

LESSON 12

PAUL'S MISSION TO ROME

ACTS 25:1-28:31

Introduction

Luke's purpose in writing Acts was to show that Jesus of Nazareth was the universal Lord and King. Luke had special interests in the lordship of Christ for Gentiles among whom he was numbered. To accomplish his purpose, it was necessary for Luke to show the geographical, social, and national conquests of the Gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke did not attempt to give a full history of the spread of the Gospel, but he included representative incidents to show that Christ is Lord of all people.

Luke shows how people of various social levels were brought into the Kingdom. Most of those in Jerusalem and Galilee who first responded to the Gospel were poor. It was not long before priests believed. After the Gospel had crossed Jewish national boundaries, Christ was preached to an official of the Ethiopian queen. During the first missionary journey, a Roman governor believed. On a number of occasions, Paul had opportunity to share Christ with Roman officials. In Athens, he spoke to the intellectuals. Luke shows that Christianity was not limited to one nation nor to one social group. Christ is Lord of all people.

Luke's purpose of showing that Christ is Lord of all was not completed until the Christian witness in Rome had been presented. Paul was not the first to take the Gospel to Rome, but his contribution to the Roman Church through his Epistle and visit deserves the place Luke gives in Acts to his journey to Rome. Luke first describes the conditions which led to Paul's Roman journey. Next, he shares some of the experiences on the journey. The Book closes with the brief account of Paul's reception by Christian Jews and a reference to his ministry among the Gentiles in Rome. Since the Roman Church became predominantly Gentile, Paul's contribution to it is significant.

The Appeal to Caesar

Acts 25:1-12

During the two years' imprisonment in Caesarea, Paul was not kept in strict confinement. He may have lived in a private home with much freedom, yet he was chained to a soldier. He was permitted to have friends and co-workers with him. Perhaps Philip and other Christians of Caesarea visited him frequently. Luke and Aristarchus may have been constantly at his side. It is possible that the Prison Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written in Caesarea.

Festus succeeded Felix as procurator between A. D. 55 and 60. Although the date has not been established for his arrival in Caesarea, a date towards the end of the period best fits Luke's chronology. Paul's trial before Festus likely occurred in A. D. 59 or 60.

Festus had been in his new provincial office only three days when he went to Jerusalem and had the charges against Paul brought to his attention. Since the procurator was responsible for keeping peace in his province, he attempted to keep the goodwill of the people. Knowing that it was to the procurator's advantage to please the Jews, the chief priests asked of him a favour which

What was Luke's purpose in writing Acts?

(Compare your answer with the text.)

List some of the social groups which were reached with the Gospel.

(poor, priests, Roman officials, intellectuals)

Name the three Prison Epistles which were written probably in Caesarea.

(Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon)

they thought he would not deny. They requested that Paul be returned to Jerusalem for trial. The Sanhedrin adopted the plans of the Sicarii to assassinate Paul if he was returned from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Festus revealed his justice and wisdom by denying the request, but he offered to reopen the trial of Paul if Jewish leaders wished to renew their charges against him.

Festus was at a disadvantage as a Roman in understanding the strange laws of the Jews and the reasons charges had been brought against one of their own. He seems to have been convinced that Paul was not guilty of a criminal offense, but as a new procurator he could not afford to ignore the demands of the leaders of his subjects.

After eight or ten days, Festus returned to Caesarea and Jewish leaders were on hand for the trial of Paul (v. 6). Luke does not repeat the charges made against Paul. He does mention that they brought "many and serious charges against him which they could not prove" (v. 7—NASB). Paul's defence indicates that he was again charged with breaking the religious law of the Jews (teaching that circumcision was not required for right relationship with God), interrupting public worship in the Temple (their assumption that he had brought an uncircumcised Gentile into the Temple), and sedition (preaching loyalty to Jesus as King instead of to Caesar).

Although the Jews could not prove their charges against Paul, Festus desired to show them a favour; therefore, he decided that Paul should go to Jerusalem and be examined again by the Sanhedrin. Festus planned to be present at the trial (v. 9). Since he did not understand Jewish laws, perhaps he thought that reopening the trial before the Sanhedrin would give him insight.

Paul refused to be tried again before the Sanhedrin. He recognized that his own people had made decisions on the bases of emotions and prejudices rather than justice. He had already stood before the Sanhedrin and defended himself against perverted charges. Jealousy and prejudice had blinded the eyes of the Jews; therefore, there was no point in arguing further with them. Caesar's tribunal had found no fault in him with reference to the accusation that he had wronged the Jews. Paul agreed that if he had committed a crime worthy of death, he should die (v. 11). Since he had not been proven guilty of crimes, he refused to be handed over to the Jewish mob which could be stirred to irrational frenzy. Paul was not afraid to die, but he saw no purpose in being returned to Jerusalem for assassination. His hands were free of the blood of the Jews. They would give account to God for their actions. He appealed his case to Caesar (v. 11).

