FIVE-DAY THEOLOGY COURSE

ACTS

The Spirit of God in Mission

TAUGHT BY

Lec SK. KIERU

Chapter 14: Journey to Rome

Voyage to Rome, ministry in Malta, and open doors in Rome

Day 1: Understanding Acts and Preparing for Pentecost · Day 2: The Spirit-Empowered Church in Jerusalem and Beyond · Day 3: The Gentile Mission and Paul's Missionary Expansion · Day 4: Paul's Missionary Journeys, Jerusalem and Rome

Day 5: Final examination (2026-10-09)

Based on Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission by Denzil R. Miller. Africa's Hope, 2017.

CHAPTER 14 · UNIT 5 · DAY 4

Journey to Rome

Voyage to Rome, ministry in Malta, and open doors in Rome

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 14)

Chapter purpose. This chapter follows Paul's perilous voyage to Rome: the Spirit's warning, the storm and shipwreck, ministry on Malta, and open doors to preach the kingdom of God in Rome.

Paul's appeal to Caesar takes him to Rome, the ends of the earth in the book's geography, completing the Acts 1:8 outline.

Bible reading: Acts 27:1-28:30

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 27:1-28:30. Each part of the lesson also has its own short reading: review Acts 27:1-44; read Acts 28:1-10; read Acts 28:11-30.

Learning Objectives

• State the warning from the Spirit that Paul gave at Fair Havens, and what the sailors did instead of following that warning.

• Describe the obstacles Paul overcame on the voyage to Rome, and what his ministry on Malta teaches about small communities and remote places.

• Explain what Paul did when he first arrived in Rome as a prisoner, and state his central message (Acts 28:23, 31).

• State the message of the book of Acts for the church today, as the textbook closes the study.

• Show how Paul's arrival in Rome relates to Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8: Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 27:1-28:30

The book also sets a short reading before each part of the lesson: review Acts 27:1-44; read Acts 28:1-10; read Acts 28:11-30.

The Big Idea

Because Paul had appealed to Caesar, his path was set. On this perilous journey to Rome we see God at work through His Spirit and His providence. He directed Paul both by the Holy Spirit and by His controlling hand over nature.

The Path to Rome Is Set

• Because Paul had appealed to Caesar, his path was set.

• In this chapter we look at his perilous journey to Rome.

• In it we will see God at work through His Spirit and His providence. He will direct Paul both by the Holy Spirit and by His controlling hand over nature.

The Story: The Journey to Rome (Acts 27:1-44)

At Caesarea, Paul, under the guard of a Roman centurion, boarded a ship for Rome. With him were Luke and Aristarchus, a Christian brother from Thessalonica. Setting sail, the ship traveled northward then westward until it arrived at Myra, a coastal city of Lycia. There the party changed ships and set off again. After many days of slow and difficult sailing, they finally arrived at Fair Havens on the southern tip of the island of Crete. By this time winter had arrived, which was an extremely dangerous time for marine travel.

At Fair Havens Paul warned his fellow travelers, "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." Nevertheless, those in authority ignored Paul's warning and decided to sail for a nearby port called Phoenix, where there was a more suitable harbor to winter in. When a soft southerly wind began to blow, the pilot and owner of the ship thought that they had attained their purpose. They therefore weighed anchor and sailed west, staying close to the shoreline of Crete. Without warning a great storm arose, and a powerful hurricane-force wind blew in from the northeast. It drove the ship out from land into the violent waves of the sea. Day after day the

crew and passengers struggled desperately to keep the battered ship afloat. Finally, after many harrowing days, they gave up all hope of being saved.

Paul then encouraged the famished crew to take food. He reminded them that if they had heeded his advice, this tragedy would not have happened. He urged them to take heart and put their faith in God, for an angel of God had visited him in the night and had told him not to be afraid of dying because he must stand before Caesar. The angel also told him that God had given him everyone who was with him on the ship. Nevertheless, the ship would be wrecked on some island.

On the fourteenth night the ship did indeed approach an island and was about to run aground. Some tried to escape in the lifeboat, but Paul warned them, saying, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."

Then, just before dawn, Paul urged everyone to eat so that they would have the strength for the ordeal ahead. He encouraged them, saying, "Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." Then, after he had given thanks to God, they ate together. Altogether there were 276 souls on board.

At daylight they spied a sandy beach and decided to let the ship run aground there. So, hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. When the ship struck a sandbar, the bow stuck fast, and the waves began pounding against the stern, breaking it into pieces. Paul ordered everyone to abandon the ship and head for land. In this way everyone was saved.

