

# Witnesses to Jesus:

## Witnessing to the Ends of the Earth: Rome

### Acts 28:17-31

#### Background:

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Rome was the capital of the Empire, a multicultural setting where decisions were made that affected the world. Paul had planned for a long time to visit Rome as a missionary. Instead he was brought as a prisoner. Yet this change of plans didn't deter him from his real mission: sharing the gospel.

#### Getting Started:

Think of a time when you made plans that you thought were from the Lord—and then had to watch them change. What was your attitude?

1. Read Acts 28:17–31. What does Paul do when he arrives in Rome? In his meeting with the Jewish leaders, what does he say? Why do you think he went to such great lengths to introduce himself and clear himself before the Jewish leaders *[verses 17–20]*?
2. How do the Jewish leaders respond *[verses 21–22]*? How do you think Paul might have felt when he heard this response?
3. Describe the meeting between Paul and the Jewish leaders in verses 23–24. Paul tried to convince them about Jesus Christ from the Law of Moses and from the prophets. Think about the needs and backgrounds of the people you encounter in the area you live, work or study. How can we put the truths about Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God into a cultural context that they can understand?
4. How do Paul's listeners respond to his case for Jesus in verses 24–25? In verses 25b–28, Paul passes judgment on his listeners. He uses a text from the Old Testament: Isaiah 6:9–10. What point was he trying to make about them? How do you think they might have responded?
5. Look carefully at verse 28. How does this summarize some of the themes we have seen in the book of Acts? How does it fit with Acts 1:8?
6. Looking at the rest of the passage, describe how Paul spent the next two years in Rome. Whom do you think "all" refers to in verse 30? What was he proclaiming? Compare this to Jesus' words in Acts 1:1–8.

#### In Closing:

God has put you where you are. How can you be an obedient witness in sharing the gospel with the people around you?

**Conclusion:** Many people think Acts has a rather abrupt ending. But in light of Acts 1:1–11, why is this a good ending? Perhaps Acts 29, 30 and so forth are really for our stories! Take some time as a group to review some of the themes you've seen in your study of Acts. Which ones affected you most? How have you been encouraged to be bolder witnesses? To rely on the Spirit more? To appreciate God's sovereignty? To cross a cultural barrier? Decide together on a bold step you will take as a result of something God has shown you in Acts.