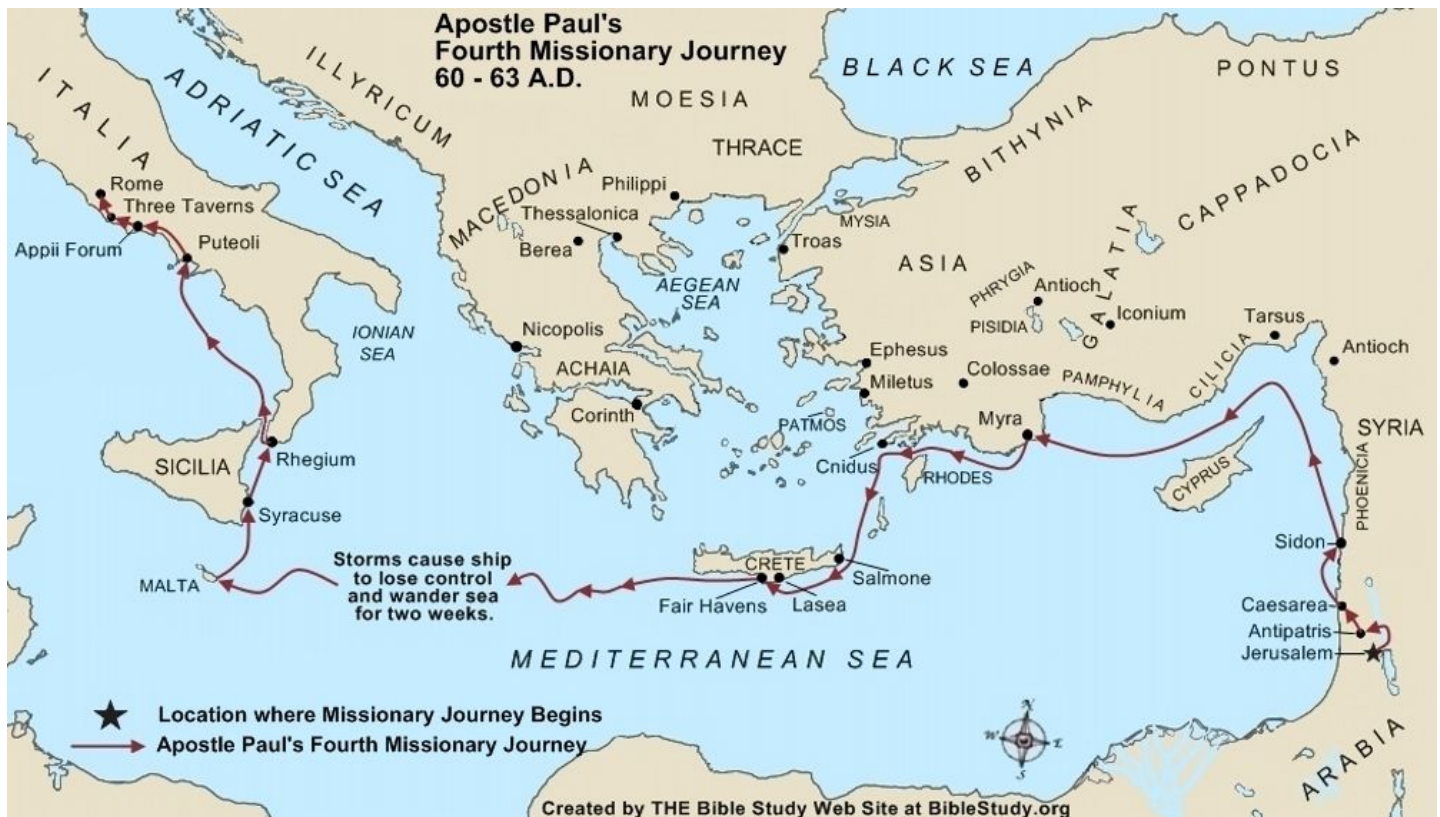


# Jesus Christ's work through the Apostles to the Uttermost Melita and then Caesar!

"... and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae'a, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." **Acts 1:8**

**Introduction:** As the book of Acts ends; Paul makes his way to Rome. He is found first in Malta and given much opportunity to preach the Gospel there. Along the way Paul is able to meet with those that be in Rome. The Bible says, "he took courage..." Though the book of Acts does not tell us of the end of Paul's earthly journey, it does culminate in his final arrival to Rome, preaching the Gospel to the Jews first and then all those that would come by.

