

Acts 28

Acts 28:1-10 is more than idle reporting. Chapter 27 has lifted up an array of elemental forces against Paul's getting to the capitol. Yet we see steady progress onward, upward toward World Conquest.

Acts 28:1-2 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita (meh-LEE-tah). 2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

28:2 sings a refreshingly different note amid the cold, wet, dark of Malta's beach. The welcome of the islanders, the warmth of the fire contrasts sharply with the violence of the Jews, the folly of civilized leaders and the dangers of the storm. It grabs the attention compellingly. This series of contrasts Luke shows primitive islanders responding to human needs versus man's wisdom drowning in its own foolish greed. Luke reveals the warmth of native hospitality with its simple sense of justice versus sophisticated skepticism of men of the world.

God's "chosen" people abused divine advantages by rejecting with violence Paul and the Gospel but simple-hearted humans gave warmth, hospitality and a home to other humans in an hour of desperate need. Island rustics provided for the safety of civilized when their ship disintegrated in the very process of meeting civilization's needs. The tempest was nullified by generosity of instincts of human hearts unspoiled by pride of religion or egotism of culture. Is this the all a token of the way the islands await the gospel in contrast to "civilized" and "religious" men's response to God's advances of mercy?

Melita ... This island is the one now known as Malta. Mention of the "Sea of Adria" there is abundant proof that the whole Mediterranean

was called "Adria" by the sailors. "There is no reasonable doubt that Malta is the island in question."

And the barbarous people... Such a designation of the people meant merely that they did not speak Greek. "They spoke a language derived from Phoenician, and they had not been completely "Hellenized" by the Greek-Roman culture." Their conduct at once proved them not to be barbarians in the usual sense of the word.

This island of Malta is about 12 miles wide, 20 miles long, and 60 miles distant from Sicily. "It yields an abundance of honey, whence its name."

... the present rain, and because of the cold.... Such storms as they had encountered always dump large quantities of water; and late in the autumn the weather was very cold, wet and bad. The survivors needed help and they received help ... from the local "barbarians".

Acts 28:3-4 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid [them] on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the [venomous] beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

Venomous beast ... Although the adjective "venomous" is not in the Greek text, the meaning surely is. The statement of the islanders that "Justice hath not suffered to live" regarded Paul's death so certain that they already referred to it in the past tense!

There are now no vipers in the island, and only one place where any wood grows, are too trivial to notice.

As Hervey pointed out, the population density of Malta in the 2nd half of the 20th century was over 1,200 people to the square mile ... with

more people every day ... and this alone accounts for the disappearance of vipers from Malta.

**“... he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live”
vengeance Greek dee'-kay self-evident right, judgment or justice.**

(vs. 3-6) The viper story is a parable of the gospel progress. The serpent of opposition will raise its poisonous head to strike but it cannot kill the push of the gospel.

**Acts 28:5-6 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.
6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.**

The intelligence and understanding of such native peoples as those of Malta make it impossible to believe that they were mistaken regarding the deadly nature of the snake that bit Paul. It is preposterous to suppose that Paul's being snake bit was the only case of such a thing that the people had ever seen! The critics who delight in rationalizing all of the New Testament miracles will have to come up with something better than a denial that this snake was poisonous.

Shook ... into the fire ... the tree huggers, SPCA and other people who are impressed with efforts to impose humane methods of killing rattlesnakes in Texas should take note of this. Burning the viper alive appeared to Paul as a suitable form of extermination; and none of the people who had to contend with such reptiles complained of it.

Changed their minds ... said that he was a god ... This is a strange reversal of what had happened at Lystra Acts 14:12ff, where Paul was first hailed as a god, and later stoned. The worldly carnal man loves

extremes, either worshiping himself in the person of his heroes, or by killing those who do not conform to his prejudices.

Kelly paraphrasing and plagiarizing the homely comment of McGarvey:

Paul was not a preacher after the style of a modern clergyman, who is particular not to soil his hands with menial labor, hirelings who expects everybody to be ready to serve them, while they preserve their dignity and looks on. The minister before me actually ate first when we began Sunday meals after worship. Serpent metaphor cf:

Genesis 3:15

Psalms 91:11-13

Matthew 4:5-6

Luke 10:19

Romans 16:20

Mark 16:14-20 (another point favoring the "long ending of Mark")

Revelation 12:9-11

Acts 28:7-9 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius (PUHB-lee-uhs); who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. 8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

Chief man ... Publius ... "This exact word has been found in two inscriptions as a title of an official in Malta."

Although once disputed, Luke's accuracy is again proved.

Received us ... If this refers to the entire 276 survivors, it would probably mean that many of the population opened their homes to the shipwrecked ...

If Luke is speaking of Paul's company and the centurion and ship's officers, which is not unlikely, then it would appear that Publius himself entertained them.

Fever and of a bloody flux ... Healed him ... Thus Publius' kindness was repaid. In being able to work such a wonder, Paul verified the truth of Jesus' promise that his apostles should suffer no hurt from deadly serpents, and that they should lay hands on the sick and recover them. "Here we have first hand evidence of a competent medical witness to the reality of Paul's miraculous cures."

"Although Luke does not mention preaching and conversions, the analogy of the Ephesian ministry ... suggests that miracles always opened the way for the Word." One likes to suppose that the centurion himself might have been converted, as his subsequent behavior would certainly suggest, and that some of those unfortunate prisoners on the way to the bloody sands of the Coliseum might, through their conversion to Christ, have been enabled to face such a wretched death in the strength of their new found hope of resurrection to eternal life in Christ.

(v 8) The same hands that were immune to the power of the poison of the serpent held healing for the sick of the island.

(v 9) There is no statement anywhere in 28:1-10 that plainly informs of any preaching or of any converts to Christ. We may safely assume possibly a church was left on the island. That such are not included in the history indicates that Luke's point lies elsewhere.

Emphasized is the service of Paul's healing ministry. The isles of the sea the Gentile nations may be glad. The gospel is for the healing of

the nations and for the purpose of redemption, not exploitation; to give service, not to get for itself.

Acts 28:10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded [us] with such things as were necessary.

The "honors" here were not "honorariums" as understood today, not gifts at all, but honors of public favor, expressed in many ways. "Paul did not receive any remuneration for the exercise of his gift of healing (which) would have been at variance with the commands of Christ cf:

Matthew 10:7-8 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

This is proved by the contrast with material gifts placed on board the ship for the benefit of all.

Acts 28:11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

The ship of Alexandria was more fortunate than the first, for it had made the port of Malta and waited until spring to depart, or at least until the most dangerous part of the winter was past.

After three months ... This would still have been somewhat early for Mediterranean sailing vessels; but the relatively short part of their voyage remaining, coupled with the probability of an early spring or an atypical spell of good weather, enabled their sailing, as it would appear, about the middle of February.

The Twin Brothers ... The Greek word here is "the Dioscuri (di-OHS-cure-i)," the mythical twin sons of Jupiter, pagan deities also called Castor and Pollux (POHL-luhx), and honored especially as the patron god of mariners by sailors. The constellation Gemini is named for

them, being one of the twelve sectors of the sky identified with the signs of the zodiac.

Two coincidences of interest in this section are (1) both ships carrying Paul were ships of Alexandria, and (2) The Twin Brothers was the name and figurehead not only of the new ship, but also of Rhegium (REE-juh-m), their second port of call on the way to Rome.

This prevalence of the evidence in which the old pagan deities appeared still to dominate the hearts of the people must have been particularly heartbreaking and offensive to Paul and Luke.