The rights of Roman citizens were jealously protected. If a citizen thought that he was not getting a just trial in a provincial court, he could appeal his case to Caesar. Paul had already been tried and found innocent, but the procurator had decided to return him to Jerusalem where Paul knew he would face death. He had no alternative but to appeal to Caesar. Paul's appeal enabled Festus to shift the responsibility of the case to someone else without jeopardizing his position. If Festus had freed Paul, the Jews would have been infuriated. If Festus had condemned Paul, he would have been acting contrary to Roman justice. His private judgement was that Paul was innocent and should have been freed (cf. 26:31f.).

Paul's Case Discussed with Agrippa II
Acts 25:13-27

Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa who had been king of Judaea until A. D. 44 (cf. Acts 12). Agrippa II had been brought up in the court of Claudius, but because he was only seventeen years old at the time of his father's death, he was not

The Sanhedrin requested the return of Paul to _____ for trial, and the Council planned to _____ him if he was returned.
(Jerusalem, assassinate)

TRUE OR FALSE?
Festus granted the Sanhedrin's request.

(false)

What were the three charges which apparently were brought against Paul?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
(breaking the Jewish religious laws, interrupting public worship in the Temple, sedition)

Festus finally decided to send Paul to Jerusalem because—
1. He wanted to please the _____.
2. He hoped to gain a better understanding of the _____ against _____.
(Jews, charges, Paul)

Why did Paul refuse to return to Jerusalem?

(He had already been tried and found innocent. If he returned to Jerusalem, he would be killed.)

Paul appealed his case to _____
(Caesar)

given his father's kingdom. He was given later the principality of is uncle, King Herod of Chalcis, upon his death. King Herod had been married to Agrippa's sister Bernice. Later, Claudius had made Agrippa II responsible for appointing the High Priest of the Jews and exchanged Chalcis for some principalities in Northern Palestine. Agrippa II was given also the title of king.

Of Agrippa's three sisters (Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla), two are known from the Book of Acts. Drusilla has already been introduced as the third wife of Felix. Bernice, upon the death of her uncle and first husband Herod, joined her brother Agrippa II in Rome. Scandalous reports began to circulate in the Roman society concerning their incestuous relations. Bernice departed from the city and married Polemo, a Cilician potentate. She soon deserted him, however, and returned to her brother. Neither Drusilla nor Bernice is famous for her chastity.

It was customary for dependent princes and rulers to pay their respects to a new governor upon his arrival. Agrippa II and Bernice arrived in Caesarea for that purpose shortly after Festus had taken office (v. 13). Their visit resulted in a prolonged stay (v. 14). Since Festus had not completely resolved Paul's case and needed additional information to send to Caesar, he discussed the matter with Agrippa II and sought his counsel. Agrippa had been officially recognized as an authority in matters of Jewish religious policy. He was Jewish by birth but Roman by training and sympathy.

Festus reviewed the case of Paul for Agrippa. He acknowledged that when the trial of Paul was held, his accusers brought "charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting" (v. 18-NASB). Festus did reveal his impression that the central point of disagreement between Paul and his accusers concerned the resurrection of Jesus (v. 19). As a Roman, Festus recognized that he was incompetent to investigate the religious questions of the Jews. Paul had refused to go to Jerusalem for further examination and had appealed to Caesar.

Agrippa II became interested in the case of Paul. Perhaps he had heard of the preaching of the famous Apostle and was well acquainted with the controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees concerning the resurrection. He probably knew nothing of Jesus since he had spent his years in Rome, but he was acquainted with Jewish messianic hope. Although Agrippa's immoral life would conflict with the message Paul preached, his pro-Roman attitude and knowledge of Jewish traditions had prepared him to be an impartial but informed judge.

Agrippa's and Bernice's vanity and social ambition are revealed by the pomp of the petty ruler (v. 23). The real power rested in the hands of Festus, but he gave the young King the opportunity of making a public display with the semblance of power. The hearing was scheduled for the auditorium of the palace. The King was given the seat of the provincial Governor, but the Governor had authority to pronounce the final verdict. Festus presented Paul, the prisoner, to King Agrippa, acknowledging again that he had found nothing worthy of death in him (v. 25). He stated that the purpose of the investigation was to discover information which should be presented to the Emperor for Paul's trial (vv. 26-27).

