

Acts 27-28

- Yet another VBVM study comes to an end
 - Similarly, Paul's journey to Rome will complete tonight
 - His trial before Festus eventually led to Paul's request for an appeal to Caesar, as was every Roman citizen's right
 - Even so, Festus had no clear basis for his charge against Paul
 - So he enlisted the support of the reigning king of Israel, Agrippa
 - But Agrippa found nothing to accuse Paul
 - So Paul returns to wait in the palace until it was time to go to Rome
 - In our last chapters, Paul begins his trip Italy
 - Along the way, Paul will encounter a storms and shipwreck
 - He will experience snakebite, perform healings, and comfort many brethren in numerous places
 - And in the end, Paul will repeat his old pattern, preaching to the Jews of Rome first, and then reaching out to the Gentiles
- Luke accompanies Paul in his travels, and his record of all the happens is one of the highlights of the entire book
 - His entire account reads with a similarity to the story of Jonah
 - And this is probably intentional on Luke's part, since the theme of both accounts is the same
 - God moving His prophet to preach repentance and salvation to Gentiles instead of Israel
 - Of course, there are differences too, since Paul makes the trip willingly while Jonah didn't

[Acts 27:1](#) ¶ When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius.

[Acts 27:2](#) And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.

[Acts 27:3](#) The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.

[Acts 27:4](#) From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.

[Acts 27:5](#) When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.

[Acts 27:6](#) There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.

[Acts 27:7](#) When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone;

[Acts 27:8](#) and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

- As Paul sets sail for Italy, we begin Paul's fourth missionary journey begins
 - We might not be thinking this is a missionary trip, since Paul makes the journey under guard
 - But that just reminds us that God uses all circumstances to meet His purposes
 - But ministry happens while we're busy planning our next mission trip
 - When the time comes to set sail for Italy, Paul is combined with other prisoners begin taken to Rome
 - These other prisoners might have included other men appealing to Caesar
 - Or more likely, they were men destined to fight and die in the colosseum for sport and amusement
 - They would be guarded during the trip by one of the cohorts or squads of soldiers stationed in Caesarea
- Looking at our map of the fourth missionary journey, we can follow the description that Luke provides
 - They board a ship named for the region near Troas,
 - The ships home port would have been Myra in that region

- This ship was scheduled to sail along the coast of Asia, which tells us it was a small ship used to run in safe waters near the coast
 - This ship is merely the first one for the trip
 - They obviously intend to find a larger ship later to cross the Med to Italy
- First, they go up the Phoenician coast to Sidon
 - While there, the centurion of the cohort, Julius, treats Paul with grace allowing him to visit the church in that town
 - This was probably a reflection of Paul being a citizen while the other prisoners weren't
 - The fact that Luke was allowed to travel with Paul was probably another concession for Paul's sake
- After Sidon, they sail around the eastern side of Cyprus using the large island as a barrier to shield them from contrary winds
 - This was a longer way to travel but it appears they had little choice, since the winds were coming against them
- Eventually they reach Myra, which was the home port for this small vessel
 - So this is the end of the line for this ship
 - And the group must disembark to find a new ship
- They find a grain ship headed to Italy and join it for the trip to Rome
 - This vessel was Alexandrian, meaning it's home port was Egypt
 - Egypt was a major supplier of grain for Rome
 - Ancient records show that there was a large fleet of these grain ships operating around the Med
 - They were 180 feet long, 50 feet wide and 44 feet deep in the hold
 - These ships were more than twice the size of the ones Columbus used to sail the Atlantic

- A direct route would have taken them straight across the Med south of Greece, but winds are blowing against them again
 - Here's where the story starts to sound like Jonah's account
 - In the story of Jonah, the ship was caught in a storm because Jonah was disobedient
 - When the men tried to return to the land, the wind blew harder to stop them
 - Clearly God was preventing the men from returning Jonah to the land for God intended that Jonah spend some quality time in the fish
 - But the men on the ship weren't immediately aware of God's working in these circumstances
 - Only later did the sailors with Jonah understand that the storm was a direct result of God's hand
 - And His intended audience was Jonah
 - Likewise, Luke's account seems to draw our attention to God's silent work in detouring the ship
 - Rather allowing a direct course to Italy, God seems to have another destination in mind
 - But at first the ship 200+ passengers are unaware of God's work
 - Nor do they understand that Paul is the focus of God's attention
- So the captain of the ship does the only thing he can at this point
 - He sails in another direction hoping to move around the weather
 - His route takes him southwest toward Crete, hoping to use the island as a shelter
 - As an aside, we see how sophisticated sailing was in this day
 - Hardly ancient, these mariners are navigating in wide open seas and can steer the vessel to known points of land with great skill

- Eventually, they land in Fair Havens on the southern side of the island
 - The ship docked here to wait out the weather

[Acts 27:9](#) ¶ When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them,

[Acts 27:10](#) and said to them, “Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.”

