SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

†
28:31

DEEP DIVE

Acts

Chapter Twenty-Eight, Verses 1–31

Unhindered — a viper on Malta, brothers on the Appian Way, a chained apostle in Rome, and the last word of Acts

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | THREE VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Shipwrecked on Malta, bitten by a viper and hailed as a god, Paul finally walks into Rome a prisoner. For two years, chained to a soldier in a rented room, he welcomes everyone who comes and preaches the kingdom of God — unhindered. Read through three teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 28:1–31

Malta · Rome · the hope of Israel · unhindered

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Four movements from the beach at Malta to a rented room in Rome

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from a broken ship to the capital of the world*	3
I	**Kindness, a Viper, and Healing on Malta** · *Acts 28:1–10 · Malta*	4
II	**And Thus We Came to Rome** · *Acts 28:11–16 · the road to Rome*	6
III	**For the Sake of the Hope of Israel** · *Acts 28:17–29 · the hope of Israel*	8
IV	**With All Openness, Unhindered** · *Acts 28:30–31 · two years, unhindered*	10
V	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	11
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	13
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	13
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	15

"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." — Acts 28:15

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Acts 28:1–31

Unhindered — Paul reaches Rome in chains — and the book ends with the word of God going out with all openness, unhindered

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Acts 28 in 4 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ACTS 28:31

"△ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ ☆ with all openness, unhindered."

† Before the Passage

Chapter 27 ended on a beach: "they all were brought safely to land" (27:44). Chapter 28 opens on the same sand, cold and wet, with 276 survivors among strangers. Luke's "we" continues to 28:16 — he is still an eyewitness — and the island has a name: Malta, about sixty miles south of Sicily. The castaways spend the winter there (v. 11), and when the sailing season opens they finish the voyage on another Alexandrian ship.

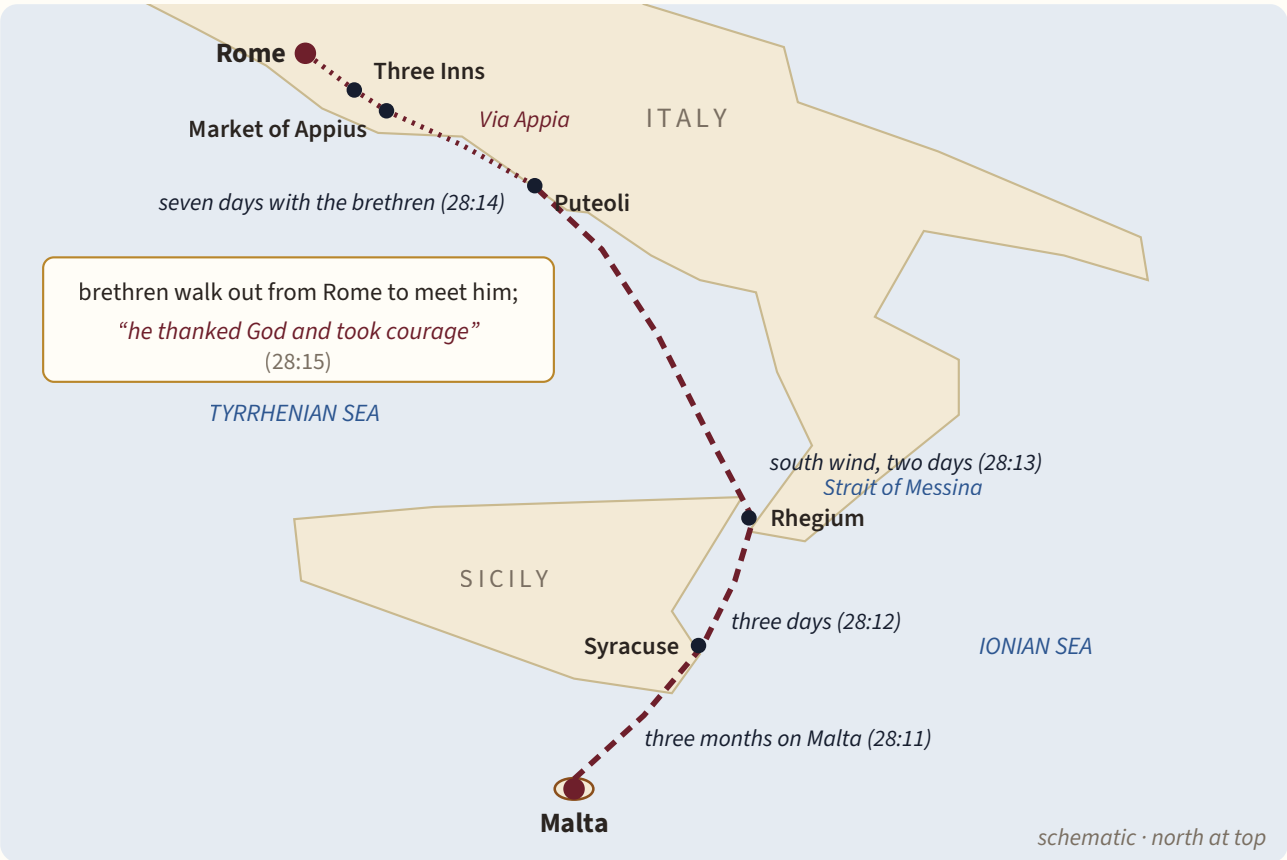
The book has been heading here since its first chapter. Jesus promised witnesses "even to the remotest part of the earth" (1:8). Paul said, "I must also see Rome" (19:21); the Lord told him, "you must witness at Rome also" (23:11); the angel told him, "you must stand before Caesar" (27:24). Years earlier he had written to the church there, "I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome" (Romans 1:15). He comes, but not the way he planned — as a prisoner, after a shipwreck, and at the government's expense.

