

Acts 28:11-31 *Wise Men Still Seek Him – Encouraging one another*

Context: Paul's final journey and arrival at Rome

1. The *final leg of the journey to Rome was aboard a ship from Alexandria, Egypt.*
 - ✓ The ship had the sign of Castor and Pollux – Roman gods.
2. When Paul landed on mainland Italy, they found brethren and others traveled far.
 - ✓ They found brethren who wanted them to tarry for seven days.
 - ✓ On route to Rome, many came from far distances to be with them.
3. At Rome, while all the prisoners were delivered, Paul was given special arrangements.
 - ✓ God gave Paul favor in the sight of the leaders of Rome's soldiers.
4. Paul used his liberty as an allowance for the sake of the Gospel.
 - ✓ Paul immediately called the Jewish leaders together.
 - ✓ Paul's bonds in Rome would ultimately launch the gospel all over the world.
5. The Roman Jewish leaders desired to hear the truth from Paul about Christianity.
 - ✓ They had heard stories, but they wanted to hear Paul's testimony.
6. Paul testified of the kingdom of God and persuaded them concerning Jesus Christ.
 - ✓ Paul persuaded them with the Scriptures from morning until evening!
 - ✓ Some believed, and some believed not.
7. Paul's final words for the Jews included a hard message from the Scriptures.
 - ✓ Paul quoted Isaiah...
 - ✓ Paul meant to provoke the Jews to jealousy concerning the Gentiles.
8. Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and received all that came.
 - ✓ Paul preached and taught with all confidence, no man forbidding him!
 - ✓ Paul went before Caesar Nero at least twice and many of his house got saved!
 - ✓ Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon from this place!

Personal Applications

1. What did God speak to you about tonight? What does He want you to do differently beginning now?
2. Have you taken ownership of the Gospel ministry personally? Are you ready to advance the Gospel?

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Current Book: The Acts of the Apostles

Historical Quote: *"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."*

—Paul (Romans 1:11-12; written approx. 60 AD probably from Corinth; Acts 19:21, 22; Erastus Rom 16:23; 2 Tim 4:20)

Scriptures for Today: **Acts 28:11-16 – Paul's final journey and arrival at Rome**

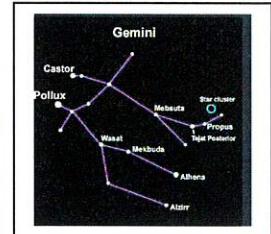
Title of Today's Message: **Wise men travelled far to seek Christ and Paul – seek out the brethren!**

PREACHING NOTES

1. The final leg of the **journey to Rome** was aboard a **SHIP** from **Alexandria** whose **sign** was **Castor and Pollux**. 28:11

- ✓ **Not by chance**, the ship taking Paul to Rome was again from **Alexandria**, Egypt...
Acts 6:9; 27:6 (Note: Do not miss the connection between Alexandria and Rome in the Bible)
- ✓ God made a point to tell us that **the sign** on the ship was **Castor and Pollux**...
Isaiah 45:20; Jonah 1:5, 16; 1 Corinthians 8:4

In Greek and Roman mythology, Castor and Pollux (known as Polydeuces to the Greeks) were twin brothers who appeared in several prominent myths. The twins were worshiped as gods who helped shipwrecked sailors and who brought favorable winds for those who made sacrifices to them. The Romans considered Castor and Pollux the **patron** gods of horses and of the Roman social order of mounted knights, called *equites*.



NOTE Remember that God does not waste **ANY** space in the Bible! The Bible says in Prov 30:5, "Every word of God is pure." In our study of Church History, we learned that the foundation for Church History is the book of Acts. The patterns found in Acts provide us with the framework and the "lens" through which we look at historical events and interpret them. The ship from Alexandria, Egypt taking Paul to Rome was marked by a sign of false gods used as a superstitious religion for sailors. The Roman religion from Alexandria, Egypt is also marked by false gods and is called "Jezebel" in the Bible. In her religion which began in Babel and can be seen in Judges 17 and 18, black-robed priests called "fathers" use idols as aids in their "worship" services.

Personal Application:

- ❖ Consider the things that you value most in your life that are worldly in nature. They can be like "gods" to you if you are not careful. Make sure your **worship** is to the God of the Bible **according to the Bible**.
- ❖ If you have never heard "Church History", consider doing so on our website – www.believethetbible.org.

