at Puteoli.

Puteoli was the main port for Rome & has been called the "Liverpool of the Roman World."

It was all wharves & warehouses and packed with merchant ships. [Map]

Just to the south was Baiae where wealthy Romans docked their yachts with their bright sails & luxuriant fixtures.

To the north & within sight of Puteoli was Misenum, home of the Roman fleet; brimming with ships of war.

As they took the famous Appian Way, they arrived at the Appii Forum 43 miles

from Rome

When he arrived there, a group of believers from Rome met him.

During the week Paul, Luke, & Aristarchus stayed in Puteoli, a message was carried to the church at Rome of Paul's arrival & they sent out a delegation to meet him.

10 miles further on, at Three Taverns, another group arrived to welcome Paul & accompany him to Rome.

After the way nearly everyone had abandoned Paul for the last 2 years at Caesarea, v. 15 says this warm greeting at Rome cheered him immensely.

¹⁶ Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

Instead of putting Paul in one of the many dungeons in Rome, he was allowed to rent a house and to enjoy the freedom of a house-arrest.

Though he had considerable freedom, he was watched night & day by a Roman guard.

5. Paul in Rome • 28:17-31

¹⁷ And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans,¹⁸ who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death.¹⁹ But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation.²⁰ For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

One of the first things Paul did was to meet with the leadership of the Jewish community in Rome, which numbered in the tens of thousands.

He spelled out the circumstances of his presence there, and letting them know that he wanted to work with them.

²¹ Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you.²² But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know

that it is spoken against everywhere.”

History tells us that the Church in Rome was at this time large & well known, so these Jewish leaders weren't without the opportunity to hear the Gospel and know what was going on.

What made Paul unique in their eyes was the fact that he'd been a member of the Sanhedrin, a rabbi, and a student of the famous Gamaliel.

Add to that august list of accomplishments was the fact that he was now on appeal to Caesar for one reason – being a follower of Jesus.

All of this added up to create a great curiosity in them.

If someone with Paul's heritage & background could be a Christian, then they thought the Gospel deserved a closer look.

²³ *So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.* ²⁴ *And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.* ²⁵ *So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers,* ²⁶ *saying, ‘Go to his people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand and with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”* ²⁷ *Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”* ²⁸ *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.*

Paul gets the same reaction from the Jews in Rome he'd received everywhere else.

They tracked with him while he laid out the prophetic picture for the Messiah and showed how Jesus fulfilled it all.

Some were persuaded & drawn into faith, while others saw it but resisted to yield to the logical conclusion of the Gospel & the case Paul built.

In response to the conviction of the Spirit that came on all, some surrendered while others hardened.

What made each person's response evident was his/her reaction to Paul's mention of God's intent to save Gentiles the same way He saved Jews.

Believers rejoiced while unbelievers rejected the idea with absolute, vehement, angry loathing!

³⁰ Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

Acts ends with Paul under a loose form of house arrest.

There's a lot of debate among scholars over whether or not this is the end of Paul's story or if he was released after this & made it to Spain as he said he intended to do in Romans 15.

We know that eventually he was executed in Rome by the demonic Nero.

Luke's mention of Paul spending 2 years in Rome under what looks like virtual freedom stands in stark contrast to the desperate situation Paul describes in his last letter – 2 Timothy, where he's awaiting the order for his execution.

So, there's a good chance Paul was released at the end of this 2 years, went to Spain as he planned, then returned to Rome where he was arrested by Nero who staged a fierce persecution of Christians in the last years of his reign.

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Feed My Sheep

Feed My Sheep

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printable Content-Type: text/xml; charset="utf-8" -----
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