The route north (see the map) ran by sea to Puteoli on the Bay of Naples, the great port for Alexandrian grain ships, and then on foot up the Via Appia to Rome. The Market of Appius and Three Inns were stations on that

road south of the city. Believers came out that far to meet a prisoner they knew from a letter — and the man who had cheered 275 strangers at sea was cheered himself.

Then the last scene. True to his pattern — "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16) — Paul calls the Jewish leaders of Rome, preaches Jesus from the Law and the Prophets, quotes Isaiah 6 over a divided audience, and announces that "this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles" (v. 28). Acts does not end with Paul's trial or death. It ends with a chained man in a rented room, preaching "with all openness, unhindered" (v. 31).

FIGURE · MALTA TO ROME



Follow the dashed line north from Malta by Syracuse and Rhegium to Puteoli, then the dotted line up the Appian Way, where the brethren met Paul at the Market of Appius and Three Inns.

I
MOVEMENT

ACTS 28:1–10

Kindness, a Viper, and Healing on Malta

Strangers light a fire, a snake strikes, and an island is healed

[1] *When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.* [2] ☆ *The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.* [3] *But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire,* ⚠ *a*

viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. [4] *When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "⚠ Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."* [5] *However △ he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm*. [6] *But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and ⚠ began to say that he was a god*. [7] *Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.* [8] *And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and △ after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him*. [9] *After this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured.* [10] *They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with all we needed.*

ACTS 28:1–10

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you."

LUKE 10:19

FIGURE · THE VERDICT TURNS

THE ISLANDERS' VERDICT TURNS · ACTS 28:3–6

VERSE 4	VERSES 5–6	VERSE 6
"Undoubtedly this man is a murderer" Justice has caught him	he shook the creature off and suffered no harm; they waited a long time	*"he was a god"* they changed their minds

Both verdicts were wrong. Paul was neither a murderer nor a god, but a servant of *"the God to whom I belong and whom I serve" (27:23)*

Henry: "See the uncertainty of popular opinion, how it turns with the wind"

Read left to right: the same crowd that called Paul a murderer called him a god a few hours later; the truth is in the band beneath.

βάρβαρος

BARBAROS · "NATIVES" · G915

To a Greek, anyone whose speech sounded like "bar-bar" — a non-Greek speaker; the Maltese spoke a Punic dialect. The KJV has "barbarous people," but Luke means no insult: these outsiders showed "extraordinary kindness" (v. 2) — *philanthrōpia* (G5363), love of mankind — the same quality Luke saw in Julius, who treated Paul *philanthrōpōs*, "with consideration" (27:3). Paul had written, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians" (Romans 1:14).