2. When Paul landed on mainland Italy, they **found brethren** while other **brethren HEARD** and **travelled far distances** to them caused Paul to **thank God** and **take courage**. 28:12-16

- ✓ They found brethren who **desired them to tarry** seven days (did the Centurion allow this?...)...
Acts 2: 46-47; 9:42, 43; 21:4, 7, 8; Psalm 119:63 ("I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts")
- ✓ On route to Rome, the **brethren heard** and **came from far distances** to be with them...
Acts 10:25; 21:5 ("with wives and children"); Exodus 4:14; Romans 15:24; Hebrews 13:3; 3 John 1:6-8

Matthew 2:1 – Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days Of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
Matthew 2:2 – Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
Matthew 2:3 – When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.



NOTE The wise men travelled 1 ½ years to find Christ. Religious people did not go the 4 miles from Jerusalem.

Consider these "one another" verses...

John 13:35 – By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another
John 15:12 – This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you
John 15:17 – These things I command you, that ye love one another
Romans 12:5 – So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another
Romans 12:10 – Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love
Romans 12:16 – Be of the same mind one toward another
Romans 14:19 – follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another
Romans 15:7 – receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God
1 Corinthians 12:25 – that the members should have the same care one for another
Galatians 5:13 – by love serve one another
Galatians 6:2 – Bear ye one another's burdens
Ephesians 4:25 – forbearing one another in love
Ephesians 4:32 – be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another
Colossians 3:13 – forbearing one another
Colossians 3:16 – teaching and admonishing one another
1 Thessalonians 3:12 – And the Lord make you to abound in love one toward another, and toward all men
1 Thessalonians 4:9 – ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another
1 Thessalonians 4:18 – comfort one another with these words
1 Thessalonians 5:11 – comfort yourselves together, and edify one another
Hebrews 3:13 – exhort one another daily
Hebrews 10:24 – And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works
Hebrews 10:25 – not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the many of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching
James 5:16 – Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another
1 Peter 1:22 – unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently
1 Peter 3:8 – be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous
1 Peter 4:9 – use hospitality one to another without grudging
1 Peter 5:5 – all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility
1 John 1:7 – But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another
1 John 3:11 – For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another
1 John 3:23 – And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment
1 John 4:7 – Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God
1 John 4:11 – Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another
1 John 4:12 – If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us
2 John 1:5 – And now I beseech thee...that we love one another

Personal Application:

- ❖ How does your life and the time you spent with other believers in 2014 compare to these verses? Take time this week (and this year) to be **intentional** about your Christian walk **with the brethren**. Seek the brethren out. Invite them to your house. Ask someone to meet you for coffee or a meal. **It is a true saying** that your life (and that of your family) will be **most impacted** over the next 3-5 years by the books you read (the Bible first) and the people you spend time with ... so **be intentional** about both!
- ❖ Consider joining a **Life Group** in 2015. It will be an opportunity for you to obey the Bible and spend time with other believers. It will cause you to be **thankful to God** and to **take courage** to do His work.

A TIME OF DECISION

There are no coincidences with God. You were here today to hear a message **from God** through His Word and through His messenger. Would you take some time to think about what He said?

- ❖ **Unbeliever**, listen to the voice of your conscience right now.

* The Bible says you must **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**. You must turn to God and trust Christ alone to save you from God's wrath to come.

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

2015 VISION: *Redeem the Time!*

Current Book: The Acts of the Apostles

Church History Quote: “Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”

– John Wesley (1703-1791; English preacher and evangelist; co-founder of the Methodist movement)

Scriptures for Today: Acts 28:16-17 – The beginning of Paul’s prison ministry at Rome.

Title of Today’s Communion Message: We “GET TO” – *remembering our Lord and our privilege!*

PREACHING NOTES

1. When they came to Rome, while all the other prisoners were ***delivered to the captain of the guard***, Paul was **ALLOWED** to dwell ***by himself*** with a soldier that kept him. 28:16

- ✓ God gave Paul ***favour*** in the sight of the leaders of Rome’s soldiers...

Acts 28:30, 21; 27:3, 31, 43; 24:23; Genesis 39:21-23; Exodus 3:21; 11:3; 12:36; Ezra 7:27; Esther 2:15; Psalm 5:12; Daniel 1:9; Luke 2:52; Acts 2:47

Psalm 5:12 – For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

- ✓ Long before this time, ***there was a time*** when Paul found ***favour in God’s eyes***...