Paul's Witness to Agrippa II

Acts 26:1-23

Paul did not waste his opportunity to speak before a Jewish king, a Roman procurator, the chief men of the city, and the commanders of the troops when he was invited to speak by Agrippa.

Luke describes Paul's address as his defence (v. 1), but Paul combined his defence with a witness of the Gospel.

Festus' position was in jeopardy because—

1. If he had freed Paul, the Jews would have been_____.
2. If he had condemned Paul, he would have been acting contrary to_____justice.

(infuriated, Roman)

Give two reasons Festus asked Agrippa to hear Paul's case.

1. _____
2. _____

(Festus needed more information for Caesar. Agrippa was an authority in Jewish religious policy.)

The central point of disagreement between Paul and his accusers concerned the

(resurrection)

The purpose of the hearing was to gain more_____ for the_____.

(information, Emperor)

Paul opened his address with a delicate compliment to the King. He counted himself fortunate to have the opportunity to present his case to Agrippa II who had had opportunity to know the Jewish customs and controversies. Since his hearers understood the pride and loyalty of a Jew to the customs of his Fathers, Paul referred to his early life. Although he was accused of speaking against the Law of Moses, he had been a Pharisee who adhered to the strictest keeping of the Law (v. 5). Paul moved rapidly from his personal experience to his understanding of the Old Testament.

God had promised the twelve tribes that they would be a great nation, would have their own land, and would be given an eternal king (v. 7). God's promise of a great nation would be fulfilled in His Kingdom. The special blessing of God's Kingdom was the resurrection by which the people of God would be established eternally in the Kingdom. The Kingdom would not cease because of the death of her people.

Paul explained that he had rejected God's plan and had conspired against Jesus and his followers (vv. 9-11). He had been personally involved in opposing Christianity. Paul's way of life had been completely reversed by a personal encounter with the Heavenly Lord. He described his experience as a light from heaven shining brighter than the sun. He had heard a voice say in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (v. 14). He discovered that the Heavenly Lord was Jesus whose cause he was opposing. The driver of oxen used a pole with a sharp point on the end to prick the heels of the oxen and cause them to move forward. Newly-yoked oxen would often kick when they were first pricked with the goad, thus driving the sharp point deeper into their legs. Likewise, opposing the will of Jesus only brought frustration and punishment. Through the experience, Paul recognized the folly of rebellion and submitted to the Lord (v. 16). The will of Christ for Paul was to preach to the Gentiles in order that they too would be brought into the Kingdom of God.

Verse 18 gives an excellent summary of Paul's doctrine of the Kingdom. He believed that in Christ the Day of the Lord had arrived when God's people would be delivered from the dominion of Satan who rules in this world and would be born into God's Kingdom. The people of this world walk in darkness; they are ignorant of truth and the reality of life. Worldly-minded people think that life exists in satisfying passions and selfish ambitions and in material possessions. People whose lives are controlled by these values are walking in darkness and are under the control of Satan. God's Deliverer was sent in the person of his Son who forgives the sins of those who repent and bestows the life of the Kingdom upon those who believe in Him as the Messiah. Those who renounce the worldly life of sin and believe in Christ are removed from darkness to light. They discover the reality of life in fellowship with God.

According to verse 18, Paul believed in the reality of the Kingdom of God, but he did not equate it with an earthly organization. He conceived of a higher spiritual reality in which either Satan or God dominates the life of the individual. God through Christ comes to dominate the life of a person when that person by faith invites Christ to become his King. Anyone who makes that decision discovers the light, the reality and meaning of life now and for eternity. Life must be lived on a plane beyond the present material level. The power for this new level of living comes from the Holy Spirit when one by faith enters the Kingdom of God.

Paul asserted again that the change from his early loyalty to Jewish customs and interpretation of the Old Testament was not the result of his own choice but was divinely given (v. 19).

Paul spoke before a _____, a Roman
 _____ chief _____
 of the city, and _____ of
 the troops.

(king, procurator, men, commanders)

The special blessing of God's Kingdom was
 the _____ by which the people of
 God would be established eternally in
 the _____

(resurrection, Kingdom)

The will of God for Paul was to preach to
 the _____.

(Gentiles)

A summary of Paul's doctrine of the Kingdom is
 found in Acts 26:_____.

(18)

TRUE OR FALSE?

Paul equated the Kingdom of God with an earthly
 organization. _____

(false)

Disaster would have resulted if he had continued in disobedience to "kick against the pricks." He could not oppose God. In obedience to the heavenly vision, he declared to the Jews of Damascus, Jerusalem, and throughout Judaea that they and the Gentiles must repent and perform deeds appropriate to repentance (v. 20).