Δίκη

DIKĒ · "JUSTICE" · G1349

Capitalized in the interlinear and glossed "Justice": the islanders are naming a goddess, Dikē, the avenger who tracks down the guilty. Their logic is old and human — the sea missed him, so the snake was sent. The word appears only three times in the New Testament (here; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Jude 7), the other two of God's real judgment. The islanders were right that justice is real and wrong about where it was pointed: the man they condemned was the one God was protecting.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sees Paul at the fire as a picture of a servant who will not stand on his dignity: "Paul was faithful to God and living as a true servant." When the viper struck, "The natives were convinced that justice had finally caught up with this prisoner." When he did not swell up, they swung the other way — "This is a typically human reaction"; "For these natives, Paul had to be seen in extremes." At Publius' estate the pattern is partnership: "God did the work, but Paul made himself ready and available for the work." "God healed this man; yet it happened through the willingness and activity of Paul." Of the others "getting cured" (v. 9) he notes, "The word more literally means, "to receive medical attention."" The honors that followed were "a strong contrast to the misery of the previous two weeks at sea."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry is struck first by the kindness of strangers: "The barbarous people showed us no little kindness." Then the viper, and the islanders' verdict: "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." When nothing happened, it flipped: "See the uncertainty of popular opinion, how it turns with the wind;" "They then magnified him as much as before they had vilified him." At Publius' house Paul came "not as a physician to heal him by medicines, but as an apostle to heal him by miracle," and "he was perfectly well in an instant." When the sick of the island came, "he bade them all welcome, and sent them away with what they came for."

II

MOVEMENT

ACTS 28:11–16

And Thus We Came to Rome

The Twin Brothers, seven days at Puteoli, and brothers on the Appian Way

11 *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.* 12 *After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.* 13 *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.* 14 *There we found some brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.* 15 *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.* 16 *When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.*

ACTS 28:11–16

"So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome."

ROMANS 1:15

Διόσκουροι

DIOSKOUROI · "TWIN BROTHERS" · G1359

The interlinear glosses it "the Dioscuri" — "the twin gods [Castor and Pollux]," sons of Zeus in Greek myth and the patrons sailors prayed to in storms; the KJV keeps the names. Luke, who has just described a storm the real God controlled, notes without comment that Paul finished the voyage under a pagan figurehead. The gods painted on the bow had saved no one; the God who sent His angel had saved everyone.

θάρσος

THARSOS · "COURAGE" · G2294

"He thanked God and took courage" (v. 15). The noun appears only here in the New Testament. Its verb is the Lord's word to Paul in the barracks at Jerusalem, "Take courage" (23:11), and Jesus' word to His disciples in John 16:33. The thanks is *eucharisteō* (G2168), the word of 27:35. The man who gave courage to a shipload of strangers received it from a few brothers on the road — and thanked God for them first.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik follows the last leg: "They spent three months on Malta, gathering strength and waiting for the winter to end," and on the way north "they spent time with fellow followers of Jesus they met along the way." The brethren who walked out to the Market of Appius and Three Inns gave Paul the welcome a city gave an emperor; he cites Horton: "It was a custom when an emperor visited a city for the people to go out and meet him and escort him back into the city." "In light of the love and honor behind this greeting, no wonder that Paul thanked God and took courage." And at last, "Finally, the promise of Jesus was fulfilled."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's sermon "Paul at Malta" (St. Andrew's, 24 July 2005) covers 28:1–16; as with chapter 27, Ligonier publishes the audio and a summary, not a transcript. The summary opens with a contrast: "Many television preachers may tell you that your destiny is a life of health and prosperity." How then does a life like Paul's — shipwreck, a viper, chains — fit? Sproul's answer is that Paul measured success by a different standard, and that in Acts 28 God proved faithful in fulfilling Paul's desire to reach Rome. The sermon speaks to believers who must take courage when the path ahead is unclear or the suffering is their own. His next sermon, "Paul at Rome," turns to Paul's aim there: preaching "the gospel of the Kingdom."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes that Paul came to Rome "a prisoner, but not a close prisoner, not in the common jail." The believers who went out to meet him did so "that they might bring him in state, as ambassadors and judges make their public entry" — a prisoner welcomed like a dignitary. And the effect on Paul is the heart of the paragraph: "he thanked God, and took courage." Henry describes it warmly: "It put new life into him, cheered up his spirits, and banished his melancholy." The apostle who had steadied 275 strangers at sea needed the faces of his brothers, and God sent them.

