

God's Message to Us in Acts

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Introduction

Today we come to the book of Acts as we make our way through all the books of the Bible.

- Acts comes after the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and is in fact a continuation of them.

Luke, the author of Acts who also wrote the gospel of Luke, makes this very clear from his salutation at the beginning of Acts.

- **Acts 1:1-3: The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.**
 - You may remember when we studied Luke that I mentioned how he wrote to a Greek named Theophilus to give Theophilus a sure historical account of all that Jesus did as a foundation for his faith.
 - Notice in verse 1 how Luke refers to his former work as an account of **all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up.**
 - If that was the *beginning* of Jesus' doing and Jesus' teaching, then Acts must be the continuation of it now that He has returned to the Father in heaven.
 - Acts is an account of the ongoing work of Jesus after He ascended to heaven.

Luke presents an amazing prophecy that Jesus makes before He ascends.

- This prophecy serves as an outline for the whole book of Acts—it is Jesus telling us what He is going to do after He ascends.
- The prophecy is in Acts 1:8.
 - Jesus is getting ready to ascend into heaven, and He has instructed His disciples to wait at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit is poured out on them.
 - His prophecy, in Acts 1:8, is this: **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to “Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**
 - In this book of Acts, Luke shows us how the work of Christ from heaven begins with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit...
 - So that the disciples bear witness of Him in Jerusalem...
 - Then in Judea and Samaria,
 - And then to the end of the earth.
- So Acts begins with the gospel at Jerusalem and ends with the gospel at Rome, the dominant nation of the whole world.
 - There are all kinds of things that try to stop the gospel from spreading, but still it spreads.
 - Some think that Acts ends rather abruptly, but in fact, it ends in triumph, showing us how despite all obstacles, the gospel has made it to the hub of the world.
 - We are meant to come away with assurance that nothing can ever stop it.

- Stop and think about what an amazing prophecy this is—
 - When Jesus gave His disciples this prophecy, the gospel was not in a strong position by human calculations.
 - It was more or less in the hands of these disciples—there are 120 of them that are gathered and they are very ordinary men—a crowd that could easily be gathered in this room and less educated than we are.
 - Their reputation in the community left much to be desired.
 - Jesus had been officially rejected by their leaders and they themselves had fled and their chief spokesman had denied Him.
 - As for the nations of the world—they knew virtually nothing of Jesus or of His death and resurrection—
 - certainly they did not think that soon people from all of their nations would believe that He is the Son of God and turn to Him for the remission of their sins, devoting their lives to be His disciples.
 - But in the space of a single generation, Acts shows how the gospel made its way from Jerusalem to Rome.
 - No one, looking at the circumstances and at the disciples of Jesus when Jesus made this prophecy, could have anticipated such a thing!
 - And what makes this prophecy even more amazing is that the Spirit of Christ had given it thousands of years before Jesus gave it to His disciples here in Acts.
 - Two thousand years before this, He had told Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed in a son that would be born of him.
 - The prophecy was renewed to his sons Isaac and Jacob, and again through Moses and then to David and by David, and then especially in Isaiah and the many of the other prophets.
 - Very often, these prophesies were given at the most unpromising times.
 - Such as when Abraham and his wife were barren and beyond the age to bear children...
 - or when Israel was in rebellion against God and being overrun by their enemies... and the temple of God destroyed.
 - All those Old Testament prophecies were written long before the nations had the least interest in them... and so was this prophecy in Acts 1:8.
 - Skeptics are forced to claim that Jesus did not actually make this prophecy, but that His disciples attributed it to Him after the fact.
 - But that takes away the very thing that motivated them.
 - Nor do these skeptics have any way to account for how it was known in the Old Testament times when there was no indication from human observation that the nations would follow a son born to Abraham.
 - The nations had no interest in following a son of Abraham—yet the prophets, speaking by the Spirit of Christ, continued to say that they would.
 - And in Acts we see Christ Himself giving that prophecy and in Acts we see it fulfilled.

And by the way, as we are working through the Bible, it is fascinating to see that Acts, though written as part two of Luke, follows John's gospel in the canon of scripture ...

