

Upheld by God

Key Verse: *“Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”*
—Acts 28:30,31

Selected Scripture:
Acts 28
Philippians 4:15-23

PAUL'S ACTIVE LIFE OF witnessing concerning the Lord Jesus Christ eventually resulted in his arrival at Rome where he was permitted to dwell as a prisoner under house arrest in a private home with a soldier who guarded him.—Acts 28:16

After three days, Paul invited the chief Jews to meet with him and he explained his desire to appeal to Caesar because there was no just cause for him to be put to death in Jerusalem. In view of Paul's innocence of any crimes against the Jewish people, he shared the hope of Israel regarding its promised Messiah with the Jewish leaders. However, they professed to know nothing about Paul because

they had not received any letters from Judea concerning him, nor had any of their fellow Jews brought any reports against him. Nevertheless, they desired to learn more because they knew the Christian faith with which he was associated was spoken against everywhere.—vss. 17-22

“When they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded

and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.”—vss. 23,24

When Paul realized that once again the Jews as a whole rejected the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, he quoted from Isaiah 6:9,10 indicating the majority of the Jews would be blinded to the good news of the coming kingdom. It was for this reason that the apostle announced he was sharing the gospel among the Gentiles, assured that they would receive it. (Acts 28:25-28) During his ministry, Jesus also issued the same rebuke to the people of Israel. “This people’s heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed.”—Matt. 13:15

Our Key Verses assert that Paul continued in Rome for two years and ministered to a large number of visitors who desired to hear what he taught. It is believed that during this period he also wrote the epistles to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Paul also wrote his second epistle to Timothy from Rome shortly before he was beheaded.

As believers today, a change in circumstances does not necessarily mean we should become inactive in serving the Lord’s cause. For those who are physically able but isolated, personal study, listening to convention recordings, corresponding with other brethren, and various witness activities are all profitable forms of service. For those who are aged or physically unable to do much of anything, in addition to the foregoing suggested activities, they may receive visitors and be an example of cheerfully enduring under adversity. Above all, we are responsible for doing what we can, and if there is nothing else we can do but pray for others who are actively laboring in the Lord’s vineyard, the Father will reward us for our faithfulness in doing that. ■