

## The End . . . Yet, Not

Acts 28:11-31 Sunday AM, March 26, 2023

**Prelude – Scripture: Acts 28:11-31** At the end of three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead. <sup>12</sup> After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. <sup>13</sup> From there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. <sup>14</sup> There we found *some* brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome. <sup>15</sup> And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. <sup>16</sup> When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him. <sup>17</sup> After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he *began* saying to them, “Brethren, though I had 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. <sup>18</sup> “And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death. <sup>19</sup> “But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation. <sup>20</sup> “For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.” <sup>21</sup> They said to him, “We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. <sup>22</sup> “But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.” <sup>23</sup> When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. <sup>24</sup> Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. <sup>25</sup> And when they did not agree with one another, they *began* leaving after Paul had spoken one *parting* word, “The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, <sup>26</sup> saying, ‘GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, “YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; <sup>27</sup> FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.”’ <sup>28</sup> “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.” <sup>29</sup> When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves. <sup>30</sup> And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him. <sup>31</sup> preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

Last week, we started wet and cold—swimming to shore, the rain, the people on the shore to meet us, and the fire they prepared to warm us after our two week ordeal with the storm. Much of our passage focused on the snake—you know, the one in the bundle of sticks Paul gathered for the fire. The fire that warmed them brought the viper to life and it fastened itself on his hand. Help him! Nope, he’s done. Why? Justice has caught up with this EXTRA bad prisoner—murderer! You ARE right. This one IS a murderer. You ARE right. Justice is stronger than attempts to evade it. But justice is NOT impersonal. God brings true justice. But there is more! God justly redeemed this murderer AND he is not in prison because of that murder. He is a prisoner because of the Christ who set him free. So he is NOT done. He has a work yet to do for Christ. The rest of our passage showed some of that work. Publius, the leading man of the island cared for Paul. The gospel Paul not only proclaimed but lived led to caring for the needs of those receiving the gospel. So in the context of island hospitality, Paul learns of one of Publius’ needs. His father was seriously ill. Paul laid his hands on him and healed him, and then cared for others on the island with diseases. Pastor Jahn spoke of church history’s record of the gospel’s impact on this island as we see that this shipwreck was also under God’s providence. His name was to be honored on this island. This is what saved people live to do. Are you looking for how you can honor His name throughout your day? Sing this call to proclaim the glories of our Redeeming God!

### \*Hymn #17: Ye Servants of God

Today, we are on the move again. Don’t miss what has become commonplace on this trip from Jerusalem—the encouragement of the brethren sought and given. *and on the second day we came to Puteoli. <sup>14</sup> There we found *some* brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome. <sup>15</sup> And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.* Why did he thank God? Because it wasn’t just encouragement. It was encouragement in the Lord. There was something about God, from God that came from these fellow believers that led to praising God for His provision so Paul could continue faithful in service to God as a good soldier. We’ve been looking at the excellencies of Jesus in Hebrews 1. Think of them in this hymn and think how focusing here would enable you to continue in faithful worship and service.

**\*Hymn #88: Fairest Lord Jesus \*Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Behold the Lamb Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1–21** Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. <sup>3</sup> But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God. <sup>6</sup> Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. <sup>7</sup> For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? <sup>8</sup> You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, *I wish* that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you. <sup>9</sup> For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. <sup>10</sup> We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. <sup>11</sup> To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; <sup>12</sup> and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup> when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now. <sup>14</sup> I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. <sup>15</sup> For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you *would not have* many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. <sup>16</sup> Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. <sup>17</sup> For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church. <sup>18</sup> Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup> But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. <sup>20</sup> For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. <sup>21</sup> What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

### Offering: \*Doxology:

A few days under guard in Rome and what does Paul do? He calls the Jews to meet with him. Paul, haven’t you had enough trouble w Jews? They fear God, then giving the gospel in Rome includes them. Paul humbly puts his case before them as he had many times before not only in court, but like we heard today from I Corinthians, as he had humbly sought to bring the kingdom of God to bear on all those who heard and received the gospel message. There are many ways to evangelize wrongly. But this does not negate our gospel mandate to proclaim the excellencies of God culminating in the gospel of reconciliation offered by God through Jesus. Be careful, love, sense how hungry they are and where they are coming from, then give accordingly. Give what? Let the word of God dwell in you richly. It’s not just the company line, it must be your testimony, your very life!

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): Each Day I Live

**Be seated.** Paul gives this gospel, and what do we see? It’s the same as all the other times—some believed, others turned away. Paul then speaks OT words of condemnation as a reminder that rejection is part of gospel work, but then continues caring for souls. And here is where our book of the Acts of the Apostles ends and where we must continue. God’s heart for souls makes you continue. But you don’t merely minister, you do it tied to Him—gazing at Christ and learning from Him. This changes the focus from the deed to the One who changes us to do the deed more like Him. Yes, there is a right/wrong way to minister, but when you look at a holy God, you recognize that all through redemption history, He has reached out to mankind—from Adam to Abraham, to the Passover Lamb, to Jesus, the Lamb of God the choir sang about. God loves you! Respond to that love by gazing at Him as you follow Him in ministry.

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): Love Incarnate

**Message: The End . . . Yet, Not Acts 28:11-31 \*Hymn #383 (Red): Follow, I Will Follow Thee \*Prayer**