

Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Session 23

Acts 27-28

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Keener, Acts, Session 23, Acts 27-28, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Craig Keener's lecture analyzes Acts 27-28, focusing on Paul's voyage to Rome. **The lecture details the perilous sea journey**, including a severe storm and shipwreck on Malta, highlighting the historical accuracy of Luke's account. **Keener explores the events on Malta**, such as Paul's miraculous survival of a viper bite and subsequent healings, emphasizing the hospitality shown to the survivors. **The lecture concludes with Paul's arrival in Rome**, his interactions with the Jewish community, and the continuing spread of the Gospel, emphasizing the book's message of heritage and mission.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Acts, Session 22 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels – Acts → Acts).



**Keener_Acts_Session
n23.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Briefing Document: The Journey to Rome and Ministry in the Capital (Acts 27-28)

This briefing document reviews the main themes and key facts presented in Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Acts chapters 27-28, focusing on Paul's journey to Rome and his ministry in the capital.

Main Themes:

- **God's Providence amidst Adversity:** Despite facing a perilous sea voyage, shipwreck, and imprisonment, God's protection and provision are evident throughout Paul's journey, ultimately leading to his arrival in Rome and the opportunity to preach the Gospel there.
- **The Importance of Mission:** The narrative highlights the continuous mission to reach all nations with the Gospel. Paul, despite being a prisoner, remains committed to preaching the message of Jesus Christ, both to Jews and Gentiles.
- **The Power of the Holy Spirit:** The success of the mission relies on the power of the Holy Spirit, which empowers believers to carry out the Great Commission. Dr. Keener emphasizes the need to depend on the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance.

Key Ideas and Facts:

The Perilous Journey:

- Paul, after years of longing to reach Rome, finally arrives, albeit as a prisoner.
- The sea voyage is fraught with danger, typical of journeys at that time. Luke meticulously details the events of the storm, highlighting its severity and realism.
- "And it just so happens that it happens when they're going to be sailing across this bay and it's going to blow them out to sea far away from Crete and away from land in general." (Keener)
- Paul receives a divine revelation that everyone on board will be saved, but the ship will be lost. This prophecy demonstrates God's foreknowledge and mercy.
- "Paul has said, we are all going to be saved. All 276 onboard are going to be saved. But we are going to be saved, but we're first going to be run aground on an island." (Keener)

- The shipwreck on Malta emphasizes the dangers of sea travel and foreshadows the eventual success of the mission despite hardship.

Hospitality and Ministry on Malta:

- The "barbarians" on Malta show remarkable hospitality towards the survivors, defying Roman stereotypes. This kindness underscores the universal appeal of Christian love and compassion.
- "Luke speaks of the local people as barbarians but emphasizes their kindness and uses a word that philosophers used for the love of humanity." (Keener)
- Paul performs a healing miracle on the island's chief man's father, which further elevates his standing and leads to more healings.
- This episode mirrors Jesus' ministry and reinforces the continuity between Jesus' work and the work of his followers.

Arrival and Ministry in Rome:

- Paul, under house arrest, is able to preach and teach about the kingdom of God, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to the Gospel.
- Despite facing a divided response from the Jewish community, Paul continues to preach, emphasizing the mission's reach to both Jews and Gentiles.
- "So, in Acts chapter 28, it's not a rejection of Israel finally at the end of the book. It's just repeating what's happened before. But Paul asks to meet again with the leaders of the Jewish community." (Keener)
- Luke ends the book on a positive note, leaving the mission open-ended, symbolizing the ongoing spread of the Gospel.

Dr. Keener's Concluding Thoughts:

- He emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical context of the Roman church, highlighting its growth despite persecution.
- He reiterates the need to learn from the early church's dependence on the Holy Spirit for power in mission.
- The concluding message is a call to embrace both heritage and mission, remaining rooted in the faith while actively sharing the Gospel with the world.

This briefing document provides a concise overview of the key points from Dr. Keener's lecture. It highlights the themes of God's providence, the importance of mission, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The journey to Rome, the ministry in Malta, and the ongoing preaching in the capital city exemplify the unwavering commitment to spread the Gospel despite facing various obstacles.

4. Acts Study Guide: Session 23, Acts 27-28

Sailing to Rome: A Study Guide for Acts 27-28

Short-Answer Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. Why was sea travel particularly dangerous in the ancient world, and what specific dangers did Paul and his companions face?
2. How does the account of the storm and shipwreck demonstrate Luke's attention to detail and historical accuracy?
3. What role does Paul play during the storm and how do his actions influence the centurion and the crew?
4. What is the significance of the sailors attempting to escape in the lifeboat and how does Paul intervene?
5. How do the inhabitants of Malta initially perceive Paul, and how does their perception change after he is bitten by the viper?
6. What similarities can be observed between the healing of Publius' father and Jesus' healing ministry in Luke's Gospel?
7. Why is it significant that Paul is able to stay in his own rented quarters while under house arrest in Rome?
8. What is the purpose of Paul meeting with the leaders of the Jewish community in Rome, and what is the outcome of this meeting?
9. How does Luke use the quotation from Isaiah 6 to explain the divided response to Paul's message among the Jewish community?
10. How does the open ending of the book of Acts, with Paul preaching under house arrest, emphasize the ongoing nature of the Christian mission?

Answer Key

1. Sea travel was dangerous due to unpredictable weather, limited navigation technology, and the risk of piracy. Paul and his companions faced a severe storm, the threat of running aground on the shallows of Sirtis, and potential starvation.
2. Luke's meticulous details about the journey, including the timing, the locations, the ship's size, and the actions taken during the storm, align with historical

knowledge of Mediterranean voyages in that era, bolstering the narrative's accuracy.

3. Paul acts as a prophet, warning of the impending danger and offering guidance based on divine revelation. While initially disregarded, his proven foresight and subsequent pronouncements lead the centurion and crew to trust and obey him.
4. The sailors' attempt to abandon ship highlights the instinct for self-preservation during times of crisis. Paul's intervention, revealing their plan and emphasizing their crucial role in the survival of everyone, ensures their expertise is utilized in reaching safety.
5. Initially, the Maltese label Paul and his companions as "barbarians," reflecting their foreign status and unfamiliarity with their language. Their perception shifts dramatically after the viper incident, assuming Paul to be a god due to his miraculous survival.
6. Both accounts demonstrate the power of faith and divine intervention in healing. The sequence of a significant healing followed by a multitude seeking similar aid echoes the pattern established in Luke's portrayal of Jesus' ministry.
7. Paul's house arrest in rented quarters, compared to harsher imprisonment, indicates a degree of leniency and freedom. This allows him to receive visitors, continue teaching, and spread the Gospel even while under Roman authority.
8. The meeting serves to inform the Jewish leaders about the Christian movement, seeking understanding and potentially bridging the divide. However, the outcome mirrors previous encounters – a divided response with some accepting and others rejecting Paul's message.
9. Luke utilizes the Isaiah 6 prophecy to portray the hardening of hearts that can occur despite exposure to God's message. This explains the continued resistance within the Jewish community, while simultaneously affirming God's plan to extend salvation to the Gentiles.
10. The narrative's conclusion, with Paul actively preaching despite confinement, underscores that the mission to spread the Gospel transcends physical limitations. The open ending invites readers to participate in the ongoing work of sharing Christ's message with the world.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the character of Paul as depicted in Acts 27-28. How does he demonstrate leadership, faith, and resilience in the face of adversity?
2. Discuss the theme of divine providence in the account of Paul's journey to Rome. How does God's guidance and protection manifest throughout the narrative?
3. Examine the portrayal of the Roman authorities, particularly Julius the Centurion, in their interactions with Paul. How does their perception of Paul evolve throughout the journey and what factors contribute to these changes?
4. Compare and contrast the reception Paul receives from the inhabitants of Malta with his experiences in other cities throughout Acts. What insights can be gleaned about the nature of cross-cultural encounters and the spread of the Gospel in diverse contexts?
5. Explore the significance of the open ending of the book of Acts in relation to the broader themes of the narrative. How does this conclusion contribute to the understanding of the early Christian mission and its enduring relevance?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Centurion:** A Roman army officer commanding a century (originally 100 men).
- **Fair Havens:** A harbor on the southern coast of Crete where Paul and his companions sought shelter from the storm.
- **Sirtis:** Treacherous shallows off the coast of North Africa, notorious for shipwrecks.
- **Malta:** The island where Paul and his companions are shipwrecked and where Paul performs healing miracles.
- **Publius:** The "first man" or leading citizen of Malta who shows hospitality to Paul and his companions.
- **Viper:** A venomous snake that bites Paul on Malta, but he miraculously survives.
- **Trans-Tiberinum (Trastevere):** A district in Rome where the majority of the Jewish community resided.
- **Praetorian Guard:** The elite military unit responsible for guarding the Roman Emperor.
- **Inclusio:** A literary technique where a narrative begins and ends with similar themes or concepts, creating a sense of enclosure.

- **Open Ending:** A narrative conclusion that leaves certain questions unanswered and the future course of events uncertain.

5. FAQs on Keener, Acts, Session 23, Acts 27-28, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Paul's Journey to Rome in the Book of Acts

1. What were the dangers of sea travel in ancient times, particularly during the winter season?

Sea travel in ancient times was notoriously perilous, as documented in both historical accounts and fictional narratives. Dangers included unpredictable weather, shipwrecks, and piracy. The winter months posed even greater risks due to fierce storms and limited visibility, making navigation difficult and increasing the likelihood of accidents.

2. How did Paul's expertise as a seasoned traveler contribute to the events during the voyage?

Despite being a prisoner, Paul's extensive travel experience earned him some respect among those on board. He offered warnings about the impending dangers of sailing during the later months of the sailing season, but his concerns were initially disregarded by the Roman centurion and the ship's crew.

3. What supernatural event occurred during the shipwreck and how did the locals interpret it?

While gathering firewood on the island of Malta, Paul was bitten by a venomous snake. To the astonishment of the locals, he suffered no ill effects. They initially believed Paul to be a criminal deserving punishment, but after witnessing his miraculous survival, they concluded that he must be a god.

4. What does the account of the shipwreck reveal about the importance of obedience and faith?

Paul received a divine revelation assuring the safety of all those on board, but it was conditional on their obedience. When some sailors attempted to escape, Paul intervened, and the soldiers, now placing their faith in him, prevented the escape, ultimately leading to the fulfillment of the prophecy and the survival of everyone.

5. How did Paul's arrival in Rome reflect a pattern established earlier in his ministry?

Upon reaching Rome, Paul, as was his custom, sought out the Jewish leaders. Despite facing a divided response, with some accepting his message and others rejecting it, he remained committed to preaching the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.

6. How did the presence of a pre-existing Christian community in Rome impact Paul's ministry there?

Paul had already established connections with the Roman church through his letter to the Romans and through believers who had migrated there. This existing community provided him with support and a base for his continued ministry while under house arrest.

7. What challenges did the early church in Rome face?

The Roman church, composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers, faced internal tensions stemming from cultural and theological differences. Externally, they experienced persecution, including expulsion under Emperor Claudius and later, brutal martyrdoms under Emperor Nero.

8. What is the significance of the open ending of the book of Acts?

The book of Acts concludes with Paul under house arrest in Rome, continuing to preach and teach about the kingdom of God. This open ending signifies the ongoing mission of the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to spread the Gospel to all nations and points to the continuing story of Christianity beyond the events narrated in the book.