

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 82 | ACTS 28:12-20

ACTS 28:11-16 | REACHING ROME AT LAST

- Verse 11 – *see session 81*
- Verses 12 –
 - Syracuse is on the island of Sicily. The town in New York adopted its name from this city during an era in which Greco-Roman classical learning was highly valued.
- Verse 13 –
 - The word translated **fetch** is περιέρχομαι [perierchomai].
 - It's root means "to come" with the prefix *peri*, "near/around."
 - We are not sure if this verb means that the ship encircled Sicily (which doesn't seem reasonable, given the location). The KJV has interpreted this as **we fetched a compass**, YLT says, "having gone round." At any rate, it seems the ship did not make the most direct route.
 - See Acts 19:13 where the word is used of people and translated **vagabond**, or 1 Timothy 5:13 & Hebrews 11:37 where it is translated **wandering/wandered**.
 - Eventually they arrived at **Rhegium**, which is today Reggio, Italy, on the "toe" of the boot. From there it took two days, due to wind, to arrive at Puteoli (modern day Pozzuoli, near Naples).
- Verse 14 –
 - While Paul is a "prisoner," it is not in the traditional sense. He is allowed to remain (likely on his own, with only his companions) in Puteoli.
 - We are not told if the **brethren** here are dispersed Jews of "the way," or believing gentiles (though I suspect the former, based on the identity of the Romans with whom Paul will concentrate his ministry).
- Verse 15 –
 - Now **the brethren** of Rome came out to meet Paul and his companions **as far as Appii forum**, 43 miles (according to Bullinger) from Rome, as well as **The three taverns**, about 10 miles closer to Rome.
 - When Paul saw these believers, He **thanked God, and took courage**. After a harrowing journey, Paul now sees "light at the end of the tunnel," and is encouraged by the Romans and their greeting.
- Verse 16 –
 - These words indicate that **the prisoners** (all 276 of them) had possibly been with Paul during this extended journey, including the seven-day delay at Puteoli. While it is possible, it seems more likely that Paul was separated from the group, even as indicated by the second half of this verse.

ACTS 28:17-29 | PAUL MEETS WITH ROMAN JEWS

- Verse 17 –
 - The **chief of the Jews** was likely the local "President" of the synagogue (as they would be called today). Not a rabbi nor a priest, but a layman who was a sort of *chairman of the board* for local Jewish matters.

- Paul begins to explain that he had been arrested by Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and had been given **into the hands of the Romans**. He immediately testifies that he had **committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers**. We must ask if Paul is being honest or if he is giving false testimony.
 - If he is honest (it has been his consistent testimony), then his message to Jewish leaders was that his message to Jews had been completely consistent with the **customs of our fathers**.
 - If he is being dishonest (thus his message was in opposition to Jewish customs), then we today, and all people, must dismiss him from any further credibility.
- If the former is true, then we cannot teach that Paul taught the Jews anything other than obedience to the Law. But why would he do this when he is the Apostle to the gentiles, to whom he clearly taught a freedom from the law? We can come to (it seems to me) only two conclusions, which we have previously discussed.
 - Either Paul's "freedom from law" message was yet to come,
 - Or there is an overlap between his TWO Gospel messages: one to the Jews, under the domain of Peter, and one to the Gentiles, under his own domain.
- Verse 18 –
 - Paul not only claims innocence toward Jewish law, but also toward Roman law.
- Verse 19 –
 - This is the ultimate reason why Paul is in Jerusalem; he was **constrained to appeal unto Caesar**.
 - When Paul says that he didn't have **ought to accuse my nation of**, he is speaking of his *Jewish* nation. There are two items of interest.
 - That the apostle of the mystery doesn't condemn the Jewish nation in their being bound to the law.
 - That the word ἔθνος [ethnos] is used of Jews. Thus we should be careful with the assumption that it means *Gentiles*.
- Verse 20 –
 - In his closing remarks, Paul says that he is imprisoned **for the hope of Israel**. What is this hope?
 - It would be difficult to argue that the hope of Israel is salvation by grace through faith, outside of works, for all who believe. Thus Paul is *not* under arrest for "the Gospel" as we know it (the Gospel of grace).
 - In Acts 23:6, Paul referred to **the hope**, which appears to be the Messianic age.
 - In Luke 2:25, Simeon is said to be waiting for **the consolation of Israel**. While using a different word, it is doubtless a reference to the same hope, and was a Kingdom reference.