

B. Paul's Message

- i. Paul proclaimed the Kingdom—the Messiah has come and has begun to reign in Jesus—so it is time to repent, and submit to His Kingship.
- ii. Paul taught about the Lord Jesus Christ who reigns over that kingdom from his position at the right hand of God having been crucified, died, and raised to life.
- iii. Paul does so
 - a) With all boldness
 - b) Without hindrance.

LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups
as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- If your response to the Gospel were measured by your reception or lack thereof of its messengers, what would it indicate? How does it stack up against the barbarians?
- What are some of the ways the people of Malta welcomed or received Paul and his team of Gospel messengers?
- If Paul had measured his effectiveness as a Gospel preacher by the results amongst the Jews in Acts 28, how do you think he may have felt? How can you be encouraged by this in your own Gospel witness?
- Luke 10:16 reflects the principle that to reject the Gospel messenger is to reject Christ and to receive the Gospel messenger is to receive Christ. What does this say about the importance of the messenger making sure it is the Gospel he delivers?
- When you read Acts 28:25-28, are you ever tempted to think, “The Gospel didn’t have any effect on them,” or, “The Gospel failed”? Did the Gospel fail, or was it effective? Explain.
- When you share Christ, why is it important to remember that both purposes (to save and to judge; to heal and to harden) are in play? How might this also be encouraging at times.
- How does this chapter call us to participate in the Gospel advancing without hindrance?

Differing Responses to Gospel Messengers

Jerry Cisar — March 8, 2015

Text: Acts 28

Introduction

- A. **Acts 28** is about how differing responses to Gospel messengers determine which Gospel purposes will be accomplished: **healing or hardening**.

- B. The Dividing Effect of the Gospel
 - i. Luke 2:32-35

 - ii. Luke 10:8-16

- C. Acts 28 reiterates that these principles related to how we respond to the Gospel messenger are still in force... to the ends of the earth.

I. The Welcome of the Barbarians (28:1-10)

- A. After the troubles, chaos, hopelessness of chapter 27, we find them on an island, Melita which means “refuge”.
 - i. The islanders (NIV) or native people (ESV), or natives (NASB) is from the word “Barbaroi”.
 - a) Romans 1:14
 - b) Colossians 3:11

 - ii. They are certainly not God-fearing gentiles.
 - a) Romans 2:14, 17-21

 - b) In Acts 28 the barbarians, who do not have the law, do what the Jews, who have the law, fail to do.

B. Publius, the Chief Man of the Island

- i. Luke 10:8-9 is happening here.
- ii. Their hospitality only increases after this.
 - a) These islanders honor Paul and company with material possessions.
 - b) F.F. Bruce is right to suggest that the “honoring us in many ways” (NIV) or “honored us greatly” (ESV) included financial or material gifts.

C. A welcome response to the messenger allows the Gospel to have its redemptive effect.

II. The Encouragement of the Brothers (28:11-15)

- A. An Alexandrian ship bearing the image of twin gods
- B. Syracuse for 3 days; Puteoli for a full week.
- C. The believers in Rome came out to welcome them in.

III. The Disregard of the Jews (28:16-28)

- A. Paul's practice of “to the Jews first,” continues.
 - i. Romans 9:3.
 - ii. “*After 3 days...*” stands in contrast to the beginning of the chapter.

iii. Paul's Explanation

iv. The Response of the Jews (21-22)

- B. They gladly received Paul's hospitality and stayed all day.
 - i. Paul testifies about Jesus, trying to persuade them. (23)
 - ii. Some were “*being persuaded*” (not fully persuaded).

iii. The Gospel is effective in judgment. (25b-28)

iv. No one is ever neutral in their response to the Gospel.

IV. The Hospitality of the Gospel Messenger (28:30-31)

- A. Paul now offers the Gospel at his own expense.
 - i. How ironic that Paul, a prisoner is the one with the freedom to offer his services at no charge.
 - ii. Paul is willing to pay the price which those receiving the message were obligated to provide, but failed to.