

The Story Continues

Acts Chapter 28

Psalm 107:23-31 "Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters; They have seen the works of the LORD, And His wonders in the deep. For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea. They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in {their} misery. They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, And were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses. He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they were quiet, So He guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men!"

Oh how Paul and the 276 people who have just gone through the Euraquilo and a shipwreck know this Psalm is true.

Act 28:1 **1) Ministry on Malta** vs 1-10

When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.

Act 28:2 **Kindness thru The World** because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.

- All on board the ship had made it safely to shore just as God promised. They discovered the island was Malta.
- The Greek origin of the word Malta (Melita) means *honey*. The Phoenician origin means *haven* or *refuge*
- Surely Malta is a *sweet refuge* for these travelers.



- The inhabitants on the island were extraordinarily kind.
- Going the extra mile
- Matthew 5:38-45 "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. "Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven;"
- Proverbs 3:3 "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart."
- Proverbs 19:22 "What is desirable in a man is his kindness"
- Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"

- **WHAT IS KINDNESS?**

- Kindness is the act or the state of being kind and marked by charitable behavior, marked by mild disposition, pleasantness, tenderness and concern for others. (benign, benevolent)

- Titus 3:7-11 *"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and {His} love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to {the} hope of eternal life."*

- Mark Twain *"Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the and the blind can see"*

Act 28:3 **But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire,**

Kindness thru serving

- Paul is gathering sticks. Here he just took over the ship and lead all to safety. Most of us would think it's time to be honored. Let someone else serve me. After all they owe me their lives.
- Paul serves others by getting sticks. It's like when we go camping. The mode is to stay warm, gaze into the fire, and relax. But as the fire is burning down, most do not notice. They just want to stay in that nice cozy place. There are others who see the need and will leave the cozy, mesmerizing fame and go get more sticks.

Kindness thru circumstances

a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

Act 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."

- Paul is laying wood on the fire and a viper came out and didn't just strike him but fastened itself on Paul's hand.
- Vipers are a family of venomous snakes found all over the world. Dr. Luke points out that this was a viper not just a snake.
- Their poisons:
 - Viperid Venoms - cause pain, swelling, blood loss, disruption of blood clotting, death due to loss of blood pressure.
 - Elapid Venoms - cause pain, swelling, blood loss, paralysis, death by asphyxiation because of the paralysis of the diaphragm.
- The natives expected Paul to die.
- In ministry vipers will bite:
 - We have a tendency to believe in an INSTANT KARMA.
 - Do good and good will be done to you.
 - Do bad and bad will happen to you.
 - Not necessarily unscriptural, Luke 6:38 *"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, {and} running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."*
 - The problem with instant karma
 - 1) Nurtures selfishness (give to get)
 - 2) Jesus wanted us to give because He wanted us to be generous people.
 - 3) It isn't an absolute. It doesn't automatically happen.
 - But as we serve, there are time when the flesh of others, or it could be the enemy Satan breaks in and tries to create havoc.
 - One of the interesting things about kindness is that by its nature it could be imposed upon.

What do you do when a viper bites while you are serving?

1. Recognize something needs to be done
 - Being bit can causes doubts as if you should be serving in this manner
 - Left untreated the poison can causes anger, bitterness and strife

Act 28:5

However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

2. Shake it off - HOW?
 - By being a great Christian and letting go of things quickly? NO
 - By forgiving and moving on? NO
 - By knowing that God knows all things, and knows what we need.
 - 1 John 3:18-23 *"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and*

knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us."

Act 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.

- The natives expected Paul to die. After a long while nothing happened. The natives changed their minds concerning Paul.
- The Natives changed their mind from Paul a Murderer to Paul a god.
 - I am confident that though there is not a sermon from Paul in this text, Paul has been consistent that throughout Acts Paul corrected misconceptions and Preached Jesus.
- The point here cannot be missed. PEOPLE ARE WATCHING. They are watching to see if there is anything to this Christianity.
 - If you act like the rest of the world - they have no reason to change their course.
 - They are hoping there is something greater than what they have.
- Christians ought to be different, because we are.
 - Free from Sin
 - Fruit of the Spirit (Kindness is one of them)
- As a side note and noteworthy, Jesus was considered one or the other. Paul was and we will be too.

Act 28:7

Kindness thru compassion Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.