[Acts 27:11](#) But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.

[Acts 27:12](#) Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

[Acts 27:13](#) ¶ When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.

- Unfortunately, the captain made the mistake of waiting too long to set sail
 - In v.9 we’re told that the voyage has now become dangerous because the fast was already over
 - Because of autumn and winter storms over the Med sea, sailing on the open waters was generally considered risky after mid September
 - And after mid November, ships would never dare venture out into open waters
 - Such a journey was assured to end badly, since the trip couldn’t be made reliably before a storm would come upon the vessel and sink it
 - The reference to “the fast” is to the Jewish observance of Yom Kippor, the Day of Atonement
 - This day is traditionally called “the fast” by Jews
 - The day occurs in the autumn, and in this year it happened on October 5
 - This means that the date is mid October or later, a very risky time to set sail in the Med
 - If the ship doesn’t sail, it will be forced to spend the entire winter in this port

- The captain of the ship won't get paid until the cargo reaches Rome, and he had not intended to spend winter away from Rome
 - So he pushes to leave
- Paul warns the centurion not to allow the ship to leave port, since Paul knows the ship will encounter serious problems should it leave
 - Specifically, Paul warns that the trip will result in loss of cargo and lives
 - Paul specifically warns that cargo would be lost, people would be injured and even lives would be lost
 - In reality all these things occurred except there will be no loss of life
 - This difference is important because it tells us that Paul was not speaking on the basis of divine revelation
 - Instead, he seems to be speaking simply as an experienced traveler doing his best to reverse a dumb decision
 - Based on Paul's earlier writing in his second letter to Corinth, we know Paul has already been shipwrecked three times before this trip
 - So he speaks with experience
 - Because the centurion took the word of the pilot and captain rather than Paul, Paul will now have to endure his fourth shipwreck
 - The majority vote to move to a better harbor for wintering
 - No one is foolish enough to set sail across the sea at this point in the year
 - But they figure they can at least make it along the Crete coast to Phoenix, which is a much better port for a long term stay
 - The trip should be relatively safe since they were going a short distance and would stay near the shore as they traveled
 - Keep in mind that Paul is going to reach Rome...and knows that he will
 - He was assured by the Spirit that he was headed to Rome

- And he has cooperated with the Romans this entire time because he knows where he is going and why
- Luke is working to build the tension as we wonder not if Paul will get to Rome, but how
 - And why is the Lord making the trip so difficult at this point?

[Acts 27:14](#) But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo;

[Acts 27:15](#) and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along.

[Acts 27:16](#) Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control.

[Acts 27:17](#) After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along.

[Acts 27:18](#) The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;

[Acts 27:19](#) and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

[Acts 27:20](#) Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

- Luke gives a lot of valuable details of the ship's movements and the sailor's reactions
 - His account is probably the most detailed and most authoritative account in classical literature of how ancient ships were sailed under these circumstances
 - For tonight, I will only highlight a couple of pertinent details
 - First, the wind that they encountered was called a Euraquilo, or today we would say a nor'easter
 - A strong northeasterly wind rushing down from the land of Crete
 - The wind was violent, Luke says, and the Greek word for violent is a word from which we get the word typhoon
 - It was a hurricane-like gale
 - The violent, swirling nature of the wind prevented the pilot from keeping control of the ship

- So it couldn't navigate to Phoenix or even steer at all
 - Luke references the ship's lifeboat, which was typically dragged behind the main ship
 - It was brought up into the ship for safekeeping, but only barely
- Fearing they would run aground in the shallow water near North Africa (Syrtis on our map), they lower the anchor and hope to slow their progress
 - Still they are driven by the wind
- Over the next two days they throw cargo overboard and even the tackle, which is the ship's furniture
 - Hoping to lighten the boat to avoid being swamped by waves
 - This is also reminiscent of Jonah, when the sailors did the same thing in the storm
 - I'm sure all sailors resort to this response when desperate, but simply the fact that the trip has come to this is important in drawing a connection to Jonah
 - The men on board have reached the limits of what they can do on their own in facing their circumstances
- But many days pass, we're told, without sun and stars shining
 - Not only does this tell us that the storm clouds have persisted for an extended time
 - But it also means the ship could be navigated
 - So hope begins to fade
 - It seems only a matter of time before they die in the storm

[Acts 27:21](#) ¶ When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.