III
MOVEMENT

ACTS 28:17–29

For the Sake of the Hope of Israel

A chained man, the Jewish leaders of Rome, a day of Scripture, and Isaiah's hard word

17 *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.* 18 *"And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.* 19 *"But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.* 20 *"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."* 21 *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.* 22 *"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."* 23 *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.* 24 *Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.* 25 *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,* 26 *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;* 27 *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.'"* 28 *"Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."* 29 *[When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]*

ACTS 28:17–29

"He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.""

ISAIAH 6:9–10

"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.""

ROMANS 11:25–26

ἐλπίς

ELPIS · "HOPE" · G1680

"The hope of Israel" (v. 20) is the phrase Paul has used at every trial: "the hope and resurrection of the dead" (23:6), "the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers" (26:6). It is the Messiah and the resurrection He brings — the promise to which "our twelve tribes hope to attain" (26:7). Paul's chain is not a break with Israel's faith; it is the price of preaching its fulfillment. Biblical *elpis* is not wishful thinking but confident expectation of what God has promised.

σωτήριον

SŌTĒRION · "SALVATION" · G4992

Not the usual *sōtēria* but the neuter *sōtērion*, "the saving thing," rare in the New Testament. Luke uses it at the start of his two books and at the very end: Simeon, holding the infant Jesus, "my eyes have seen Your salvation" (Luke 2:30); John the Baptist's Isaiah text, "ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD" (Luke 3:6); and here, "this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles" (v. 28). Luke–Acts closes the circle it opened.

συζήτησιν

SYZĒTĒSIS · "DISPUTE" · G4803

The word of the bracketed verse 29. It stands in brackets in the NASB, its sign for words probably not in the original writings. It is missing from the oldest Greek manuscripts and from modern critical editions (the biblehub interlinear also brackets it), and present in the later Byzantine text behind the KJV: "and had great reasoning among themselves." Nothing hangs on it — verse 25 already says "they did not agree with one another" and began leaving. We print it as the NASB does and build no teaching on it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the meeting as both vindication and appeal. That no letters had come from Judea "demonstrates that the religious leaders who accused Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea knew their case was hopeless." Paul wanted them to know "that he was a prisoner because of his belief in Israel's Messiah, the hope of Israel," and the leaders "should be complimented on wanting to hear the story from Paul himself." Many expected a different kingdom: "Most of the Jewish people of Jesus' day and of Paul's day looked for a political kingdom, not a spiritual kingdom." On Isaiah: "Many hear and reject simply because they don't want to turn to God and be healed of their sin." The turn to the Gentiles was no failure of the message: "It just meant that God would find those who would hear it."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires Paul's restraint toward his accusers: "It is an invidious thing to accuse, especially to accuse a nation, such a nation." "Paul made intercession for them, but never against them." He wears his chain "because he preached that the Messiah was come, who was the hope of Israel," and of the leaders' report Henry says, "It is, and always has been, the lot of Christ's holy religion to be every where spoken against." The day-long meeting "should seem to have been a continued discourse, from morning till evening," with the familiar result: "Some are wrought upon by the word, and others hardened." Reading the KJV, which includes verse 29, he notes that as they left, "they had great disputes among themselves."