Commentary: A Warning from the Spirit (Acts 27:1-12)

• Before the ship departed from Fair Havens, Paul, speaking by the Spirit, gave the sailors a warning: If they tried to move the ship to another harbor, disaster would ensue.

27:10 Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous

• It seems that Paul here is speaking by revelation. Other translations render the phrase "I can see" as "I perceive" (RSV, NKJV, NASB).

• The phrase likely indicates a manifestation of the gift of the word of knowledge (compare 1 Corinthians 12:8).

• The same spiritual gift may be taking place in 8:23, 10:34, 14:9, 17:22, and

28:26.

27:12 The majority decided

• God's will is not decided by a majority vote but by the Word of God and by spiritual discernment.

Commentary: Hurricane (Acts 27:13-26)

27:14 A wind of hurricane force swept down

• The sea storm may have been providential, that is, brought about by the will of God. If so, it was God's hand directing Paul's pathway to Rome.

27:23 An angel stood beside me

• The angel ministered to Paul by giving him encouragement and hope. Paul was then able to minister that same hope to his fellow shipmates.

• Angels are "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).

27:25 I have faith in God

• This confession of Paul's faith sums up the core of his life and ministry.

• Once he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

• This should be the confession of every minister of the gospel.

Commentary: Shipwreck (Acts 27:27-44)

• After many days at sea, the ship ran aground on a remote island and was broken to pieces. As Paul had prophesied, not one life was lost.

27:35 Gave thanks to God in front of them all

• Paul's giving of thanks in this instance served two purposes. First, it was an expression of genuine gratefulness to God. Next, it served as a witness to those who heard his prayer.

• Paul's confidence in God during this dangerous circumstance encouraged the others to trust in God also.

Life Application: Confident Faith Influences Others

• How we act, or react, in trying circumstances will influence others.

• Paul's steadfast confidence in God encouraged others to trust in Him. If we act in confident faith, it will witness to others. They, too, will be encouraged to put their faith in God.

• However, if we react in fear and unbelief, others will be reluctant to trust in God.

• We witness to others not only with our words but also by the way we conduct our lives and the way we respond to life's problems.

The Story: Ministry in Malta (Acts 28:1-10)

Once Paul and the others were safely ashore, they discovered that they had landed on the island of Malta. The kindness and spiritual interest of the islanders was soon clear to see. They quickly built a fire for the shivering survivors to warm themselves. Paul, as was his nature, helped gather firewood. As he put some sticks into the fire, a poisonous viper came out and fastened itself to his hand. The islanders saw the viper hanging from Paul's hand and felt that their gods were punishing this prisoner for his crimes. So they exclaimed, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." However, when Paul shook the snake into the fire and suffered no ill effects, they changed their minds. Now they said he was a god!

Publius, the chief Roman official of the island, lived on an estate nearby. He invited Paul and his fellow missionaries to his home and took care of them for three days. During that time, Paul prayed for Publius' father who was sick in bed suffering from fever and dysentery. Laying hands on him, Paul healed him. When this miracle became known, the rest of the sick on the island came, and they too were healed. When Paul and his colleagues were ready to sail, the islanders furnished them with whatever supplies they needed.

Commentary: Ministry in Malta

• The battered sea travelers were shipwrecked on the island of Malta. They stayed there for three months.

• During that time, Paul preached the gospel and demonstrated the power of the Kingdom to the inhabitants of the island.

• In all probability, Paul also planted a church on the island, as was his custom in every place he preached.

• It is inconceivable that he performed miracles without presenting Christ to the people. It is further inconceivable that Paul would lead people to Christ and then not gather them together into a church to worship God and further evangelize the rest of the people on the island.

• In any case, a providential event led to further witness of the kingdom of God on an isolated island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Divine Protection (28:1-6)

• On the island of Malta God miraculously delivered Paul from a venomous snake bite.

28:1 We found out that the island was called Malta

• Malta is a tiny island in the Mediterranean Sea just south of Sicily and Italy.

• The guiding hand of God caused Paul's ship to wreck on a sandy beach of that remote island.

28:4 This man must be a murderer

• Seeing the snake attach itself to Paul's hand, the Maltese interpreted the event according to their own worldview. They assumed that justice had caught up with Paul.

• Then, when he shook the snake off and suffered no harm, they changed their minds and thought that he was a god.