Acts 9; Ruth 2:13; 1 Samuel 2:26; 16:22; Esther 2:17; 5:2, 8; 7:3; Psalm 30:5; 106:4; Prov 8:35; 19:12

Ruth 2:13 – Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, thou I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

Psalm 106:4 – Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.

NOTE What a thing it is to comprehend that the God of heaven and earth – the Lord of lords and King of kings – would look upon us and desire to have us for His own! And what a thing it is to comprehend that God so loved the world that He purchased the pardon for the whole world with the most valuable substance in the entire universe – the blood of His Son Jesus Christ! O believer, do you remember the day you felt like Ruth in Ruth 2:13? Do you remember the day you heard that you were God’s enemy, but that He loved you anyway and paid the price to have you? Do you remember the day you realized how your sins were not just minor sins with no consequences but crimes of the highest magnitude against the Judge of all the earth? What a good thing it was for you to be so greatly humbled, so crushed to the core of your heart, so flushed at the thought of what you had done to God and how your lies, your coveting, your blasphemy, your idolatry, your lust, your hatred was all against God and His perfect Law of liberty. Good...because it was on that day and at that time that you cried out to God with your ***whole heart*** and with your ***whole mind*** and with your ***whole soul*** and with all the strength that remained in you to ***SAVE YOU*** and to take your earthly life and passions and to use them in any way that He could for His glory because He deserved it all! Today was a day that was created in God’s mind for us to remember such things! On the day of our salvation, we realized that we **GET TO** go to heaven when we die! We **GET TO** be adopted into God’s family and have God as our Father! We **GET TO** have eternal life and spend all eternity with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And, it was on that day that we realized that above all the pleasures and riches and happiness in this world, ***we were bought with a price and our life was not our own.***

Personal Application:

- ❖ Do you remember who you were before you met the Lord Jesus Christ? And, do you remember how valuable your eternal salvation was on that day and how much you loved ***YOUR*** Saviour? Today is a day that God has given to us to **REMEMBER** and to **BE THANKFUL** for His great love toward us.
- ❖ Have you forgotten? Repent today and do the first works. Love Christ because He first loved you.

2. Paul viewed his **liberty** as an **allowance** for the sake of the **GOSPEL**. 28:17

- ✓ Paul **used his liberty wisely** and **immediately** called the Jewish leaders together...
Romans 1:7-15; 15:22-29; Galatians 5:13

Galatians 5:13 – For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

- ✓ Paul's bonds in Rome would ultimately **launch the gospel all over the world**...
Romans 8:28, 37; Philippians 1:12-14; 2 Timothy 2:9

Paul had written these words BEFORE arriving at Rome...

Romans 8:28, 37 - And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose...Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 – To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do **for the gospel's sake**, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

Paul wrote these words from his prison in Rome...

Philippians 1:12-13 – But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Philippians 4:22 – All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

Before going to His cross for us, the Lord Jesus Christ said...

Mark 8:34-36 – And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

NOTE On the day that Jesus Christ saved your soul from God's eternal wrath in a literal place called hell, He placed His Holy Spirit inside of you to seal your salvation until He comes or takes your last breath. For it was on that day that you were given a **privilege** that was more valuable than anything in this world...the **privilege** of representing the Saviour before a lost generation and preaching the most incredible good news the world has ever heard. That same Holy Spirit was also given as the source of God's power **IN YOU** to teach you, to comfort you, to guide you, and to empower you to preach the gospel. On that day, like the apostle Paul, you were given a **privilege**. You were now **ALLOWED** to represent Christ and to speak on His behalf to the world. You must have realized that you not only **GET TO live** for His glory, but you also **GET TO speak** for His glory! He made **YOU His** ambassador. He had given you a life-long assignment. You would **GET TO speak** to every person that He would put in your path that they also might be saved and **know Him as Lord!** O how we say in our mind sometimes that we **HAVE TO** ... but, that is not right! Imagine what God must be thinking. As you remember what your Lord did for you this communion Sunday, may you also remember that you are here at this time in church history to do the **ONE THING** you cannot do in heaven – preach the gospel to **your** family, **your** friends, **your** neighbors, **your** co-workers, and the strangers that cross **your** path every day. You **GET TO!**

Personal Application:

- ❖ Believer, as we take time to remember our Lord's great sacrifice for us, please take time to talk to Him and thank Him personally for His great grace and mercy and love toward you.

A TIME OF DECISION

There are no coincidences with God. You were here today to hear a message **from God**.

- ❖ **Unbeliever**, listen to the voice of your **conscience right now**.

* The Bible says you must **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**. You must turn to God and trust Christ alone to save you from God's wrath to come.

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Current Book: The Acts of the Apostles

2015 VISION: *Redeem the Time!*

Church History Quote: “Do you want arguments for soul winning? Look up to Heaven, and ask yourself how sinners can ever reach those harps of gold and learn their everlasting song, unless they have someone to tell them of Jesus, who is mighty to save. But the best argument of all is to be found in the wounds of Jesus. You want to honor Him, you desire to put many crowns upon His head, and this you can best do by winning souls for Him. These are the spoils that He covets, these are the trophies for which He fights, these are the jewels that shall be His best adornment.”

— Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892); British Baptist preacher and pastor; called the “prince of preachers”

Scriptures for Today: Acts 28:17-24 – The beginning of Paul’s prison ministry at Rome.

Title of Today’s Message: To Believe or Not to Believe? (Eternity will prove the answer)

PREACHING NOTES

1. After three days, Paul **called** for the chief of the Jews at Rome to **COME** to him. 28:17-20

- ✓ Paul explained that he was **delivered to be a prisoner** by the **JEWS** from Jerusalem...
Acts 21:33; 23:33
- ✓ Paul told them that he **wanted to see them** and **SPEAK** to them about **the hope of Israel**...
Acts 10:29, 33; 23:6; 24:15; 26:6, 7; Romans 10:1-3; 13-21

NOTE Paul never stopped desiring to speak to the unsaved Jews to the end that they might be saved. His heart for Israel is a picture of how God loves them – even though they rejected Him and crucified His Son. Paul was longsuffering towards the Jews because God is longsuffering to them and to us. In Matt 28:18-20, the Bible says, “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” May we never stop seeking to save souls for our Lord Jesus.

Personal Application:

- ❖ The Bible says, “*he that winneth souls is wise.*” (Proverbs 11:30) Are you wise in this way?
- ❖ Are you longsuffering towards the people in your life? Who do you need to “call” this week?

2. The Roman Jewish leaders **desired** to **HEAR the truth** from Paul **about Christianity**. 28:21-22

- ✓ They **wanted to hear** what Paul **THOUGHT** about Christianity...
Luke 9:9; 10:24; Act 13:7; Romans 10:13-17
- ✓ They had heard that it was spoken against – but had **NOT heard directly from anyone**...
Acts 16:20, 21; 17:6, 7; 24:5, 6, 14; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:16; Jeremiah 23:18; Romans 10:13-17

NOTE It is still true today that **MANY** have heard **ABOUT** Jesus and **Christianity**, but have **NEVER** directly heard from someone **willing to take the time** to make it clearly known to them what is required for heaven, how God must judge the world in righteousness, who Jesus was, and why Jesus had to pay the price for the sins of the world and our personal sins and crimes against Almighty God! Paul spoke to the Jewish leaders in a way that made them **DESIRE** to hear what he thought about Jesus Christ. He made them “*thirsty*” for the truth. The Law has a way of making people “*thirsty*” for the truth when we **use it** in a loving way like Jesus and Paul did (1 Tim 1:8-11).

Personal Application:

- ❖ The Bible says, “*And how shall they believe of whom they have not heard?*” (Romans 10:14)
- ❖ Are you willing to take the time to make Christ known this week? Are you ready to preach the gospel?

3. Paul **testified** of the kingdom of God and **PERSUADED** them **concerning Jesus.** 28:23-24

- ✓ Paul **persuaded them concerning Jesus** from the **SCRIPTURES** from morning till evening...

Acts 17:2, 3; 18:4, 28; 19:8; 26:22, 23; Luke 24:26, 27, 44; Acts 20:9-11; Nehemiah 8
- ✓ And **some believed** the things which were spoken, and **some believed NOT...**

Acts 13:48-50; 14:4; 17:4, 5; 18:6-8; 19:8, 9; Romans 3:3, 22-26; 10:13-17; John 1:12, 13; 3:14-18, 36; 5:24; 6:27-29, 35, 40; Acts 13:39; 15:7-9; 16:31; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5

