



Note that in chapter 27-28 of Acts, Luke and Paul (“we” throughout) travel from Caesarea to Rome. The voyage began after the Day of Atonement in late summer or early October (note 27:9; “the fast” = Day of Atonement). This was a dangerous time to travel, and indeed this voyage proved disastrous. After wintering at least 3 months on the island of Malta (28:11) they arrived in Rome on the third ocean vessel of their trip in late winter or early spring, completing an approximate 6 month, almost 1000 mile trip on the Mediterranean Sea. Truly, it took no small miracle of Divine provision and protection to get Paul to Rome.

WHERE WE HAVE COME THROUGH ACTS

- ✓ [Jesus:] “you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (1:8)”
- ✓ Acts
 - of the Apostles – Peter and Paul
 - of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost and beyond)
 - of the Church (spreading, multiplied, strengthened, prevailing)
- ✓ To the Gentiles (Jerusalem Council)
- ✓ 3 Missionary Journeys (Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia)
- ✓ 5 Mock Trials of Paul (Jews, Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus, Agrippa)

We began Acts on Ascension Day – 40 days after the crucifixion of Jesus – that would be on a Thursday. The disciples gathered around Jesus, near Jerusalem, and Jesus told them then:

Acts 1:8 *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

And we have found this to be a brief but accurate preview of the book of Acts. The Church, after beginning at Pentecost 10 days later, expanded from a few thousand in Jerusalem, into the province of Judea (Peter), north to Samaria (Philip), through Galatia and into Macedonia and Achaia (Europe) by the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul, until the Church numbered into the tens of thousands. Ultimately, as recorded in this last chapter of Acts, Paul reaches Rome, the “uttermost parts” of the known world.

Acts is less the “Acts of the Apostles” than the “Acts of the Holy Spirit” or the “Acts of the Church.”

The only two apostles who are highlighted in any detail are Peter in the first portion and Paul in the last. The Holy Spirit and His work is present throughout, as is the spread of the Church.

This is the book that takes the gospel message to the Gentiles, as both the Old Testament and Jesus predicted would happen. And the apostle Paul and his companions were the chosen vehicles of that spread, approved by the Council of Jerusalem in AD 49, and recorded in Acts 15.

We have seen God’s determined purpose to send Paul to Rome, as indicated by a visit to Paul by night by none other than Jesus Himself (23:11). And this purpose is carried out by Paul enduring five mock trials before both Jewish and Gentile leaders, climaxing in his being sent to Rome when Paul makes appeal to Caesar as a Roman citizen.

God’s purpose will never be thwarted and always comes to pass.

Philippians 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

PROBABLE TIMELINE FOR PAUL

5 AD – Birth in Tarsus

35 AD – Conversion

47 AD – First Missionary Journey (Galatia)

49 AD – Council of Jerusalem

50 AD - Second Missionary Journey (Macedonia)

57-59 AD - Before Governor Felix, Festus & King Agrippa

60 AD - Arrival in Rome (“prison epistles” written)

62 AD – Released by Nero

65 AD – Imprisoned again & beheaded by Nero

From this timeline we can note a few interesting items:

1. Paul was converted about 2 years after Jesus’ death and resurrection, since many scholars, such as myself, favor AD 33 as the year of Jesus’ passion
2. Paul was in his early to mid-50’s when before the youthful Felix, Festus & Agrippa
3. He arrived in Rome at about age 55, and stayed there 2 years (28:30) until age 57.
4. Other sources and tradition tells us that Paul was released by Nero (probably because of no valid charges). We know nothing of these years other than speculation.
5. Paul was again imprisoned in Rome during Nero’s period of violent persecution of Christians. Peter records this persecution in his letters.
6. Tradition tells us that Paul was beheaded by Nero, and shortly afterwards Peter was crucified by Nero – both probably around AD 65
7. History tells us that Nero committed suicide AD 67 or 68, just a few years before under Titus, Jerusalem’s temple was destroyed, as Jesus had predicted

Chapter 28 Outline

REFUGE ON MALTA (1-10)

√ extraordinary kindness (2)

√ *extraordinary protection* (5)

√ *extraordinary respect* (10)

ON TO ROME (11-16)

√ *welcoming brethren* (14-15)

√ *courage in fellowship* (15)

√ *freedom in chains* (16)

PAUL MEETS WITH THE JEWS (17-29)

√ *for the hope of Israel* (20)

√ *testifying of the kingdom of God* (23)

√ *Isaiah's prophesy of blindness* (26-27)

EPILOGUE (30-31)

√ *welcoming all who came* (30)

√ *all about Jesus and God's kingdom* (31)

√ *unhindered* (31)

And so the Book of Acts comes to an end with a shout of triumph....Now the tale is finished; the story that began in Jerusalem rather more than thirty years ago has finished in Rome. It is nothing less than a miracle of God. The church which at the beginning of Acts could be numbered in scores cannot now be numbered in tens of thousands. The story of the crucified man of Nazareth has swept across the world in its conquering course until now without interference it is being preached in Rome, the capital of the world. The gospel has reached the centre of the world and is being freely proclaimed—and Luke's task is at an end.

William Barkley, "The Acts of the Apostles"

And is the story over? Absolutely not. It has continued for some 2000 years. And it continues every time one of Jesus' followers does or says anything in the name of Jesus to advance His kingdom.

Every day you write a new portion of the "Acts of the Jesus-followers."

And this story will continue until all people groups have heard (now estimated by Wycliffe Bible translators to be sometime in the late 2020's) and all who have been appointed by God for salvation have responded.

BE AN ACTIVE PART OF THE CONTINUING STORY

LET YOUR LIFE COUNT FOR GOD'S KINGDOM

LET THE EXAMPLES OF PETER & PAUL STENGTHEN YOUR FAITH

MAY OUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS BE "UNHINDERED"