• Missionaries must be aware of and sensitive to the worldview of those to whom they minister. They must not, however, compromise the gospel to accommodate a people group's worldview.

28:5 Paul suffered no ill effects

• This miracle, and the subsequent healing ministry of Paul on Malta, is a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Mark 16:18: "They will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will

place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

The Sick are Cured (28:7-10)

• The healing of Publius' father opened a door for Paul to minister to the healing needs of many.

28:8 Paul placed his hands on him and healed him

• Healing is an integral part of the gospel message and should be an integral part of gospel ministry, as Paul's ministry on Malta illustrates.

• A miracle of healing can open up people's hearts to hear and respond to the gospel (compare Acts 3:11-16; 4:4; 8:4-8, 14; 9:34-35, 40-42).

Life Application: Proclaim the Truth and Demonstrate the Power

• As we go into the world preaching the gospel, we should expect the Lord to confirm the word by performing confirmatory miracles (compare Mark 16:15-20).

• We are not only to proclaim the truth of the gospel; we are also to demonstrate its power.

• We can do this only if we are daily walking in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Story: Open Doors in Rome (Acts 28:11-30)

After a stay of three months on the island of Malta, Paul and his companions put out to sea and sailed to Sicily and then to the Italian mainland. In the city of Puteoli they found some brothers with whom they stayed for a week. Leaving there, they headed for Rome. The brothers in Rome, hearing that Paul and his companions were coming, sent an advance party to greet them on the way. When they finally arrived in Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself in his own rented house with only a soldier to guard him.

After three days Paul called a meeting of the Jewish leaders in Rome. When they had assembled, he presented his case to them, saying that he was innocent of all charges that the Jews in Jerusalem had lodged against him. He concluded by saying, "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." The Jews replied that they had not received any bad reports about him from Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, because people everywhere were speaking against the Christian faith, they wanted to hear what Paul had to say; so they arranged a meeting with him on a certain day.

When the day came, an even larger group of Jewish leaders gathered to hear Paul's words. From morning until evening he taught them concerning the kingdom of God. He tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Law and the Prophets. Some were convinced, but others rejected Paul's teaching. Quoting from Isaiah 6:9-10, Paul chided the Jews for their unbelief. "Therefore," he concluded, "I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

Paul stayed in his own rented house for two whole years and received everyone who came to visit him. So, boldly and without opposition, he preached the kingdom of God and taught the people about Jesus Christ.

Commentary: Arrival at Rome (Acts 28:11-16)

• After a long, eventful journey from Caesarea, Paul and his fellow missionaries finally arrived in Rome.

28:13-14 Puteoli. There we found some brothers

• Puteoli is a coastal town about 80 miles (130 kilometers) south of Rome.

• The fact that Paul found some brothers there indicates that there was a church in this place. Could this have been a church plant from the church in Rome?

We came to Rome

• How Paul must have rejoiced when he finally arrived in Rome. Even though he had come as a prisoner, he knew that he was moving in the will of the Lord.

Commentary: Preaching the Kingdom in Rome (Acts 28:17-31)

• When he arrived in Rome, Paul took every opportunity to preach and to teach about Jesus Christ, both to the Jews and the Romans.

28:23 From morning till evening

• Paul's extended teaching session shows both his zeal for the gospel and the Jews' interest in what Paul had to say.

• It reminds us of his ministry in Troas where he taught all night (Acts 20:7-12).

He tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law and from the Prophets

• Just as Jesus after His resurrection had taught His disciples about himself from Moses and the Prophets (Luke 24:27), Paul used the Old Testament Scriptures to teach the Jews about Jesus, their Messiah and the Savior of the world.

• Apollos had also used the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28).

• Whether preaching from the Old Testament or the New, our teaching and preaching should center on the person and work of Christ.

28:28 God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!

• This verse is in some ways a summary of the book of Acts.

• The salvation of God is for all peoples, and it must be preached to them in the power of the Holy Spirit (compare Acts 1:8).

28:31 He preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ

• The book of Acts began with teaching about the kingdom of God (1:3), and it ends the same way.

• The kingdom of God is the overarching context of the entire book (compare 1:6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

Life Application: Walk Through Open Doors

• When a door to proclaim the gospel is opened to us, we should not hesitate to walk through it.

• Just as Paul did with the Jewish leaders in Rome, we must "make the most of every opportunity" to preach Christ (compare Ephesians 5:16).

