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THE END OF THE JOURNEY WITH PAUL IN ACTS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 142
ACTS 28:10-31

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ACTS 28:10-31 "Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary. And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollus. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

In verse 10 we have come to the end of the winter season in Malta. Paul and Dr. Luke and Ariscarchus spent the winter in Malta and we have already studied their ministry there.

ACTS 28:10 "Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary." It is obvious from our study here that the people of Malta were suffering from a number of different kinds of diseases. Apparently there was need for miracles and for medical attention and both were accomplished. These people of Malta, though unbelievers, had nobility of character and were indeed kind to Paul and to his companions. The hospitality offered by Publius was outstanding and Paul's experience on Malta turned out to be a happy one. The response on the Island of Malta was fantastic and God used this winter experience to get Paul ready for an interlude in his life. Paul had gone for twenty years without

a vacation and he needed one. So here at Malta Paul evidently had a fantastic ministry, enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the Island very much, and evidently had ninety days with little opposition. "Honoured us" is an aorist, active, indicative of "Timao" and means that he was honoured in every activity. Evidently they received many very valuable things, including hospitality, friendship, love and material things. There was no hostility on the island and Paul and his companions had three months of delightful ministry. It would all be quite different when he got to Rome. Here was an interlude between battles. When they departed they loaded them down with things they needed. It was indeed unusual to see a terrible shipwreck end like this. This was the last lap of the sea journey to Rome, where the storm of opposition would break over his head. Just about ninety miles north of the Island of Malta was Sicily which touched up close to the boot of Italy. There is a narrow pass between Sicily and Italy and it is called the Strait of Messina. Paul and his companions will pass through this Strait and on to the Port of Naples and then on to Rome. It is very hard to get through the Strait of Messina for two reasons. There you find a series of rocks called "Scylla" and a whirlpool called "Charybdis." So we have today the slang expression "Caught between Scylla and Charybdis." So it was a very dangerous bit of water. There was a port entitled Regium, and here the ships would stop and wait for the South wind to blow so they could sail safely through that pass.

ACTS 28:11 "And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux." Paul found a good sea captain who had enough good judgment to spend the winter there and not rush out into the wild sea. The name of the ship was Castor and Pollux. The word translated sign here is from "parasemon" and for a long time no one understood what this meant. It means twin boys, one named Castor and the other Pollux. Their images and names were written there on the bow of the ship. These are the twin sons of Zeus, one famous as a horse trader and the other famous as a boxer. This sign was on the ship to bring good luck and the heathen sailors often prayed to Castor and Pollux.

ACTS 28:12 "And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days." They landed at Syracuse, a very famous city. It was founded in 735 B.C. and conquered by the Romans in 212 B.C. In the 5th Century this was a famous city and here the Greek fleet was wiped out in battle. There was a man living in Syracuse named Archimedes, who was one of the founders of geometry and one of the greatest mathematicians of all times. He helped invent some instruments of war that proved to be fantastic and thereby delayed the conquest of the Romans by several years. When the Romans conquered Syracuse, they put Archimedes to death.

ACTS 28:13 "And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:" "We fetched a compass" may be one of the strangest translations in the New Testament. The word is "perierchomai" and it means to go around, to make a detour in order to get to Rhegium, and there they waited for the south wind to blow. Their next stop was Puteoli, which is the port of Naples and out in the bay is the Isle of Capri. It is about four miles square and has a population of about eight thousand. This is one of the most beautiful bays in the world, the Isle of Capri on the left and in the distance are mountains where is located Mt. Vesuvius. Probably it was belching out smoke when Paul sailed by there, for a few years later it would erupt and destroy Pompeii in 79 A.D. Here is also the city of Naples. In Paul's day Puteoli was a great resort town. Here Paul landed and all this area was destroyed when Vesuvius erupted. Here the wealthy of Rome had their summer homes and here the grain ships came in.

ACTS 28:14 "Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome." Here Paul and his companions found some believers and they had a seven-day stay with them.

ACTS 28:15 "And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage." Ninety miles from Puteoli and forty miles south of Rome you find the town called Appi Forum. This is on the Appian Way, which was the most famous freeway in all the world, and it is still there and still in use. The Three Taverns is a town ten miles closer to Rome. Apparently Paul had become depressed, after those three great months at Malta. But when he met the believer at the Appi Forum and The Three Taverns, he thanked God and took courage. The Greek says, "He seized courage." Paul seized courage and the word for courage is "Tharsos" and it means to go from a deep depression to sustained courage.

ACTS 28:16 "And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." Paul was delivered to the captain of the guard. This is a very important officer who was in charge of the Praetorian Guard. Paul was permitted to dwell in his own apartment, under a Roman guard. This evidently was the result of his fine conduct on the long trip from Caesarea and his helpfulness in the shipwreck and on the Island of Malta. So here is a high honor that was accorded to a man who had appealed to Caesar. In this apartment Paul wrote Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians. These are the most intensified and concentrated books in the Bible concerning doctrine. These two years were the most productive two years in all his ministry.

