Bible Study 9

September 9, 2021.

Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 27

Paul has defended him self before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; before Felix the governor in Caesarea; before Festus and now before King Agrippa. He appeals to Caesar. We learn so much about Paul through his spoken defense in Chapters 25 through 27.

In Chapter 27 Paul sails for Rome. Fourteen days at sea in the midst of a terrible storm, Paul survives with 26 men till they are shipwrecked on the Island of Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

Paul is impressed by the kindness of the people of Malta and cures many at the house of Publius the chief Roman Official on the Island. Many are converted to the ‘Way’ and will later adopt Paul; as their patron. After three months they board an Alexandrian merchant Ship and sail for Rome.

In Rome Paul gathers the Christians and explains his presence. He is under house arrest awaiting trial. Many come to see him during his two years of imprisonment. Some are converted but not all.

Luke concludes the Acts of the Apostles here, never mentioning Paul’s fate.

This concludes the Acts of the Apostles. It gives us a glimpse of the lives of the Earliest Christians. We see how the Faith spread from Jerusalem to Antioch and Caesarea and how Paul and other missionaries took it to Asia Minor and on to Macedonia and Greece.

The two main characters of Acts are Peter and Paul although mention is made of Philip, James, Barnabas, Mark and Timothy.

One of the major themes is about the Baptism of John versus the Baptism of Christ with the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, the move from conversion of the Jews only, to spreading the Word of Jesus to the Gentiles. There is a heated discussion about ‘circumcision, the mark of Judaism. Opinions are divided till Peter speaks.

Acts finishes rather suddenly without adding the death of Paul.

Acts is followed by the Letter to the Romans, the longest of Paul’s Epistles probably written in Caesarea while he was imprisoned by Felix and Festus for some two years.

We can imagine that Paul wrote these letters during the period of Acts. Usually, he is writing back to a community he has already converted to strengthen their Faith.

His letter to the Romans is the exception. It is highly doctrinal as if he himself, has so much time on his hands that he can marry the prophecy and theology of the Old Testament with everything that happened to Jesus.

Paul’s two letters to the Corinthians are the most loving, kind and pastorally orientated. They clearly show that he had spent a long time in their midst and loved that community dearly.

Did he write his Epistles as one long letter or were they many letters that were later put together as one? We do not know.

We learn so much from readings Acts and these letters.

Fr. Bill.