**This Is Not the End**

**Introduction:**

After a long and arduous journey, Paul finally arrives at Rome. It has been a difficult and dangerous trip. (Acts 27:24) “saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ ” NKJV Paul is placed under house arrest but is not idle. He meets with the Jewish leaders, receives several visitors, and writes several of the New Testament epistles during his two-year stay.

**Text:** Acts 28:17-31

**Body:**

1. **Paul Meets with the Jewish Leaders** Acts 28:17-22 “And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: ‘Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.’ Then they said to him, ‘We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.’ ” NKJV

* Paul explains why he is there in Rome. He denies any wrongs committed against the Jews; his desire is to win some of them to Christ. (Romans 9:1-5) “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” NKJV

(Romans 10:1) “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” NKJV

* The Roman official had found him innocent of breaking any Roman laws. (Acts 23:29) “I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains.” NKJV
* Paul makes a distinction between his listeners and those Jews who had wronged him. Paul assures them he has no intention of bringing an accusation against the Jewish nation.
* He declares he is in chains because of the hope of Israel – the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. (Acts 23:6) “But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!’ ” NKJV (Acts 26:6-7) “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope’s sake. King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.” NKJV
* The Jerusalem Jews had never sent word to Rome about Paul. But they had heard negative reports concerning the cause he preached. (Acts 24:5, 14) “For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.” NKJV Satan is still doing the same thing today.

1. **Paul Preaches to the Jews** Acts 28:23-29 “So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: ‘The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, Go to this people and say: Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed. Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’ And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.” NKJV

* No doubt Paul remembered the words of Jesus in Acts 23:11. “But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.’” NKJV He uses this opportunity to evangelize the Jews in Rome. His testimony is centered around the Kingdom of God. This was the subject of Jesus’ teaching after His resurrection. (Acts 1:3) “to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” NKJV See also John 3:3, 5) “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ 5 Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” NKJV He also tried to persuade them that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. (Acts `17:2-3) “Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.’ ” (Acts 13:16, 23, 32-33, 38-39) “Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, ‘Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:’ 23 From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior – Jesus – 32 -33 And we declare to you glad tidings – that promise which was made to the fathers, God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ 38-39 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.” NKJV
* As is typical with any gospel sermon, some believed and some did not. Then they began to argue. They departed after Paul gave them a solemn warning. He quoted Isaiah 6:9-10. “And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people; Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.’” NKJV This text emphasized the danger of continually rejecting God’s Word. Note the following verses. (Matthew 13:14-15) “And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull, Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’” NKJV (Romans 11:8) “Just as it is written: ‘God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.’” NKJV
* Then Paul declares that the Gentiles would be more receptive of the gospel that the Jews. (Isaiah 42:1, 6) “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 6 I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,” NKJV

1. **Paul Continues Preaching** Acts 28:30-31 “Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.” NKJV

* Even though he was chained day and night, he didn’t let that stop him from preaching at every opportunity. (Ephesians 6:19-20) “and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in Chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” NKJV
* He had opportunities to preach to the palace guard. (Philippians 1:12-13) “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;” (Philippians 4:22) “All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.” NKJV
* He also wrote four of his epistles while chained there in Rome: Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians.

**Conclusion:**

Acts is not the end of the story. It is not the final word on the spread of the gospel. The gospel will continue to be taught because it is “the power of God unto salvation.”

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