

Acts 28:11-31 The End of the Beginning

Today we come to our final study in the book of Acts

A) We began this study Jan 3rd 2010 – and are going to complete it today Feb 20th 2011

B) It is always a good feeling to complete a book.

C) If you were here with us last January you will remember that we entitled this series in Acts as

THE REVOLUTION

D) We noted that Webster defines a revolution as a sudden, radical and pervasive change in society.

That is exactly what happened in the book of Acts.

A) The book of Acts Chronicles a group of men and women who under the Power of the HS **did not leave their world the way that they found it.**

B) It was said of this group of believers Acts **17 that they turned their world upside down.**

C) They were ordinary people who under the power of the HS did extraordinary things.

1) It was the beginning of a movement that continues to this very day.

D) This is the final study in our series – but this is not the end of the story – rather – the end of the beginning!

We left Paul on a ship last time headed to Rome after being shipwrecked at an island called Malta.

A) Paul – the crew and the other prisoners stayed there 3 months – waiting for the winter to pass.

V. 11-16 Paul arrives in Rome.

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.

B) Here we get a wonderful note. There at Puteoli Paul was met by Christians.

C) As best we can determine this was about A. D. 60. Paul had never been to Italy before.

1) Nor, to our knowledge, had any of the other apostles.

D) And yet there were Christians in many of the cities of Italy as well as in Rome itself.

1) A great testimony to the power & the spread of the gospel.

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. 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.

A) Julius the Roman commander and his party took the famous Appian Way and traveled 125 miles from Puteoli to Rome.

B) Paul gets there and the believers come out to greet him. GREAT COMFORT

C) As he approached the city he evidently felt some sense of fear and trepidation.

10 He didn't know what was going to happen to him when he appeared before

Nero.

D) He must have been very uncertain as to whether he would ever again be free from his imprisonment.

1) Indication here that Paul was a bit uneasy –

E) But Paul was radically encouraged by the believers who showed up to welcome him.

Great reminder of the importance of being a part of a body – the role that other believers play in our lives

A) We need those connections that can encourage us.

B) Struggling – we want to retreat – isolate ourselves

C) But in reality that is when we need to be around the body the most.

D) Even the great Apostle Paul was encouraged by other Christians .

When he arrived in Rome he could see God's hand still at work!

A) Paul was put under house arrest rather than in a dungeon – had visitors -

B) Under this provision, the guard was changed every six hours.

1) Paul would later write to the Philippian believers, “All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household” (Philippians 4:22).

C) How did men in Caesar’s household get saved?

By being chained to Paul!

1) Six hour sermon or listening Paul Pray.

D) Great example of Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

V.17-24 Paul's Introduction and message to the Jewish community in Rome.

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. **"I am here on a judicial matter," "I have come to clear my name, not to condemn Israel."**

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."

Because of the Hope of Israel.

A) Reference to the Messiah – 2,000 yrs later this is still the dividing issue in Israel

B) Who is the messiah- Some Jews in Israel believe like Paul – **Jesus is the Messiah** –

1)

Yeshua Ha'Mashiach

C) But Many in Israel are still waiting for Messiah to come. - **Embrace Anti Christ – build temple.**

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."

Acts 28:23a So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging,

It is rather revealing that these Jews in Rome had received no word about the apostle.

A)It is possible the word was sent to them in the ship that went down. – Wouldn't that be ironic.

B)Paul is going to get a chance to speak to these Roman Jews with out prejudice.

V.23b 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.

C)So Paul beginning with the law, and going through the prophets, he explained the kingdom as it related to Jesus.

D)I would love to have MP3 of that study.

No doubt Paul would have directed their attention to Genesis 22.

A)where Abraham was told to take his only son to Mount Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice unto the Lord.

B)On their way up the mountain, Isaac, who was probably thirty-three years old at the time, said to his father, "Here's the wood and there's the fire—but where is the sacrifice?"

C)And Abraham spoke prophetically when he answered, "God will provide Himself a Lamb"

1)not, "God will provide for Himself," but, "God will provide Himself. He will be the Lamb."

D) Certainly, Paul would have reminded his audience of Exodus 12, Passover lamb – blood door post cross

E) Sure Paul would have turned their hearts to **Psalm 22**, where crucifixion was described centuries before it was known in the Middle East and wherein the very words Jesus spoke on the Cross were recorded.

F) And He would have reminded them of **Micah 5**, which prophesied specifically that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem;

1) **Daniel 9**, which pinpointed the very day of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem,

He would have reviewed Zechariah 11 it was prophesied that Messiah would be betrayed by His friend and sold for thirty pieces of silver,

A) which would be cast on the floor of the temple, scooped up, and used to purchase a potter's field.

B) From morning until night, Paul showed how the entire Old Testament pictured, pointed to, and prophesied Jesus Christ.

C) Over 300 prophecies that he could have pointed to that were fulfilled by Jesus.

What are the chances that the three hundred-plus prophecies given concerning Messiah would be fulfilled by one man? 1 in 10 to the twenty-third power

A) 1 with 23 zeros after it.

B) Think of it this way: Suppose the entire state of California was covered with acorns three feet deep—one of which was painted green.

C) You and a squirrel go up in an airplane, and, as you fly over California, you open the door and shove the squirrel out.

D) After landing safely, he wanders up and down the state—through San

Francisco, San Jose, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, Lake Tahoe, Redding, until he feels hungry and decides to eat an acorn.

The chance of him choosing the green acorn would be 1 in 10 to the twenty-third power.

A)the same chance that all of the prophecies concerning Messiah would be fulfilled in one man.

B)Listen: It doesn't make any sense intellectually for a person to deny the irrefutable facts of the OT prophecies and pictures, that predicted who Jesus would be,

C)how He would be born, how He would live, and how He would die.

1)It takes more faith *NOT* to believe Jesus is the Messiah than it takes to believe in Jesus as Messiah.

But notice what v.24 says again: And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

A)Some believed and some didn't. **That's still the way it is.**

B)When you share the message some will believe and some will not.

1)Some believe – MANY WILL NOT –BRAWD.... NARROW IS THE WAY that leads to life.

C)Hosea 4:6 **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge."**

D)Some know the truth –but choose to reject it

They turn a deaf ear to the Lord.

A)Which makes what Paul says next sobering.

Acts 28:25-29

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 this people and say: 'Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 **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 with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."

28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.

Do you see the heart of the Lord in this quote from Isaiah – I wanted to draw you in – heal you.

A) You wouldn't listen

B) The heart of this people **has grown dull is an interesting idea that is repeated four times in the Bible.**

1) Isaiah 6:10 about Israel.

Bb) Matthew 13:15 Jesus to the religious leaders.

1) Acts 28:27 – Paul to Israel.

C) Hebrews 5:11 – to Jewish believers

Which is an interesting thing to consider – as believers our hearts can become dull to the things of the Lord.

A) **Grown dull - Hebrews 5 says they had become dull of hearing.**

B) **It is a progression Not on fire one day and cold the next – gradual decline.**

Being **dull of hearing is not a problem with the ears, but a problem with the heart –**

A) It is when you aren't really interested in what God has to say to you.

D) Dullness = being sluggish, a laziness, apathy and complacency that prevents spiritual development.

CONTRAST Jesus said Matthew 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness ... filled*

A) This is the opposite of that - hunger is gone

B.) It describes a person who's appetite for Word has been replaced by a desire for other things /

1) The fire that once burned bright in life: dim flicker

C.) The zeal and excitement that once characterized their desire for God,

1) His Word, things of Kingdom / is gone

D) Replaced by sense of duty, routine even boredom

What causes the heart to grow dull? Note Few insights from Scripture:

A.) #1 Spiritual pride: Rev 3 - Church of Laodicea they said *we are rich and had it together!*

B) But Jesus perception of them was quite different

***C) Poor, miserable, blind, and naked!* LUKE WARM**

1) They were so blinded by their spiritual condition they had no idea – Jesus was outside the church

D) He was knocking on the door wanting back in – wanting – fellowship.

