

Series: Acts

Title: A Glorious Chain

Scripture reading: John 7: 14-18

Text: Acts 28: 16-31

Date: October 28, 2010

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Acts 28: 16: And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. 17: And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together:

Paul had been rejected *at Jerusalem* by men in the same office capacity as these men--chief of the Jews. Still, at Rome, his first order of business is to call the chief of the Jews.

God delighteth [in] mercy (Mic 7:18). Those born of his Spirit delights in mercy. But mercy at the expense of judgment (righteousness, truth) is no mercy at all. Paul deals in great mercy by wasting no time declaring the Truth. The mercy he shows is by straightway giving God the Father and Christ his King and his Savior, all the glory.

He states 2 things up front: 1) He was bound with a chain for no other reason than because those chief Jews at Jerusalem rejected God in Christ, the salvation of God; 2) He was sent there--to Rome--by that same God, by King Jesus, to preach the same gospel which those men rejected.

Acts 28: 17:...and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men [and] brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

The rejection Paul experienced at Jerusalem was not because Paul caused personal injury, nor a matter of injury to the customs of our fathers. That is what they charged Paul with. But Paul was innocent of all charges.

Acts 28: 18: Who, when they had examined me, would have let [me] go, because there was no cause of death in me.

Paul says that the Roman judges found him not guilty.

Acts 28: 19: But when the Jews spake against [it], I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

(Acts 25: 9-12; 26: 32) Furthermore, Paul states that he is not at Rome to accuse his nation of any civil crimes.

Acts 28: 20: For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see [you], and to speak with [you]:

To declare to you the truth of why I am bound with this chain--here is the two-fold reason.

Acts 28: 20:...because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

Paul is using great plainness of speech.

1) He is declaring that Jerusalem rejected the LORD God, Jehovah when they rejected the gospel of Jesus, the King and Savior. (Turn to Jer 14.) These chief Jews at Rome knew what he meant by "the hope of Israel" because they memorized the scriptures. They knew Jeremiah's word.

Jeremiah 14:8: O "the hope of Israel," the saviour thereof in time of trouble...17:13: O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

Paul states that his rejection at Jerusalem is a matter of their hearts. When they rejected the gospel--Jesus of Nazareth the King and Christ--they rejected the LORD God, Jehovah.

2) Secondly, Paul is declaring his chain--everything that had come to pass to bring him to Rome--was in fact, by Christ the King SENDING him to proclaim the gospel at Rome also, just as he did at Jerusalem.

- Acts 23: 11
- Ephesians 6: 19, 20
- Colossians 4:3

The King and Savior, Jesus of Nazareth, had sheep at Rome whom the Father had given him. They were sheep he had purchased in righteousness. He had reconciled them to God by paying their sin debt on the cross. Those sheep were his rightful, purchased possession. Yet, those sheep were spiritually blind, lost in a refuge of natural religion.

Romans 10:14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

How shall they hear without a herald to declare the Lord our Righteousness?

Romans 10: 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

Paul is declaring that for the hope of Israel--for King Jesus himself, by King Jesus himself, for the proclamation of his fully accomplished work of righteousness, the Hope of Israel has sent me here! Just as John the Baptist was sent to herald the arrival of King Jesus into the world, Paul was sent to herald the announcement of the King's arrival into the heart of his children. So it is with his preachers whom he sends.

God the Father receives the glory through his Son, Jesus, upon whose shoulder the government rests. It is because the God of heaven and earth redeems in righteousness and converts in righteousness (Isaiah 1: 24-27). Mercy and truth have met together in Christ Jesus on the cross, declaring God just and the Justifier of all who believe (Romans 3: 24-31). The same Righteous Sovereign will not apply his mercy in the hearts of his redeemed children at the expense of Truth (1 John 2: 18-27; 1 Corinthians 12: 3; John 8: 44; Revelation 3: 9). The only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ receives all the glory in the salvation of his children--it is his Voice, together with the voice of those the King sends which make the tidings glad (Isaiah 30: 31; 52: 6-8; 40: 6-9; Hebrews 1: 8-2: 4).

Acts 28:21: And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

Who receives the glory for that? HE who ruled the hurricane when he walked this earth, ruled the hurricane from heaven--he could have put those letters on the bottom of the ocean just as he used that hurricane to land Paul at Melita. He who turns the kings heart as he will is able to shut the mouths so that none speak evil of his ambassador. He has ruled everything to give Paul a hearing.

Acts 28: 22: But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

These are not the brethren to whom Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans. They use a term of reproach--this sect, this heresy. But there are some among them whom the Lord is about to call.

Acts 28: 23: And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into [his] lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and [out of] the prophets, from morning till evening.

They were looking to all things natural. To hear what Paul preached in a similar instance, see Acts 13: 16-52. God set up an earthly kingdom to teach his true Israel concerning his everlasting kingdom.

1. They trusted in blood--natural sons of Abraham--Paul declared the electing grace of God, not born naturally into this kingdom but born again into this king (John 3: 3).
2. They trusted in the will of the flesh--their parents had circumcised them at 8 days old (Gentiles submitted to the same)--circumcision is of Christ, of the Spirit of God--he is a Jew which is one inwardly of the heart whose praise is of God, not men (Romans 2: 28-29).
3. They trusted in the will of man--their imaginary obedience--Christ is the righteousness of God, the fulfillment of the precept, the justification from the penalty (Romans 3: 19-24).
4. They looked for the restoration of an earthly, political nation--
 - Paul declared Christ's kingdom is everlasting (John 18: 36).
 - God hath raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead and his King over both those born again children who have died in faith and those who are yet alive on this earth (Romans 14: 9).
 - He is King and Savior upon whose shoulder the government of his kingdom rests. Of the increase and peace of his government there shall be no end (Isaiah 9: 6-7; Acts 2: 34-36).

Acts 28: 24: And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Acts 13: 48:...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

John 1: 11: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

God sent forth his Spirit and some were born again through the incorruptible seed through the gospel preached unto them. God made Christ unto them the Power and Wisdom of God (1 Peter 1: 23-25; 1 Corinthians 1: 25-31). The righteousness of God in Christ was revealed in their hearts (Romans 1: 16-17). They submitted to Christ the Righteousness of God by God-given faith (Ephesians 2: 8-10). They were given repentance to turn from trusting in their own sight and hearing, their own wisdom and might, to rest by faith in Christ Jesus the Lord and Savior (Acts 5: 31). They were given light to see the kingdom of God, Christ the King (Psalm 56: 13; 2 Corinthians 4: 4-6; Psalm 36: 9; John 8: 12).

Acts 28: 25: And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and [that] they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

- Acts 13: 44-52; John 9: 35-41

- **2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. 16: Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given [us] everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.**