Paul had been accused of betraying God by speaking against the Law of Moses. His call to genuine repentance and true righteousness could not have been contrary to the will of God. Yet, some Jews seized him while he was in the Temple and attempted to put him to death (v. 21). The fact that Paul stood before Agrippa to give his witness was evidence that God approved of his work and had delivered him. Paul claimed that all he taught was based on the Old Testament, an interpretation of the Prophets and Moses (v. 22). In the Old Testament, he found that God's Messiah was to suffer and be raised from the dead (v. 23).

Before his Damascus road experience, Paul held the typical Jewish view that God's Messiah would be victorious and rule in power and splendour. The hope had never been realized because previous prospective messiahs and their kingdoms were destroyed by death and decay. God was able to establish His promise of an eternal Messiah and Kingdom when death itself was defeated. Death was defeated by the resurrection of Jesus, and Jesus was the first to proclaim the light of the new life in God's Kingdom to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles (v. 23). Paul's life and beliefs were revolutionized because the resurrected Lord appeared to him and enabled him to understand these truths.

The Responses to Paul's Message
Acts 26:24-32

Festus' retort (vv. 24-26)

Because of the reality of the new life Paul experienced in Christ, he became emotionally involved in the presentation of the Gospel to the extent that Festus exclaimed that he was out of his mind. Festus was probably ignorant of Jewish Scripture and its interpretation, but he may have been acquainted with the concept of the resurrection which was taught by the mystery religions of the Greeks and Romans. However, resurrection in the mystery religions was a symbol of renewed life after the winter season. Paul spoke of a person who was ordained of God to establish an eternal Kingdom composed of people who would be raised to eternal life. The concept of God's anointed King gaining victory through humility and suffering was as foreign to Romans as to Jews.

The glorious life which Paul presented as the result of submission instead of self-assertion appeared contradictory to Festus. In his confusion Festus exclaimed that Paul was mad. Paul replied that he was not mad but uttered "sound-minded" words of truth (v. 25). Paul looked to King Agrippa to support his statement. Surely Agrippa knew that Paul spoke sensible words, for Christianity was a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Christianity had grown rapidly and was no longer an obscure movement. Not only the movement but also the truth of Christianity was widely known. The Christian doctrines of the resurrection of the dead and the coming of a Messiah were prominent doctrines of Judaism also and would be known by Agrippa.

Agrippa's response (vv. 27-29)

When Paul looked to Agrippa, his enthusiasm for Christ again carried him to the point of pressing his listener for a decision (v. 27). Knowing that Jews accepted the Old Testament as the authoritative Word of God, Paul was convinced that Agrippa

All Paul taught was based on the _____
_____, an interpretation of the
_____ and _____.

(Old Testament, Prophets, Moses)

Death was defeated by Jesus' _____.

(resurrection)

Festus said Paul was _____.

(mad)

believed what he was saying, because his words were based on the Prophets. Agrippa's reply to Paul has been the text for many sermons, but the meaning of the statement may not be as it appears in the Authorized Version. It is possible that Agrippa said, "Paul, do you attempt to make me a Christian with so little persuasion?" Although Agrippa was interested in Paul's arguments and interpretation of the Old Testament, he may have been embarrassed to have been called upon to support Paul's position before the city dignitaries. Paul's zeal was not diminished by the negative response of the two political rulers. He expressed the strong desire that not only Agrippa but all who heard him would share his experience, except for his chains (v. 29).

Agrippa's conclusion concerning Paul's case (vv. 30-32)

Lysias had found that Paul had committed no crime worthy of imprisonment or death; neither had Festus found him guilty. Agrippa went aside with the governor and Bernice for a brief conference. He agreed with Lysias and Festus that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment. Agrippa concluded that Paul might have been set free had he not appealed to Caesar. Some may conclude that Paul acted hastily in appealing his case to Caesar. Had he not made that decision, however, he would have been returned to Jerusalem where certain death awaited him. The experience of Paul also reveals the providential care of God. Paul had been promised that he would go to Rome. Even imprisonment could not defeat God's plan but was used to accomplish His will.

Paul's Journey to Rome
Acts 27:1-28:15

From Caesarea to Fair Havens (27:1-8)

A voyage was not inviting at the beginning of winter when the sea would be treacherous and stormy. The sea was practically closed for navigation during the winter months. Frank Stagg has suggested that the voyage provides a good picture of Paul's life and ministry. "His entire ministry was a stormy one; he was often repudiated; he was often in a mood of depression; but his far-reaching decisions were amply vindicated by subsequent history."¹

Throughout the voyage, the author focuses upon Paul and his unflinching faith in his God even in the darkest hours. He proved to be a prophet and a true spiritual leader during the six or more months of travel.