IV
MOVEMENT

ACTS 28:30–31

With All Openness, Unhindered

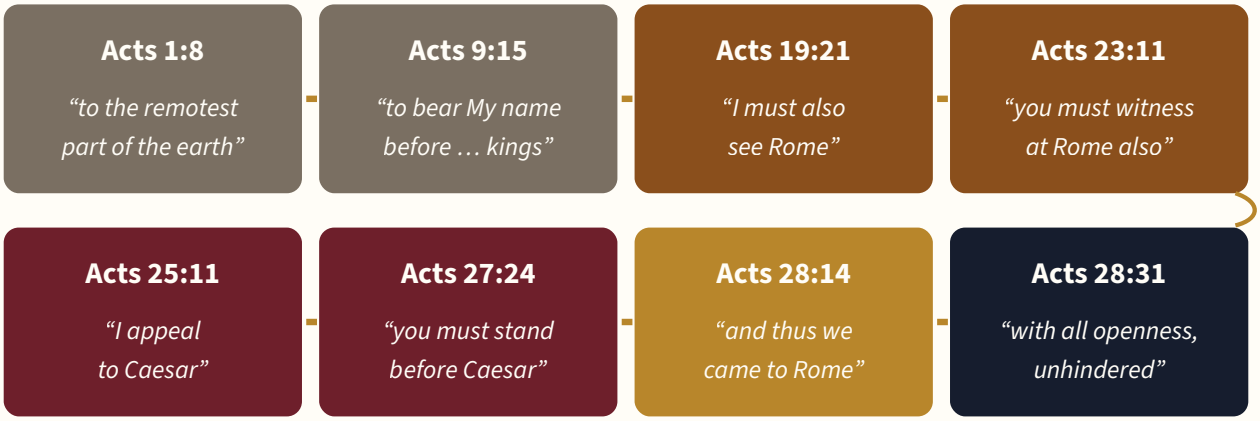
Two years in a rented room, a door open to all, and the last word of Acts

> 30 *And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and ☆ was welcoming all who came to him,* 31 *△ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ ◷ with all openness, unhindered.*
>
> ACTS 28:30–31

> *"Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,"*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 1:12–13

FIGURE · THE ROAD TO ROME

THE ROAD TO ROME RUNS THROUGH THE WHOLE BOOK



Read the top row, then the bottom: promise, purpose, appeal, arrival — and a book that ends with the word still going out.

Eight verses trace the promise from Jesus' commission to the last word of Acts; Rome was never an accident.

ἀκωλύτως

AKŌLYTŌS · "UNHINDERED" · G209

The last word of Acts in Greek, and the only time it appears in the New Testament: *a-*, not, with *kōlyō*, to hinder or forbid. The interlinear glosses it "without hindrance"; the KJV, "no man forbidding him." Luke has used *kōlyō* at key doors in the book — "What prevents me from being baptized?" asked the eunuch (8:36). Paul is chained, but the word is not. Luke ends not with Paul's fate but with the gospel's freedom.

παρρησία

PARRĒSIA · "OPENNESS" · G3954

Literally "all-speech": freedom to say everything, boldness. The interlinear glosses it "freedom-of-speech." The apostles prayed under threat, "grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence" (4:29), and "began to speak the word of God with boldness" (4:31). The book that began with that prayer ends with its answer: a prisoner in Rome "with all openness."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik dwells on the last word: "This has the idea of completely unhindered." Paul was chained to a soldier, but "The word of God was unhindered." "These two years were not wasted, and God didn't waste Paul's time in Rome." Why two years? Bruce suggests the backlog of Caesar's court: "It took that time for his case to come up for hearing." Guzik follows the early church's view that Paul was likely acquitted and later executed under Nero around A.D. 66–67, and he refuses to treat the chapter as an ending: "The Book of Acts really is a never-ending story." He closes with Poole's doxology: "Now unto him, who is able to work so as none can hinder."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry pictures the two years plainly: "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house," and "He received all that came to him." He preached the kingdom and taught about the Lord Jesus "as one that was himself well assured of the truth of what he preached," and his freedom to do it was God's gift through Rome's leniency: "Divine Providence gave him a liberty of speech: No man forbidding him." The prisoner in a rented room had an open door that no chain could shut, and Henry leaves him there, preaching.

V

THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

Serpents, a hardened people, and a salvation that reaches the nations

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you."

LUKE 10:19

"He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.""

ISAIAH 6:9–10

"AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD."

LUKE 3:6

> *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*
>
> ROMANS 1:16

> *"I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."*
>
> ROMANS 11:1

> *"Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear."*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 1:12–14

> *"But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth."*
>
> 2 TIMOTHY 4:17

