

PAUL GOES TO ROME

ACTS 27-28

Intro. "All roads lead to Rome" was a proverbial expression during the glorious days of the Roman Empire. Rome was the capital of the mighty empire it built on three continents -- Africa, Asia and Europe--and the hub of political policy and power.

Deep was Paul's desire to go to Rome. In Romans 1:13 he referred to how often "I purposed to come unto you," but his travel wishes were hindered. In Romans 15:23 he said that for many years he had longed "to come unto you." (Also 15:30-32). In Acts 19:21 he laid plans after visits to Macedonia, Achaia and Jerusalem by stating emphatically, "After I have been there [Jerusalem], I must also see Rome." His motivation was not to see one of the Caesars, or experience the political excitement. His motivation was "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome." (Romans 1:15).

Soon after the speech before King Agrippa, Paul found himself about to begin the long expected voyage to Rome. His visit was far different from what he had hoped for and expected. Instead of coming as a free man to appear in the synagogues in the name of Jesus, he entered the city under guard, as a prisoner sent up for trial. He did not hesitate to begin his work in spite of difficulties and obstacles. First, he has to get there. Paul made this journey on three different ships. We will divide the journey up by describing the journey on each of the ships. The journey is described in Acts 27-28.

I. The Adramyttian Ship.

- A. Acts 27 begins by saying "when it was decided..."
 1. Festus did the deciding as a result of Paul's appeal to Caesar.
 2. It is doubtful that this is the way Paul thought he would be going to Rome.
- B. "We should sail for Italy."
 1. Most likely include Luke as well as Aristarchus.
 2. Aristarchus was a traveling companion.
- C. This ship's destination was homebound and not Rome.
- D. They evidently expected to contact another ship along the Aegean coastline in route to Rome.
- E. Julius, the centurion in charge of Paul, treated Paul with "consideration." (v.3).
 1. Friends most likely Christians.
 2. Refresh himself...receive care.
- F. Put out to sea.
 1. Sailed past Cyprus.
 2. The contrary winds caused them to have to pass to the east of Cyprus.
 3. From there they sailed along the coast of Myra.

II. Alexandrian Ship.

- A. This was a grain ship, which supplied Rome with bread from the granaries of Egypt.
 1. Evidently a large ship.
 2. Accommodated 276 passengers.
- B. Many days of difficult sailing characterized their voyage from the city of Myra to Crete. They began to question the wisdom of continuing the voyage.
- C. They spent "much time" in Fair havens.
 1. Sailing now was dangerous.
 2. "The fast..." relates to time. (Sailing after this time period was considered unsafe)
- D. Paul admonished them (vss.9,10).
 1. They didn't listen. [Proved to be a disaster]
 2. They decided to try to go a little further. Try to reach Phoenix
 3. Sounds like some drivers today. (We will stop at next exit and get food, or fuel, etc.)
- E. Supposing that they had obtained their purpose. (v.13)
 1. The lull before the storm.
 2. The winds took over (v.15).
- F. The Storm.
 1. While in the shelter of Clauda they:
 - a. Secured the boat.
 - b. Undergirded the ship.
 - c. Lowered the sail.

2. The next day they lightened the ship.
3. The third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard.
4. Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days (Navigation system).
5. They lost hope in surviving.

G. Paul's Speech.

1. "You should have listened to me." Listen this time.
2. He encourages them (v.22) (Contrast v.20).
3. No lives will be lost if you will cooperate.
4. Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve..(v.23)
5. "Wherefore, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be just as he told me." (V.25)
 - a. Cheer up.–keep up one's courage.
 - b. If we do our part, God will do his.
 - c. Exactly as he said he would.
 - d. Remember their condition.
 - (1) They haven't eaten or rested in days.
 - (2) They haven't seen the sun or stars in many days.
 - (3) They have given up hope.
 - e. Now Paul says, my God will deliver us!!
6. Not everyone believed Paul.
 - a. The sailors tried to escape (v.30).
 - b. The centurion stopped it (v.31). [Unless you stay in the ship...]
7. Before daylight, Paul encouraged them to eat (vss.33-38).
 - a. They needed nourishment.
 - b. They would need their strength.

H. The remainder of chapter 27 tells how they did reach the safety of an island's shore without loss of life.

I. Island of Melita.

1. Barbarous people means they were "foreign folk". They did not speak Greek or Latin or Hebrew.
2. They were kind and hospitable.
3. Paul was bitten by a serpent (28:3-10).
 - a. No harm came.
 - b. Paul healed the sick.
4. They stayed three months.

III. Ship Three: Castor and Pollux.

A. First stop was Syracuse.

B. They Rhegium.

C. Then Puteoli.

1. Found Christians there.
2. Stayed seven days with them. Have opportunity to assemble with saints.

D. On to Rome.

1. News of Paul's arrival preceded him.
2. The brethren came to meet him.
3. Paul thanked God and took courage.
 - a. He had been the giver.
 - b. Now he is receiver.
 - c. Brethren encouraging brethren.

E. Paul in Rome.

1. After three days, he began his work.
2. The Jews response was: We have heard nothing. (Paul did not speak a single unkind word against the Jews. He wanted to preach the gospel to them.)
3. They desired to hear what he had to say.
4. The sect which is spoken against.
 - a. This was the case then, and , to a great extent, is the case still.
 - b. It has been the common lot of the followers of Christ to be spoken "against" (Acts 24:5).
5. When he spoke, some believed, some did not believe.
6. The book closes with Paul still preaching the kingdom of God..."

F. The main thought of the book of Acts. The gospel is meant for all.

G. Paul was a chosen vessel to carry the message to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

H. Thus, we close out the book of Acts.

1. Paul remained a prisoner in Judea over two years, for several months on the voyage, then two full years a prisoner at Rome, making a period of between four and five years that he was in chains without a charge or accusation against him.
2. Was the providence of God at work here?
 - a. Had he been set free in Judea, he would have been murdered by a mob.
 - b. In Rome he was the prisoner of the government. As such, none dared molest him.
 - c. While they protected him, he was allowed freedom in preaching the gospel to all in Rome.

Concl: Tradition says that Paul died in spring of AD 68 during the last year of Nero's reign as a prisoner in Rome. The way the apostle Paul died is not important. The way he lived is. Because of the way he lived, he could make the statement found in II Timothy 4:6-8. Paul was a great servant of God. We may not be able to be a Paul, but we can serve God to the best of our ability. Paul's great confidence in God, "I believe God..."