It appears that the author once again joined Paul in the journey because of the return of the use of the first person plural. "Other prisoners" (of a different kind) were also to be delivered to Rome.

Aristarchus of Thessalonica is mentioned as a companion of Luke and Paul (v. 2). He is called a fellow-prisoner in Colossians 4:10.

Agrippa's reply was _____

(Do you attempt to make me a Christian with so little persuasion?)

The three officials who judged Paul innocent were _____, _____, and _____.

(Lysias, Festus, Agrippa)

TRUE OR FALSE?

The winter was a dangerous time to travel by sea. _____

(true)

Paul was the _____ and _____ for the voyage.

(prophet, spiritual leader)

One of Paul's companions was apparently _____

(Luke)

Who joined Paul and Luke on the voyage?

(Aristarchus)

¹ *The Book of Acts*, p. 255.

Paul was placed in the care of Julius who secured passage for the group on a coasting vessel as far as Myra in Lycia. The season for sailing was far advanced, and there was no ship in port sailing directly for Rome. Perhaps Julius had planned to go to Ephesus, cross the Aegean Sea to Corinth, and take another ship on to Rome.

The distance of 70 miles to Sidon was covered the first day. Paul had already gained the respect and friendship of Julius who permitted him to visit his friends while the boat was docked at Sidon. Paul may not have been well, which accounts for Luke's (a physician) presence with him.

Since the westerly winds had already begun to blow, the vessel sailed under the shelter of Cyprus rather than crossing the open sea. Progress was slow along the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia.

At Myra, Julius arranged passage on a grain ship which may have been blown off course, going from Alexandria to Italy. The northwestern winds continued to blow and hindered the progress of the ship. The ship was partially sheltered from the adverse winds by the island of Crete and finally arrived at Fair Havens on the southwestern part of Crete.

The storm on the journey to Malta (27:9-44)

The "fast" was the Jewish Atonement which fell near the beginning of October, a time of the year when sailing was very dangerous. Since the ship was unable to make progress after it rounded the southwestern point of Crete and headed northwest into the wind, it remained in port at Fair Havens for many days. Paul warned the centurion and captain of the ship that a continuation of the voyage would result in great loss of cargo, ship, and lives (v. 10). The centurion and crew of the ship agreed that the journey to Italy should be postponed until the winter months had passed, but a more suitable harbour should be sought up the northwestern coast of Crete at Phoenix (v. 12).

After a few days, the wind shifted to the south and became moderate; therefore, the centurion and captain concluded that they could accomplish their purpose of reaching Phoenix (v. 13). The vessel was making progress along the coast of Crete until the wind changed unexpectedly to the northeast (called Euroclydon) and drove the ship into the open sea (vv. 14-15). The ship was driven past the small island of Clauda, southwest of Crete. The island gave the crew some protection and an opportunity to reinforce the hull of the ship by undergirding it with cables (vv. 16-17). Uncertain of the direction they were being driven, the crew was fearful of the quicksands off the coast of Africa near Cyrene; therefore, they lowered the sails and drifted in the storm. When the storm became more violent, the cargo and tackle were thrown overboard (vv. 18-19).

Without the aid of a compass, the captain could not determine the direction they were being driven. Ancient seamen were dependent on the sun and stars for navigation (v. 20). As the storm continued for several days, hope of being saved was gradually abandoned (v. 20). The tossing of the vessel prevented the preparation of food even if any passenger had become hungry.

At the time all hope was gone, Paul stood to give encouragement. He reminded them that if his advice had been followed at Crete, the loss and danger would not have been incurred (v. 21). Perhaps Paul was not as interested in saying "I told you so" as he was giving assurance that the Word revealed by the Lord through him was dependable. Paul informed the 276 on board that the ship would be lost, but there would be no loss of life. His prophecy was based on a message received from God through an angel. Paul's God was able to sustain his life in order that he could

Who was the official in charge of Paul?

(Julius)

If the voyage was continued from Crete to Rome, Paul warned there would be loss of _____, _____, and _____.

(cargo, ship, lives)

The ship caught in the storm while seeking a safer harbour at _____.

(Phoenix)

accomplish the will of God who had predetermined that Paul would stand before Caesar.