• We should be prepared to preach the Word "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Figure 13.1: Paul's Voyage to Rome

Figure 13.1. Paul's Voyage to Rome. The book's list of figures numbers this map 13.1. The voyage itself is narrated in this chapter. Stages below are the places named in the Chapter 14 story, not printed map labels.

• Caesarea: Paul boarded a ship for Rome under a Roman centurion, with Luke and Aristarchus.

• Myra in Lycia: After sailing northward then westward, the party changed ships here.

• Fair Havens, Crete: Southern tip of Crete. Winter had arrived. Paul, speaking by the Spirit, warned that to sail on would bring disaster.

• Phoenix: The majority ignored the warning and sailed for this nearby harbor. A hurricane-force wind from the northeast drove the ship to sea.

• Shipwreck: On the fourteenth night the ship approached an island, struck a sandbar, and broke up. All 276 souls were saved.

• Malta: Three months of ministry: divine protection from a viper, the healing of Publius' father, and the sick of the island cured.

• Sicily, then Puteoli: They sailed to Sicily and the Italian mainland. In Puteoli they found brothers and stayed a week.

• Rome: Paul lived in his own rented house and, for two years, preached the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ.

Important Terms

Word of knowledge. A spiritual gift. The textbook says Paul's "I can see" at Fair Havens likely indicates this gift.

Providence. God's controlling hand over nature and events, directing Paul's pathway to Rome.

Worldview. The basic assumptions a people use to interpret events, as the Maltese did with the viper.

Confirmatory miracles. Miracles that confirm the truth of the gospel.

Kingdom of God. The overarching context of Acts. The book begins and ends with

teaching about the kingdom of God.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The powerful spiritual experience by which believers are empowered for witness.

Hermeneutical key. The key that unlocks the meaning of Acts: Acts 1:8.

Key People

• Paul: Spoke by the Spirit at Fair Havens, encouraged the ship's company, ministered on Malta, and in Rome preached the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ.

• Luke: Traveled with Paul from Caesarea toward Rome.

• Aristarchus: A Christian brother from Thessalonica who sailed with Paul.

• The Roman centurion: Guarded Paul on the voyage from Caesarea.

• An angel of God: Visited Paul in the night, told him not to be afraid because he must stand before Caesar, and that God had given him everyone on the ship.

• Publius: The chief Roman official of Malta. He took care of Paul and his fellow missionaries for three days. Paul healed his father of fever and dysentery.

• The Jewish leaders in Rome: Paul met them after three days. From morning until evening he taught them concerning the kingdom of God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Law and the Prophets.

Key Places

• Caesarea: Where Paul boarded a ship for Rome under a Roman centurion.

• Myra: A coastal city of Lycia where the party changed ships.

• Fair Havens: On the southern tip of Crete. Paul warned that to sail on would bring disaster. The majority decided otherwise.

• Phoenix: A nearby port with a more suitable harbor to winter in. Those in authority sailed for it against Paul's warning.

• Malta: A tiny island in the Mediterranean Sea just south of Sicily and Italy. Three months of witness, healing, and, in all probability, a church planted.

• Sicily: Reached after the stay on Malta, on the way to the Italian mainland.

• Puteoli: A coastal town about 80 miles (130 kilometers) south of Rome, where Paul found brothers and stayed a week.

• Rome: Where Paul lived in his own rented house for two years and, boldly and without opposition, preached the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ.

Key Event

Paul arrives in Rome and, though a prisoner, preaches the kingdom of God and teaches about the Lord Jesus Christ for two years (Acts 28:30-31).

According to Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8, the gospel has been preached in the power of the Spirit in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Although the part concerning the ends of the earth had not been fulfilled completely, its process had begun, and it had been fulfilled symbolically.

Key Verse

"He preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ."

Acts 28:31

Remember This

• Paul urged them to put their faith in God.

• God's will is not decided by a majority vote.

• Missionaries must be sensitive to the worldview of those to whom they minister.

• From morning until evening he taught them concerning the kingdom of God.

• When a door to proclaim the gospel is opened to us, we should walk through it.

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. What warning from the Spirit did Paul receive? Rather than follow the voice of the Spirit, what did the sailors do?

• 2. What remarkable obstacles did Paul overcome on his voyage to Rome? What does the story of Paul's actions on Malta have to teach us about the value of small communities and the people who live in remote places?

• 3. Even though Paul was a prisoner, what did he do when he first arrived in Rome? What was his central message? (Acts 28:23, 31).

• 4. What is the message of the book of Acts for the church today?