[Acts 27:22](#) "Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

[Acts 27:23](#) "For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,

[Acts 27:24](#) saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'

[Acts 27:25](#) "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.

[Acts 27:26](#) "But we must run aground on a certain island."

[Acts 27:27](#) ¶ But when the fourteenth night came, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors began to surmise that they were approaching some land.

[Acts 27:28](#) They took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found it to be fifteen fathoms.

[Acts 27:29](#) Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak.

- The storm's intensity was so great that no one had been able to eat in days
 - Paul then steps forward to accomplish two things
 - First, Paul wants to teach the men to trust him and his word
 - So he reminds them that Paul had anticipated these circumstances
 - Secondly, Paul has encouraging news to share with the men
 - So he witnesses to the angel's statement, that Paul must reach Caesar and Rome and these men who accompany him will survive too
 - Notice that God has granted this saving of all lives provided they all sail with Paul
 - One writer noted that Paul is the only man with courage remaining in this moment, because it came from a knowledge of and a trust in the God who controlled the seas
 - And by his courage, Paul the prisoner has become the captain
 - This monologue is also similar to Jonah, when Jonah gives his explanation to a mystified crew for the storm and connects his circumstances to God
 - Luke seems to be crafting the narrative to follow the Jonah pattern
 - Finally Paul also predicts the ship will run aground, as this is God's plan

- A full two weeks into this storm, on the fourteenth night the sailors sense that land is near, probably by smell
 - They took depth readings and discovered that they were quickly approaching an underwater shelf and feared running aground
 - Since they can't see at night, they need to stop their movement and wait
 - So they lowered anchors and prepared to wait for daybreak

[Acts 27:30](#) But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow,

[Acts 27:31](#) Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved."

[Acts 27:32](#) Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it fall away.

[Acts 27:33](#) ¶ Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing.

[Acts 27:34](#) "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish."

[Acts 27:35](#) Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat.

[Acts 27:36](#) All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food.

[Acts 27:37](#) All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons.

[Acts 27:38](#) When they had eaten enough, they began to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea.

- In the midst of lower the anchor, some on the ship begin to lower the small boat brought on board earlier
 - They are pretending that this is part of lower an anchor, but Paul the experienced sailing passenger knows better
 - He warns the centurion that his only hope to see God hold to his grant to save everyone is if everyone remains with Paul
 - Paul is simply echoing what he heard the angel say: God's offer was to save all those who set sail with Paul
 - If that group is no longer together, God's grant of their lives to Paul would be void
 - The centurion and soldiers immediately respond by cutting the lifeboat free

- Why does Paul work to save these men's lives at this point?
 - He could have let them go, but then he knew that God intended to save all of them, as the angel said
 - He could have assumed God would keep that promise somehow and not intervened
 - Instead, Paul seemed to understand that we are called to be God's means for accomplishing His work
 - So Paul acts to instruct the men in how to obey the Lord's direction so that His word will stand
 - Could it have been any other way? No, but we don't try to figure out the "what ifs?"
 - We obey without worrying about how God works it out
- There is still another parallel here to the story of Jonah
 - When Jonah reaches Nineveh, his declaration of God's message results in the entire city being saved by faith
 - Like the ship's passengers, it was an all or nothing commission from God
 - Until Jonah preached, none were saved
 - But God intended to save the entire city through Jonah's preaching, so it must happen
- Then Paul works to bring encouragement to these sailors and by prompting them to eat for the first time in 2 weeks
 - That's a very long time to be without food, and it will have left them very weak
 - Paul's concern is for their weakness so he breaks bread
 - And he reassures them they will all make it through the storm
 - The encouragement took hold and they ate were strengthened
 - So much so that they felt they could throw the wheat out
 - The reason is simple: the wheat was the heaviest thing left in the ship and it was making the ship vulnerable to running aground

- They want to lighten the ship so it will raise up in the water and get closer to shore

[Acts 27:39](#) ¶ When day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could.