NOTE Today, we have seen the pattern that has been established by God through His faithful servants all throughout the book of Acts. It was not Paul's job to **MAKE** them believe. It was Paul's job to **PREACH** the truth in love and to persuade them concerning Jesus to the end that they might believe on Him for eternal salvation. Unfortunately, the response to Paul's message has also been well established throughout the book of Acts – **some believe and some believe not.** In this materialistic and God-forsaken world of Vanity Fair, it is unfortunate that so many people care more about this life than that which is to come. So many people care more about what others think than what the God of heaven and earth thinks and has made clear in His written Word. The Bible says that we will all spend eternity somewhere – **either in heaven or in hell.** And, eternity is a long time to be wrong about what happens to you when you die. With such things in the balance, where are the faithful watchmen lifting their trumpets to warn of judgment to come (Ezek 3, 33)?? Where are those willing to stand in the gap for our great God and Saviour (Ezek 22:30)?? Where are those who are valiant for the truth upon the earth (Jer 9:3)?? Where are the defenders of the faith once delivered (Jude 3)?? Where are the faithful and true witnesses (Rev 3:14)??

Personal Application:

- ❖ As we approach the end of Acts, we have seen Paul and **many others** be faithful witnesses for our Lord. Have you been faithfully doing the "*One thing you cannot do in heaven*" – witnessing to the lost?
- ❖ Jesus said that most people will go to hell and not heaven when they die (Mt 7:13-14). Have you truly believed (repented and trusted) on the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul?

A TIME OF DECISION

There are no coincidences with God. You were here today to hear a message **from God** through His Word and through His messenger. Would you take some time to think about what He said?

- ❖ **Unbeliever**, listen to the voice of your conscience right now.
 - * The Bible says you must **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.** You must turn to God and trust Christ alone to save you from God's wrath to come.
- ❖ **Believer**, listen to the Holy Spirit of God that lives inside you.
 - * What did God speak to you about this morning that you need to respond to immediately? Listen to Him.

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Current Book: The Acts of the Apostles

2015 VISION: *Redeem the Time!***Scriptures for Today: Acts 28:25-29 – Paul's prison ministry at Rome.****Title of Today's Message: *Behold the Goodness and Severity of God!*****INTRODUCTION**

As we continue our study of the book of Acts, today we find ourselves nearing the end of chapter 28. We have seen the Apostle Paul and those with him endure a dangerous and difficult journey to Rome which included both perilous trials and encouraging open doors. Upon his arrival at Rome, Paul wasted no time, and after only three days, he called the chief of the Jews there to come to his prison house. Surprisingly, they were very interested in what Paul thought about "*this sect*" called Christianity. As a result, a day was appointed and many Jews came to Paul's prison lodging place to hear him speak. Last week, we saw how Paul so loved the Jews and desired for them to be saved. It was a reminder for us how much God loves Israel and **STILL** desires for them to be saved! The Bible says that Paul expounded unto them and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus using the Scriptures "*from morning till evening.*" At the end of the day, the Bible says, "*some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.*" Today, we will see Paul's last words to these same Jews – many of whom had just rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and God's offer of salvation from His wrath and judgment to come, forgiveness of sins, and an eternal inheritance in Christ alone. Paul will say to these Jews what God said many times to the children of Israel. We will be reminded of God's longsuffering and love toward Israel and to **US**. The following introductory verses will help us to be reminded of these things...

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

– Jesus (Matthew 23:37); after rebuking Scribes and Pharisees; speaking to His city and the children of Israel who rejected Him

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

– Paul (Romans 11:22); speaking of the Jews who rejected Christ and the Gentiles that received Him

PREACHING NOTES

1. Paul's **final words** for the Jews included a **HARD** message from **the Scriptures**. 28:25-27

- ✓ Paul **quoted Isaiah** who had just seen the **HOLINESS** of God revealed and said "*Send me*..."
Isaiah 6:9, 10; Ezekiel 12:2; Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:38-40; Romans 11:8-10

Isaiah 6:9, 10 – And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Ezekiel 12:2 – Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

Mark 4:12 – That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

NOTE It is hard for most of us to imagine speaking in this way to people who have rejected the truth of God's Word and His offer of eternal salvation and forgiveness of sins. Paul was speaking to a Jewish audience who knew Isaiah's words very well. Remember, the words in Isaiah 6 were spoken to him directly from God Almighty. As it turns out, Paul saw that the Jews were responding to the preaching of the cross in the same way the children of Israel were responding to God's call for repentance and obedience in the Old Testament. Paul was looking at religious people who **THOUGHT** they knew what the Bible said, but were in fact **NOT** hearing the truth of the message at all. Many of us were like these Jews before we repented and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. We thought we were ok. We thought we could be religious without surrendering our entire being to the Lord Jesus Christ. We were wrong. We were on a crash course to God's eternal prison called hell, and we deserved it. Some in this room today perhaps are still on that deadly course.