- And in John, we have in the Upper Room Discourse which we looked at last week (John 13-17) a description by Jesus of how it will be when He leaves this world and goes to the Father.
 - Jesus told His disciples that it would be better for them because when He went to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit to them...
 - And the Spirit would enable them to preach of Him and would convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment so that people from all nations would believe.
 - Jesus said that all of this would happen in the face of much tribulation—much opposition from rulers and such—
 - Basically, He showed them that the gospel would be unstoppable.
 - As He said in Acts 1:8: **But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**

What an amazing prophecy—and what amazing grace!

- Our LORD has appointed that His gospel would go not just to the sinners of one nation, but to sinners in all the nations of the earth.
 - Not one person deserves to be saved—nor even to hear the gospel of grace, but the gospel has truly gone to the nations of the earth.
 - This is God's gracious plan.
 - Let us now see in Acts how the gospel went from Jerusalem to Rome by the power of the Holy Spirit after Jesus ascended on high to the Father.

I. First, see how our Lord's work begins at Jerusalem after He is ascended to the Father. The foundation is here laid for the whole world.

A. Twelve witnesses are established at Jerusalem.

1. Jesus had chosen twelve disciples to testify of Him to Israel.
 - There had been twelve tribes and there were to be twelve apostles.
 - Their task was to leave the world with the official testimony of Christ.
 - However, one of them, Judas, had betrayed the Lord and had hanged himself.
2. Peter leads the 120 disciples in the upper room in putting forth someone to take his office, that there might be twelve witnesses.
 - We learn in Acts 1:21-22 that those who are among the twelve must meet these criteria: **Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.**
 - They had to be someone who had been an eyewitness of the entire ministry of Jesus and had seen Him raised from the dead.
 - Matthias was selected.

TRANS> Now they must wait for the Holy Spirit whom Jesus had promised to fall on them that they might receive power to be those witnesses.

- Without the Holy Spirit, it would not have been possible for these men to be witnesses of Christ from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
- And that brings us to the great event at Pentecost in chapter 2.

B. The Holy Spirit falls upon the disciples of Christ.

1. His initial coming is made very conspicuous.

- We are told of three things that happen to make it conspicuous in 2:2-4: **And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**
- So the Spirit came with *the sound of wind*, *the vision of fire*, and with *the miracle of tongues* by which they spoke in languages that they had never learned.
 - Pentecost was a feast of the Jews, so that meant that people were there from all over the diaspora... Jews that spoke the languages of the nations to which they had been scattered.
 - And they heard these fisherman from Galilee speaking in their own languages—the people who did not know the languages suggested that they were drunk—but it was clear that they were real languages.
 - This was not only a testimony that the Spirit had truly come, but it was also a sign that the gospel was to be preached among the nations.

2. Immediately after the Spirit comes, Peter preaches of Christ.

- a. Remember how Jesus told His disciples that when He went away, the Holy Spirit would come and they would do greater works than He had done?
 - Well here it is—Peter preaches and 3000 souls respond.
- b. Peter’s sermon is very pointed.
 - He tells them that what they have seen is the fulfillment of the promise of Joel 2 that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh.
 - He tells them that this is because Jesus who did miracles among them and who was crucified by them has been raised from the dead and has ascended to the right hand of God—that He has poured out the Spirit.
- c. The Spirit convicts many of them of their sin and they cry out, “What shall we do?”
 - They realise that they have rejected their own Messiah.
 - They realise what we realise if the Holy Spirit has worked in us... that we are sinners—desperate sinners—who need to be saved.
 - Peter tells them to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus—looking to Him to cleanse them from their sins—and they do and He does.

3. These new disciples are added to the church and **continue steadfastly**, as verse 42 says, **in the apostles’ doctrine** (that is, they submit to the preaching of the word), **fellowship** (they join them in serving Christ and worshipping Him), **the breaking of**