[Acts 27:40](#) And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders; and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach.

[Acts 27:41](#) But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of the waves.

[Acts 27:42](#) The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape;

[Acts 27:43](#) but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,

[Acts 27:44](#) and the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that they all were brought safely to land.

[Acts 28:1](#) When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.

- The daylight showed them the bay of an island they didn't recognize
 - The bay is in the island of Malta south of Italy and today the bay is called St. Paul's Bay
 - Ocean currents from east and west meet along the island of Malta, and deposit silt and mud in the bay
 - But the sailors resolve to reach the beach
 - They drop the anchors and free the rudders to steer the ship and now they sail head long toward land
 - They hit a reef, which in the Greek indicates a sand bar and they are stuck out from the beach
 - And as the waves strike the ship, they are in danger of breaking up in the waves
 - The soldiers then decide they should kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping, since soldiers usually paid with their lives when a prisoner escaped
 - The centurion relieved the soldiers from this responsibility and saved the prisoners' lives for Paul's sake

- This man's actions indicate he has taken an inordinate interest in Paul and may have come to faith himself, though we don't know
- So instead, the centurion says swim if you can and the rest float to shore
 - This was brave on his part, for if a prisoner escaped he would lose his life
 - And these prisoners had every reason to escape, since they were likely to die in Rome
 - And as God promised, all made it to shore and none died
 - They land on Malta and now regroup

[Acts 28:2](#) The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.

[Acts 28:3](#) But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

[Acts 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."

[Acts 28:5](#) However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

[Acts 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 men are received well by natives who make a fire to dry them out
 - The text indicates they didn't speak Greek, since the word native indicates non-Greek speaking
 - Therefore, they probably had trouble communicating in details
 - We see Paul's experience collecting wood and the snake biting his hand
 - Paul probably picked up the snake as it was hiding among sticks, and it was sleeping or sluggish in the cold
 - The heat woke it up
 - The natives witness this and begin to make a common assumption among unbelievers and even some believers: bad things happen to bad people
 - While there is truth that bad behavior leads to bad outcomes, the natives have incorrectly assumed the reverse: bad outcomes are unique to bad people

- The natives see the outcome as proof that Paul is bad
 - But in reality, bad things happen to everyone, but God promises to turn them to good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose
 - In this case, Paul's bite becomes God's opportunity to glorify His name among these people through Paul
- For his part, Paul doesn't seem fazed by the event
 - And sure enough, he shows no reaction to the bite
 - This outcome is in keeping with Jesus' promise to the apostles in Mark 16:18, when He promised that deadly snakes will not hurt them
 - This promise wasn't universal to all believers but given as an example of how the Lord's work in the Body of Christ will manifest for some believers
 - In Paul's case, he saw this specific promise fulfilled
- The natives are astounded by Paul's resilience and call him a god
 - A similar response to the earlier episode with Barnabas
 - What these natives prove by their response is how these signs were God's way to demonstrate His power through the Apostles
- This moment of healing for Paul himself becomes the opening for God to reach the entire island through Paul

[Acts 28:7](#) ¶ 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.

[Acts 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.

[Acts 28:9](#) After this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured.

[Acts 28:10](#) They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with all we needed.

[Acts 28:11](#) ¶ 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.

- Paul is a bit of a celebrity and now encounters Publius, the leading man of the island
 - The Greek phrase for “leading man of the island” means the political leader or chief officer
 - He was a Roman governor who ran the island
 - And his father was dying of Maltese Fever, a water-borne bacterial disease common to the island of Malta
 - Paul ministers to this man, heals him and then finds himself at the center of a crowd of islanders seeking similar healing
 - Here is Paul preaching the Gospel and reaching Gentiles for Christ on a far away island practically unknown to sailors
 - While he is a prisoner of the greatest human empire known, yet he is furthering the expansion of the eternal kingdom of the true God
 - Though the Roman empire purposed to deliver Paul to Caesar, God purposed to deliver Paul to the Maltese people
 - Just as Jonah was forcibly sent outside Israel to preach to Israel enemy, Paul was taken as a prisoner away from Jerusalem to preach to Israel’s enemies
 - And when the time came for Paul to represent the truth, he influences an entire island, just as Jonah saved an entire city
- After three months wintering on Malta, time came to leave the island, the natives graciously replaced the lost goods and sent them on their way
 - They sail on a sister ship of the one lost in the storm, which had also wintered on the island
 - It was decorated with the twin brothers, who were sons of Zeus and Leda, and were the patron gods of sailors
 - The remainder of the trip to Rome was uneventful

[Acts 28:12](#) After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.