Act 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 leading man - possibly the governmental structure was more tribal. The leading man, Publius was the major influence but is not named a governor or ruler.
- Publius' father became sick.
- Paul didn't have the attitude that the work of presenting Jesus was accomplished with the Viper Miracle. With the eyes of compassion the work continues
- Maltese Fever exists on the islands even today and it can last 4 months and can result in death.
- Paul - 1) Prayed 2) Laid hands on him 3) He was healed

Act 28:9 After this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured.

- The news got out and all others who were sick came.

Act 28:10 They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied {us} with all we needed.

- Excuse: What about those people on a deserted Island? Will they be saved?
- This account shows us that God is concerned about those islanders. So much so that He took His servant and caused something that seemed awful to the servant to bring the servant to those islanders.
- The question isn't what about those islanders? The question is are we resisting God's guidance (no matter what it looks like to us) to reach those islanders?

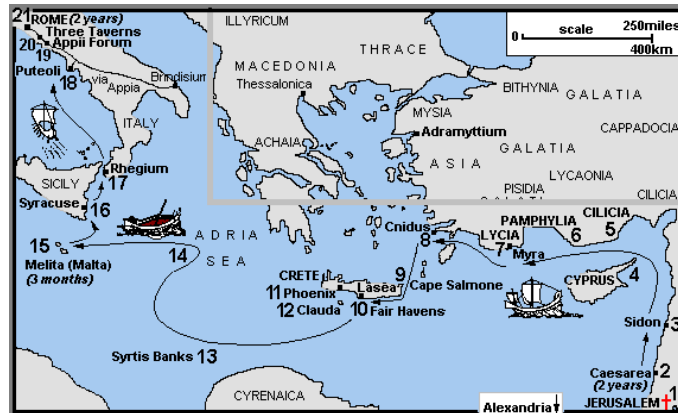
Act 28:11 **2) Approaching Rome** vs 11-16

At the end of three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead.

- After three months it was time to continue the journey to Rome.
- They caught an Alexandrian ship that had at the bow of the ship the figurehead of two brothers Castor and Pollux the twin sons of Zeus. They were regarded as protectors of seamen.

Act 28:12 **After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.**

- They sailed to Syracuse, the Capital of Sicily.



Act 28:13 **From there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.**

- From Syracuse they sailed to Rhegium.
- A south wind (a south wind is a wind coming from the south blowing to the north) blew accommodating the direction they needed to go.
- They sailed to Puteoli. This was the main port for the Alexandrian grain ships coming to unload their cargo. Puteoli is 170 miles from Rome..



Act 28:14 **There we found {some} brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.**

- In Puteoli, Christian people lived there and received this group travelling with Paul.
- This is a good case for believing that Julius, the Roman Praetorian Guard may have been saved.
 - Travelling with Paul, no doubt he heard the gospel.
 - Through the storm and on Malta Paul's message is confirmed with miracles.
 - Here he allows the group to hang out for 7 days rather than press on to Rome.
 - They hang out with other believers.
- They left Puteoli and headed up towards Rome along the Appian Way. This was one of the first (312 BC) of many roads Rome built. (All Roads lead to Rome was an accurate statement)



In 71 BC in response to Spartacus' revolt, over 6000 slaves were crucified along this road throughout Italy.

Act 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.

- Some of the saints in Rome heard about Paul's arrival and they travel to Three Taverns or Three Inns some 30 miles away to meet with Paul.
- These saints some 2 years earlier received a letter from Paul,
- **Romans 1:7-11** "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called [to be] saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;"
- When Paul saw them HE thanked God and took courage.
- **Romans 1:12** "That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."
- "Fellowship is a relationship of inner unity among believers that expresses itself in outer co-participation with Christ and one another in accomplishing God's will on earth."

Built up by fellowship

Act 28:16 **3) Meeting the Jews in Rome** vs 16-24

When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

- When Paul arrived in Rome, he was not kept with the common prisoners.
- He was allowed to be on his own. In his own rented house (verse 30) but with a Guard watching over him.
- **Philippians 1:13** implies that through the guards that watched him the gospel was being spread even to royal palace.

Act 28:17 After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews,

- Paul follows his pattern of speaking to the Jews first.

and when they came together, he {began} saying to them, "Brethren, though I had 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.

Act 28:18 "And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.

Act 28:19 "But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

- Paul gives a brief account of how he arrived before them Accused, Acquitted, Objected, and Appealed.

Act 28:20 "For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel."

