

## **ACTS 28: The End, The Beginning**

### 28:1-10: The Kingdom of God comes to Malta

Refer to Mark's Great Commission, Mark 16:14-19. (Later manuscripts add verses 9-20. The verses may have been added later because Mark or some other copyist thought the Gospel needed a Great Commission.)

"Signs" is "attesting miracles" that support the preaching of the Gospel. GR for "pick up" serpents also means "remove or destroy." Paul did not intentionally pick up a poisonous snake. Paul picked up some kindling for a fire and the snake was inside. It should read, "If you pick up some wood for a fire and a poisonous snake is inside and bites you, then you will not die." I was hiking on a trail in Louisiana and almost stepped on a copperhead snake. I did not try to pick it up and "test" Jesus' promise.

Jesus told Paul he would testify in Rome and a poisonous snake bite would not interfere with His plan. Jesus will get you where He wants you to be at the time He has determined, and Satan cannot stop it.

The natives of Malta saw Paul as a murderer getting what he deserved. When he survived the snake bite, they saw him as a god. This is a superstitious worldview like Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The angry gods dispense justice equal to the crime. The gods tried to drown Paul when the shipwrecked and failed, but the gods got him with the poisonous snake. God does not try and fail to do something. God does not dispense justice equal to the crime.

Consider the description of how Paul healed Publius. Dr. Luke provided the diagnosis that the father of Publius had COVID19... a fever caused by dysentery (bacteria not a virus). Luke did not prescribe a treatment. I imagine they prayed together and then Paul rebuked the fever. The text says, "After he had prayed, he laid hands on him and healed him." These are two distinct actions: prayer and laying on hands. Paul's prayer may have been to determine God's will or it may have been a simple prayer to glorify God; for

example, "Father, glorify your Son, Jesus Christ, and heal this man so he will believe and be saved." (See John 17:1-4.) The phrase "laid hands on" generally refers to consecration, but in this context, it is healing by command with authority like Jesus did it (Mark 6:5-6). Paul probably spoke a healing command when he was confident of the Lord's will: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command this dysentery to be healed and fever to go."

### 28:11-30: Take the Gospel to the Gentiles

Paul testified to the Jews first. He tried to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah based on the fulfillment of prophecies in the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

Paul used a prophecy from Isaiah to explain the rejection of Christ by the Jews. This prophecy comes from Isaiah 6:9-10. Isaiah had a vision of God and he was commissioned to call the people to repentance. But Isaiah was told the people would reject his message. In fact, Isaiah's message would only harden their hearts and blind their eyes more. This is a combination of personal responsibility and divine sovereignty. It was God's plan for the Jews to reject the Gospel so they would not keep it for themselves and fail to share it with Gentiles. God didn't want the Jews to dilute and destroy the Gospel of grace by adding it to the Law of Moses. Salvation through the Law of Moses would negate the Gospel of grace. Old wineskins cannot contain new wine.

God still loves the Jews and there is a Messianic movement among them. Jews in Israel are now reading the NT and believing in Christ as Messiah. I support a ministry "One for Israel" and the website has testimonies: [Bless Israel With Yeshua - ONE FOR ISRAEL Ministry](#)

28:23, 30 mention the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? Churches are part of the kingdom of God. They are like villages, towns, and cities in a worldly kingdom (depending on the size of the church). The

kingdom of God encompasses all of creation and has authority over every worldly kingdom. The kingdom of God has ultimate power.

[The Holy Spirit reminded me that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Remember what Jesus said to Pilate: John 18:36: Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."]

What was the result of his trial before Caesar?

Romans 15:22-26: *For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you; but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.*

Paul wrote Romans before his trip to testify in Jerusalem (Acts 21-22). Paul had a plan to preach the Gospel in Spain. He hoped to stop in Rome and get support to go on a mission trip to Spain. Paul got to Rome, but not the way he probably hoped. We do not know what happened after two years in Rome. Christian tradition says Paul was beheaded in Rome around AD 65-67 when Nero was emperor.

It ends where it began - preaching the kingdom of God. Jesus gathered his disciples and spoke of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). The conclusion is to preach the kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 28:30-31: *And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness,*

*unhindered*. The preaching of the kingdom of God with attesting miracles is still happening because the Holy Spirit is actively glorifying Jesus Christ.

Review the reasons for studying Acts:

First, **Acts shows us we need to know the third person of the Trinity.** Luke is all about the HS. There is a transition from the ministry of Jesus to the ministry of the HS. Get to know the HS.

Second, **Acts is God's discipleship training manual for modern Christians.** Acts is meant to be studied as inspired Scripture and then lived. Acts shows us how to share the Gospel, and then everything that supports sharing the Gospel; that is, how to walk in the Spirit, how to exercise biblical faith, how to pray, how to heal the sick and cast out demons, how to engage in spiritual warfare. This is basic training – Christianity 101.

Third, **Acts is intended to be a paradigm or model of how the kingdom of God would be spread worldwide through the centuries until Jesus returns.** Acts is open-ended. It goes beyond the "Apostolic Age" of the first century. What is described in Acts is meant to continue until Christ's Great Commission is completed.

Refer to The Joshua Project and UPGs: [Joshua Project](#)

"An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance."

India is the greatest challenge to the completion of Christ's Great Commission. India's population is 1.37 billion. That's more than North and South America combined. India has 1/5 of the world's population and 40% of the world's poorest people. India has 2,440 UPGs which is 1/3 of the world's

UPGs. India has around 50 million Christians which is about 4% of the population.

I personally support a ministry (The Elijah Challenge) that has planted 703 churches in two states of India from 2018-2020. This was accomplished by 'ordinary' believers preaching and demonstrating the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

FCBC supports the Southern Baptist IMB: Charlotte 'Lottie' Moon.

Stories from two ministries I support: *Bible for Mideast* and *The Elijah Challenge*.

Let's keep our focus on Christ's Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20.