

Acts 28

Acts 28.1-6

V1 – On what island had they landed? Malta (still known by that name today) or Melita (in some translations)

-Remember the conference on Malta, Jan.-Feb. 1945, between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill (with their military staffs)

V2 – How did the islanders receive Paul and those with him? They welcomed them

-What was the weather like? Rain

-What did the local people do to help those from the ship? Built a fire to warm them up

V3 – Why did the snake come out with the heat? It had been in hibernation

-Where had Christ said that his followers in the First Century would be able to handle deadly snakes? *Mark 16.18*

-When did that power end? See *1 Cor. 13.10* – The miraculous gifts ceased when the Bible was completed in *Rev. 22*

V4 – What did the local people say when they saw the poisonous snake bite Paul? He must have been an evil man, and even though he survived the shipwreck, he still did not escape his punishment (or his "justice")

-Where else in the New Testament do we see this same kind of thinking? *Luke 13.1-5* – The disciples reported on the disaster with Galileans carried out by Pilate

-The disciples assumed that the victims were guilty of something terrible

-What was the reply of Jesus? Read *Luke 13.1-5* – We all have the need to repent (in other words, we must be very cautious in blaming people for the disasters that befall them)

-Today when we hear that someone has some terrible disease, for example, the first thought is, "What did he do to get that disease?"

-But instead, we should examine our lives and repent of our sins (not worry about other people and why they are suffering)

V5 – What was Paul's reaction in getting bitten by the poisonous snake? He shook the snake off and continued on his way

-How did he know that he would survive this bite? God had already told him he would testify before Caesar in Rome (*Acts 27.24*), so one snake bite was not going to deter the plans of God

V6 – Where else were people so fickle? Lystra

-What was their new opinion? That he was a "god" (again, like the scene at Lystra, except in reverse – See *Acts 14.8-20*)

Acts 28.7-10

V7 – How did the leading man of the island (Publius) help the people from the shipwreck? He treated them very courteously for 3 days

V8 – Who had a sick father? Publius

-How did Luke describe the symptoms of this man? Recurrent fever and dysentery

V 9 – How were the people repaid for their kindness? Their diseases were healed

V 10 – Was Luke still with Paul? Yes

-How do we know that? The use of "us" in this verse

-How did the people bid farewell to Paul and the others? With marks of respect and supplies for all their needs

-Notice the kindness of these people, as opposed to the many brutal people we have seen in the book of *Acts*

Acts 28.11-16

V 11 – What did the next ship have for its figurehead? The "Twin Brothers" – Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Zeus (notice Zeus, not Jupiter – so this is Greek mythology, not Roman mythology)

-There are two mountain peaks in Yellowstone National Park named Castor and Pollux

-For more very interesting details on these two gods in Greek mythology, see the Internet

V 12 – Where did they sail to next? Syracuse, on the island of Sicily (about 80 miles due north of Malta) – so they are getting closer and closer to Rome

V 13 – They next sailed to Rhegium

-According to brother Boles, there are coins from Rhegium which have the image of Castor and Pollux on them

-And then on to Puteoli, a grain port

-From there, Paul would have been able to see Mt. Vesuvius (which had a very violent and deadly eruption in 79 A.D.)

-There are many great photographs of Mt. Vesuvius on the Internet and in standard reference books

V 14 – How had the gospel spread to Italy? From the Day of Pentecost (*Acts 2.10 – "visitors from Rome"*)

-We are just beginning to see the great impact of the Day of Pentecost on the world

V 15 – Who came down from Rome to meet Paul and accompany him to Rome? Members of the church in Rome

-How wonderful that must have been for Paul and Luke!

-It is so great even today to be traveling and to find a faithful congregation of the Lord's people

V 16 – What living conditions did Paul have when he arrived at Rome? He was allowed to stay by himself (not in prison), but in the company of a Roman soldier

Acts 28.17-22

V 17 – Why preach to the Jews first? *Romans 1.16* (next chapter in the Bible) – Christ assigned Paul to preach first to the Jews, and then to the Greeks (Gentiles)

-What was Paul's message in his opening remarks to the Jews? That he had not maligned the Jews and had not violated the customs of the Jewish people, but nevertheless the Jews had

delivered him over to the Romans

V 18 – The Romans had offered to release Paul, but could not because of the charges made by the Jews in Jerusalem

V 19 – Paul was forced to appeal to Caesar (which was why he was in Rome)

V 20 – What an excellent statement – Paul was wearing chains because of the "hope of Israel"
-**How was Christ the "hope of Israel"?** He was the one spoken of by all the prophets of the Old Testament (think of *Isaiah 53* just as one example)

V 21 – **Their reply?** They had not received any letters or news from Jerusalem about Paul

V 22 – **The reputation of the church (at least in Rome)?**

-It was spoken against everywhere (in much of the world at that time)

-**How did they describe the nature of the New Testament church?** Still a "sect" of Judaism in their eyes

Acts 28.23-31

V 23 – **What did Paul do to try to persuade them to become Christians?** He spoke "from morning to night" about Christ and the New Testament church

V 24 – **The result of Paul's preaching?** Some believed, but others did not

V 25 – Paul quoted from the great prophet Isaiah

-**Why did he quote from Isaiah?** Because he was a great Jewish prophet of the Old Testament, and these Jews would have had great respect for Isaiah

V 26-27 – A quote from the book of Isaiah - **Read Isaiah 6.9-10**

-**What was the message of God to Isaiah?** You are to continue to preach my message, even though very, very few will heed it (God's same message to Jeremiah, Amos, and others)

-Indeed, the 12 tribes fell, in spite of the preaching of Isaiah and the other prophets, but the prophets were still to keep preaching the message until God told them they could stop

V 28 – **Since these Jews in Rome were rejecting the message, what was the decision that Paul made in their presence?** To take the gospel to the Gentiles

V 29 – Typical of the Jews – they had a great dispute among themselves concerning taking the message of God to the Gentiles

Acts 28.30-31

V 30 – **How long did Paul stay in Rome awaiting trial?** Two years

-**Where did he stay during that time?** In his own rented quarters

-**What did he do during that time?** Welcomed all who came to see him

V 31 – What was he preaching during that time? The kingdom of God and the good news about Jesus Christ

-Did the Roman government put any restrictions on him? No, he could preach with openness and without hindrance

The rest of Paul's life:

1. He wanted to go to Spain (*Rom. 15.22-25*), but there is no concrete evidence that he made it there

2. It is believed that he was executed at the command of Nero in 64-67 A.D., after a second imprisonment

3. His final inspired message in the Bible (in time sequence) was 2 Timothy 4 – Read 2 Tim. 4.9-22

Great lessons from the book of Acts and the life of Paul:

1. Paul's adaptability – Read 1 Cor. 9.19-23

-Examples: Speeches before the Jews – he was not offensive

-The work at Ephesus (*Acts 19.37*)

-The Nazirite Vow (*Acts 21.24*)

-Athens – He didn't condemn idols directly, but he preached the truth about the one true God of the Universe

2. Paul's respect for all people, great and small

-**Small?** Philippian jailer, prisoners in the shipwreck

-**Great?** Felix, Festus, Agrippa, Sanhedrin

-*Acts 17.26* – of one blood God made all the nations (See *Gal. 3.28*)

3. Paul's clear conscience

-**Where stated?** *Acts 23.1* – before the Sanhedrin

-*Acts 24.16* – before Felix

Read your favorite verse from the *Acts* to the class:

Revised 2012-12-05