- I. Reception Received 1-10
- II. Return to the Road 11-15
- III. Rest in Rome 16-31



## I. Reception Received 1-8

### A. Arrival to the Island v1

1. v1 "And when they were escaped, then the knew that the island was called Melita."
2. This island of Melita is now called Malta. Its name signifies "honey" of which is was famous for.
3. The distance they had travelled if it was a straight shot would be between 460-480 miles.

## B. Acceptance of the people v2

1. **v2** The "*barbarous people*" received them. This word does not mean the people were foolish, but rather did not speak Greek or Latin and therefore were called barbarians.
2. "*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.*" **Romans 1:14**
3. **Romans 1:14** signifies Paul accepted fully his mission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to all people.
4. **v2** These were kind people, notice they "...*kindled a fire,*" and "*received*" them. And for this we do understand there are many noble and goodhearted people in the world; those who have compassion on others. But yet these, even though they were kind were still sinners in need of a Saviour.
5. Matthew Henry had this to say concerning these people, "The Samaritan is a better neighbour to the poor wounded man than the priest or Levite."
6. It is shocking that at times Christians are less honorable than the "barbarous people" of the world.
7. In the next few verses we are shown their superstition and how quick they are to fall into idolatry, not having the truth.
8. No doubt Paul and the others were tired from the difficult journey and the rain and the cold would have been difficult to endure had these not "*kindled a fire..*"

## C. Attack of the Viper v3-6

1. **v3** "*And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks...*" - This telling statement show us that Paul was a man of action, willing to take part in the labor. Not only that, but here we see the Apostle was not 'above' a menial task such as gathering sticks.
2. Once the sticks were applied onto the fire, the viper came out.
3. This viper was a venomous snake and it "...*fastened on his hand.*" – meaning it bit Paul.
4. **v4** "*And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on the hand....*" – Here they immediately judge by what they see, yet they do acknowledge there are no accidents. The heathen call it 'fate.' Shown in this very statement is the fact that inside of even those with no other light is the internal witness that there is a God. This agrees with the external witness of creation. But for the Christian we should say, "Yet are we not to live by faith?"
5. "Accidents are not punishments. The clinging of the viper to Paul's hand was not an evidence of the anger of God, but was permitted in order to give these simple-hearted people an evidence which they would appreciate of God's care for His own. How changeable is human opinion, shifting in a moment from the highest to the lowest estimate of our fellows, and basing that estimate solely on the favorable or unfavorable aspect of outward circumstances! Let us not judge by appearance, but righteously." – FB Meyer

6. How shamefully oftentimes we quickly judge circumstances without knowing the reasons.
7. The summation of their verdict is given to us *“No doubt this **man is a murderer**, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, **yet vengeance suffereth not to live.**”* ‘Vengeance’ is given a personage and ability to act on its own by these superstitious folks.
8. We should thank the Lord that we know that our thrice Holy God is in charge of the universe He created. We should further thank God that as a Christian we have a different perspective than the rest of the world when difficulties arise. No one would have guessed that the viper would have no effect on Paul, other than those who have the eye of faith, reckoning that God’s Word is true!
9. **v5** *“And he shook the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.”*
10. According to **Mark 16:18** God’s promises concerning these Apostolic witnesses would be true. *“They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”*
11. **v6** Once again they “looked” on and too their surprise their verdict is overturned. *“...when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly...”* So, they *“changed their minds, and said that he was a god.”* Oh, but this is an opportunity to show them the one true living God. Paul coming from of ship of prisoners is now shown to be different, this provides an opportunity to witness.
12. **What are we to suppose by all of this?** That the lost world must have the special revelation contained in the Bible. Many have seen miracles and still remained lost. The nation of Israel sought after a sign and yet their entire history and even present circumstances in the Gospel accounts are wrought with miracle after miracle. We are to access the grace of God by faith, there is no other method.
13. **Matthew 16:4** *“A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.”*
14. **v7** Introduction is given to this man *“whose name was Publius;...”* and was apparently the chief magistrate of the area.
15. **v7** Lodging was given *“three days courteously.”*
16. **v8** We are told of the father of Publius who *“lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux:...”*
17. **v8 Paul entered in prayed and laid hands on him and healed him.** Oftentimes it is a testimony and glory to Jesus Christ, that those who are without know to whom to go to in times of great need. “Would you pray for me?” comes from the lips of those who say they believe in nothing.
18. **v9,10** We see a miraculous outpouring of God’s blessing upon the people of this island. As word got out concerning the healing, many *“others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed...”*

19. **v10** These thankful people “*honoured*” them with “*many hounours;*” This means they bestowed upon them many gifts. And should they not receive from those who have blessed them so much, both physically and spiritually.
20. **I Timothy 5:17,18** “*Let the elders that rule well be **counted worthy of double honour, especially** they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, **The labourer is worthy of his reward.***”