Personal Application:

- ❖ We must remember that Paul and all of God's prophets were sent from God to speak to people who **did not want to hear Him** and obey Him. Isaiah was willing to go and said, "*Here am I; send me.*"
- ❖ When you are rejected for preaching the cross, remember that God is longsuffering and "*not willing that any should perish.*" (2 Pet 3:9) This is your life calling and purpose. You have been entrusted with the Gospel that saves souls. You have been given the ministry of reconciliation. **You must go and speak to people who do not want to hear!** Satan has "*blinded*" their minds (2 Cor 4:4). We must seek to instruct those "*that oppose themselves*" in meekness (2 Tim 2:24-26) and win their souls for Christ!
- ✓ Isaiah's message is a **TOUGH** dose of reality concerning **the goodness and severity of God...** Deuteronomy 29:4; Psalm 81:11-12; Isaiah 29:10, 14; 42:13-25; 66:4; Jeremiah 5:21; Ezekiel 3:6, 7; 12:2; Matthew 23:37; Mark 8:17, 18; Luke 24:25, 45; Romans 1; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6

Psalm 81:11, 12 – But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

Psalm 81:13, 14 – Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

Consider what God is saying in verse 27...

- The heart of this people is **waxed gross...** *Lest they should...understand with their heart!*
- And their ears are **dull of hearing...** *Lest they should...hear with their ears!*
- And their eyes have **they closed...** *Lest they should...see with their eyes!*

...and should be converted, and **I should heal them.**

NOTE

It is important to note that of all the body parts mentioned, one of them is NOT the **brain!** That is because salvation is not an intellectual thing – it is a heart thing! Do not miss the **goodness** and **severity** of God clearly summarized in verse 27. Through Paul, God through His **GREAT LOVE** and **GRACE** and **MERCY** was extending to these Jews the **GREATEST GIFT** that could ever be given – eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, a full pardon from God's eternal judgment and hell, complete forgiveness of sins, and an eternal inheritance in Christ!! It was **FREE**. The cost was nothing but total surrender of mind, body, emotions, and will to Christ as Lord. However, for those who REJECTED God's FREE GIFT of salvation, the consequences would be **grave** and farther-reaching than anything that a human brain could imagine. To REJECT God's FREE GIFT of salvation is to REMAIN UNCONVERTED. To remain **unconverted** is to remain "*dead in trespasses and sins.*" (Eph 2:1) To remain **unconverted** is to remain "*condemned already*" (John 3:18) and guilty of breaking God's Law and crimes against the **Lord God Almighty** who is the **Maker** of heaven and earth and who is the **Most High** and the **Most Just** and the **Judge** of all the earth according to the Bible. To remain **unconverted** is to CHOOSE to have God wet "*his sword*" of justice (Ps 7:11-13) and prepare "*the instruments of death*" that will come **against you** when His judgment falls (upon your death or His Second Coming) and you are delivered immediately to a place of everlasting punishment in a literal place called hell and the lake of fire.

Personal Application:

- ❖ Unbeliever – I beg you today – run to the Saviour before it is too late! Call upon Him to save you!
- ❖ Believer – Isaiah had others words that are more direct to us today...consider these words...

Isaiah 42:19, 20 – Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

A TIME OF DECISION

There are no coincidences with God. You were here today to hear a message **from God** through His Word and through His messenger. Would you take some time to think about what He said?

- ❖ **Unbeliever**, listen to the voice of your conscience right now.

* The Bible says you must **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.** You must turn to God and trust Christ alone to save you from God's wrath to come.

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Current Book: The Acts of the Apostles

2015 VISION: *Redeem the Time!***Scriptures for Today: Acts 28:28-31 – Paul’s prison ministry at Rome and the conclusion of Acts.****Title of Today’s Message: *The Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles – and their “fulness” is near!***

INTRODUCTION

Last week, we saw Paul’s longsuffering toward Israel following the rejection of Christ by the Jews who had come to Rome to hear him. Today, we will continue our journey to the end of Acts and see the incredible privilege that we have as Gentiles to receive the salvation of God by **FAITH** in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. We will see that from his Roman prison house, Paul will have open doors given to him from God that no man could shut! He will be able to preach the gospel and teach many, many, people throughout the course of his imprisonment. Instead of slowing down or stopping, we will see Paul press toward the mark and with his pen, we will witness how “*the word of God is not bound*” (2 Tim 2:9) and was used to build God’s church. Yes, the Gentiles did **HEAR** it! But, as all good things come to an end, it is now approximately 2,000 years later **near the END of the Gentile story** and the church age. Consider Romans 11:11...

