

## In Step with Jesus 159

July 6, 2025

**Key Text** “As regards the gospel; they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Romans 11: 28 -29)

### Introduction

We bless the name of the Lord for giving us the opportunity to read His word. We have spent about two and half years reading the book of Acts. It has been a long and exciting journey for us, and I believe that the Apostles who lived the book of Acts also had extraordinarily long and exciting journeys to be able to leave an incredible record of God’s power and faithfulness to us. Acts of the Apostles clearly reveals God’s commitment to work in partnership with feeble human beings to bring salvation to the world. God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, directed the Apostles in their travels, gave them words to speak, encouraged them in times of distress, delivered them from dangers in land and sea, and empowered them to do exploits. The good news is that we have received the same Holy Spirit that God gave the Apostles. However, we can only experience His power to the extent that we are willing to trust Him and obey His commands, day by day and moment by moment. The more we yield ourselves to Him, the greater will be our usefulness in the things of the kingdom.

As we read the final verses of the book of Acts today, I pray that God will give us more of His Spirit so that we can accomplish more to His glory and hasten the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### Acts 28:17- 30

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar— though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.” 21 And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. 22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening, he expounded 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. 24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. 25 And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

26 "Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." 27 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' 28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." 30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

## REFLECTIONS

Shortly after Paul's arrival to Rome, he invited the elders of the Jews and explained the reason for his arrest and imprisonment. He spent an entire day teaching them from the scriptures but, as usual, there was division among them. Some believed, while others rejected the message. The arguments between the believing and unbelieving parties disrupted the gathering. But before they departed, Paul made the most profound statement about the importance of human choices in the plan of salvation. By choice, the Jews had refused to hear and understand the gospel, and God was not going to force their will. But the good news is that God never gave up on the Jews. He kept on giving them opportunities to experience God's love and rethink their decisions. Even today, He has not given up on the Jews because God cannot fail on His covenant with Abraham. His gifts and calling are irrevocable. The Jews rejected the gospel, and God grafted the Gentiles into the body of Christ. But, through the Gentiles, the Jews are learning more about the gospel, and many of them are returning to the Lord.

Here is the lesson for us. We may have friends and family members who have rejected the gospel. While we are supposed to respect their decisions and never force our will on them, we must never give up on them. Love never fails and love will never let go. I pray that God will give us that unfailing love for our people so that we will continue to serve them until they see the goodness of God in us and turn to God in repentance.