

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Acts 28:23-31

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, November 25, 2012

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, November 25, 2012**, is from **Acts 28:23-31**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (also known as the *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** give possible hints to answer the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website and below. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **[International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#)**. The weekly **[International Bible Lesson](#)** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

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Acts 28:23-31

(Acts 28:23) After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter 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.

After Paul arrived in Rome, he remained in house arrest (at his own expense and probably making tents) and waited for the Emperor to hear his appeal. When Jews who lived in Rome came to his home to learn more about his Christian faith, he explained how Jesus the Messiah reigned from heaven over the Kingdom of God and that everyone owes faithful allegiance and obedience to Jesus as Lord and Savior. Paul used their own holy scriptures [the Old Testament] to try to convince them of the truths about Jesus.

(Acts 28:24) Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe.

Paul testified based on his own experience with Jesus throughout his ministry; probably explaining how he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, because he had previously told about this event in his previous presentations of the good news about Jesus. He used reason to make arguments to try to persuade them to believe in Jesus. He also used the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, as an objective standard or infallible reference to show how Jesus the Messiah came

according to prophecy, and how Jesus died and rose again according to Moses and the prophets. He argued and reasoned based on the Bible's teachings and their common belief in the Bible as the word of God.

(Acts 28:25) So they disagreed with each other; and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah,

Some believed based on what Paul explained from the Bible and his experiences. Even though they understood Paul's reasoning, others refused to believe. The new believers and the unbelievers then tried to show that the other group was wrong. Paul used the arguing of some against his teaching and against the new believers' faith to affirm what the Holy Spirit influenced Isaiah to write—in doing so, Paul affirmed the divine inspiration of the Bible and that the Bible's teachings and prophecies should be applied to people's lives, even hundreds of years later.

(Acts 28:26) ‘Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive.

God told Isaiah and Paul to teach the truth to His people, and God told them in advance that some would refuse to accept their message. If someone does not truly want to honor and follow God according to the Word of God (the Bible and the revelation of Jesus Christ in the flesh when they learn of Him); then, they will listen to but not understand the Word of God (either the Bible or the Word of God in the flesh, Jesus).

(Acts 28:27) For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.'

Isaiah foretells the consequences of people's wrong choices and of continuing to live based on their wrong choices. If people refuse to do what God wants them to do as revealed in their conscience, their reason, the Bible, and in the life of Jesus; then, their hearts will become hard and they will lose their ability to understand more truths about God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. Eventually, they will lose the ability to understand right from wrong and truth from error, and they will live more unreasonably and wrong. If they refuse to listen to the Word of God, they will not turn to God and they will not accept the spiritual and often physical healing God wants them to enjoy—God's way of healing, the only way of healing.

(Acts 28:28) Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

Paul told them that the time God had allotted for him to explain the Bible and the Good News about Jesus to them had expired (or was soon to end). Paul needed to use the remainder of the time allotted to him wisely. He needed to teach the

Gentiles about God; about how God had sent Jesus to save both Jews and Gentiles from the devil's grip and slavery to sin, and give them eternal life.

(Act 28:29) And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. [King James Version: some translations omit verse 29.]

Paul told these Jews that the Gentiles would listen to the Good News about Jesus. Rather than receive the Good News about Jesus the Messiah and that the Message of Salvation was for the Gentiles as well as for them, they went away arguing among themselves. Luke does not indicate that the unbelievers gave Paul any further attention or trouble after they left him and Paul turned to teach others.

(Acts 28:30) He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him,

Where possible, Paul preferred to remain in a city or town long enough to establish a church with educated and spiritually mature leaders and teachers. Then, as he travelled, he wrote letters to many of these churches to guide them in his absence. Paul conducted his ministry at his own expense by making tents as a trade. He could hold discussions throughout the light of day while making tents for a living, and he welcomed all who came to him, because he wanted to tell them the truth about Jesus and saving faith.

(Acts 28:31) proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Jesus taught believers to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Paul taught about the rule of God on earth and the future visible reign of Jesus the Messiah when He returned to earth. Paul kept his focus of attention and teaching on Jesus as Lord and Messiah. In spite of possible problems and persecution, Paul talked boldly and no one hindered him at that time. The Holy Spirit can use our teaching the truth of and about Jesus Christ from the Bible to lead some to faith in and obedience to Jesus, which will help believers grow in grace, spiritually mature, and prepare them for heaven.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What would you do if you had a captive audience, similar to a guard, as Paul did, and were under house arrest for a crime that you had not committed, but for your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? What do you need to do to prepare yourself, if something like this should happen to you?
2. After all of the mistreatment Paul suffered from his fellow Jews, what attitude did Paul take toward them? How easy is it for people today to take the attitude

that Paul took toward those who mistreat them? What can we do to try to maintain a Christ-like attitude toward others?

3. Why does the Bible show at least three different approaches to dealing with those who oppose God and the kingdom of God: the way of Jesus, the way of Stephen, and the way of Paul? [Tradition teaches that Paul was later martyred, but the Bible does not teach this.]

4. Why is the use of reason important in teaching the good news of Jesus? Why is giving an explanation for why you believe in Jesus important? Why is appealing to what the Bible teaches important when you speak to someone about Jesus and the good news?

5. Would you be willing to teach the Bible freely to others at your own expense? Sunday school teachers do this, as well as others. Paul also received support from various churches in his missionary work (see his Letter to the Philippians). What are the benefits of supporting pastors, preachers, teachers, evangelists, and others as they share the gospel in word and deed so they do not need to spend the major part of each day “tent making”?

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