

The Book of Acts

Study Guide and Discussion Questions

Week 18

Chapters 27-28

CHAPTER 27:

1. We open the chapter with Paul being escorted from Jerusalem to Rome because he had appealed to Caesar. He is on a ship with a centurion named Julius, who allows Paul certain liberties usually denied prisoner. How so?

2. Verse 4 tells us that they do not take the most direct course to Myra, but instead stay close to the shore. Before Paul was sent to Rome by Festus, he was commissioned by God. God knew the contrary winds would naturally force the sailors to alter their route, for there are no surprises with the Lord. He also had specific people appointed for an encounter with Paul along the way. What does that mean to you?

3. Fair havens, the south coast of Crete, has retained its name to this very day. They continue on from here but by now it is past time for optimal sailing. We are told that because the Fast had now passed, the seas would be dangerous. Scholars agree the fast would have been the Day of Atonement, which would have fallen on the tenth of Tisri the seventh month of the Jewish year – in that year September 24th. It is not clear why they delayed their voyage until it was dangerous to sail, and Paul warns them not to depart but they do not heed his advice. Even when we have wise, godly counsel we often choose our own way. What is the result of their stubbornness?

4. After being tossed at sea Paul stands up and exhorts the men. Why should they listen to him this time?

5. In verse 31 Paul again warns the centurion and soldiers not to depart, but to stay with the ship. What reason does he give?

6. Paul urges the men to break their fast and eat. He takes bread and gives thanks to the Lord and eats and what does this do for their morale? Note how Paul honors God even in these dire circumstances and among mixed company.

7. The ship finally runs aground and the soldiers resolved to kill all of the prisoners. Why don't they?

CHAPTER 28:

8. They landed on Malta, a island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, where the native people are kind to those shipwrecked. They build a fire and Paul encounters more danger. What happens to Paul? And what is the result of it?

9. While they are marooned on the island Paul has the opportunity to minister to the people. How?

10. They stay on the island for 3 months and then continue their journey to Rome. They stop in Puteoli, which is in Italy and there they find other believers. Why was this detail important? What does this do for Paul? Have you ever been so encouraged just by encountering brothers and sisters in the Lord? If so, why?

11. Paul is permitted to stay in a house with just one soldier and after three days who does he seek? Why?

12. What is the result of his preaching?

Notice that some believe and some do not. Keep this in mind as you also share the gospel. The Word of God says that the Good Shepherd will leave the 99 sheep for that one lost lamb.

13. Paul leaves the Jews with one final word – that of the prophet Isaiah 6:9. There is only so much speaking, preaching and teaching one can do. Ultimately you either have ears to hear or you don't. You respond to the Lord or you refuse to. That same message resonates today.

We are told that Paul continues to preach the kingdom of God to all those who are interested in hearing him for two more years. Historical records indicate that Paul was freed for a brief period following his imprisonment in Rome, during which time he most likely wrote 1 Timothy and Titus and possibly Hebrews too. And then, his mission was complete. He was beheaded in Rome, likely during Nero's reign, and was surely received by the Lord Jesus whom he longed to see.

May we each finish the race set before us with the same courage, passion and persuasion as the Apostle Paul.