THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 31ST– NOVEMBER 1ST, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED (ACTS 28:17–24)

"AFTER THREE DAYS…"

It didn't take Paul long to get to work in Rome. Also, we see the same pattern he had been using for decades—first to the synagogue, and then to the Gentiles.

- Since Paul was on house arrest, the Jewish leaders had to gather at his residence. His first point was his innocence.

"FOR THE HOPE OF ISRAEL"

Paul suffered in hopes that all people would know Jesus, but his first emphasis was the Jews who were given the original prophecies.

- **The gospel isn't anti-Jew,** and Paul knew **God promised Israel would always exist** (Jeremiah 31) and **the door would always be open for salvation** (Romans 11).

PAUL NEVER PLAYED THE VICTIM

Though Paul knew he would suffer for Jesus, he didn't expect to be martyred in Rome. His desire was to minister as long as possible.

- **Christians aren't victims but victorious through Christ. We will encounter injustices, but we overcome and move forward with God's help and grace.**

THEY HADN'T HEARD ANYTHING? (VS. 21–22)

The Jews in Rome hadn't heard about Paul, which is odd. One reason may be because the Jews had expelled Christians from Rome in 50 A.D. until many returned in 54 A.D.

- It also seems there was a disconnect from the Jews in Rome and Jerusalem because of safety concerns.

"PEOPLE…ARE SPEAKING AGAINST THIS SECT"

Sect in Greek is *hairesis* and can mean *heresy* or *a different school of thought.* "From dawn to dusk," Paul invited Jewish leaders to his home "and testified about the kingdom of God."

- Paul used **scripture to identify Jesus. This is the only proper way for one to identify the real Jesus!**

LIKE PAUL'S WORK BEFORE, RESULTS WERE MIXED

This is a constant in the Bible. Jesus tells us metaphorically that "two will be in a field" (Matthew 24) and there will be "wheat and tares" (Matthew 13).

- **We are not responsible for the results** but for **planting and cultivating the truth. God is the only one who can change the heart** (1 Corinthians 3:6).

LISTENING (ACTS 28:25–29)

AS PAUL TAUGHT, HE SENSED DOUBT IN THE ROOM

Paul quoted a prophecy from Isaiah 6, which Jesus had also used (Luke 4), about unwillingness to understand truth.

- Jesus used parables to reveal the hardness of people's hearts. Paul uses Isaiah 6 as a warning to all people of **the eternal consequences of callousness to the gospel.**

THIS IS WHEN PEOPLE WALK OUT

God's Word reveals our brokenness, selfishness, sinfulness, and inability to save and restore ourselves. This is painful to hear, but **God and His Word reveal hard truths in order to rectify and change the situation!**

- **Why do we get so offended by the information that will save us?**

A LOSING BATTLE

We war against the flesh (selfish desires) by living out God's Word **because the flesh wants what is in opposition to the Spirit and will inevitably lead us to eternal death.**

- The tension is that we live in a society, even in many churches, which teaches and models pursuit of self over Spirit and Truth.

THERE WILL BE THOSE WHO WANT TO LISTEN

The majority rejection of Jesus by the Jews led to the "salvation of God" being "sent to the Gentiles" because "they will listen."

- To this day, the Jewish people as a whole still reject Jesus, but many believe Rm. 11 alludes to a spiritual awakening among Jewish people in the end times.

EPILOGUE (ACTS 28:30–31)

MEETING AND WRITING

It seemed like Rome wasn't in a hurry to deal with Paul. For two years, Paul stayed "in his own rented house" and "welcomed all who visited him."

- Not only did Paul meet with Romans, but he also wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon during this time.

IT ENDS HOW JESUS WANTED IT TO

Acts ends on a high note. Paul is in the capital, "**proclaiming** the kingdom of God and **teaching** about the Lord Jesus Christ with all **boldness** and **without hindrance**."

- Some think Acts is incomplete or abrupt, but **it ends how God intended, with victory and progress (Revelation 19)!**

THE BEGINNING OF GREAT PERSECUTION

Luke concluded Acts in 63 A.D., and in 64 A.D., intense persecution began under Caesar Nero after **the Great Fire of Rome.**

- More than likely, Nero started the fire to make room for a palace but blamed it on Christians. **Persecution began in 64 A.D. and lasted until Constantine in 313 A.D.**

WHAT HAPPENED TO LUKE?

Luke traveled with Paul until Paul's martyrdom. After that, some traditions believe Luke ministered in Greece, Egypt, and Libya, while others claim he led churches in Rome.

- How he died is uncertain. Catholics claim he died peacefully at 84 in Greece; others claim he was hung from an olive tree.

WHAT HAPPENED TO PAUL?

Most scholars believe Paul was released in 62 A.D. after meeting Nero. He possibly went on a fourth missionary journey to Spain and wrote the letters to Timothy and Titus during that time before he died.

- Paul was beheaded outside the walls of Rome by the order of Nero around 67 A.D.

WHO IS THE HERO OF ACTS?

Luke wasn't writing Paul's biography but the story of the birth of Christianity. **Paul isn't the hero of Acts; Jesus is.**

- Acts leaves us with an emphasis on **the victory that comes in our daily lives, with others**, and **in eternity through a relationship with Jesus.**

TRUTH AND THE BIBLICAL JESUS

- **Are we rooted in biblical truth?** Do we follow the Jesus of the Bible or a Jesus molded to be like us and our culture?
- **Does the topic of repentance offend us?** Do we make excuses for sin? Do we welcome instruction and conviction? Do we desire to distance ourselves from sin (sanctify)?

HOW ARE WE WAGING WAR?

- We all fight with our selfish desires. To give up this fight or not take it seriously is dangerous because **our "flesh" is in opposition to the Spirit and will lead us to chaos and destruction** (Romans 8:6,13; Galatians 6:8).
- We cannot simply pray our "flesh" away, but we can **choose to walk with Jesus daily.**
- When we live in the Spirit (trust, believe, obey), we "reap eternal life" (Galatians 6) and are **victorious** in our "war" through **relationship with Jesus, repentance,** and **grace.**
- We will not be perfect, but we will put distance between ourselves and sin because **we are no longer slaves to sin** (Romans 6).

PLANTING AND CULTIVATING

- Are we willing to have people "walk out" on us because we share hard truths? **Do we fear people more than God** (Proverbs 9:10)?
- Do we speak **truth out of love and concern?**
- If we are loving people well and telling them the truth, **the results are not up to us.** Only Jesus can save, change, and restore.

JESUS WINS

- Life is often confusing, difficult, and disappointing. Life is also good, if lived in relationship with Jesus and with the knowledge that He is returning to right all wrongs and usher His followers into an eternal and beautiful city (Revelation 21). **In Christ, we have hope.**
- The world will get worse before it gets better. Is our faith stable and ready for the "labor pains" Jesus foretold (Matthew 24)?
- **If we can't live for Jesus now, how will we as it becomes more difficult?** The answer lies in **our willingness to "understand with [our] hearts and turn" towards Him** (Isaiah 6).