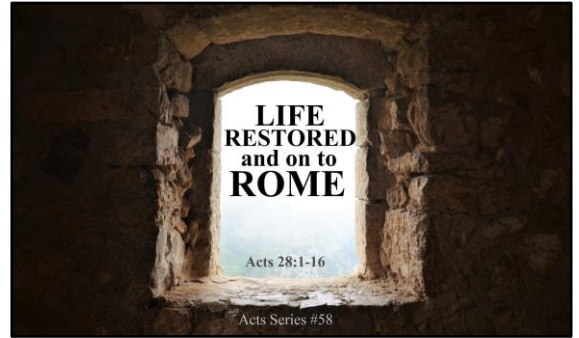


ACTSFACTS

C@G Supplementary Study Notes for ACTS

Message #58

“LIFE RESTORED and on to ROME” (Acts 28:1-16)



VISIONS & DREAMS

Have you ever had a dream of taking the gospel to a certain place, or person, or people group?

Or perhaps you've had a vision of how you could serve God in a particular way.

Have your dreams/visions been realized...or have they never come to fruition?

Take a few moments to share of your hopes, dreams and visions.

If you had nothing standing in your way, no limitations at all, what would you attempt to do for God?

Paul had long harboured a desire to get to Rome and proclaim the gospel there (See Romans 15:23). Now, as we enter the very last chapter of the book of Acts, we see that Paul is almost there. Indeed, within these 16 verses, we see that Paul, accompanied by Luke (and others) arrives at the ancient metropolis of Rome. What a journey it has been to get there! Let's have a quick look at this final leg of Paul's journey to Rome.

The ship that Paul and 275 others were on had been blown about 500 miles west from its last harbour, Fair Havens, and arrived at the island of Malta where it ran aground. However, God had promised that none of the 276 people on board would be lost and this promise was fulfilled when all made it safely to land. They didn't know where they were but learned that the island was named "Malta" (which, appropriately, means "a place of refuge"). Here, on this strange island they would have had some concerns as to how they would be greeted by the local inhabitants (islanders – *barbaroi* – literally "barbarians" which was how non-Greek speakers were referred to). Thankfully, they had nothing to worry about.

Luke tells us that the islanders "showed us unusual kindness..." (28:2).

What kindnesses did the islanders show this large number of survivors of the shipwreck (28:2,10)?

Who are the strangers in your community? How can you make them feel welcome?

Have you ever shared your home, your food, your car, etc with a stranger?

Look at how Jesus talks about being a stranger in **Matthew 25:35-36**.

How does this passage in Matthew challenge you?...your church?

Luke gives us a fascinating insight into the humility of Paul in Acts 28. In spite of his obvious notoriety, his leadership status and his prophetic insight which had assured them all of safety, Paul helps to collect wood for the fire. No airs and graces. Serving others was not beneath Paul.

Paul was happy to lend a hand and do whatever needed to be done. What can we learn from that?

As Paul picked up sticks, one of those sticks turned out to be a viper (snake) and it bit him on the hand.
Read Acts 28:3-6.

What does the snakebite incident show us about Paul?

What does the snakebite incident show us about God?

What does the snakebite incident show us about the people?

Following the snakebite incident, the local governor, Publius welcomed them (Paul, Luke and a few others, or the whole 276?) and showed them great hospitality for three days, even though his father was very sick. Paul did what Paul always did...he prayed for the sick man. And God miraculously healed him.

This, naturally, became known throughout the whole island and many more sick people were brought to Paul and, as a result, received the healing of the Lord.

Despite all the tiredness of the long, dangerous journey, a strange island, an exhausting storm, a brush with death in a shipwreck and the snake-bite...Paul is still ready to be used by God.

How willing are you to serve God, even when you don't feel like it?

WHEN STICKS BECOME SNAKES

Paul was doing something to help others when he was bitten by a snake.

Have you ever "picked up sticks" for someone (done something to help someone) only to have the stick turn into a snake...and you get bitten?

Sometimes our best intentions are not appreciated and, sometimes, they are even used against us to hurt us.

It will help if we can "shake off the snake" and allow God to minister His sufficient grace to us and through us to others. Just like Paul.

Luke then describes how, after three months laying over in Malta, they boarded another Egyptian grain ship and set sail once again (this time with supplies provided by the kind people of Malta (Maltesers?). They sailed first to Syracuse, then to Rhegium and on up to Puteoli in the Bay of Naples where they disembarked. The sea voyage was now over and the rest of the journey to Rome was on land. News of Paul's arrival in Italy spread quickly and Luke tells us that they were met by a delegation of believers who travelled out of the city to meet them along the Appian Way (the road to Rome).

What do you think it must have been like for Paul to be met by a delegation of Christians when he was almost at Rome? (28:14-15).

In what ways is the help and support we get from other Christians different from any help we might get from non-Christians? How can Christians who have never met before have such close relationships so quickly?



Why do you think Paul was encouraged? (Acts 28:15)

And in what ways do you get encouraged in your faith?
