

August 4

Scriptures: Acts 28

Key Verse: "... for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." (Acts 28:20)

Overview

The book of Acts concludes with Paul living under house arrest in Rome. It was a fairly casual confinement—only one soldier to guard him, and anyone who wished to do so could visit him. Even here, Paul discharged his duty of proclaiming Christ to his Jewish brethren. In fact, the Jewish leaders from Rome came to hear Paul, and he bluntly confronted them with their hardness of heart in rejecting Jesus. He spoke with passion because he believed, even after all he had been through, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the hope of Israel.

This is something believers today should reaffirm in their own lives—Jesus is the hope of Israel. Our faith is not the product of some recent dreamer of charismatic prophet; nor is it the Gentile religion. Christianity is the product of an ongoing relationship God had had with a people ever since He made a promise to Abraham, the "father of faith". It is rooted in the promise of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And it is personified in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One of whom the prophets spoke, "Emmanuel"—God with us, the hope of glory.

God became flesh and dwelt among us. He walked with us, talked with us, showed us the will of the Father, and challenged us to repent from our sins and turn our eyes to the Kingdom of Heaven. He lived, died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to Heaven after appearing to hundreds of eyewitnesses in His resurrected body. And He is coming again to take the Church unto Himself—not the Gentile Church, nor the Jewish Church, but the Church that is described in the Bible as His "body", men and women of faith whose spiritual father is none other than Abraham himself.

Jesus is the hope of Israel. He is also the hope of the Church. And He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Prayer

O God of Abraham and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant that we will be filled daily with Your Holy Spirit so that we may do as Your servant Paul: preach the Kingdom and teach the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence. Amen.