The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V28 N47 November 29 2026

UNHINDERED

"Unhindered"

Acts 28:17-31

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Evangelism

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

"'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'"

Acts 1:8

Q?

How does Paul's time in Rome fulfill Acts 23:11?

If any one Core Competency fits the whole book of Acts, it's the Central Practice of Evangelism. The book describes the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, from Jews in Jerusalem to Gentiles in the capital of the Empire, and is filled with accounts of evangelists and evangelism. One might say that strung together, these accounts form the backbone of the plot of the narrative.

Aside from the apostle Peter, who *preached* the gospel at Pentecost, explaining Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation and calling his hearers to repentance and baptism (Acts 2:14–41), *proclaimed* Christ to the crowds in Jerusalem following the healing of the lame man (Acts 3:12–26), *witnessed* to Jesus before the Jewish religious authorities (Acts 4:8–12; 5:29–32), and *presented* the gospel to Cornelius and his household, opening the door of the gospel to Gentiles (Acts 10:34–48; 11:1–18), and the apostle Paul, who following his conversion, immediately *preached* Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:19–22), *proclaimed* the gospel in Antioch of Pisidia, emphasizing Jesus' death, resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins through faith in him (Acts 13:16–41), *conducted* extensive missionary evangelism throughout Asia Minor and Greece, establishing churches and strengthening new believers (Acts 13–20), and *presented* the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, using different approaches depending on his audience (Acts 14:8–18; 17:16–34) all the way to Rome. There were other lesser, yet just as bright lights.

Other evangelists included: Stephen, one of the seven appointed to oversee the distribution of food to widows (Acts 6:1–6), who performed signs and wonders among the people and engaged in public debate concerning Jesus (Acts 6:8–10), delivered an extensive defense of the Christian faith before the Jewish council, and whose martyrdom provided a powerful witness to the gospel (Acts 7:54–60); Philip, who is explicitly identified as an evangelist (Acts 21:8). He preached Christ in Samaria, accompanied by signs and miracles, resulting in many conversions (Acts 8:4–13), and explained Isaiah 53 to the Ethiopian official, proclaiming Jesus to him, which resulted in his baptism (Acts 8:26–40). His ministry demonstrates the geographical expansion of the gospel beyond Jerusalem and the Jews; then there was Barnabas, who was sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch, where he witnessed the grace of God among Gentile converts and encouraged them to remain faithful to the Lord (Acts 11:22–24). He was described as a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith; many people were brought to the Lord through his ministry (Acts 11:24). He, of course, joined Paul in missionary evangelism, proclaiming the gospel in Cyprus and Asia Minor (Acts 13–14). Priscilla and Aquila were Christian coworkers of Paul, who participated in his missionary ministry (Acts 18:1–3, 18). They took Apollos aside and explained the way of God more accurately to him (Acts 18:26). Their ministry illustrates the importance of personal instruction and theological preparation in developing effective gospel witnesses; and last, but not least, were the Scattered Believers, evangelists through everyday witness, who following Stephen's martyrdom were scattered by persecution throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1–4). They went about preaching the word (Acts 8:4), travelling as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch proclaiming the gospel, initially to Jews but eventually to Greeks as well (Acts 11:19–21). Their ministry demonstrates that evangelism was not restricted to apostles or recognized church leaders but was undertaken by ordinary believers.

1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Acts 28:17-31

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar – though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." 21 And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. 22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. 25 And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

26 "'Go to this people, and say,
"You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive."
27 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed;
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.'

28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,
31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "after three days" in v. 17.
- Bracket "local leaders of the Jews" in v. 17.
- Bracket "our people or the customs" in v. 17.
- Box "yet" indicating *contrast* in v. 17.
- Box "because" indicating *reason* in vv. 18, 19, 20.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in vv. 19, 22, 24, 26.
- Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 20.
- Circle "hope of Israel" in v. 20.
- Circle "sect" in v. 22.
- Circle "kingdom of God" in vv. 23, 30.
- Next to vv. 26-27 write "Isa 6:9-10."
- Underline "lived there" and "welcomed all" in v. 30.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."

2 DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Why do you think Paul wasted no time ("after three days") before "calling together the local leaders of the Jews" (v. 17)?

2. *Who* were these "local leaders of the Jews," and *why* do you think he addressed them as "brothers" (v. 17)?

3. Explain the *contrast* ("yet") in verse 17.

4. Explain the *contrast* ("But") introducing verse 19.

5. Verse 20 begins, "For *this* reason." *What* reason is that?

6. "The hope of Israel," *what* is it?

7. Summarize Paul's day-long message to the Jews at his "lodging" (vv. 23) in your own words.

8. Explain the point of Isaiah's figurative reference to Israel's *ears*, *eyes*, and *heart*.

9. If "salvation . . . has been sent to the Gentiles," does that mean it is no longer available to Jews? Explain.

10. **Discussion:** Talk about how 28:30-31 amounts to the fulfillment of 23:11.

3 EXPLORE RESOURCES

Commentary On The Text

Acts 28:17-31 concludes the book of Acts. According to one commentator, it is "carefully constructed." He writes, "It consists of an outer framework which focuses on Paul's situation in Rome, living in his own rented house and under military guard (vv. 16,30). In between are two scenes involving Paul's testimony to the Jews of Rome—an initial favorable encounter (vv. 17-22) followed by a second encounter in which the Jews reject Paul's message and the apostle turns to the Gentiles (vv. 23-28)" (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 538).

The first scene contains a summary of the preceding trial narrative and imprisonment speeches in Acts 22—26. In it Paul focuses on his innocence. According to one commentator: "Paul emphasized these points in his explanation: (1) He had 'done nothing against' the Jews or their 'customs' (v. 17). (2) The Roman authorities in Judea had already declared him innocent, so there were 'no grounds for putting' him 'to death' (v. 18). (3) He had appealed to Caesar because the Jews in Judea challenged the Romans' verdict, not because Paul had any grievance against the Jews (v. 19). (4) Paul's present condition grew out of the promises that God had given Israel ('the hope of Israel,' i.e., concerning her Deliverer and deliverance, v. 20; cf. 23:6; 24:21; 26:6-8)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Acts," 2026 ed., 470, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

In response they said to him: "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against" (vv. 21-22). Their reply may have been somewhat disingenuous since Jews in Jerusalem and Rome communicated frequently with each other.

The second scene (vv. 23-28)—some manuscripts add verse 29: "And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much dispute among themselves," which is omitted in the ESV—contains a summary of Paul's second encounter with a greater number of Jews. From "morning till evening" he spoke to them regarding "the kingdom of God" in an attempt to convince them from "the Law of Moses and the Prophets" that Jesus was the Messiah. He had to convince them that Messiah had to die and be raised from the dead. His message was met with a mixed response. "Some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved" (v. 24). Paul was looking for a communal decision, a recognition by the Jewish community as a whole that "Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish hope. The presence of significant opposition showed that this was not going to happen" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 347).

As the Jews departed, Paul quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 to them (cf. Mt 13:14-15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:40-41), to the effect that they had ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart to understand but refused to believe just as God's people had in Isaiah's day. One writer comments: "The picture is that of a people who merely take in sensory perceptions but in no sense appropriate them. Their ears heard the sounds, but the hearing was without understanding. Their eyes took in the sights but without any insight because their hearts had become calloused; the message received by their eyes and ears was neither understood nor acted upon" (Polhill, 543).

Paul was like Isaiah and the apostle's contemporary community was like the ancient nation. As a result the "salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles"—but not to the exclusion of Jews.

With verses 30-31, Acts comes to a rather abrupt ending, leaving readers to wonder what ultimately happened to Paul. Some believe that the Roman authorities condemned Paul and put him to death. However, most believe that they released him and that he left Rome. In support of the latter view are references to Paul's activities in other New Testament books. These activities are difficult to incorporate into the events of his life that Acts records. We can only explain them if he continued his ministry.

"While Paul was in Rome during the two years that Luke mentioned (28:30) he evidently wrote the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). After his release and departure from Rome he wrote the Pastoral Epistles. He probably wrote 1 Timothy between A.D. 63 and 66 to Timothy who was ministering in Ephesus, but we do not know for sure from where he wrote it, though Macedonia may have been the place. He spoke of meeting Timothy in Ephesus later (1 Tim. 3:14; 4:13). Paul also wrote the Book of Titus, probably from Illyricum or Macedonia, during the same period, to Titus who was on the island of Crete (cf. Titus 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:10). Perhaps Paul visited Spain, which he longed to do, between A.D. 62 and 67 (Rom. 15:23-24), though there is no Scriptural record that he did or did not do so" (Constable, 474-75).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 17 ***after three days*** "Paul began immediately to prepare to witness. He wanted to see the leaders of the Jewish community soon for two reasons: He wanted to preach the gospel to them as Jews first. He also wanted to take the initiative in reaching out to them with an explanation of why he was in Rome. He wanted to do so before they arrived at false conclusions concerning his reasons for being there" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Acts," 2026 ed., 469, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

v. 17 ***local leaders*** "The decree of the emperor Claudius (see 18:2) had been allowed to lapse, and he Jews had returned to Rome with their leaders" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ac 28:17). "Putting together the various allusions to Jewish presence in Rome, the best estimate of its size in the middle of the first century is about 40,000-50,000, most of them slaves and freedmen . . . We know of some ten to thirteen synagogues, all of which may have been in existence at this time" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 351). "It is unclear exactly who these 'leaders' of the Jewish community were—perhaps the ruling elders of the various Roman synagogues" (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 539).

v. 17 ***our people, our . . .*** Cf. Ac 21:28. Paul's apologia: "He had done nothing, he insisted, against the Jewish people or against the customs of the fathers (v. 17). The Roman authorities had judged that he had not committed any capital crime and were willing to release him (vv. 17b-18). But objections from Jerusalem forced him to appeal to Caesar—not to accuse his own people but to save his life (v. 19). The point of contention between him and his accusers at Jerusalem had to do with the messianic hope of Israel, which Paul believed was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth and they did not. Therefore he concluded: 'It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain' (v. 20; cf. 23:6; 24:21; 26:6-8)" (Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *John-Acts*, vol. 9, EBC, 570).

v. 20 ***hope of Israel*** The "hope of Israel" refers to the promises made in the Old Testament regarding the coming of Messiah, the restoration of Israel, and the coming kingdom of God. "It was his testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, that Jesus is both Messiah and Lord, that constituted the *real* contention between him and the Jews. That was the real issue, and Paul had constantly focused on it in his defense speeches (23:6; 24:15; 26:8, 23)" (Polhill, 539-40).

v. 22 ***sect*** "The Jewish leaders in Rome still considered Christianity as 'a sect' within Judaism" (Constable, 471).

v. 23 ***kingdom of God*** "The term 'kingdom of God' probably means the same thing here as it usually does in Acts, namely, Messiah's rule both now and in the age to come (cf. 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:31)" (Constable, 471).

vv. 26-27 ***Isaiah the prophet*** "Paul's parting word was a quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10 in which God told the prophet that his Jewish hearers would not believe God's message through him (cf. Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40-41). Paul saw that this word to 'Isaiah' was as applicable in his own day as it had been in Isaiah's. He also regarded it as inspired by 'the Holy Spirit'" (Constable, 472). "Through repeated and emphatic statements, the people are told of a highly unnatural situation: ears, eyes, and heart, which are meant for hearing, seeing, and understanding, have lost their power to perceive. This unnatural state, in which the organs of perception contradict their own purpose, has blocked God's desire to 'heal them,' a desire that a perceptive people would gladly embrace" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 348).

v. 30 ***lived there . . .*** "The book of Acts ends on a note of triumph. It is a final summary like the closing of earlier units (6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20). Paul, even though imprisoned, lives at his own expense and receives any who would visit him" (Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 757), "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."

4 APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome witnessing to the Jews, the gospel having spread from Jerusalem to the capital of the Empire through the ministry of apostles and evangelists, who carried it first to the Jews and then after to the Gentiles.

3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?

PARENT CONNECTION

What part of parenting feels overwhelming to you? Is it math homework? What about the never-ending pile of laundry? It could be that your stuck in between ages and stages – tantrums and hormones at the same time. I know – dinner. Every single night your creativity is tested by judges harsher than Gordan Ramsey. There are so many things that can overwhelm a parent, which is why it seems easy to outsource your child's faith to church or teachers at a private Christian school. I meet people all the time who take their child to church on Sunday but don't talk about God, open His Word with them, or pray as a family. Your kids won't learn how to walk according to God's word just by having a Bible in the house. They need you to disciple them. God gave Paul a mission in proclaiming the Gospel to everyone he met, both Jew and Gentile. You might not feel comfortable telling the check-out clerk in the grocery store about Jesus, but that precious child sitting next to you at breakfast with syrup dripping down her chin, desperately needs to hear it and hear it from you. This week, open the storybook Bible and read to your child. Pray before you head out the door. Tell them how God made a way for them to join His family through Jesus. We're praying for you!

Family Challenge: Read the Bible together this week.

What Does The Bible Say?	What Do You Think?	What Do You Do?
Read Acts 28:17-31 1. What did Paul ask to speak with the local Jewish leaders? 2. What did Paul speak about from morning to night? 3. When the Jewish leaders wouldn't listen to Paul, to whom did he plan to share the Gospel?	Why didn't the Jewish leaders believe in Jesus?	Thinking about your closest circle and then into the community and world, who can you share the Gospel with this week?

CORE COMPETENCY: Evangelism

I share Jesus with others with my words and actions.

MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 3:17

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.
Questions: **kids@wearecentral.org**

_____ I completed my Bible Study
_____ I memorized this week's verse
_____ I brought my Bible to church
_____ I brought a friend

CHILD'S NAME _____ GRADE _____ PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.
Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.
Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.
The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.
Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.
Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.
Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.
Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.
Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.
Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.
Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.
Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.
Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.
Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others
Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.
Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.
Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.
Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.
Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.
Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.

CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.
Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.
Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.
Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.
Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.
Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.
Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.
Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.
Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.
Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.