

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 11.14.2021

TURNING POINT: ACTS 28

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Throughout the Book of Acts, we have seen the Holy Spirit at work forming the church, empowering the church, and expanding the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Spirit filled people like Peter and Paul. The Apostle Peter courageously preached to the nation of Israel while the zealous Apostle Paul spread the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Book of Acts covers a period of about 33 years. J.B. Philips, a modern English Bible scholar and translator, said in no comparable period in human history "has any small body of ordinary people so moved the world that their enemies could say, with tears of rage in their eyes, that these men have turned the world upside down!". In this concluding chapter of Acts, the tireless Paul finally makes it to Rome just as promised by Jesus (Acts 23:11). Let's get into our study...

1. What does J.B Philips mean when he said, "these men have turned the world upside down!"?
2. Who are some modern-day "Peters" and "Pauls" that are turning the world upside down?
3. What stood out to you during this week's study?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 28:1-10

Surviving the shipwreck, God brought all the crew and passengers to the Isle of Malta (which means "refuge"). The native people welcomed all 276 of them and did their best to make them comfortable. These people proved to be kind and sympathetic. The storm subsided, but the weather was cold, so the natives built a fire. As Paul was helping with the fire, he was bitten by a poisonous snake. At first, the local citizens thought the Apostle must have been a murderer and while he had escaped from the shipwreck, justice would catch up to him and he would die from the snake bite. However, when Paul showed no ill effects from the snake bite, the people changed their mind and thought he must be a god.

1. After all Paul had done for the passengers, he did his share of the work and helped gather fuel for the fire. Is any task too small for the servant of God who has the mind of Christ (Phil 2:1-13)? Why or why not?
2. Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake. As a result, the natives thought Paul must have done something wrong and was receiving justice. Sometimes, there might be a misperception among Christians that God punishes us if we do something bad. Is this true? (Romans 8:1)
3. The peaceful people of Malta demonstrated "unusual kindness" for the ship's crew and passengers. Why are these the type of people ready to receive Jesus?
4. Our culture is becoming more pagan. Why do you think C.S. Lewis defined pagans as "pre-Christians"? (Emptiness leading to more Emptiness)

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 28:11-30

Paul finally makes it to Rome just as promised by Jesus (Acts 23:11). He is met there by fellow brethren who blessed and honored him. Paul was greatly cheered and encouraged by this touching demonstration of love from the saints. In Rome, Paul was not put in jail with the other prisoners but was put again on house arrest where he

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

remained for two years. He used this time to witness systematically to the Jews in Rome. He described how Jesus was the Hope of Israel and the Messiah as prophesized by Isaiah. Some of the Jews were persuaded and some were not. It was also during this time Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

5. Jesus promised Paul would make it to Rome and he did. According to one account, there are at least 3,000 promises in the Bible. Read a few of them (2 Peter 1:4, Jeremiah 29:11, Matt. 11:28-29). How do these promises encourage you? Claim the promises of God found in scripture.
6. Paul was greeted by fellow Christians in Rome. This deeply encouraged him. This should remind us that Christians are never alone. How might we pray for Christians experiencing loneliness?
7. The first people Paul sought throughout his travels were the Jews (Romans 1:16). What did he say to them first (Acts 28:17-20)? When they courteously agreed to hear him further, what did Paul go on to discuss with the Jews (Acts 28:23)? What specific methods did he use to appeal to them?
8. Acts 28:25-29 is from Isaiah 6:9-10. This famous passage was also repeated by Jesus in the parable of the seeds and soils concerning Israel's spiritual blindness toward her Messiah (Matt 13:1-23). What point was Paul trying to make to the Jews by referencing back to this passage in Isaiah? With so much information today, why is there so much spiritual blindness today?

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Historical records tell us that after these two years, Paul appeared before Caesar and was cleared of the charges of sedition brought against him in Jerusalem. He was set free and for some three to five years afterward, went about ministering the Word of God, going even as far as Spain. Then he apparently went back again to the Near East, visiting some of the assemblies where he had labored before. This is attested to by his letter to Titus, which was written at that time. After he had finished his final testimony, he was eventually rearrested and confined in the Mamertine prison in Rome. Not long before his martyrdom, he wrote his last letter, 2 Timothy. There he said that even though he was in chains, "the word of God is not chained" (2 Timothy 2:9). In contrast to Paul's situation, he rejoices in knowing that the truth of the gospel could not be restrained! Even from his cell and in chains, Paul communicated God's truth. Still today, the Word of God given through Paul impacts lives around the world. As Hebrews 4:12 teaches, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

1. Read Roman 12:6-8 and 12:1. Consider your gifts, passion, and your experiences. How does the church's mission apply to you personally?
2. The word of God is not chained. It is your turn. Are you willing to take the baton and continue the expansion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What steps of faith will you take this week to continue the mission as described in the Book of Acts?

PRAYER

Lord, Thank you for the Book of Acts, the story of Your church. Thank You for Your Word, that cannot be chained. Thank you for those who have come before us, some who have even died proclaiming Your Word. Lord, as we take steps of faith to execute our personal mission make this a turning point for each one of us. Bless us with Peter's courage and the zealous, inspired, tireless character of the apostle Paul. May we be vessels of the Holy Spirit, making disciples of all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

"Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained." (2 Timothy 2:8-9).