## II. Return to the Road 11-13

### A. After Three Months v11

1. **v11** This is the third ship boarded in this journey. It is the second ship of Alexandrian origin. Many surmises that the ship may have been commandeered by compulsory law.
2. **v11** The Bible gives us the “sign” of this ship. This would be on the front of the ship and would be marked with an image or a figure. In this case two demi-gods in Greek/Roman mythology whose names were Castor and Pollux. These celebrated deities were thought to protect mariners.
3. **One must wonder if this ship was chosen purposely because of its “sign.”**
4. **v12** They arrive in Syracuse, the capital of Sicily and remain three days.
5. **v13** They went around the island and came to Rhegium and then the next day Puteoli.
6. **Here we see the reference that the “south wind blew...”** Unlike before this was a favorable sailing condition.
7. **v14** Upon arriving in northern Italy at Puteoli they “*found brethren...*” Think for a moment how much of an encouragement that must have been. The proliferation of the Gospel had made it to this city. This certainly means someone communicated the Gospel. Paul knew there were Christians in Rome (**Romans 1:8**).
8. **v14** The Bible stresses that these were found or discovered Christians. These have the common bond of Jesus Christ and though never knowing them prior would have great fellowship one with another.
9. **There was a desire to be around brothers and sisters in Christ; the family of God.** Here they were compelled to tarry with them seven days.
10. **v15** Word travels and others come to meet them as they head north “*as far as Appii form, and the three taverns...*”
11. **v15** **Notice how the presence of others encourage us.** “*...whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.*”
12. Paul had long desired to preach the Gospel to those in Rome and now it seemed this desire would take place. He had written the letter to the Romans some five years earlier, thus the Christians in this place would have perhaps known of Paul and travelled the distance to see him.

13. **Romans 1:8-11** *“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;”*

### III. Rest in Rome 16-31

#### A. Finally, at Rome v16-24

1. **v16** *“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.”*
2. **v16** Paul was granted great liberty by the Centurion only one Soldier was assigned for his safekeeping.
3. **v17-22** Paul immediately begins the work of witnessing to those in Rome.
4. **The context of Paul’s life had to do with Jesus Christ. Because of this, his story naturally would lead into His Story.**
5. **v20 Paul states,** *“because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”* The hope of Israel was none other than Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
6. **v22** *“But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that ever where it is spoken against.”* Here is an open door, where folks are willing to listen we ought to communicate as pointedly we can the Gospel message. Paul from the verse that follows used every faculty of his mind and the Word of God to communicate the truth to these Jews. They knew that Christians were spoken of against everywhere.
7. **v23** Tells us that Paul *“expounded and testified...”* These two words tell us much about our reasonability toward others with the Word of God. Expounding means to expose. We must be Spirit-led in exposing the Word of God to others. Secondly, Paul testified. To testify means to give a personal account of something you have knowledge of and gives the idea of conveying in such a way to garner belief.
8. Notice also Paul was persuading them concerning Jesus out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets. In other words, he was a student of the Scriptures. The Word of God is powerful and in order for us to have to Sword of the Spirit handy we must have a good handle of it. He expounded and testified so much that he used the entire day. Would our knowledge of the Scriptures last an entire day?
9. **v24** The result is still the same, *“some believed”* and *“some believed not.”* What a blessed comfort that is to us who sometimes believe that our efforts are for not when the Gospel has been preached and some believe not.

## B. Final word given v25-31

1. **v25** These stinging words delivered, were spoken by permission of the Holy Spirit and in reflection of what the Holy Spirit had already commented concerning the Jews. This word cut deeply and was quoted from **Isaiah 6:9**. Never was any people group in the entire world of all time given as much light had been given to the Jewish people.
2. **v26** They had heard, but really did not hear or rather receive the message. They saw much and yet did not see or perceive. Why? Verse 27 tells us.
3. **v27** *“the heart of the people is waxed gross...”* – They had become spiritually calloused or dulled.
4. **v27** Further it says they had **closed their eyes**. Because of this they could not hear, they could not see, and consequently they could not be converted and healed.
5. **v28** The great *“therefore”* is given here that is given according to God’s redemptive plan. The age of the Gentiles would commence and Israel would be set aside for a time. This does not denote that Jews cannot be saved, but rather the continuing redemptive plan of God would flourish at this time through the Gentiles.
6. **v29** This word is encouraging to say the least, that they *“had great reasoning among themselves.”*
7. **v30,31** **As the book of Acts closes, Paul is found faithfully continuing the work of preaching the Gospel.**