World Mission Report 2021

PAUL IN HIS OWN RENTED HOUSE

Acts 28:11-31

Key Verses: 28:30-31

After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13 From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14 There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. 15 The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. 16 When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. 17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.18 They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. 19 The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. 20 For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.” 21 They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.” 23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. 24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: 26 “‘Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” 27 For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ 28 “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” [29] 30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. 31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

1. Describe Paul’s journey to Rome (11-14). Who came to meet him, and how far did they travel (15a)? How did he respond (15b)?

1-1, Describe Paul’s journey to Rome (11-14).

***After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13 From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14 There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome.*** 

1-2, Who came to meet him, and how far did they travel (15a)?

***15 The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us.***

1-3, How did he respond (15b)?

***At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged.***

* They must have received Paul’s letter to the Romans a few years before, so they probably felt like they knew him already. They certainly wanted to honor him. In light of the love and honor behind this greeting, no wonder that Paul thanked God and was greatly encouraged by the fact that they were like coworkers in Christ.

2. How was Paul allowed to live in Rome (16)? Who did he call together, and what did he tell them (17-19)? Why was he bound in chains (20)?

2-1, How was Paul allowed to live in Rome (16)?

***16 When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.***

* Paul wasn’t in a normal prison. He was allowed to dwell by himself and provide his own living space. Yet he was constantly under the supervision of a Roman guard, and often chained.
* The rotation of the palace guards must have given him a constant supply of people to talk to. The soldier would be taking turns every four hours.
* In [Philippians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/philippians/1/13/s_1104013), written from this Roman custody, Paul told of how his message reached the palace guards of Rome. Though he was the prisoner, he had a genuinely captive audience and engaged in 1 to 1 Bible study with intellectual young soldiers. Then the gospel seeds were planted in them.

2-2, Who did he call together, and what did he tell them (17-19)?

***17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.18 They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. 19 The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people.***

* Paul followed his usual practice of going to the Jews first in every city as an evangelist. It took him only three days to have a meeting with the leaders of the Jews in Rome.
* Men and brethren: Paul wanted them to know that he had not forsaken Israel and that they were still brethren to him.

2-3, Why was he bound in chains (20)?

***20 For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”***

* The hope of Israel had to do with the expectation of the Israelites that Christ and (the Messiah) would come in accordance with what God had promised to Abraham and David.
* Finally Jesus came, suffered, died on the cross and was raised from the dead. Apostle Paul knew that God’s promise had been fulfilled.
* All he had to do was to let Christ be known to the Israelites who were scattered in Roman territory and the gentiles according to Jesus’ personal command of him.

3. How did the Jews view Paul and his gospel ministry (21-22)? What were the highlights of his witness to them (23)? How did they respond (24-25a)?

3-1, How did the Jews view Paul and his gospel ministry (21-22)?

***21 They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.”***

3-2, What were the highlights of his witness to them (23)?

***23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.***

* In speaking of the kingdom of God, Paul undoubtedly taught what Jesus taught instead of what he thought. That was, in Jesus God brought a spiritual kingdom that would take root in men’s hearts.
* Most of the Jewish people of Jesus’ day and of Paul’s day must have looked for a political kingdom, not a spiritual kingdom.

3-3, How did they respond (24-25a)?

***24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement***

* Some were convinced by the things which were spoken from Paul, and some disbelieved.
* In response to this long teaching from Paul, some believed and trusted Jesus. Others did not, and disbelieved.

4. How did Paul regard their unbelief in light of Isaiah’s prophecy (25b-27)? What direction did he find (28)?

4-1, How did Paul regard their unbelief in light of Isaiah’s prophecy (25b-27)?

***“The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: 26 “‘Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” 27 For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’***

* This is a message just as true today as it was when Isaiah first said it. When Paul quoted it. Many hear and reject simply because they don’t want to turn to God and be healed of their sin.

4-2, What direction did he find (28)?

***28 “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”***

5. What did Paul do while staying in his own rented house (30-31)? What was at the heart of his teaching? How does his teaching ministry in his own rented house inspire us to serve God in our times?

5-1, What did Paul do while staying in his own rented house (30-31)?

***For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. 31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!***

5-2, What was at the heart of his teaching?

***He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ***

* Though Paul could not travel, he could proclaim to all who came to him. He also wrote letters to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians.
* These two years were not wasted, and God didn’t waste Paul’s time in Rome. God never wastes our time, though we may waste it by not sensing God’s purpose for our lives especially during 2020 and 2021, the years of Covid.
* Paul eventually had his appearance before Caesar Nero. It’s entirely reasonable to believe that he boldly and powerfully proclaimed the gospel to him as God had promised he would. Praise the Lord!
* It is also said that Paul was free for several years until he was arrested again, condemned, and executed in Rome at the command of Nero in mid 60.
* Paul’s chains and custody mattered nothing. The word of God was unhindered. Through Paul, God shows that God’s man, fulfilling God’s will, cannot be stopped though all kinds of difficulty may come in the way.
* Even the disbelief of some of the Jews will not hinder the gospel. The gospel will go forth and find those who will believe.
* Finally, God invited all that would come, including Gentiles – but they could only come if they were clothed in the garments of Jesus.
* There is no end to the story, because the history of the church continues this story on and on through the centuries.
* Trusting in Jesus, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Father, the word of God will continue to spread without hindrance and continue to change lives for the glory of God. The Book of Acts is a never-ending story.

5-3, How does his teaching ministry in his own rented house inspire us to serve God in our times?

*Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29374b)*] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29375c)*] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. (Philippians 1:12-14)*

* During this ongoing pandemic, we are more proactive to meet each other eagerly through zoom meetings to study the Bible.
* For the first time 2021 world mission report would be held online. It is a historical event and a kind of paradigm shift.
* Although people have become very limited and they carry all kinds of concerns, still God’s kingdom grows thanks to technology.
* May the Lord bless us to advance the gospel about the kingdom of God as well as our Lord Jesus Christ and to preach the word in season and out of season.
* May the Lord help us to exalt Jesus’ name more than ever before through participating in the suffering of Jesus Christ in our times. Amen.

**One word:The Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ**