

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

#### Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

##### E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

##### 36. Christ's Use Of Paul To Direct Church Ministry For The Rest Of Church History (Acts 28:17-31)

###### I. Introduction

- A. Though the Book of Acts is a history of how Jesus continued to minister through His believers as He had ministered in His earthly life, Acts 1:1-28:16 deals only with Christ's work in the Early Church era.
- B. However, what the Book of Acts began to record continues even today as Christ has ministered through His people all through Church History, and Acts 28:17-31 records God's use of Paul to direct the Church beyond his era in a way that affects Christ's ongoing ministry with us for our application today:

###### II. Christ's Use Of Paul To Direct Church Ministry For The Rest Of Church History, Acts 28:17-31.

- A. Three days after he arrived in Rome, Paul called the city's Jewish leaders to his home since he was under house arrest and could not meet them in the synagogue, Acts 28:17a; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 430.
- B. From his announcement in Acts 28:17b-20 explaining he had been unfairly imprisoned by Jewish enemies in Jerusalem, we discern that Paul was aiming for an opportunity to share the Gospel of Christ with Jews in Rome before their view of it had been negatively distorted by influence from his Jerusalem foes.
- C. The Jewish leaders in Rome replied they had not received any news from Jerusalem about Paul, but that they wanted to hear him share his beliefs, for Christianity was being opposed everywhere, Acts 28:21-22.
- D. So, having agreed on a date, many Jews came to Paul's house to hear him share his faith, Acts 28:23a.
- E. Paul then expounded from the entire Jewish Scriptures, and from morning to evening, how Jesus was God's promised Messiah Who had come to offer His Kingdom, Acts 28:23b. In this effort, Paul **TRIED** to **convince** His hearers to believe in Christ, the KJV verb in Acts 28:23 "persuading" being properly rendered "**tried** to convince" by the NIV in this context, cf. Acts 28:24-25.
- F. The response was the same Paul had seen throughout his ministry to his countrymen: some of his hearers believed his message while others did not, a mixed response, Acts 28:24 with Acts 13:42-45; 14:1-3, et al.
- G. Accordingly, before dismissing them, Paul explained that Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10 about Israel as a **nation** being unreceptive to God's truths was applicable to his generation of Israel, Acts 28:25-27.
- H. Paul added that the salvation of God was now being sent unto the Gentiles, and that they would hear it, Acts 28:28. Romans 11:25-26 expands on this claim to reveal that God had judged Israel as a nation with spiritual blindness until the full number of Gentile converts to Christ in the Church era had been saved, after which God would turn back to evangelize Israel in the Great Tribulation Period.
- I. [Acts 28:29 does not exist in many manuscripts, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Acts 28:29]
- J. Paul continued two full years in his rented quarters, receiving all who came to him, and preaching the "Kingdom of God," Acts 28:30-31. This is an important phrase in the context of Paul's turning to Gentiles from trying to reach Israel, for in the context of Jewish theology, it mean Gentiles with Jews are justified by faith in Christ and will participate in Christ's millennial kingdom, Ibid., Bib. Kno. Com., N. T., p. 431.
- K. Scholars believe Paul's legal case was eventually dropped because his accusers did not appear (Ibid.), and that at this time of his house arrest, he wrote the "Prison Epistles" of Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians Ibid. It is believed he was eventually released, and was later recaptured and martyred, Ibid.

***Lesson:*** (1) Acts reports that from Jerusalem to Rome, the Jewish people as a nation did not accept the Gospel of Christ, so they would be nationally blinded to its truth until the full "harvest" of Gentile souls had believed in the Church era, after which time God would turn back to reach Israel in the Tribulation Period. (2) Acts 28:31 also reveals Gentile Christians will be in the Messianic Kingdom.

***Application:*** (1) May we seek to minister to individuals who are open to God's truths. (2) However, if people refuse it, though we must be patient with all men, we should follow Paul's lead of giving MORE attention to the RECEPTIVE as Paul did in Acts 28:25-31! (a) This principle applies both in our work with the lost (b) as well as in our work with more receptive versus more hardened professing believers!