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

– Paul (Romans 11:11); speaking of the Jews who rejected Christ and the Gentiles that would receive Him)

PREACHING NOTES

1. Paul meant to **PROVOKE** the Jews to **jealousy** concerning **the Gentiles**. 28:28-29

- ✓ Be it **known therefore** unto you, that **the salvation of God** is **sent** unto the Gentiles...
Acts 2:14; 4:10; 13:38; Acts 10-28; Romans 1:16-17; chapter 11; Ephesians 2:11-22
Romans 11:25 – For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
✓ And that **they will hear it...**
Psalm 98:2, 3; Isaiah 49:6; 52:10; Luke 2:30-32; 3:6; Acts 11:18; 13:46, 47; 14:27; 15:14, 17; 18:6; 22:21; 26:17, 18; Matthew 21:41-43; Romans 3:29, 30; Acts 10 (Cornelius); 11 (Antioch); 13, 14 (Galatians); 16 (Philippi); 17 (Thessalonica, Berea, Athens); 18, 19 (Corinth, Ephesus); 20 (Macedonia, Greece)
Matthew 21:43 – Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

NOTE It is important to realize that Israel is the “apple of God’s eye” (Deut 32:10). Through the Jew’s rejection of their promised Messiah, the Gentiles have been given an opportunity to be saved. And yet, God has taken us to an unprecedented level. For all who would hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and believe it and call upon God to save them, He would adopt them into His family and count them as joint heirs with His only Son!

2. Paul dwelt **TWO** whole **years** in **his own hired house**, and **received all that came**. 28:30-31

- ✓ Paul **preached the kingdom of God**, and **taught those things concerning Christ...**
Acts 1:1-3; 5:42; 8:12; 11:26; 19:9, 10; 20:25, 27; Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:14; Luke 8:1
Acts 1:3 – To whom he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:
Acts 20:27 – For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
1 Corinthians 2:2 – For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
- ✓ Paul preached and taught **with all confidence, no man forbidding him...**
Acts 4:29, 31; Ephesians 6:19, 20; Philippians 1:14; Colossians 4:3, 4; 2 Timothy 4:1

Ephesians 6:19, 20 – And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Colossians 4:3, 4 – Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

- ✓ Paul went **before Caesar Nero** at least twice and many of Nero's household were saved...
2 Timothy 4:16, 17; Philippians 4:22

2 Timothy 4:16, 17 – At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

- ✓ Paul wrote the books of **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon** from this place...
Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; Philippians 1:7, 12-14, 19; 2:24; Colossians 4:3-4, 7-9, 18; Philemon 1:1, 9-13, 23

Philippians 1:12-14 - But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

NOTE God allowed Paul to have a platform for the gospel and for the word of God from his Roman prison house for two years. When you consider how this helped God's church, the eternal impact cannot be underestimated. Many of the pastors and missionaries in the known world at that time were able to come to and from Paul to get words of encouragement and training. We might have stopped the work of the Lord upon entering Rome. We now see that God and Paul had plans to use this time to anchor God's church in the word of God forever!

3. The **truth of the ages** is that **the Gentiles** really did **HEAR** it and **BELIEVE** it! 28:28

- ✓ The Ephesus Church Period (approx. 90-200 AD) – the disciples of the Disciples; persecution
- ✓ The Smyrna Church Period (approx. 200-325 AD) – the great and severe Roman persecutions
- ✓ The Pergamos Church Period (approx. 325-500 AD) – pagan Rome becomes papal Rome
- ✓ The Thyatira Church Period (approx. 500-1000 AD) – the beginning of the dark ages
- ✓ The Sardis Church Period (approx. 1000-1500 AD) – the Crusades and the Inquisitions
- ✓ The Philadelphia Church Period (approx. 1500-1900 AD) – the greatest time of world missions
- ✓ The Laodicea Church Period (approx. 1900-Rapture) – the great apostasy and false Christianity

NOTE The Gentiles did "hear," and they heard continuously, even through the Dark Ages and into the Reformation. The American Gentiles did not begin to wrestle the Jews in the Scriptures until the early 1900s. There was a bit of a revival in the United States between the two world wars. The fruits of reviving were the ministries of Billy Sunday, J. Frank Norris, and other men like them. The "fulness of the Gentiles" is about "come in," and there has been a steady, rapid decline in American Christianity since World War II. The great soulwinning efforts of 1880-1930 were marked by the conversion of grown men and women. The next period (1930-1960) was marked by the conversion of teenagers. This last one (1960-present) has been marked by the conversion of children – with many false conversions coming from a watered-down message in the pulpit of most churches. As Europe slipped away (1700-1900), followed by England (1800-1904), and the United States (1901-1990), "the salvation of God" was destined to be **sent to Israel** (Rom 11:26), and "they will hear it"!

A TIME OF DECISION

There are no coincidences with God. You were here today to hear a message **from God** through His Word and through His messenger. Would you take some time to think about what He said?

- ❖ **Unbeliever**, listen to the voice of your **conscience right now**.

* The Bible says you must **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**. You must turn to God and trust Christ alone to save you from God's wrath to come.

Scriptures for Today: Acts 28:30-31 – Paul’s prison ministry at Rome and the conclusion of Acts.**Title of Today’s Message: *The End of the Beginning – KEEP to the preaching and teaching!*****INTRODUCTION**

Last week, we saw how Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and preached and taught all who would come, “*with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*” What an incredible reality!! Paul was a prisoner to Rome. He was bound, **but the word of God was NOT bound!** (2 Tim 2:9). Today, as we conclude our study of Acts, we will focus on the man – Paul – and his faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his willingness to live for Christ and hold fast to His words, the church of God was built and the gates of hell have not prevailed against it. For 2,000 years, the salvation of Christians has come in part because of Paul’s faithfulness to **STAND** when nobody else would. Consider this passage...

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

– Paul (2 Timothy 4:6-8); last words to Timothy – who he had led to Christ, trained and sent out to pastor God’s church)

PREACHING NOTES**1. Paul was *faithful* to **FIGHT** a good fight for his Lord Jesus Christ. 28:30-31**

- ✓ For I will shew him **how great things he must SUFFER** for my name’s sake...
Acts 9:15-16; 14:19-20; 16:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:24-28; 2 Timothy 3:12

Acts 9:15-16 – But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 – Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

NOTE Paul did NOT **quit!** He was a faithful soldier in a battle for the kingdom of God and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul understood that it was his God-given privilege and responsibility to fight for the word of God and for the souls of every man, woman, boy and girl. He also understood that it was his God-given privilege and responsibility to wage war on the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ and to seek with His help to build His church so that the gates of hell would not prevail against it! He expected trouble, and it found him often.

❖ **Personal Application**

- Are you **fighting a good fight** for your Lord Jesus Christ? Are you in the battle for souls?

2. Paul **FINISHED his course for his Lord Jesus Christ. 28:30-31**

- ✓ For I have appeared unto thee for this **PURPOSE; to make thee a minister and a witness...**
Acts 26:16-18; 14:26-28; 20:25-27; 28:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Acts 13:25, 36

Acts 26:16-18 – But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts 14:26-28 – And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

NOTE Paul “fulfilled his course” like John (Acts 13:25) and the purpose that was given to him by His Lord on the day of his salvation. He took it personally and sought to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ and His church no matter what. He knew it was his job in history like David to “serve his own generation by the will of God” (Acts 13:36).

❖ **Personal Application**

- Have you served your own generation **by the will of God?** Time is running out on you...

3. Paul KEPT the faith for his Lord Jesus Christ. 28:30-31

✓ That good thing which was **committed** unto thee **KEEP by the Holy Ghost** which dwelleth in us
2 Timothy 1:11-15; 2:10; 3:10-11, 14; 4:1-5, 16, 17; Jude 3

2 Timothy 1:11-15 – Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

2 Timothy 3:10-11, 14 – But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me...But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

2 Timothy 4:1-5 – I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

2 Timothy 4:16-17 – At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Jude 3 – Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

NOTE Paul trusted God to keep his soul eternally secure. Paul trusted God with his life. **God trusted Paul to keep His Word and THE gospel committed to his trust.** Paul was faithful to preach and teach the whole counsel of God. Paul was faithful to preach the Law, the righteousness of God, sin, judgment, hell, and the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Paul preached the word!** He warned **every** man, and taught **every** man (Col 1:28).

❖ **Personal Application**

- If the salvation of the world for 2,000 years depended on you, would you have kept the faith? How about this generation? Will you go for our great God and Saviour before it is too late?

A TIME OF DECISION

There are no coincidences with God. You were here today to hear a message **from God...**

❖ **Unbeliever**, listen to the voice of your **conscience right now.**

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