- the bread** (that is, they celebrate the Lord's Supper) **and the prayers** (they participate in the prayers of the church for the kingdom).
- Remember what we saw last week in John 13-17?
 - Jesus said that when the Spirit came, they would abide in Him and bear fruit—by faith, they would cling to Him and abide in His word with prayer for His saving work in their lives and in the world.
 - This is how the church began and this is how it continues to bear fruit.
 - These new disciples in Acts are now abiding in Christ and bearing much fruit.
 - So are all who are in Christ today.
- C. Efforts are made to stop the gospel, but they are utterly futile.
1. In chapter 3, a lame man is healed by Peter and John... the man is a beggar who had sat begging in front of the temple for years... he was a familiar sight.
 - No one can deny the miracle... the man is able to walk and even to leap about.
 - a. Everyone comes to marvel at Peter and John, but once again Peter preaches a pointed message, declaring that Jesus, the Prince of Life, whom they crucified, has been raised to heaven and has healed this man.
 - b. In 3:19, Peter says to his audience: **Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord...**
 - He tells them this is the One Moses spoke of that must be heard else they will perish... and the one that God promised to Abraham when He said, **“And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**
 2. Peter and John are arrested for this in chapter 4, especially because they were preaching Jesus and the resurrection.
 - a. But this does not impede the gospel—now the number of believers goes from 3000 to 5000.
 - The rulers are frustrated... In 4:16, they say: **“What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.”**
 - Peter and John respond (v. 19): **But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.”**
 - b. Peter and John are released and they do what the Spirit-filled church does... they go and pray... they give thanks that they could suffer for Christ and they pray for boldness to keep on being witnesses for Him.
 - The result is that the church bears more fruit—they love one another, they are filled with joy, and they increase in number.
 - The leaders of the Jews cannot stop them. This is God's work.
 3. But in chapter 5 another great threat comes to stop the church.
 - This time, it is not an attack from the outside, but hypocrisy on the inside.

- A couple (Ananias and Sapphira) sees the joy and love of Barnabas and others who sold land and gave the proceeds to their persecuted brothers in the church and they pretend to do the same, but lie about the amount.
 - They are looking for honour for themselves instead of for Christ.
 - God shows us what He thinks of such hypocrisy and strikes them both dead for their lie.
 - He does this in the early days of the church to show us what He thinks of such things... Many have done worse and are not struck down for it... but the testimony of Ananias and Sapphira stands for all ages.
 - The Lord shows us that He will not allow hypocrites to destroy His church.
4. Then, Peter and John continue to heal and to preach Jesus so that the leaders come and arrest them again.
- They are locked up in prison, but there is humor here... an angel takes them out and tells them to go back and preach in the temple the following morning.
 - The leaders don't know what to make of it... Verse 24 tells their reaction: **Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be.**
 - This is powerful—we know what the outcome was—the gospel went into all the world!
 - No one can stop the gospel from advancing.
 - Peter and John are arrested again and they preach the gospel to the council without fear again and this time, they are beaten and strictly charged not to preach in the name of Jesus.
 - Listen to their response in 5:29-32: **But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹ Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”**
 - This is what continues to this day. The church filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now we come to the second stage of Jesus' prophecy about the spread of the gospel.

II. The gospel moves from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, just as Jesus said it would.

- A. Intensified persecution scatters the church, causing the gospel to spread outside Jerusalem.
1. Deacons are appointed to assist the apostles, and one of these deacons, a man named Stephen, is accused of blasphemy...
 - In 6:13-15, it says: **They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” ¹⁵ And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.**

- In chapter 7, Stephen responds with powerful words in which he exposes how Israel has always been stiffnecked and has opposed the prophets that God sends to them...
 - His potent concluding words are in 7:51-53: **“You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it*.”**
 - He is stoned by the angry mob because they cannot answer his arguments; but he dies with joy and grace, praying for their forgiveness.
 - 2. At this time Saul, whom we know by the name of Paul, consents to Stephen’s death and leads a harsh persecution with imprisonment against all who follow Christ.
 - But the outcome of this intensified persecution is given in Acts 8:4: **“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”**
 - The Gospel cannot be suppressed! That is what Acts shows us again and again.
- B. We are given some examples of how the gospel spread at this time.
1. Philip took the gospel to Samaria.
 - The Samaritans had long been despised by the Jews because they were not pure Jews because of intermarriage with Gentiles—and they did not worship at Jerusalem.
 - But when Philip preaches to them, we are told that (v. 6) **multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip.**
 - They are converted through the preaching of the word and are baptised, calling on the name of the Lord.
 - The apostles come to Samaria and the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit when the apostles lay their hands on them... this showing that the Spirit is given to Samaritans too... they too are part of Christ’s kingdom by faith.
 2. Time would fail me to do more than barely mention that Philip is sent by the Spirit to overtake a prominent eunuch from Ethiopia, serving under Queen Candace, who believes and is baptised,
 - And that Peter goes to Lydda and Joppa and spreads the gospel in this region to the northwest of Jerusalem.
- C. And talk about persecution failing—Saul (or Paul), the leading persecutor, is converted.
1. The Lord Himself appears to him while leading a delegation with authorisation from the chief priests to arrest Christians at Damascus.
 - Paul’s conversion is given in Acts 9.
 - He is blinded by light on the road so that he is knocked off his horse and Jesus actually speaks to him from heaven and charges him with persecuting Him... persecuting Jesus!
 2. Saul (or Paul) is instructed to go on to Damascus and receive instruction.