On the fourteenth night at sea, the sailors detected that the ship was approaching land (v. 27). Anchors were lowered to prevent the ship from running aground on the rocks. The sailors attempted to escape in a small boat, but they were detected by Paul who warned the centurion and soldiers that the sailors would be needed in handling the ship. If the sailors escaped, lives would be lost; if all worked together, no life would be lost. The soldiers cut loose the small boat and permitted it to fall into the sea. The action prevented the escape of the sailors, but it also deprived them of the use of the much-needed boat. Paul spent the rest of the night encouraging the passengers to eat since they would need strength to get to shore (vv. 33-34). Again he assured them that no life would be lost. He expressed his faith in action by taking bread, giving thanks, and eating (v. 35). Paul's leadership ability and strength of character were evident during the crisis of the storm.

After the passengers and crew had eaten, the rest of the wheat was thrown into the sea. At daybreak, a bay with a beach was spotted, and the crew determined to drive the ship onto it. The ship was cut loose from the anchors and the foresail was hoisted. A reef prevented the ship from reaching the beach, but it was close enough for some to swim ashore. The grounded ship began to break up under the pounding of the sea and had to be abandoned at once. Since the soldiers were responsible for their prisoners, they decided to kill them so there would be no risk of any escaping which would require the forfeiting of the guards' lives. The gratitude and affection of Julius for the Apostle caused him to forbid his men to carry out their proposal. He instructed the persons on board to swim or reach shore on planks or other debris from the ship. Luke notes that the promise of the Lord, given through Paul, that all souls would be saved was kept (v. 44).

The winter in Malta (28:1-10)

The island on which the ship was wrecked was called Melita (Malta—v. 1). The natives were unusually kind and offered whatever comforts were available.

As Paul placed a bundle of sticks on the fire, a viper darted out and fastened onto his hand. The natives probably had noticed Paul's chains and had concluded that he was a murderer. When they saw the viper fastened to his hand, they concluded that the goddess Justice would not permit him to escape death a second time. After the Apostle showed no harm from the viper, the natives concluded that he was a god instead of a criminal (v. 6).

Adverse external circumstances never hindered Paul from ministering. He was on the way to Rome as a prisoner, he had just experienced a severe storm and shipwreck, and he apparently was not physically strong. However, Paul still used his opportunities during the three months on Malta to minister to the needs of the people there. Publius, a leading citizen of the island, had expressed unusual courtesy to Paul and his companions. The father of Publius was healed after Paul prayed and laid his hands on him. Luke indicates that Paul's fame spread across the island, and those with diseases came to him and were healed (v. 9). Luke does not mention whether or not converts were made and a church established. It would have been unusual if Paul did not use the three months to teach the Gospel.

The final stage of the journey (28:11-15)

Another Alexandrian ship which had been prevented from reaching Rome had wintered at Malta. The vessel was prepared to continue the voyage about the first of March, and Julius secured passage on it for his company. It was called Dioscuri for the twin brothers, Castor and Pollux, patron gods of sailors and

How many people were on board the ship?_____

TRUE OR FALSE?

Paul assured them there would be no loss of life._____

(276, true)

How many days did the storm last?_____

How did Paul show his confidence in God's promise of safety? _____

(14, by taking bread, giving thanks, and eating)

Who saved Paul's life when the ship began to break up and the soldiers were fearful of losing their prisoners?_____

(Julius)

What was the name of the island where the ship was wrecked?_____

(Melita or Malta)

The natives concluded Paul was a god when he was not harmed by the_____.

(viper)

Paul healed_____ father and many others.

(Publius')

sons of Zeus.

The ship docked at Syracuse for three days before continuing to Rhegium. Within two days the ship came to Puteoli, the port of Rome which was 140 miles away. Paul found Christian brothers there and spent seven days with them. As Paul and his company continued on the journey towards Rome, a group of Christians met them at the Forum of Appius. Ten miles further, another group of Christians met them to welcome them to Rome. Paul was greatly encouraged by their expressions of fellowship (v. 15).

Luke does not record the origin of the Christian Church in Rome. When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, the Church appears to have already been strong. He expressed his desire to strengthen the faith of the Roman Christians and in turn to be strengthened by them.

Paul's Activities in Rome

Acts 28:16-31

Paul's meeting with Roman Jews (vv. 17-22)

Three days after Paul arrived, he met with the Jewish leaders. Since Jews from Asia had given erroneous reports in Jerusalem concerning his missionary work, Paul was concerned that the Roman Jews not be misguided also. He also wanted to explain the reason for his bondage and why he had appealed to Caesar.

Luke summarized Paul's account of the events leading to his arrest and bondage. He mentions the charges made against Paul, his defence, and his appeal to Caesar. The statement in verse 19 implies that Paul's appeal to Caesar was an act of disloyalty to his own nation.

