

## Acts 28

Please read chapter 28 of Acts before we start. If you wish, please also read the attached article about Paul possibly going to Spain as well as the web page <https://earlychurchhistory.org/beliefs-2/st-paul-went-to-spain/>.

## Malta

Malta is an island in the Mediterranean, 80km south of Sicily, that is only 30 km long. The population of Malta is about 519,000. The island is completely urban today. Given its location it is considered important as a naval base, with a succession of powers having contested and ruled the islands, including the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Aragonese, Knights of St. John, French, and British.

While Christianity was present in Malta since the First Century, in the Middle Ages it was a Muslim country under Arab rule. The name Malta is a Phoenician name meaning Refuge. At the time of Paul, about 58 AD, it was under Roman rule but was exempt from paying tribute to Rome.

Malta is very religious with 365 churches, one for each day of the year. The Bay where Paul's ship ran aground is called "Bay of Paul" or "St Paul's Bay."

**Why does Luke Record the details of what happened in Malta in such detail?**

**Why does Luke say that the Maltese showed them unusual kindness? Thinking about our previous segment on hospitality, comment on the hospitality of the Maltese.**

## Paul arrives in Rome

I was interested as to why Luke mentioned the figurehead on the boat were the twin gods Castor and Pollux. According to Wikipedia, they were also known as the constellation of Gemini and were regarded as the patrons of sailors, to whom they appeared as St. Elmo's fire (considered by sailors of the time as a good omen).

Luke gives a description of the journey and Paul being met by Christian brothers and sisters (or finding them, having previously not known about them), by whom Paul was encouraged and thanked God for. Kloske estimates that Paul travelled approximately 10,000 miles in his lifetime for the gospel, 7,000 by land and 3,000 by sea.

**The Christian brothers and sisters they met seemed to be a new or unknown group. Discuss.**

**What do you make of the statement that Paul was allowed to live in his own house in Rome with only one Roman guard?**

The NIBC commentary points out that the statement in vs 14 "And so we came to Rome" is like a climax, this is what Acts has been leading up to. Paul's coming to Rome.

**What do you think of this idea?**

## Paul and the Jewish Leaders

One of the first things Paul does when he gets to Rome is to call together the Jewish leaders. He makes his defence against the charges brought against him and that he bears his people no ill will but the Jews in Rome seemed baffled by his words. They hadn't heard anything bad about Paul. They did know about "this sect" as it was spoken about everywhere.

Paul spends a great deal of time and effort preaching to the Jews and showing them from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah. In an increasingly familiar narrative, the listeners were divided with some believing and others not convinced.

**Luke includes the proclamation that the Gospel will now go to the Gentiles because they will listen. Discuss.**

**Paul preached for two years in Rome, boldly and unfettered. Luke seems to imply that this was the true platform Paul needed to preach the truths of the gospel. Discuss.**

**Why do you think that Luke ends his account of Acts here?**

### **Did Paul go to Spain?**

In Paul's letter to the Roman church, he mentions his intention to go to Spain after delivering the gift to Jerusalem. A tradition has built up that Paul did go to Spain. Clement of Rome, a co-worker of Paul later wrote that Paul preached in the East and the farthest reaches of the West, which would have been Spain - <https://earlychurchhistory.org/beliefs-2/st-paul-went-to-spain/> See also the attached article.

**What do we think of the tradition that Paul went to Spain and what is its importance?**