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik quotes Boice on the shape of the book: "Now, at the very end of the book, the apostle comes to Rome." The commission of 1:8 has reached the capital of the world — and, Guzik says, the story keeps going.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Three teachers on the last chapter of Acts. Guzik walks the text, from the fire on the beach to the last word, "unhindered." Sproul (from his sermons' published summaries) measures Paul's life by God's faithfulness rather than by comfort. Henry draws counsel from every scene, from fickle crowds to an open door in a rented house. No Spurgeon sermon on an Acts 28 text could be sourced, so his column is empty. All three read the turn to the Gentiles as the gospel going on, not God giving up on Israel.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Malta	Paul in extremes to the natives; God did the work, Paul made himself available.	— (Sproul's Malta sermon is summarized under Movement II)	— (no Spurgeon sermon on Acts 28 sourced)	Popular opinion turns with the wind; an apostle healing by miracle, not medicine.
II · The road to Rome	Welcomed like an emperor; no wonder he took courage; the promise fulfilled.	Not health and prosperity — success measured by God's faithfulness to His call.	—	Brought in state; it put new life into him and banished his melancholy.
III · The hope of Israel	Case hopeless in Judea; a chain for Israel's Messiah; God finds those who hear.	— (no transcript of "Paul at Rome" to summarize)	—	Intercession for them, never against them; some wrought upon, others hardened.
IV · Unhindered	The word of God unhindered; two years not wasted; a never-ending story.	Paul's aim in Rome: "the gospel of the Kingdom."	—	His own hired house; all welcome; no man forbidding him.

ACTS 28:1–31 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Kindness from unexpected people.** The "natives" — *barbaroi* — showed "extraordinary kindness" (v2). God had strangers waiting on the beach before the castaways arrived. THE GREEK
- **Crowds swing between extremes.** Murderer to god in an afternoon (vv4–6). Henry: "See the uncertainty of popular opinion, how it turns with the wind." Guzik: "Paul had to be seen in extremes." HENRY
- **Shake it off into the fire.** Paul did not panic or perform; he "shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm" (v5) and went back to the work (Luke 10:19). THE TEXT
- **God does the work through a willing man.** Guzik: "God did the work, but Paul made himself ready and available for the work." Paul prayed first, then laid on hands (v8). GUZIK
- **A pagan figurehead, a sovereign God.** Paul sails under "the Twin Brothers" (v11), the sailors' gods. The God of 27:23 had already done what Castor and Pollux could not. THE GREEK
- **Even apostles need brothers.** "When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage" (v15). Henry: "It put new life into him, cheered up his spirits, and banished his melancholy." HENRY
- **The chain is for the hope of Israel.** Paul is bound "for the sake of the hope of Israel" (v20) — not against his people but for their Messiah. Henry: "Paul made intercession for them, but never against them." THE TEXT

- **A hardening that is partial.** Isaiah's hard word (vv26–27) is real, but Paul himself wrote that "a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25–26). THE TEXT
- **Luke closes the circle.** *Sōtērion*, "the salvation of God," appears at the start of Luke (2:30; 3:6) and at the very end of Acts (28:28). THE GREEK
- **The last word is "unhindered."** *Akōlytōs* (v31). Guzik: "The word of God was unhindered." The book ends with the gospel still going out. GUZIK

† Questions for the Table

1 **The islanders called Paul a murderer, then a god (vv4–6). Whose opinion of me swings like that — and whose opinion am I actually living for?**

See the uncertainty of popular opinion, how it turns with the wind (Henry).

28:3-6; 27:23

2 **Paul gathered sticks for the fire like any castaway (v3) and prayed for a sick man in a stranger's house (v8). What ordinary service is God asking me to do where I am right now?**

God did the work, but Paul made himself ready and available (Guzik).

28:3, 8-9

3 **Paul took courage when he saw the brethren (v15). Whose face do I need to see this week — and whose face does someone else need to see?**

It put new life into him and banished his melancholy (Henry).

28:14-15; Heb 10:24-25

4 **Some were persuaded and others would not believe (v24). How do I keep loving and praying for people who have heard and refused?**

Paul made intercession for them, but never against them (Henry).

28:24-27; Rom 10:1

5 **Paul was chained to a soldier, yet the word went out "unhindered" (vv16, 31). What chain in my life — a record, a limit, a sentence — have I treated as a reason God can't use me?**

My circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel (Phil 1:12).

28:16, 30-31; Phil 1:12-14

6 **Acts ends without telling us what happened to Paul. If the story keeps going, what is my chapter supposed to look like?**

The Book of Acts really is a never-ending story (Guzik).

28:30-31; 1:8

Acts ends with a prisoner in a rented room, a soldier at his side, and an open door. Paul never got the trip to Rome he planned; he got the one God promised, and the word went out unhindered. Take courage, thank God for your brothers, and keep preaching the kingdom — the story isn't finished.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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