

Acts of the Apostles – 28

- I. The Inspired History
 - A. Paul Took Up Serpents (1-6).
 - B. Paul Healed the Sick (7-10).
 - C. Paul Arrived in Rome (11-16).
 - D. Paul Testified to the Jews (17-29).
 - E. Paul Remained in Rome (30-31).

- II. The Sense and Meaning
 - A. Paul was magnified by the Lord before the natives of Malta by taking up a serpent (1-6).
 - 1. After the 276 men on board the doomed ship made it to shore, they knew it was Malta.
 - 2. “Barbarians” in the N.T. did not know Greek or Latin (Romans 1:14; I Cor 14:11).
 - 3. These strangers showed kind hospitality with a fire to warm and dry all 276 men.
 - 4. As Paul laid some sticks on the fire, the heat drove a viper to latch onto his hand.
 - a. A viper is generally a venomous or poisonous snake.
 - b. Venomous is the ability to inject venom or poison by a bite.
 - 5. The Lord Jesus had promised His apostles would take up serpents (Mark 16:18).
 - a. This was one of the great signs promised to accompany the Great Commission.
 - b. Such gifts were designed to confirm the apostles (Mark 16:14-20; Heb 2:4).
 - c. Certain segments of the Pentecostals have taken this sign gift as still existing.
 - d. As their followers die from snake bites, they simply blame a lack of faith.
 - e. Inconsistent Charismatics only use “sign gifts” they can fake without danger.
 - f. Paul did not seek the viper to tempt the Lord in an assembly of believers.
 - g. God providentially sent the viper, and Paul simply shook it off into the fire.
 - h. The miracle was visible before viper experts, who watched for a great while.
 - 6. When the Barbarians saw a viper on Paul’s hand, they fatalistically saw vengeance.
 - a. As Job’s three friends, they falsely presumed the evil was only the result of sin.
 - b. Presuming him a murderer, they saw Fate using a viper rather than shipwreck.
 - 7. When Paul had no harm from the viper’s bite, they showed their great superstition.
 - a. Instead of thinking him a murderer, they now presumed he must be a god.
 - b. They sound like Nebuchadnezzar and his great extremes (Dan 3:14-15,28-30).
 - c. Without the more sure Word as our solid foundation, we would move as far.
 - 8. God magnified Paul with this miracle before the unbelievers on this island.
 - B. Paul was magnified by the Lord before the natives of Malta by healing their sick (7-10).
 - 1. They were lodged three days courteously by Publius, the chief man of the island.
 - 2. Paul healed the father of Publius with another visible demonstration of God’s power.
 - a. He had a fever and a severe case of dysentery.
 - b. Paul prayed to show his dependence on God’s power for the miracle.
 - c. Paul laid his hands on him to fulfill the apostolic promise (Mark 16:18).
 - 3. When this miracle was known, others came and were healed of their diseases.
 - 4. They gave them many honors and loaded them abundantly with needed provisions.
 - 5. The Lord Jesus took care of Paul with honor and esteem and with all things needed.
 - C. Paul arrived safely in Rome by the providential mercy of God upon his trip (11-16).
 - 1. Paul and company stayed on the island of Malta for more than three months.
 - 2. Paul’s third ship was based out of Alexandria, Egypt and had wintered in Malta also.
 - 3. Castor and Pollux were the pagan Greek twin sons of Jupiter who protected sailors.
 - 4. From Malta, Paul was taken to an eastern port named Syracuse on the island of Sicily.

5. From Syracuse, the ship took a circuitous route to maintain their course to Rhegium.
6. From Rhegium, the ship sailed rapidly with favorable winds to Puteoli, near Naples.
7. At Puteoli, Paul met brethren who kept him seven days before he went toward Rome.
8. When the saints in Rome heard Paul was coming, they went 56 miles to Appii forum.
 - a. Paul had not been to Rome, but he had written an epistle to them years earlier.
 - b. Their great affection for Paul was shown by attentiveness and distant greeting.
 - c. When Paul saw such affection and loyalty, he found courage and thanked God.
9. In Rome, while the other prisoners were put in common hold, Paul was loosely held.
 - a. The other prisoners were quickly processed by Caesar's captain of the guard.
 - b. Paul was allowed to rent a house and live by himself with just his own soldier.
 - c. Consider what this centurion named Julius has seen over the last few months.
- D. Paul called together the Jewish leadership in Rome to explain his legal situation (17-29).
 1. He explains to the sympathetic Jews that he was in Roman hands by Jewish betrayal.
 2. He further explains that his chains are due to his promulgation of the hope of Israel.
 3. These Jews knew nothing of the charges brought against him in Judea by the Jews.
 - a. The Jews had been successively defied by Lysias, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa.
 - b. They must have given up their case and not made any efforts in the capital.
 4. These Jews were curious about Christianity – the sect or cult everywhere despised.
 - a. **Sect.** A religious following; adherence to a particular religious teacher or faith.
 - (1) It has generally been used in recent centuries for *denomination*.
 - (2) Paul called the Pharisees the most conservative sect of the Jews (26:5).
 - (3) And the Jews called Paul a leader of the sect called Nazarenes (24:5).
 - (4) Both Sadducees and Pharisees were called sects by God (5:17; 15:5).
 - b. "Cult" is a vague word like sect, yet used today as a cheap slur by the ignorant.
 - (1) **Cult.** 1. Worship; reverential homage rendered to a divine being or beings. *Obs.* 2. A particular form or system of religious worship; *esp.* in reference to its external rites and ceremonies. 3. *transf.* Devotion or homage to a particular person or thing, now *esp.* as paid by a body of professed adherents or admirers.
 - (2) Those who write or talk about "cults" must define the word themselves.
 - (3) Calling a church or denomination a "cult" doesn't prove anything at all.
 - c. It should not surprise us that holding to Scripture only will result in ridicule.
 5. Paul taught the Jewish leadership in Rome about Jesus and the kingdom of God.
 - a. Paul used the entire day to show as much evidence as possible from the O.T.
 - b. As always, Jesus caused a division (John 7:40-44; 9:16; 10:19; Acts 17:4-5).
 - c. Let us never forget God's mercy in causing us to believe (II Thess 2:13-14).
 - d. Paul summarized their lack of faith as fulfilling Isaiah the prophet (Is 6:9-10).
 - e. And like at Antioch of Pisidia, Paul knows the Gentiles will believe it (13:48).
 - (1) This "salvation" is gospel salvation and the preaching of the gospel.
 - (2) Only the gospel is sent and God's predestination is not transferred.
- E. Paul's biography is shortened by Luke, who leaves Paul in a rented house in Rome (30-31).
 1. For two years Paul preached from a rental house in the city of Rome.
 2. Paul was given great liberty to preach Jesus Christ without opposition.
 3. We learn from another epistle that some of Caesar's house were converted (Phil 4:22).