- Paul isn't trying to defend himself. He states his purpose in requesting to see them.
- To speak to them concerning the "Hope of Israel"
- Acts 23:11 "you must witness at Rome also"
- Things are not going just as he pictured it would go. Accused in Jerusalem, Appealing and going to Rome a Prisoner, Shipwreck, Snake bite, House Arrest to a Roman Guard.
- What do you do when things are not going like you pictured it.
 - Keep doing what you know to do - (Paul called the Jews first)
 - Keep preaching Jesus - (Paul preached to them the "Hope of Israel")

Act 28:21 They said to him, "We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you."

Act 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."

- These prominent men of the Jews told Paul they had not received any letters from the Jerusalem leadership about Paul or any problem.
- They also desired to hear from Rabbi Paul and his views and especially the (Christian) sect that seems to be the topic of the day.
- Can you imagine the accelerated heartbeat in Paul with such an open door?

Act 28:23 When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

- On the scheduled appointment, these prominent Jews and Paul had a Bible study.
 - Kingdom of God - a spiritual kingdom and not a political kingdom
 - "Hope of Israel" Jesus - not from just feelings or impressing but from the Scripture.

Place of Birth - Bethlehem	Micah 5:32	Luke 2:4-7
From the line of David	2 Samuel 7:12-13	Matthew 1:1
Born of a Virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Luke 1:26-35
Father God will declare Jesus is His Son	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:17
There would be a Forerunner preparing	Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 11:10-14
Spirit of Lord on Him to Preach, to heal to release	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:16-21
Eyes opened, Ears Unstopped, Lame Leaping, Mute singing	Isaiah 35:3-6	Matthew 12:22-23
Taught in Parables	Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:34-35
Will Ride into Jerusalem on a Donkey	Zechariah 9:9	John 12:12-16
Jesus Rejected	Isaiah 53:3	Mark 7:6-7
Betrayed by a Friend	Psalms 55:12-24 Psalm 41:9	John 13:18-30
Betrayed for 30 Pieces of Silver (Potters Field)	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:3-10
Accused And Yet Remained Opened Not His Mouth	Isaiah 53:7	Luke 23:9
Jesus Crucified	Psalms 22:16-17	John 19:34-37
Jesus Would Rise from the Dead	Micah 7:7-8 + Psalms 16:10-11	Matthew 28:1-20

- From morning to evening - Could you do a Bible Study that long?

Act 28:24 Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

- This is the truth concerning the response to the Gospel. Some will believe, some will not.
- Our responsibility is to preach the gospel. Their response is not our responsibility.

Act 28:25 **4) One Last Word** vs 25-29

And when they did not agree with one another, they {began} leaving after Paul had spoken one {parting} word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,

Act 28:26 saying, 'GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

Act 28:27 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE

THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM."

- Isaiah 6:9-10
- Hearing w/o understanding / Seeing w/o perceiving
- WHY? Because of a bad heart.
 - A bad heart will cause one to stop listening and close their eyes.
 - Understanding and perceiving begins in the heart
- Romans 10:9-10 " *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

Act 28:28 "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

- Dispensationalists say this is the statement that created a shift. A new dispensation the age of the Church (Gentiles)
- The problem with that is that Jesus had said that at the beginning of the book of Acts 1:8 "to uttermost parts of the earth" and earlier than that Genesis 12:3 "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"

Act 28:29 [When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

Act 28:30 **5) Ever After** vs 30-31

And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,

Act 28:31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

- Paul is able to stay in his own place and preach the gospel to all who would come to him.
- One who came to him was a runaway slave Onesimus. Paul wrote to his master Philemon.
- In these two years Paul will writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, (Possibly Hebrews)

At this point we could talk about:

- Paul before Nero
- Paul being Acquitted
- Paul travelling to Spain
- Paul returning to Palestine
- Paul returning to Rome
- Paul being arrested again in Rome
- Paul passing the torch to Titus and Timothy
- And Paul's death

But the Holy Spirit Didn't so we won't

- The account seems to end abruptly
- Some will say that it was because the Gospel of Luke and Acts was a brief that was going to be presented to Nero's court for Paul's defense.
- I believe it is because the story continues.
- "UNHINDERED" The task of spreading the Gospel of Jesus, His Birth, His Death, His Burial, His Resurrection and Our Identification with Him is Unhindered. It doesn't matter if the weather doesn't cooperate. It doesn't matter if the religious rise up against it. It doesn't matter if governments oppose it. It doesn't matter if people stand in your way. The Gospel will go forth UNHINDERED!
- "There is no end to the story. Why? Because this same story is repeated again and again throughout the history of the church. Trusting in Jesus, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Father, the word of God will continue to spread without hindrance and continue to change lives for the glory of God. The Book of Acts really is a never-ending story." (Guzek)

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