ACTS 28:17-21 "And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee." Here is the description of Paul's first meeting with the Jews in Rome. Paul rested from his journey for three days and then called the Jews together. Pompey had brought certain slave Jews there, but little by little other Jews had come to Rome and by the time Paul arrived there was quite a large Jewish population in Rome. In 61 A.D. Claudius decided to get rid of the Jews in Rome and many were deported, including Aquila and Priscilla. But later he changed his mind; and allowed the Jews to return to Rome. So Paul made a speech to these Jews which began with "Men and brethren" and it means men of the same race. Paul first declared his innocence. Actually no report had yet reached Rome from Caesarea concerning Paul. Paul then explained how the Romans in Caesarea tried him and found in him nothing worthy of punishment. He then explained how he was compelled to appeal to Caesar. He wanted to get to Rome in order to preach the gospel and witness for Jesus Christ. In verse 20 Paul didn't say it was for the "hope of Israel he was bound with this chain" but rather "It was for the confidence of Israel he was bound," and the confidence of Israel was none other than Jesus Christ. I am bound "perikeimai" and it means to lie around something. This is reverse imagery. It actually means that Paul lies around the chain, not the chain around him. "I lie around this chain." Now why did he put it that way? Because he had overcome his depression and by this figure of speech was saying to them that though this chain was on him physically, his spirit had won the victory over the chain and he was actually not a prisoner of Rome but a prisoner of the Lord. In verse 21 they let him know that they had received no message from Caesarea about him.

ACTS 28:22-24 "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." This was Paul's second meeting with the Jews. They wanted to hear what Paul had to say. "What thou thinkest." This means to think and form a definite conclusion. They wanted to know what his established opinion was. They called Christianity a "sect" and the word is "Airesis" and it means "a faction." This is what they called Christianity. And they added "It is known that it is spoken against." In verse 23 we see that a great crowd of Jews came to his apartment and he "expounded" and this is from "ektithemai" and it means to place outside. In other words, he just placed the truth outside so it was very clear for them to understand. He testified is from "diamarturomai" and it means to give a very solemn warning and give it objectively. The word "peitho" is persuade and it means to persuade on the basis of having a clear presentation of the facts. In other words, Paul gave the facts one by one concerning "The Jesus." Notice where he got his information--out of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Jesus is found in the Old Testament and Paul presented Jesus as the Messiah and he did it from morning until evening. In verse 24 we notice that some believed and some did not believe. "Petho" is used for believe and this means they believed on the basis of the facts. "Things which were spoken" refers to the fact that they believed not because Paul presented the message in such an attractive manner, nor did they believe because they became emotional, but they believed on the accuracy of the content of the material. But some refused to believe and this is John 3:36 all over again.

ACTS 28:25 "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." Paul here gets in one last word from Isaiah. As the believers and unbelievers fell into an argument, Paul explains that their response is a fulfillment of prophesy. He quoted Isaiah 6:9-10.

ACTS 28:26-27 "Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." These two verses from Isaiah were addressed to the unbelievers. "Suneimi" is translated understand. They heard but didn't hear. They saw but they didn't see, they didn't get the panoramic view. Isaiah gave this message in 700 B.C. when the nation of Israel was in great danger and now Paul uses the same message when the nation of Israel is in great danger again. Verse 27 explains why the nation was in danger. "Waxed gross" means to wax fat. This is an athletic word Paul used. Paul told them they had gotten fat in their minds and couldn't think. It means that they had negative volition toward Bible doctrine. This is the reason they couldn't see and hear and that's why they didn't understand. Paul used this passage to warn the Jews that the Fifth Cycle of discipline was coming to them.

ACTS 28:28 "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Paul lets them know that just because the Jews rejected the message, it didn't mean that the progress of the kingdom was over. Not at all. It just meant that dispensations were just shifting gears. The Church Age had dawned and Gentiles were now hearing and being saved. He reminded them that the Jews had been the major thrust of the angelic conflict, but the Church Age had just begun and the angelic conflict had shifted to the Gentiles. And remember, the

great expositors for the last 2,000 years have been Gentiles. The reformers were Gentiles. And who is teaching the Word of God in the world today? Jews or Gentiles? Well, you know. This is the Church Age and in the Church Age the Gentiles will be the ones who embrace Christianity and the message of Christ. In the next two years Paul would write Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians and all through them was the emphasis on Gentiles, Gentiles, Gentiles. The middle wall of partition had been broken down. We are all one in Christ. Paul said, "They will hear it" and this is a prophesy of the Church Age that was then just dawning. Verse 29 is not found in the original.

ACTS 28:30 "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him," Paul had his own apartment for two whole years and wrote these four great books mentioned above. "And received all that came unto him" and it is "Apodechomai" and it means to embrace from the ultimate source. He had enough doctrine to shift gears--to the Jews first but also to the Greek and the Gentiles. Here is a Jew of Jews, of the Tribe of Benjamin, and yet he had sense enough to shift gears and move on.

ACTS 28:31 "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." The word for preaching refers to his authority, the word teaching refers to the content of his message. So God graciously gave Paul two glorious years to write and preach and teach in his own hired house in Rome. Paul would write about those days and say, "Even some in Caesar's household salute you."