1) Great Reminder there is always hope.

E) Warning – I wish ...hot cold -vomit

#2 Cares of the World! - Parable of Sower!

A.) Seed sown among thorns Word choked out - become unresponsive to

it by getting focused on cares of world! Pursuit of Riches

B) DISTRACTED

#3 A lack of exercise - Hebrews 5

A) Problem was a lack of use.

B.) Be doers not just hearers – Physically only eat never exercise – fat – lethargic.

1) Thanksgiving day: B- Ball. Williams sisters

C) Red Sea verses the Dead Sea – Out flow is the Key

1) Life – vs death

A U.S. Army officer told of the contrast in his pupils during two different eras of teaching at the artillery training school at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

In 1958; the attitude was so lax that the instructors had a problem getting the men **to stay awake to listen.**

But During the 1965; classes, the men, hearing the same basic lectures, were alert & took detailed notes.

The reason for the difference in 1965: *those men knew that in less than six weeks they would be facing the enemy in Vietnam.*

Christian life a playground vs a battle ground.

ARE U IN the Battle?

So How do you deal with a dull heart?

A)#1 Search - Go to the doctor blood test cholestoral test etc.

B)God is the great Physician

Psalm 139:23-24

**“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.”**

#2 Change your diet.

A)Get back to eating the right things –

B)Feeding your heart with all this junk –

1)TV media – etc

C)Stimulate – read biographies – or books stimulate your faith

#3 Exercise

A)Get in the game – get busy about your faith

#4 Shock

A)Biblically what does that look like?

B)Prodigal – comes to his senses in the pig pen – lost everything – pig slop

C)Samson – Philistines – get up like I did before –1)But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

D)Samson heart was woke up – gouged out his eyes

1)Blinded Bound grinding at the mill.

E)Some of you are headed there – Saddens my heart

One year bible – Psalm 37:3-5

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.”

It starts with trusting Jesus – sinner – savior – may not understand everything – but trust in Him

A) His sacrifice- the facts – Empty tomb.

B) Trust and do good – Start walking with Jesus- living for Jesus.

C) Leads to dwelling in the land – Dwell = rest

1) Resting in His work – resting in who He is.

D) That leads then to delighting – At rest we delight – we grow – we learn more about Him.

1) Desires of our heart – Transformation happens – His desires become our desires.

E) Leads to an even deeper commitment and trust.

Give Jesus a Chance -

Paul's final years V. 30-31

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.

So the Book of Acts comes to an end with a shout of triumph.

A) But it also **ends an unfinished story** - Dr. Luke ended his book before Paul's case had been heard, so he could not give us the results of the trial.

B) Now, although this is where Luke, the author of Acts, put down his pen, Paul's story continued.

1) Released from house arrest to stand before Caesar Nero, Paul witnessed powerfully for the Lord.

C) Nero, however, **rejected Paul's message** and proceeded instead to go on a rampage against Christians.

Historical records verify that he lost his mind at the very time he listened to Paul and rejected the gospel.

A) Paul was Released by Caesar because there was no legal case against him,

B) the Book of Romans and the writings of history tell us Paul preached the gospel **in Spain and Europe** before he was brought back to Rome under arrest once more.

C) This time, however, it was no longer house arrest. He was thrown into a dungeon. { Beheaded

There is a reason the HS inspired Luke to end the story where he did.

A) The Purpose of the book of Acts was to reveal the **Acts of the Holy Spirit** working through believers – men and women called the Church.

B) Still is working today: You at your work –

1) IN your home –

2) Mission field

C) See The record is not concluded.

1) It is a continuing story – Revolution continues

Be a part of the Revolution

**Harden heart and live for self – or die to self and surrender your heart –
live for Jesus**

HS working thru you.