[Acts 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.

[Acts 28:14](#) There we found some brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.

[Acts 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.

[Acts 28:16](#) ¶ When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

- Paul was able to find and greet believers in at least one church along the way
 - Until finally Paul reaches Rome
 - Paul is now in the capital of the greatest empire the world has ever seen
 - The empire was 3,000 miles east to west and two thousands miles north to south
 - Its population was 4.5 million, and half were slaves
 - Paul has traveled 2,250 miles from Caesarea to get here
 - As Paul walks to the city from the port, he is met by the brethren in two places
 - They probably learned of Paul's approach from the brothers in Puteoli who had seen Paul a little earlier
 - The Roman church sends two parties out to greet Paul and encourage him, one meeting him at the Market and another at the Three Taverns
 - These spots are 33 miles south of Rome
 - Imagine someone walking 33 miles to greet you?
 - This was a great encouragement to Paul and quite an honor for him
 - Paul's accommodations in the city were good, all things considered
 - He was allowed to live by himself, perhaps in the home of the captain of the guard who watched over him
 - Now that Paul is settled in the city and since he will have a long wait to see the Caesar, Paul begins again to minister in the way he always did
 - Only this time, instead of visiting the synagogue, Paul has the synagogue visit him

[Acts 28:17](#) ¶ After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, 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.

[Acts 28:18](#) "And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.

[Acts 28:19](#) "But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

- Paul says he was forced into becoming a prisoner of Rome at the hands of Jewish authorities
 - Yet Paul is careful to point out that his appeal to Caesar was not an indication he was choosing Roman affiliation over his Jewish people, but merely out of necessity

[Acts 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."

[Acts 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.

[Acts 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."

- The Jewish leaders assure Paul that he will have a fair hearing with them, though they have heard many negative reports concerning the sect called the Way
 - We see again that the Christian faith is understood to be a division of Judaism and not something different

[Acts 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.

[Acts 28:24](#) Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

- Here is the fulfillment of Luke's storyline
 - Paul and the Gospel itself has moved outward from Jerusalem to the corners of the world's empire
 - And Paul now sits in Rome teaching the Jewish leaders of the city about the Messiah
 - Specifically, Paul taught on the Kingdom of God and concerning Jesus

- One is a teaching concerning God's plan for Israel and the arrival of the promised Messianic kingdom
- The other is to the Person of the Messiah
 - Eventually Paul stood before Caesar with a similar message
 - As always, some believed while others did not

[Acts 28:25](#) 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,

[Acts 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;

[Acts 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."

[Acts 28:28](#) "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

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

- Paul responds to the leaders' unbelief in quoting Isaiah's own commission from God
 - Isaiah was told that though he was called to be a messenger to God's people, God would withhold understanding from them
 - And by withholding that understanding, God ensured they would be ensnared by their own sin
 - Paul quotes that passage to remind these leaders that God had in the past sent the truth to Israel only to have it rejected
 - And now these men were repeating that pattern
 - Paul's point is clear: he had done his duty to preach to the Gentile first, but by their rejection they prove God's word
 - And Paul is no free to preach to the Gentiles in Rome

- And so Luke's story comes to an end

[Acts 28:30](#) And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,
[Acts 28:31](#) preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

- The length of time mentioned here is significant
 - Two years was the Roman statute of limitations for witnesses to appear against the accused
 - Since Paul spent two years in house arrest, the implication would be that Paul was then released, since there were no charges that could be brought against him
 - In fact, there is strong evidence from some of Paul's epistles and from writings of early church fathers that Paul was released in Rome in AD 63
 - From there, Paul likely undertook a fifth missionary journey, since there are places and events mentioned in 1 & 2 Tim and Titus that did not occur in the journeys mentioned in Acts
 - The church fathers also wrote that Paul was released from Rome, visited more churches and eventually returned to Rome
 - In Paul's second visit to the city, he was arrested again and executed under Nero by beheading in AD 68