The Jewish leaders assured him that they had received no letter from Judaea nor evil report from Asian Jews. They were interested in knowing the teachings of Christianity since they had heard that "this sect" was spoken against everywhere (v. 22).

Paul implied in the statement, "for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (v. 20), that he considered Christianity to be closely related to Judaism. He did not think of Christianity as a sect but a fulfilment of Judaism. The Roman Jewish leaders thought of Christianity as a sect of Judaism.

Paul's presentation of the Gospel in Rome (vv. 23-28)

The Jewish leaders had expressed an interest in knowing more about the teachings of Christianity. On an appointed day, Paul explained the Scriptures of the Old Testament referring to the Kingdom of God and the Messiah. He probably showed them how the promised descendant of David could only fulfil the promise of an eternal Messiah through the resurrection. Some of the Jews believed and others did not. Paul became impatient with those who did not believe. He quoted Isaiah 6:9f. to emphasize the point that the Israelites would not hear and understand because they had closed their ears and would not see because they had closed their eyes. Paul applied the prophetic words spoken through the Holy Spirit to the Jews who rejected his message. His last words to them were that the message would be carried to the Gentiles who would listen (v. 28).

Verse 29 is committed in many of the earlier manuscripts. The verse points out that when Paul "had said these words, the Jews departed" (v. 29). Then Luke moved immediately to the summary statement that Paul spent two years in Rome, teaching those who came to him. He leaves the impression that after Paul mentioned the Gentiles the Jews were no longer open to hear his teachings. Since Paul was a Roman citizen and the Jews in Rome were not popular with the Emperor, there was no attempt made to hinder his teachings.

Luke opened the Book of Acts with the disciples' questions

Paul was encouraged by the fellowship of the _____ Christians.

(Roman)

Paul met with the Jewish leaders for two reasons:

1. To defend himself against erroneous reports from _____ or Jerusalem Jews.

2. To explain his bonds and his appeal to _____.

(Asian, Caesar)

Paul explained the Scriptures of the Old Testament referring to the _____ of _____ and the _____.

He also told them the message would be carried to the _____.

(Kingdom, God, Messiah, Gentiles)

When did the Roman Jews cease hearing Paul?

_____ (when he mentioned the Gentiles)

concerning the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Jesus had answered that they were not to be concerned with "times or seasons" but to preach the Gospel in all the world. Luke closed the Book with reference to Paul's proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Rome. The question of the disciples concerning the time when God would restore the Kingdom to Israel had been answered. The Kingdom was no longer limited to Israel, but it was composed of men of all nations and social classes who believed. The Kingdom was being established by the power of the Holy Spirit as believers witnessed and proclaimed the good news that all who repented and believed were born spiritually into the Kingdom of God.

According to the teachings of Acts—

The Kingdom would not be limited to _____; it would be made up of all _____ and social _____;

the time of the restoration of the Kingdom would depend on the power of the _____

_____ working through faithful _____

(Israel, nations, classes, Holy Spirit, witnesses)

Home Study Assignment

Basic study (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text answer the following questions.

1. Name three social groups which responded to the Gospel. _____

2. Name the three Prison Epistles which may have been written at Caesarea. _____

3. Why did the chief priests request Festus to return Paul to Jerusalem for trial? _____

4. Give two reasons Festus decided to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial. 1. _____
_____ 2. _____
5. Why did Paul refuse to return to Jerusalem? _____

6. How did Paul avoid going to Jerusalem? _____
7. How did Paul's case jeopardize Festus' position? _____

8. Why was Agrippa II invited to hear Paul's case? _____

9. Why was the resurrection essential to the fulfilment of God's promise of an eternal Kingdom? _____

10. What was Agrippa's response to Paul's message? _____

11. Name three political officials who judged Paul innocent. _____
12. Who accompanied Paul on the journey to Rome? _____
13. What did Paul predict would happen if the journey was continued from Crete to Rome?

14. Where was the ship headed when it was caught in the storm? _____

15. How many days did the storm last and how many were on board the ship? _____

16. What assurance did Paul receive through the angel in the midst of the storm? _____

17. Who did the natives of Malta conclude Paul to be? _____

18. Why did Paul desire to meet with the leaders of the Roman Jews? _____

19. When did the Roman Jews cease listening to Paul? _____

20. What answers does Acts give to the disciples' question concerning the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel?