- A believer named Ananias comes to preach the gospel to him, restore his sight, and baptise him.
 - Paul receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a proclaimer of the doctrine that he had been trying to destroy.
3. The outcome?
- Acts 9:31: **Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.**
 - Nothing can stop the spread of the gospel... now it has gone from Jerusalem to Judea, Galilee, and Samaria by the power of the Holy Spirit. Take heart!

TRANS> The rest of Acts is devoted to the third great stage of the unstoppable gospel.

III. The Gospel is carried to the nations in the power of the Spirit.

A. The conversion of Cornelius opens the way.

1. Cornelius was a godly Gentile, a Roman centurion, who worshipped the true God, but who was not a full proselyte.
 - By that, I mean that he believed in the true God in a saving way, looking to Him to save him, but he had not been circumcised and become a Jew.
 - He was, however, a man who prayed to God and gave alms generously and had hope in the promises of the coming Messiah.
2. God by His Spirit arranged for a meeting between Cornelius and Peter that Peter might preach the gospel to him.
 - Peter went and found that Cornelius had gathered all his family, friends, and servants to hear the message from the Lord.
 - What every Christian preacher dreams of!
 - Peter began to tell him about Jesus and when he got the place where he said (Acts 10:43) **“To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”**
 - Verse 44-48 say: **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.**
3. This is huge!
 - Peter is later questioned at Jerusalem by the Presbytery for baptising an uncircumcised man.
 - Peter basically defends his action by explaining that God baptised Cornelius first—with the Holy Spirit. What else could he do but baptise him?
 - Reasonable Jewish believers agreed that this meant that God had accepted the Gentiles and that they did not need to become Jews first.
 - God accepted them through faith in Jesus Christ.

- B. Paul's missionary journeys to the Gentiles begin in Acts 13.
1. He and Barnabas are sent out by the Holy Spirit, speaking through prophets in the presbytery at Antioch of Syria.
 - This is followed by another missionary journey that ends up taking him to Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea).
 - After that, he goes on to Athens and Corinth and Ephesus.
 2. A pattern emerges in Paul's ministry that is instructive to us.
 - a. He enters a city and preaches the gospel at the synagogue, first urging the Jews to receive the Messiah that was promised to them.
 - A full example of his preaching is given in Acts 13:13-41 where we see him declaring and showing from scripture that Jesus is the Messiah, and where we see him urging the hearers to believe.
 - b. Then, in almost every place Paul goes, he faces opposition...
 - Usually from angry Jews who reject the gospel, as at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Thessalonica, and Corinth...
 - Sometimes from angry Gentiles—
 - such as at Philippi where he was beaten with rods and put in prison when he was accused by citizens there who lost their profits when Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl they used to tell fortunes.
 - or from a silversmith at Ephesus who was concerned that his business of making idols would fall off because people were being converted...
 - c. But this opposition never seems to hinder the gospel... in almost every place he goes, there are some Jews and usually even more Gentiles who receive the gospel.
 - Paul is forced to move on sometimes, but the gospel remains.
 - So the pattern is, first preaching, then opposition, then conversions... but there is more to this pattern... more that is instructive to us!
 - d. Paul's pattern is to return for the purpose of firmly grounding the new believers.
 - This is seen in Acts 14:21-23: **And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." ²³ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**
 - He both grounds them in their faith and establishes churches with elders.
 - This is a pattern we see all through his ministry.
 - In Acts 20, we have an example of him speaking to the presbytery at Ephesus and urging them to guard their pulpits from false doctrine.

TRANS> Over and over we are told of the preaching, of the Spirit's work, of conversions, and of opposition, with the result that churches are established in every city.

- This is how God does His work... and this is still how He works.

- C. In the final 8 chapters of Acts, Paul takes the gospel to Rome against every impediment.
1. His journey from Jerusalem to Rome seems to be symbolic of the gospel itself going into the world by the power of the Spirit.
 - God promises Paul that he will testify at Rome—
 - In Acts 19:21, it says: **When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”**
 - And in Acts 23:11, were told that: **the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”**
 - But the path from Jerusalem is not at all a straight one or an easy one.
 - There is every impediment, but he gets there, just as the Lord said.
 - The word gets there—it gets to the end of the earth because God carries it there. Nothing can stand in the way.
 2. Look at all that is overcome to get Paul from Jerusalem to Rome.
 - a. In Acts 21, prophets are given visions of Paul being bound in Jerusalem (which he was) and his friends beg him not to go...
 - But in Acts 21:13, Paul rebuffs them: **Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”**
 - b. And then when he gets to Jerusalem, he goes to the temple to worship (paying a vow) and is attacked by a mob of Jews who accuse him falsely of taking a Greek into the temple and other things...
 - But though the mob would have stoned him, in God’s providence, the Roman commander of the garrison hears the commotion and comes and rescues him.
 - Paul takes the opportunity to address the mob (Acts 22), telling them of his conversion to Christ and his call to the Gentiles.
 - And then before the council a second time, he tells them of his hope in the resurrection.
 - But though this mob would have snuffed him out, God kept him... just as He keeps His word from being snuffed out.
 - c. Then in chapter 23:11ff there is a plot of the Jews to summon Paul to another hearing, and to ambush him when the Romans escort him... forty men take a vow that they will neither eat or drink until they kill him.
 - This plot is uncovered when Paul’s nephew hears of it and tells Paul, who sends his nephew to alert the commander.
 - The result is that Paul is escorted under strong guard to Caesarea where he is kept in custody until his case can be heard.
 - d. Now the danger seems to come that he will be left in prison at Caesarea and forgotten... or delivered up the Jews to do them a favour.
 - In chapter 24, Governor Felix who is in charge of him does not know what to do with him and procrastinates, hoping for a bribe.

- The outcome is that though Paul is delayed, he ends up testifying of his hope not only before Felix,
 - but also before Festus who after two years took Felix's place as governor...
 - And then after that before King Agrippa II (as recorded in Acts 26), whom Paul almost persuades to become a Christian.
- Now, finally, having appealed to Caesar, Paul is taken by Julius, a centurion, with other prisoners to Rome. Finally he is on the way to Rome.
- e. But this time, it looks like rather than going to Rome, he will be swallowed by the sea. This is in Acts 27.
 - He is with some foolish mariners who set sail when the stormy season is coming.
 - Paul advises them to wait, but they press ahead and all 276 of them are in grave peril.
 - As verse 20 says, **Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.**
 - But the Lord has already made it clear that Paul is going to Rome to testify of Him there... and nothing can prevent that from happening.
 - Paul reports to the distressed men in verse 22-24 these words: **“And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴ saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ ²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island.”**
 - Chapter 28 shows how they are well received on the island of Malta.
 - However, Paul is then attacked by a viper while gathering firewood... but once again, God miraculously preserves him from harm.
 - In fact, he ends up preaching the gospel at Malta and healing people there.
 - Neither snake bite nor sea can hinder the gospel.
- f. Paul does indeed arrive at Rome, and though he is a prisoner,
 - The gospel is not bound by that.
 - He has lots of visitors including Jews who come to him to hear from him about the sect they have heard so much about.
 - They are divided, some receiving and some rejecting the gospel as elsewhere.
 - Paul continues to minister in Rome as we saw already in the concluding verses of Acts 28... **Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.**

Conclusion: That is how Acts concludes.

- The Gospel has made it to the Gentiles despite all kinds of opposition.
 - It has made it to where God wanted it to go by the man God chose.
 - It is not bound.
- It cannot be bound because it is God's decree for it to go forth and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to make that happen.
- It has happened ever since and it shall happen until Jesus returns.
 - His work goes on from His throne in glory until all those that Father has given Him are brought in.
 - Paul's words in Acts 27 while on the sea are very suitable for us: v. 25: **"Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me."**
 - After 2000 years, we have no reason to doubt.