
Day 347 – December 13

Christ's Church and the Apostles (30-100 CE)

Voyage to Rome

House Arrest in Rome

Readings: *Acts 27:1-28:31*

Reflections:

- From Caesarea to Crete: Luke now records Paul's near disastrous journey to Rome. Luke mentions both the centurion and Paul's travelling companion by name. As mentioned previously, Aristarchus was well known within the Jesus movement. Luke notes the kindness of the Centurion and Paul's trustworthiness. This continues to affirm to the reader of Paul's character.
- Warning against voyage: Paul apparently has a prophetic word about what is to come and yet the Centurion listens to the captain rather than to his captive. Sometimes God speaks to us through the most unlikely sources. Luke is incredibly detailed throughout this section. No doubt Luke is remembering this first hand as one of Paul's travelling companions.
- Ship blown by storm: Here is one of the best written accounts within Acts. It captures the drama and force of this fearful event. His imagery is vivid. To throw the tackle overboard was to give up any hope of being able to steer the ship. This was obviously a desperate attempt to lighten the ship. It is no surprise by how Luke describes this hurricane storm that they ultimately gave up all hope of being saved.
- Paul promises safe passage: Here we see Paul encourage the crew with an encounter he had the night before. Was this an angel or literally a messenger Jesus who was speaking to Paul? The last time Paul was in danger, it was the Lord who appeared to him in the night. Possibly Paul didn't want to use Jesus' name but preferred to just focus on the fact that God has spoken to him. This reminds us how important it is to be open to God speaking to us and through us to encourage and help others.
- Sailors attempt escape: The drama continues to unfold and we see Paul again used by God to help save the crew. Obviously Paul and the Centurion's relationship is growing in trust. We see a contrast between Paul who is working to save everyone and the sailors who are just interested in saving themselves. Paul is modeling Christ-likeness even as the sailors are modeling our natural human tendencies to just look out for ourselves.

- Passengers eat last meal: Paul is like a parent to the crew by this point. His natural spiritual parental instincts continue to guide his leadership. Now he leads the crew and passengers to eat and be renewed in strength. It almost reads like Paul was leading the entire ship in the Lord's Supper. Obviously he wasn't but it is reminiscent of this and maybe is a subtle way for Luke to make a connection between the example of Jesus as a rescuer and Paul being used by God as a rescuer of these people.
- Ship wrecked: Again we see Luke capture this event with amazing detail. Now it is the Centurion's turn to be used as a lifesaver. It was normal practice in such situations for Roman soldiers to kill their prisoners to prevent their escape. The Centurion is obviously quite loyal to Paul at this point and God uses him to save Paul's life.
- Paul seen as a god: Here is another of Luke's humorous stories. Paul goes from being judged as a murderer by the islanders on Malta to being hailed a god just because he was bitten by a snake and then survived. Here we see a great example of magical religion. Magical religion is completely driven by experience and a mechanical notion of how spiritual power works. First they thought the gods were killing him because a snake bit him. Then they thought he was a god because he didn't die. Magic is one of the versions of religion that the kingdom of Christ exposes as false and empty of truth. This story is included to show how foolish trusting in magic can make us appear.
- Sick healed on Malta: We see here how God provides even in the midst of very difficult circumstances. God uses Paul to heal the father of the chief official of Malta as well as many of the sick on the island. No doubt this shows the true power of God compared to the superstitious magical notions of the islanders.
- Final voyage to Rome: Here we see again Luke providing incredible detail about their travels and the ship. All of this continues to underscore the attention to detail and historicity of Luke's account. No doubt Paul was happy to meet the Christ-followers in Rome. It is amazing how far and quickly the Jesus movement had spread already.
- Paul under house arrest: Paul is secured by a guard in Rome but is held under house arrest until the time of his trial.
- Jewish leaders visit: Paul is looking to build a bridge of understanding with the Jewish leaders in Rome. They know nothing about the charges against Paul but they are definitely curious to hear him explain about the sect that follows Jesus. Obviously Christ-followers were becoming well known.
- Paul proclaims Jesus: Paul meets with the Jewish religious leaders the next day and carefully and thoroughly teaches them about Jesus and his message. He argues his case from the Jewish Scriptures. Some believe and some do not. This is what we have come to expect. The religious leaders divide and again we see that it is not Paul who is being disruptive but rather the actual message of Jesus is what creates the reaction. Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9,10 as the perfect summary of why some Jewish religious leaders respond to the message of Jesus

and others do not. Again Paul is very bold that he believes he is called to the Gentiles and they will respond to the message of Jesus.

- Two years of ministry: Luke's account of Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest for two years. Even in this confined quarters Paul carries on with his preaching and teaching. In fact, it is in prison he writes many of his most helpful letters that will be passed down from generation to generation of Christ-followers. We see in all of this, the sovereign control of God. Paul knew he was going to Rome. He would have never guessed that he would have to go through a ship wreck to get there. Paul knew he was being sent as an apostle to the Gentiles. He would have never guessed he would have had to spend so much time in prison. God alone knows what his will is. God alone knows how he will complete his will for our lives. Paul's dedication and humility models for us a realistic picture of what can happen to someone who is abandoned to Christ.