Supplementary activities (Levels 2 and 3):

1. Give a summary of Paul's doctrine of the Kingdom.
2. What did the storm and shipwreck reveal about Paul?

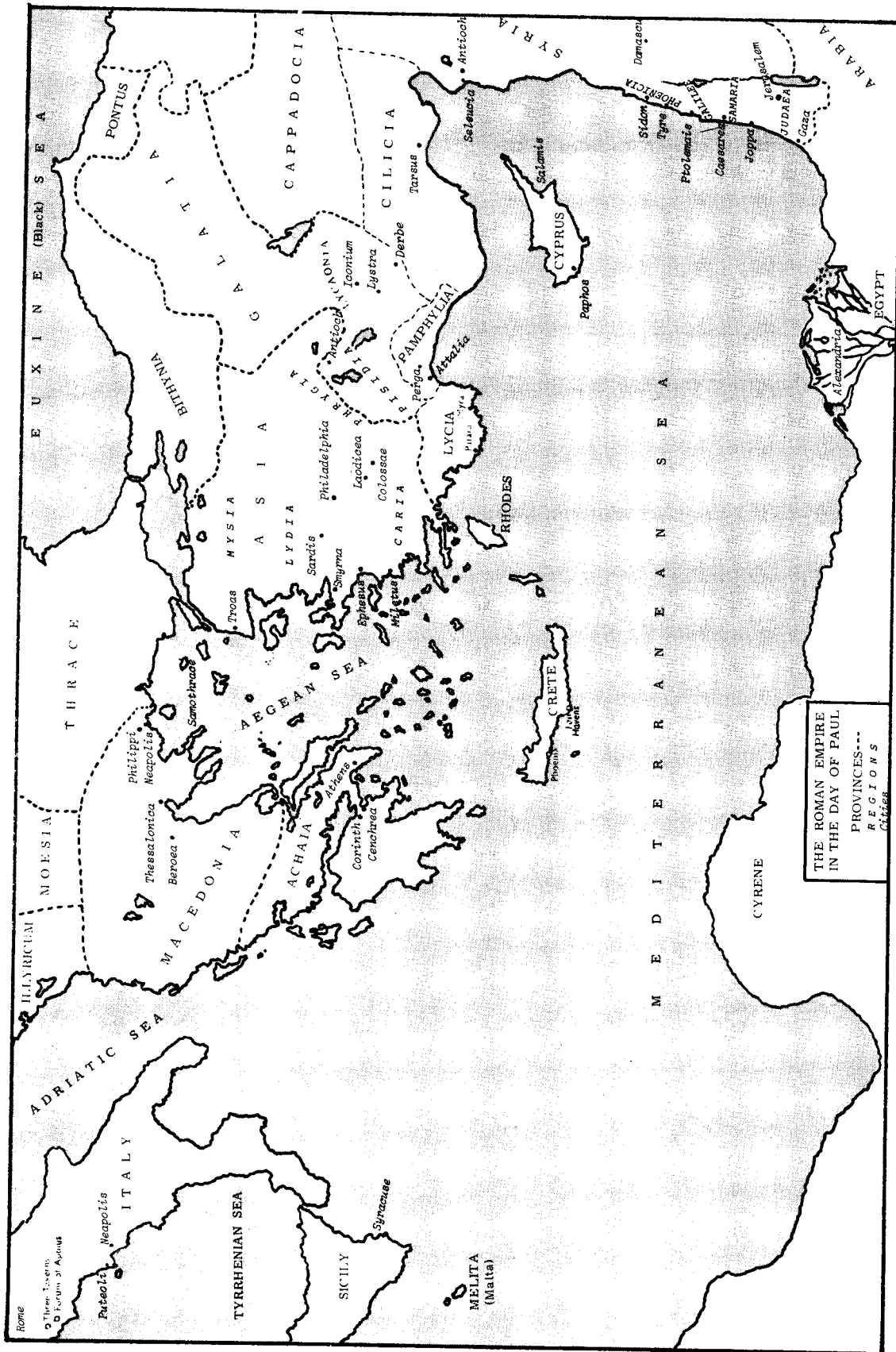
Advanced activities (Level 3):

1. Read pages 243 to 266 in *The Book of Acts* by Frank Stagg.
 2. What was Agrippa's probable response to Paul's invitation?
 3. Explain the apparent contradiction in Paul's predictions that no life will be lost, but later he said if the sailor escaped there would be loss of life.
-

Seminar Discussion

1. Why did Luke give such a detailed account of the journey to Rome?
2. What could the sailors and passengers have learnt about Paul's God during the storm at sea?
3. What was the response of the Roman Jews to Paul? Did they oppose him? Why?
4. What do you conclude to have been Luke's purpose in writing the Book of Acts?

APPENDIX A: MAP FOR THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL



APPENDIX B: MAP FOR THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL

