

Journey Through Acts
“The Rest Of The Story”
Acts 28:17-31

Introduction:

1. Please Turn With Me In Your Bibles Tonight:
 - To The Last Chapter In Acts:
 - Acts 28 - Where Tonight - We Will Finish:
 - Our Year-Long:
 - *Journey Through Acts:*
 - As Well As Spend Some Time:
 - Considering What We Can Call:
 - “The Rest Of The Story!”
2. Some Of You Might Be Familiar:
 - With That Phrase!
 - It Was The Ending:
 - To Those Intriguing Stories:
 - Told By The Radio Personality, Paul Harvey:
 - “And Now You Know The Rest Of The Story!”
 - Well - Unfortunately:
 - Much Of What Takes Place:
 - *After* Acts 28 - In The History Of The Early Church:
 - Is Not As Well Documented:
 - And Can’t Be As Well Known:
 - As We Would Like It To Be!
 - But - There Is Still Some History:
 - And Tradition:
 - That Might Help Satisfy:
 - Our Inquiring Minds - Or - Perhaps:
 - Produce Even More Curiosity!
 - 3. And That’s OK!
 - Because - The Holy Spirit:
 - Intended For The Book Of Acts:
 - To End:
 - Both Were & How It Does!
 - And So - Let’s First Look At:
 - The Ending Of This Journey:
 - We’ve Been On - When Paul Finally Reached:
 - His Destination Of Rome!
 - But - Unlike Me & My Wife This Summer:
 - Paul Was Not On Vacation In The “Eternal City!”
 - No - This Was A Mission Trip!
 - And Now - He Had No Time To Lose!
 - **Here Is The Earliest Known Illustration Of** The Apostle’s Peter & Paul - It Is On A Medallion That Was Struck In The Early 200’s AD. This Medallion Was Found In Some Catacombs Just Outside The Ancient Walls Of The City!
 - So - In 28:17-22 - 3 Days After His Arrival:
 - He Calls A Meeting With Some Of The Prominent Jewish Leaders:
 - In Rome!
 - 28:17-22 - “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. / 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. / 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. / 20 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. / 21 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. / 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against!”
 - I Am Struck By Paul’s Words:
 - In 28:19 - When He Says - After All He’d Been Through:
 - “Not That I Had Ought To Accuse My Nation Of!”
 - Those Were Words Of Mercy & Grace:
 - Extended To The Nation & The People Of Israel!

- He Was Only In Rome:
 - To Defend Himself From False Charges - Not To Accuse The Jews With Charges Of His Own!
- And So - Another Opportunity Was Provided:
 - For Paul To Plea With His People:
 - Concerning “The Hope Of Israel” - The Messiah - The Lord Jesus Christ!
- And This Is What We Find Next:
 - In 28:23-25 - Where For One Long:
 - And Full Day - Paul Shares The Gospel With Those Jewish Leaders!
- 28:23-25a - “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. / 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. / 25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed!” - We’ll Stop There For A Moment!
 - Because - Paul Finds The Reception:
 - Of His Message About Christ:
 - To Be About The Same In Rome:
 - As In The Other Cities & Towns He Went To!
 - “Some Believed” - It Says In 28:24:
 - “And Some Believed Not!”
 - And So - With This Mixed Response:
 - The Meeting Was Over!
 - But - Not Before:
 - Paul Gave - What You Might Call:
 - The World’s Most Unusual & Ineffective Invitation:
 - After A Sermon!
 - Because - It Wasn’t Much Of An Invitation:
 - At All!
 - You See - The Real Invitation Paul Gave To Those Jews:
 - Was **All Throughout** His Message:
 - That Day! He Didn’t Wait Until The End! He Called On Them To Believe In Jesus Right Then & Right There - As He Was Speaking!
 - But - Though Some **Did** Believe:
 - Likely Most Of The Others:
 - **Did Not** - And So Paul Leaves Them With Some Food For Thought!
 - He Explained To Them From Scripture **Why** Those Who **Did** Not Believe:
 - **Would** Not & Now **Could** Not Believe!
 - It Was Another Fulfillment:
 - Of God’s Word To His Prophet Isaiah:
 - Back In Isaiah 6:9-10!
 - And So - Paul Repeats God’s Words To Them:
 - In 28:25b-29!
- 28:25b-29 - “They departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, / 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: / 27 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. / 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. / 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves!”
 - Paul Told The Unbelieving Jews:
 - That They Had The Same Problem:
 - As Their Fore-Fathers!
 - But - It Wasn’t A Problem:
 - With Their Ears!
 - They Weren’t Physically Deaf!
 - Nor - Was It A Problem:
 - With Their Eyes!
 - They Weren’t Physically Blind!
 - But - As F. F. Bruce Once Said:
 - “There Are None So Deaf, As Those Who Refuse To Hear! And There Are None So Blind, As Those Who Will Not See!”
 - So - The Problem Was:
 - With Their Heart!
 - Their Rebellious Heart:

- Caused Them To Shut Their Eyes & Plug Up Their Ears To The Truth Of God's Word:

- And **That** Brought Them Into A State Of Spiritual Sleep And Stupor!

- So Now - Not Only:

- **Would** They Not See & Hear & Understand:

- The Truth - To Believe!

- They **Could** Not!

- Because - As Part Of Their Judgment:

- The Lord Left Them:

- In Their Own State Of Willing Ignorance & Unbelief!

- And - Isn't This One Of The Worst Judgments:

- A Person Can Receive? To Be Just Left Alone:

- To Their Own Will:

- And In Their Own Unbelief!

- But - At The Same Time:

- Their **Rejection** Of The Gospel:

- Once Again Brought About:

- An **Extension** Of The Gospel:

- To The Gentiles & To The Whole Wide World!

- Because "They" - Paul Says - "And They":

- By The Grace Of God:

- "Will Hear It!"

- And This Prophecy Of Paul:

- Includes You Tonight:

- If You Have Seen & Heard & Understood The Gospel:

- And Believed!

- But Then - We Come To The Final Two Verses:

- Of The Book Of Acts - Which Reveals That The Apostle Paul Continued To Share The Gospel:

- From The Confines Of His "Own Hired House!"

- So - Even Though He Was Bound, Still As A Prisoner In Rome:

- "The Word Of God" Proved Once Again That It "Is Not Bound!" (2 Timothy 2:9)

- 28:30-31 - "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, / 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him!"

- Paul Kept On Doing:

- What The Lord Jesus Had Called Him To Do:

- On The Road To Damascus Over Twenty Years Before!

4. **And That** - At Least From Luke's Standpoint:

- In The Book Of Acts:

- Is The End Of The Story!

- But - What Happens Next?

- To Paul? In Rome? To The Other Apostles, Like Peter & James & John?

- Our Journey Through Acts:

- Seems To End:

- With More Questions:

- Than Answers!

- Well - Before We Think About:

- The "Rest Of The Story!"

- I Want You To Think About:

- These Words - Written Over A Hundred Years Ago - By The English Preacher - G.

Campbell Morgan:

- In Which He Explains, Why - Perhaps - The Book Ends The Way It Does!

- "This Paragraph Constitutes The Last Page Of The First Chapter Of The History Of The Christian Church! We At Last Find Ourselves With Him In Rome! Now We Fell That We Should Like To Settle Down To A New Chapter . . . But The Book Is Over, And There Is No Further Word! Why Not? Because More Was Unnecessary! The Same Story Will Be Repeated In Every Decade, In Every Country, In Each Millennium, Until The Lord Shall Come! And To Write The Whole History Was Unnecessary!"

5. You See - The "Rest Of The Story" For Paul:

- And For The Rest Of The Early Church:

- Would Have Followed The Same Pattern:

- That We've Already Seen:

- In The Book Of Acts!

- Sure - The Circumstances Would Be Different:
 - But The Essential Plan:
 - To Be “Witnesses . . . Unto The Uttermost Part Of The Earth” Would Be The Same:
 - And Even A Bit Redundant!
 - Because - Look Again:
 - At What Paul Did There In Rome:
 - For Those Two Years!
 - 28:31 - “Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ!”
 - Everywhere He Went & To Everyone He Met - He Kept “Preaching” & “Teaching” About Christ!
 - Isn’t This What Every True Church:
 - Has Done - Throughout The History Of The Church?
 - Isn’t This What Every True Church:
 - Should Keep Doing?
 - Including Ours?
6. We Are To Keep “Preaching & Teaching” - “Those Things Which Concern The Lord Jesus Christ!”
- The Same Way Paul:
 - And The Other Apostles Did!
 - With A Powerful Witness!
 - Even As Paul - 28:23 - “Expounded - The Kingdom Of God!”
 - He Used God’s Word To Reveal God’s Plan Of Salvation To Those Who Were Lost, Both Jews & Gentiles!
 - Even The “Law Of Moses” & “The Prophets!” (28:23)
 - Our Witness Is Only As Powerful:
 - As The **Word** We Use!
 - And It’s The **Word Of God** That Is “Quick, And Powerful, And Sharper Than Any Two Edged Sword!” (Hebrews 4:12)
 - We Also Need To Keep Preaching & Teaching Christ:
 - With A Personal Witness!
 - Even As Paul - 28:23 - “Testified - The Kingdom Of God!”
 - To “Testify” Means That You Are A Personal, Eye-Witness To The Things That You Are Telling Others!
 - Paul Could **Testify** Of God’s Power & Grace - Because - He Had **Experienced**:
 - God’s Power & Grace:
 - In His Own Life!
 - And This Continues To Be One Of The Best Ways:
 - To “Preach & Teach” The Gospel To Others!
 - To Not Just “Tell” - But “Show” What Jesus Has Done For You!
 - We Also Need To Keep Preaching & Teaching Christ:
 - With A Passionate Witness!
 - Even As Paul - 28:23 - Kept “Persuading Them Concerning Jesus!”
 - This Means - That He Plead With Those People:
 - And Implored Them:
 - To “Be Ye Reconciled To God!”
 - We Hear Paul’s Heart For The People Of Israel:
 - When He Says - Romans 10:1 - “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved!”
 - And - We Feel Christ’s Own Heart For His People:
 - When He Said - Luke 13:34 - “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”
 - Do You Have The Same Heart:
 - For The Lost?
 - Is Your Invitation Always Open?
 - Sometimes - Like Paul - You May Need To Modify The Method Of Your Invitation - To Get Them To Think About Their Condition Before God! But - Be A Passionate Witness For Christ!
 - But Then - We Also Need To Keep Preaching & Teaching:
 - With A Patient Witness!
 - Even As Paul - Who - 28:23 - “From Morning Till Evening” Delivered The Message Of Christ:
 - To Those Jewish Leaders In Rome!
 - He Was Patient & Persistent!

- And That Is The Kind Of Witness:
 - You Need To Be As Well!
 - Patient & Persistent!
 - Never Consider An Opportunity To Talk To Someone About The Lord & His Word:
 - An Imposition Or An Interruption!
 - Even If Those Conversations:
 - Last “From Morning Till Evening” Or:
 - Well Into The “Evening” Itself!
7. This Is:
- The “Rest Of The Story” - After:
 - The Book Of Acts!
 - God’s People & God’s Churches:
 - Continue To Preach & Teach:
 - “Those Things Which Concern The Lord Jesus Christ!”
 - The Places May Be Different!
 - The People May Be Different!
 - The Pressures May Be Different!
 - But The Plan & The Pattern:
 - Remains The Same!
8. But - Still:
- We Are Curious:
 - As To The “Rest Of” Paul’s Story:
 - And Perhaps Even The Other Apostles!
 - It Seems Like:
 - Something *Did* Happen After:
 - Those “Two Whole Years” In Rome!
 - But What?
9. Well - There Are Some Things:
- That Likely Happened:
 - *During* Those Two Years:
 - Like The Writing Of The 4 Prison Epistles:
 - Of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, And Philemon!
 - So - Even Though Paul Could Not Get Out To Those Churches:
 - Many Of Those Churches:
 - Sent Representatives:
 - To Paul - So He Could Continue To Exercise His “Care Of All The Churches!” (2 Corinthians 11:28)
 - But - Paul Was Also In The Business:
 - Of Evangelism - Even With The Guards:
 - Who Were Chained To His Wrists!
 - Listen To What Paul Wrote:
 - To The Philippian Church:
 - 1:12-13 - “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; / So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places!”
 - 4:22 - “All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household!”
10. But - *After* Those Two Years:
- Things Aren’t So Certain!
 - It Seems Like He Was Released:
 - After Those Two Years:
 - Because In His Letters To Titus & Timothy:
 - There Are Travels That Don’t Quite Fit In With The Chronology Of Acts!
 - In The Letters Of Paul:
 - There Are Additional Trips Mentioned:
 - To Crete, Ephesus, Miletus, Troas, Various Cities In Macedonia, Corinth, And Probably Nicopolis!
 - Otto F. A. Meinardus - “The early church believed that the apostle's appeal to Caesar terminated successfully, that he was acquitted of the charges against him, and that he spent some years in freedom before he was again imprisoned and sentenced to death. Eusebius writes that ‘after pleading his cause, he is said to have been sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and after a second visit to the city, he finished his life with martyrdom.’” (Biblical Archaeologist)
 - But - One Of The Biggest Questions Is:
 - Did Paul Ever Make It To Spain?