Acts 28:12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried [there] three days. 13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium (REE-juh-m),: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Pu-te'-o-li (pyuh-tee-O-lee):

fetched a compass ... or made a circuit ... Literal Greek "come all around" indicates that the voyage from Syracuse to Rhe'gi-um required sailing in a circle, due to the direction of the wind. Rhegium is "the modern Reggio di Calabria on the "toe" of Italy," and thus at the eastern extremity of the Strait of Messina, site of the famed rock of Scylla (SILL-ah) and the whirlpool of Charybdis (kah-RIB-diss). Passing through the strait would avoid a voyage around Sicily; but the wind had to be just right.

the south wind blew ... This was exactly the break they needed, for Puteoli is due north of Rhegium, and the final leg of the voyage was quickly made in a little over a day.

Puteoli (pyuh-tee-O-lee) ... was a regular port of entry for the fleet of grain ships operating between Rome and Egypt, and was in those days a seaport of great importance. "Just eight miles Northwest of Naples, it was the greatest port in Italy. The large pier had twenty-five arches, of which thirteen ruined ones remain."

At Puteoli (pyuh-tee-O-lee):, "now Puzzuoli," where frequently "the whole population" went out to welcome the arrival of the wheat ships, Paul and his companions left the ship, accompanied, of course, by the centurion Julius and his command, with the purpose of continuing the final part of the trip by land.

Acts 28:14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

The Centurion must have been shocked by Paul ... what a "world traveler and man about town" everywhere they go a crowd of "brethren" know him ... A delay of seven days would enable the Centurion Julius to equip himself and his men, after the loss of everything in the wreck, before entering Rome.

Furthermore, it is not amiss to see in this seven days waiting in Puteoli (pyuh-tee-O-lee):, an evidence, not certain of course, but probable, that Julius himself might have become a Christian. Certainly, SOMETHING induced him to honor the request of the Christians in Puteoli (pyuh-tee-O-lee):, for Paul to remain with them over a Sunday in order to observe the Lord's Supper with them.

"so we went toward Rome ..." Now on the famous Appian Way was one of the earliest and strategically most important Roman roads ... we have travel with Paul over 13,000 miles along the various Roman ways.

"Thus Paul and his party would be with the Christians at the Lord's table on the Lord's Day, here at Puteoli (pyuh-tee-O-lee):, as they had been at Troas (TRO-az) Acts 20:6,7 and at Tyre (TI-r) Acts 21:4."

Acts 20:7 And upon the first [day] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Acts 21:4-5 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. 5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till [we were] out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

There can hardly be any doubt that all three instances of these seven-day periods of waiting were caused by the Apostle Paul's arrival on a Monday, in each case, and that a week's delay was necessary to afford the opportunity of taking the Lord's supper on the Lord's Day.

Acts 28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii (ah-PIE-eye) forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Appii (ah-PIE-eye) forum ... This place was "forty-three miles from Rome," and the travel of some of the saints in Rome such a distance to welcome the beloved apostle was a source of great joy. He had written them several years earlier of his intention of coming, but neither any of them nor Paul could have supposed that the manner of his arrival would be as it came to pass. He entered as a prisoner, chained to a soldier, and filled with apprehension lest the brethren might be ashamed of his bonds. No wonder he "thanked God, and took courage." The Lord had not forsaken him; faithful brethren stood by to cheer and welcome him.

Regarding this place one priceless line from the poet Horace, for which we are indebted, is as follows: "With sailors filled, and scoundrel publicans!"

Three Taverns ... was ten miles closer to Rome, indicating that some, possibly including women and children, had not traveled as rapidly as others. One should read the last chapter of Romans chapter 16 in

connection with this welcoming scene, wondering if some of the names there might not have been those of persons appearing here. A tear must come in the eyes of the tender hearted as we meditate upon all the emotions and over whelming joy that swept over the hearts of the Christians at this historic meeting.

It had been three years since he authored his epistle to the Romans. Now, following a joyful seven days with the brethren at Puteoli, (pyuh-tee-O-lee); Christians came 30 to 40 miles to the Market of Appius (ah-PIE-eye-us) just to welcome Paul. Such an eager, happy reception removed any misgivings he might have had on his place in the hearts of the disciples at Rome.

This place was no better than being typical commercial stops between the port of Puteoli and the "eternal city."

Acts 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Paul would have been brought before Sextus Burrus, (died 62AD), praetorian prefect or General of the Imperial Praetorian Guard (51–62) who, along with Seneca, were the chief adviser of the Roman emperor Nero. Burrus was a good man and Julius the Centurion of Augustus' Band who had charge of Paul during the whole adventure of this trip from Caesarea to Rome and the ensuing shipwreck would have been duty bound to make a truthful report to General Burrus upon their arrival ... regarding Paul a Citizen and how during the journey he had proved that he was a good and honorable man that ordinary people and rich people everywhere loves him and calls him brother ... everybody in the Roman Government these past 3 years believes he should be set free ... except for the Jews. He would have reported how the Jerusalem Chief Captain Claudius Lysias reported to the Governor about the original charges cf:

Acts 23:25-30 And he wrote a letter after this manner: **26** Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix [sendeth] greeting. **27** This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. **28** And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: **29** Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but *to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.* **30** And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what [they had] against him. Farewell. (Emphasis added)

How Governor Festus had publically declared in open court, to King Agrippa

Acts 25:24-25 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and [also] here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. *25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death,* and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. (Emphasis Added)

Acts 26:30-32 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: **31** And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, *This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.* **32** *Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.* (Emphasis added)

This is the fulfillment of God's promises to Paul cf:

Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Acts 27:23-24 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

Back in Asia Paul set his goal to fulfill Paul's purpose cf:

Acts 19:20-21 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. 21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

"... but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." General Burrus was a good and honorable man and he allowed Paul to dwell under "house arrest" with his servants and attendants.

Acts 28:17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men [and] brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

As Paul always did, he addressed himself to the Jews, "to the Jew first" Romans 1:16; and the mention of this having been "after three days" suggests that the three days had been required for getting him settled in his quarters and perhaps visiting with personal friends, of whom he had many in Rome.

As one appealing to Caesar, Paul might naturally have been supposed by the Jews in Rome to have been appealing against Jews; but it was the other way around. Paul was appealing against Roman courts to

which the Jews had delivered him, and by their protests had prevented his acquittal.

From Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans ... How could Paul say that the Jews had delivered him to the Romans, when it was a Roman, Lysias, who had first arrested him? Both Felix and Festus would have released Paul, except for Jewish protests against it. He promptly explained that.

Acts 28:18-19 Who, when they had examined me, would have let [me] go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against [it], I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

Paul's forbearance here is notable, in that he made no mention of the repeated attempts against his life, aided and abetted by the high priest himself. His message to his countrymen in Rome was designed to be as conciliatory as possible.

This passage sheds further light on what happened under Festus. It was the protest of the Jews that led Festus to withhold from Paul the liberty which was his right.

Acts 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see [you], and to speak with [you]: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

For the hope of Israel ... "By this, Paul meant the Messiah and the Christian faith was the true fulfillment of all the hopes and prayers of God's people." Throughout his sermons, speeches and epistles, Paul ever insisted upon the identity of the New Covenant with all that had been prophesied and typified through types and shadows found in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament.

Bound with this chain ... McGarvey observed that:

Paul remained chained day and night, the guard being changed according to uniform custom every three hours, unless an exception was made of the sleeping hours in this case.

The chain itself was a strong, relatively light one, fastened on one end to Paul's arm, and to the soldier on the other or both on Paul ... as a citizen he would be like a "trustee."

Acts 28:21-22 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

Verse 21 signals the end of any prosecution whatever against Paul in Rome, leading as most conservative scholars believe led to his release from this first imprisonment. The speculation of some who would have it otherwise, to the effect that insufficient time had elapsed for the charges to arrive, is ridiculous. If they had wished to press charges, Paul's three months delay after shipwreck gave them plenty of time to have crawled to Rome, if they had had any intention whatever of appearing.

