

## THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

### MINISTRY NOTES

- A. Paul maintained his plan of going first to the Jews and then to Gentiles.
- B. In Rome, Paul was confined to a private residence under guard. He was well known and people came to him.
- C. Thomas Constable, *Luke's purpose in recording Paul's ministry in Rome included vindicating God's promises to Paul that he would bear witness there...The apostle to the Gentiles was now able to minister in the heart of the Gentile world.*

### PAUL AT ROME, ACTS 28:17-31

- A. Paul's proclamation of the Gospel to Roman Jews (17-28)
  - 1. His initial meeting with Jewish leaders (17-22)
    - a. He gave them reasons why he was in custody (17-20)
      - 1) Paul declared his innocence (17), *After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, 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.*
        - a) Paul called local Jewish leaders to hear why he was a prisoner.
          - 1] He couldn't go to the synagogues because of his confinement.
          - 2] It was estimated that there were between 10,000 and 60,000 Jews in Rome in the first century.
        - b) He stated that he had not harmed Jewish people nor customs but was imprisoned.
      - 2) He appealed to Caesar because of the objections of the Jews (18-19), *When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation.*
        - a) Roman officials examined Paul's case and wanted to set him free because there was no grounds for the death penalty.
        - b) Paul appealed to Caesar because of Jews who wanted him executed.
        - c) He was not there to press charges against Israel but only to be acquitted of charges against him.
        - d) These verses are a summary statement of Paul's defense from Acts 22 to 26.
      - 3) He explained why he wanted to meet with them (20), *For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain."*
        - a) Paul's primary reason he called the Jewish leaders together was to proclaim the hope of Israel.
        - b) The hope of Israel is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to Israel, Acts 26:6, *And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers,*
        - c) The hope of Israel is centered in a coming Messiah who will establish Himself as the King of Israel.
        - d) As always, Paul's purpose was to share the Gospel with everyone.
    - b. The Jewish leaders wanted to hear more (21-22), *And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."*
      - 1) They said they had no bad reports concerning Paul.
      - 2) They looked forward to hearing from Paul concerning the sect which was spoken against by many.
      - 3) It is surprising that they were unfamiliar with Paul since they were familiar with the sect he proclaimed.
        - a) I. Howard Marshall, *Very possibly the Jews in Rome preferred to remain ignorant of the case; they would not have forgotten that earlier disputes over the Messiah had led to their temporary expulsion from the city (about 10 years earlier).*
        - b) Kenneth Gangel, *...Paul's ship was among the first to arrive after winter, so Jews in Jerusalem and Caesarea had little chance to communicate with their counterparts in Rome since this whole trial sequence began during the riot at the temple in chapter 21.*

2. The response of the Jews to Paul's message (23-27)
  - a. Paul taught them about Jesus from Scripture (23), *When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.*
    - 1) The Jewish leaders assigned a day for Paul to make his presentation.
    - 2) Many came to Paul's residence to hear him speak all day.
    - 3) His focus was on Jesus Who is the hope of Israel as seen in the law and prophets (Jewish Scripture).
      - a) *the kingdom of God* included the death and resurrection of Messiah and His rule on earth during the millennial kingdom.
      - b) Stanley Toussaint, *To the Jews the concept of the Messiah dying for sins as an atonement and the teaching of justification by faith as the way of entering the kingdom sounded strange.*
      - c) Robert Tannehill, *He [Paul] was seeking a communal decision, a recognition by the Jewish community as a whole that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish hope.*
  - b. Paul's reaction to the response of the Jews (24-27)
    - 1) Some received the message but others rejected it (24), *And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.*
      - a) The response was mixed.
      - b) Some believed and others did not. The word *convinced* is best translated *began to be convinced*, based on the tense of the verb.
      - c) Kenneth Gangel, *...a divided synagogue following proclamation of the gospel has become a staple in Acts.*
    - 1) Paul commented on Jewish rejection of Messiah (25-27), *And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: 'Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'*
      - a) The Jews departed after Paul rebuked their disbelief.
      - b) He quoted from Isaiah who prophesied of the unbelief of the Jews.
        - 1] Stanley Toussaint, *Obstinate refusal to believe results in calloused hearts, deafened ears, and spiritually blinded eyes.*
        - 2] Thomas Constable, *Paul saw that this word to Isaiah was as applicable in his own day as it had been in Isaiah's.*
        - 3] Paul ascribed the words of Isaiah to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
3. Paul declared that Gentiles would listen (28-29), *Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.*
  - a. God's salvation was to be sent to the Gentiles who will listen.
    - 1) This is the climax of the Book of Acts, the Gospel proclaimed to all people.
    - 2) The focus of the Gospel will be to Gentiles until the fullness of Gentiles comes, Romans 11:25-26, *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."*
  - b. Note on verse 29, *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much dispute among themselves*
    - 1) This is probably a scribal addition.
    - 2) Most translations omit it due to lack of manuscript evidence.

- B. Paul's two year ministry in Rome (30-31)
1. He lived in Rome at his own expense (30), *He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,*
    - a. In those two years, Paul wrote four epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.
    - b. Those who visited Paul included Tychicus, Onesimus and Epaphroditus.
  2. He freely proclaimed the Gospel without interference (31), *proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.*
    - a. Paul preached the Gospel unhindered while in Rome.
    - b. He taught others of the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- C. What happened to Paul?
1. Some believe Paul was condemned and put to death.
  2. Most believe he was released and left Rome.
    - a. There are references in other New Testament books of other activity by Paul.
    - b. Writings after his departure from Rome include 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.
    - c. Stanley Toussaint, *Probably Paul returned to the provinces of Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia and then turned west to Spain according to his original plans (Rom. 15:22–28). Then he ministered once more in the Aegean area where he was taken prisoner, removed to Rome, and executed.*
    - d. Eusebius, early church historian, *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 [Rome], that he finished his life with martyrdom.*

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. God is always in control and never makes mistakes.
- B. The focus of Acts is on the message of the Gospel that is available to all people.
- C. Paul demonstrated a life well-lived, sold out to Jesus Christ.
- D. Richard Longenecker, The history of the church continues, *In seeming to leave his book unfinished, he [Luke] was implying that the apostolic proclamation of the gospel in the first century began a story that will continue until the consummation of the kingdom in Christ (Acts 1:11).*