- After All - That Is Where He Set His Sights:
 - Even Beyond The City Of Rome!
 - Well - There Is Some Early Church History:
 - And Tradition - That May Indicate:
 - Paul Did Indeed Make It To Spain!
 - One Of The Earliest References:
 - Is By A Man Named Clement Of Rome:
 - Who Was A Co-Worker With Paul:
 - And Is Even Mentioned In Philippians!
 - Well - In A Letter Written By Clement:
 - He States That Paul Had “Reached The Farthest Limits Of The West” - Which In Roman Times - Was The Region Of Spain!
 - And - Less Than One Hundred Years After Clement:
 - Another Document Known As The Muratorian Canon Mentions *As Fact* That Paul Went To Spain:
 - “Luke Compiled The Individual Events That Took Place In His Presence – As He Plainly Shows by Omitting The Martyrdom Of Peter As Well As The Departure Of Paul From The City Of Rome When He Journeyed To Spain!”
11. But - Whether Paul Made It To Spain Or Not:
- It Is Certain That:
 - His Ministry Ended Back In Rome:
 - Because - In Paul’s Second Letter To Timothy:
 - Things Take On A More Somber Tone:
 - Than At The End Of Acts!
 - In Acts - He Is A Prisoner:
 - But - He Is Allowed To Stay:
 - In His “Own Hired House!”
 - In 2 Timothy - He Is Once Again A Prisoner:
 - But Is Most Likely In The Notorious And Cold:
 - **Mamertime Prison - Around The Time** That Emperor Nero Started To Unleash A Horrific Wave Of Persecution Against The Christians In Rome!
 - He Asks Timothy To:
 - Bring His Cloke & To Do So:
 - Before Winter Sets In! (2 Timothy 4:13,21)
 - In Acts - He Was Able To Be Visited:
 - By Just About Anyone:
 - Including Members Of The Church:
 - And Seemed To Experience A Kind Of Favored-Status With His Guards!
 - In 2 Timothy - He Writes That:
 - “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. / Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me!” (2 Timothy 4:17)
 - In Acts - Paul Is Still Filled With Hope:
 - About Getting The Gospel To The Gentiles:
 - Who “Will Hear It!”
 - In 2 Timothy - He Writes:
 - “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. / I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!” (2 Timothy 4:6-7)
12. When We Went To Rome:
- Last Summer - We Wanted To Trace:
 - Some Of The “Rest Of Paul’s Story” In That City:
 - Even Though It Is Mostly Based On Tradition!
 - But - Even Tradition:
 - Has Its Roots In History!
 - So - Near The End Of Nero’s Reign:
 - After The Burning Of Rome:
 - He Blamed The Christians:
 - And - Likely - Executed The Leaders Of The Churches In The City:
 - Including Paul!
 - He Was Taken Outside Of The Walls Of The City:
 - **Along The Ostian Road - That Led Right Past:**
 - The Pyramid Of Cestius - That Was Built As A Tomb 12 Years Before Christ!
 - Paul Would Have Seen This Pyramid & Passed By This Pyramid:
 - On His Final Journey Out Of Rome!
 - And - Because He Was A Roman Citizen:

- He Would Have Been Beheaded:
 - Instead Of Crucified Or Killed By Wild Beasts!
 - And After All Those Years:
 - Of Testimony & Trial:
 - Though He Was Absent From The Body, He Was Finally - And Forever - Present With His Lord!

- **And - At Least From Our Vantage Point On Earth:**

- That Is The Rest Of The Story:
 - For The Apostle Paul!

13. But Now:

- What About Your Story?
 - It's Not Over Yet, Is It!
 - No!
- Keep Doing What The Lord Has Called You To Do!
 - And Let The Historians:
 - Worry About & Write About:
 - The "Rest Of The Story!"
 - Just Be Faithful!
 - And Keep On:
 - 28:31 - "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence!"

* See: "Paul's 4th Missionary Journey" (Kenneth Berding)

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