• 5. How can you apply the message of the book of Acts to your ministry? List at least five specific applications or actions you can take to respond to God's Word in the book of Acts.

• 6. Let those in the class share their responses together and then pray over them. When we seek to apply God's Word, we can ask God to clothe us with pentecostal power for witness.

Quick Review

1. What warning from the Spirit did Paul give at Fair Havens, and what did the sailors do?

Answer: Paul warned that the voyage would be disastrous if they moved the ship to another harbor. Those in authority ignored the warning and sailed for Phoenix.

2. How many people were on board when the ship wrecked, and how many were saved?

Answer: Altogether there were 276 souls on board. As Paul had prophesied, not one life was lost.

3. What did Paul do on Malta after the shipwreck?

Answer: He was delivered from a venomous snake, healed Publius' father, and the rest of the sick on the island were healed. He stayed three months, preached the gospel, and demonstrated the power of the Kingdom.

4. Even though Paul was a prisoner, what did he do when he first arrived in Rome, and what was his central message?

Answer: After three days he called the Jewish leaders. From morning until evening he taught them concerning the kingdom of God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Law and the Prophets. For two years he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 28:23, 31).

5. What is the message of the book of Acts for the church today?

Answer: If we are to participate powerfully in Christ's mission to take the gospel to all nations before His soon return, we too must be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and our churches must

clearly understand the church's mission in the world.

Chapter Summary

On the journey to Rome, God directed Paul both by the Holy Spirit and by His controlling hand over nature.

• Paul warned by the Spirit at Fair Havens. The sailors ignored him, a hurricane wrecked the ship, and all 276 were saved.

• On Malta Paul was protected from a viper, healed Publius' father, and ministered to the sick of that remote island.

• In Rome, though a prisoner, Paul preached the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ for two years.

Walk through open doors to preach Christ. The salvation of God is for all peoples, and it must be preached to them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What Have We Learned?

• So ends the book of Acts with Paul safely arriving in Rome.

• According to Jesus' prophecy in 1:8, the gospel has been preached in the power of the Spirit "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

• Although the part of the prophecy concerning the "ends of the earth" had not been fulfilled completely, its process had begun, and it had been fulfilled symbolically.

• From the book of Acts we have learned many things. Most importantly, we have learned about God's mission and how the first-century church went about fulfilling that mission.

• Hopefully, we will apply what we have learned to our own lives and ministries. And hopefully, we will personally experience the same power of God in our own lives as did the apostles and early disciples.

What is the message of Acts for the church today?

• The messages of Acts can be said to be as numerous as its readers, for, like any part of God's Word, the Holy Spirit can take and apply the individual passages and

incidents of the book to the specific situations of the reader.

• If, however, we are to take Acts seriously, we must find its message in the book's literary and historical context. Before we can really know what Acts has to say to us today, we must first determine what it had to say to its first-century readers.

• In this study we have discovered that Luke wrote with a clear purpose, found in 1:8, the hermeneutical key to the book: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

• Luke thus wrote to call the church back to its pentecostal and missionary roots. That purpose was then, and remains today, the primary message of Acts.

• Remember, Luke wrote to a second generation of Christians who lived remotely from Jerusalem. These believers, because of the persecution they were enduring, had lost their spiritual fervor and missionary zeal.

• In Luke's mind, they desperately needed to hear (or to hear again) the story of the church's powerful beginning and irresistible missionary advance.

• Luke thus wrote to demonstrate to his original readers the absolute necessity of every member of the church being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

• He further wrote to demonstrate that such an empowering comes as a result of a powerful spiritual experience called the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

• If Luke's readers would be thus empowered and remain resolutely focused on Christ's mission, they too could become a powerful missionary force, fully equipped to proclaim the gospel at home and abroad, just as had the first church. What is more, this could happen even in the midst of severe persecution.

The same message for us

• This, then, is the message of Acts. It is the same for us today as it was for those first-century believers: If we are to participate powerfully in Christ's mission to take the gospel to all nations before His soon return, we, too, must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

• We, as church leaders, missionaries, and pastors, must work tirelessly to ensure that our churches, and every member in our churches, have been clothed with power from on high.

• And we must further work to ensure that our congregations clearly understand the church's, and thus their, mission in the world.

• If we will do these things, we will have gone a long way toward making the church the effective force in the earth that Christ intended it to be.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

God brought Paul through storm and shipwreck to Malta and then to Rome, where the prisoner preached the kingdom of God without opposition.