

McCoy Memorial Baptist Church
Date: June 21, 2020
Title: "The End of the Beginning"
Text: Acts 28:16-31

INTRODUCTION:

1. "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." [Winston Churchill]
2. How appropriately these lines fit the final verses of the book of Acts. The church's beginning, with its setbacks and struggles, is ending; but by no means has its story ended.

PAUL ADDRESSES THE JEWS (vv. 17-27)

1. His _____ (vv. 17-23; esp. verse 23b)
2. Their _____ (vv. 24-27)
Paul's day-long persuasive exposition of Moses and the Prophets split his audience in two, they were deeply divided, as so many times previously!

Paul summarized their response with a solemn finality which no-one could miss. He boldly applied to them words which the Holy Spirit had spoken to their forefathers in Isaiah's day (Isaiah 6:9-10); which Jesus had quoted of his unbelieving contemporaries (Matt. 13:14-15; Mk. 4:11-12); which John also quoted (John 12:37ff. see Merrill Tenney's outline).

PAUL TURNS TO THE GENTILES (v. 28)

Three times before in Acts, stubborn Jewish opposition had led Paul to turn to the Gentiles: (1) in Pisidian Antioch—13:46; (2) in Corinth—18:6; & (3) in Ephesus (19:8-9). And now for the fourth time, in the world's capital city, and in an even more decisive manner, he does it again (vs. 28).

SO WHAT?

Many readers of Acts, who have no problem with chap. 28 (Paul's arrival and ministry in Rome), find great difficulty in chap. 27 (the voyage, the storm, and the shipwreck). Why devote so much precious space to this graphic, but seemingly unedifying, story? The length of the narrative seems out of proportion to its value.

What is the major lesson we are intended to learn from Acts 27 and 28? It concerns the _____ of God.

1. God's providence is seen in these chapters in two ways:

A. Bringing Paul to Rome _____ (vs. 14b-16)

Circumstance after circumstance seemed determined to make this impossible!

B. Bringing Paul to Rome as a _____ (vss. 30-31)

- His witness was _____.

Note the constant flow of people visiting, his witness to the whole palace guard, and his witness to Emperor Nero. This would not have been possible if he were not a prisoner on trial (see Phil. 1:12-26).

- His witness was _____.

Read Paul's Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians/Philemon). His perspective was adjusted, his horizon extended, his vision clarified, and his witness enriched by his prison experience.

- His ministry was _____.

His appeals to the churches to live a life worthy of the gospel were more authentic because he was himself a prisoner on acc't. of the gospel. He was ready to die for it; they must live to adorn it. "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph. 4:1).

2. God's providence is a reality in _____ life too (Rom. 8:28):

This verse tells us that there are certain realities "we know" . . .

A. God works, or is _____, in our lives.

B. God is at work for the _____ of His people.

C. God works for our good "in _____ things".

D. God works in all things for the good of those who love Him.

E. Those who love God are described as "those who've been called according to His purpose."

Some examples in Scripture:

- _____ (cp. Genesis 50:20)

- _____ (cp. Jeremiah 29:11)

- The _____ of _____ (cp. Acts 2:23; 4:27-28)