As to why the Sanhedrin decided not to send any charges, this was due to a number of possible reasons, any one of which was more than enough: (1) Only recently, the Jews had been expelled from Rome, and although the ban had by this time been relaxed, the Jerusalem hierarchy would have been careful not to open old wounds. (2) Having already failed miserably to convince the lower courts of Felix and Festus, they knew they had no case worthy of the name. (3) They had, at that time, no powerful advocate in Rome who could have aided their plea. The date here is about 60-61 AD, two whole years prior to Poppaea Sabina's (POH-pee-ah sah-BEE-nah's) marriage to Nero. (4) They were as busy as beavers with the intrigues leading to the

outbreak of the Jewish war. (5) They could also count on Paul's being held in prison for two more years without any charges being pressed by them; and they could have taken that option of keeping him in prison.

As MacGreggor said, "There is some evidence that if the prosecution failed to put in an appearance within two years, they lost their case by default." Therefore, it is the confident conclusion of Coffman and others that Luke, by Acts 28:21, signals that the freedom of Paul was momentarily expected when he concluded this report.

Paul was doubtless pleased with the indication that no further appearance of his old enemies from Jerusalem could be expected, else they would already have appeared. It was an additional bonus that the leaders of the Jews in Rome decided to hear his arguments on behalf of Christianity and promptly set a date.

Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into [his] lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and [out of] the prophets, from morning till evening.

This was a long and thorough presentation by Paul, in which he doubtless covered all of the arguments previously recorded by Luke in Acts. The exposition went on "from morning until evening."

Acts 28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Here occurred what always occurs when the gospel is preached: men are polarized with reference to it, some believing, some not believing.

Acts 28:25a And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word,

As Bruce said, "It would be a great, mistake to suppose the exposition took the form of a monologue. The debate must have been keen and impassioned." There is no need, then, to view the "one word" of this verse as being anything other than the "one word" which broke up the previous meetings with the Jews. Luke had already related how the temple mob heard Paul patiently until a single word, the word "Gentiles" Acts 22:21-22, the strong likelihood being that it was exactly that same word which signaled the end of the meeting here. Luke did not spell it out again; but Paul's appeal to the prophecy of Isaiah as foretelling their rejection strongly infers this.

Acts 28:25b-27 Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

This is Isaiah 6:9-10; and although spoken "through" Isaiah, it is clearly presented here as the word of the Holy Spirit.

This same passage was applied to Israel by Christ, as affirmed in all four gospels Matthew 13:15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; and John 12:37-41. The significance of its being repeated here lies in the fact that the same blindness that closed the hearts of Israel to the Christ was still operative in closing their hearts against the gospel. Paul had already written in Romans a detailed prophecy of the hardening of Israel, proving by many Old Testament passages that their rejection had been foreknown of God from of old. Paul already had the most extensive knowledge of that self-induced blindness to the truth on the part of the chosen people, but he had no doubt hoped until now that

some change in the pattern might come to pass in Rome. The interview just concluded blasted any such hopes.

Up until this time, Paul had ever gone "to the Jew first," but in the light of this final rejection in the heart of civilization, he promptly announced in the next verse the termination of that phase of Christianity.

Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and [that] they will hear it.

In this, the book of Acts reaches a magnificent climax: rejection on the part of secular Israel, unlimited and glorious success among the Gentiles. This, however, is not the only climax, because the undeniable implication of Paul's innocence, as proved by the absence of any charges against him in Rome, implies that his freedom was expected momentarily. Luke did not state that it was expected, any firm declaration having to wait on the event itself; but the anticipation of it is surely here.

Any allegation that the charges would have been sent to the government, and not to the Jewish leaders, is refuted by the obvious truth that the charges would have been sent to both. Even at Caesarea, it will be recalled, the local Jews joined in the clamor for Paul's death; and the fact that the Jerusalem priests had instigated no movement against Paul among their own in Rome proves that they had also failed to instigate any charges against him before their emperor. The fantasy that "the charges were lost in the wreck" dies of its own weight; for Festus would most certainly have exonerated Paul in any official report that might have been on board the wrecked ship.

(16-29) These verses leave certain questions of great human interest unanswered. What were the results of Paul's appeal to Caesar? Was

he acquitted or sentenced? What relationship, if any, did he have with the Roman church? The warm welcome of v 16 would suggest some. Did he gain any fruit? We have no answer to such questions. And the fact that there are no answers places such questions outside the purpose of Luke in writing his book.

The progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome is the story of Acts.

Acts 28:29-31 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. 30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Two whole years ... Luke had just revealed that no letters or charges of any kind had been received from Judaea; and, as any case before the emperor which was not prosecuted in two years was judged to be defaulted, this indicates an air of expectancy that the release might come any day.

His own hired dwelling ... Here again the question of Paul's undeniable financial ability comes to mind, but we have no certain solution. Luke may very well have been wealthy; or Paul himself, as Ramsay believed, might have inherited wealth. The extreme and unusual courtesy extended to Paul could not have come about except, partially at least, through the favorable report of Festus, the same fact giving the falsehood to the notion that "the papers were lost in the wreck." The papers would have been preserved in spite of the wreck.

Received all that went in unto him ... Paul preached to all comers; and there soon were "saints in Caesar's household." Intended by the Jews

as a frustration of Paul's efforts, keeping him imprisoned two years without charges, his imprisonment actually helped the gospel. Paul himself said, "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel" Philippians 1:12.

Preaching the kingdom of God ... MacGreggor said, "This comes near to being a synonym for the Christian church"; but, in context, the expression is not "nearly" a synonym for Christianity, but exactly so! Many New Testament passages use "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably, as here. See my Commentary on Hebrews under Hebrews 12:29.

With all boldness, none forbidding him ... Safe from any efforts to assassinate him, Paul preached fearlessly and boldly to all who came near; and, in addition to those who came to him, he had a new prospect every three hours, every time the guard was changed.

This brings us to the end of this magnificent sacred history. "The narrative ends as it does, because it has caught up with history, and at the moment there was nothing more to report." [29] Like all conservative scholars, we think that "From 62 to 65 A.D., Paul was a free man, visiting Crete and points around the Aegean Sea Titus 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:13,20, possibly even fulfilling his desire to go to Spain."

During the two full years mentioned here, Paul wrote "the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistle to the Colossians, and those to Philemon and the Philippians," according to Hervey; and it may also be assumed that he gave Luke some help on the book of Acts. How strange it is that Luke did not mention any of Paul's writings. If Acts were all that we had, we would not even know that Paul was an author, despite the fact that his writings "have moved the world of mind and spirit more than all the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Bacon all combined."

The sacred authors are unlike any others. How strange, for example, that there is no mention of the virgin birth of Christ in Acts; and if we did not also have the gospel of Luke by the same author, the radical critics would be screaming to high heaven that "Luke knew nothing of it!" Nothing? Well, read Luke, second chapter. This teaches Christians to be on guard against deductions based upon the silence of the Holy Scriptures.

Long, and patiently, we have labored in these studies in Acts; and it is with a certain reluctance that we have come to the end of so profitable and delightful a pursuit. We shall honor the immortal J.W. McGarvey by repeating his final words on Acts, thus:

We bid Paul adieu until the resurrection morning, well pleased that the course of the narrative on which we have commented has kept us for so long a time in his company

Sources: KJV Bible, theWord.com, Burton Coffman, BW Johnson, Adam Clark, FF Bruce, McKnight and JW McGarvey, George Faull Commentaries, Wikipedia, and World Conquest.

According to the stories told of her, Poppaea had urged Nero to kill his mother, Agrippina the Younger, and to divorce and later murder his first wife, Octavia.

She is also reported to have persuaded Nero to kill the philosopher Seneca, who had supported Nero's previous mistress, Acte Claudia. Poppaea is believed to have stirred Nero to attack Christians after the Fire of Rome and to have helped free Jewish priests at the request of Josephus.