

# CHAPTER 10: ROME AND BEYOND

Acts 27–28 — “If We Finish Like They Did ...”

## WHAT THEY FACED

Paul’s journey to Rome tested everything he had learned about leadership. A deadly storm, a shipwreck, a venomous snakebite, and two years of house arrest stood between him and his ultimate destination. Yet these obstacles carried him to the very heart of the empire where his mission would be completed. He faced a life-threatening voyage where the ship “was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind” (Acts 27:15). He bore leadership responsibility in crisis with 276 people depending on his guidance. He encountered the supernatural through divine interventions, miraculous healings, and protection in danger. He endured restricted ministry under guard that limited, but did not stop, his influence. The question was simple: Would he finish strong, or would the final obstacles defeat him just short of his goal? As Maxwell writes, “How you finish is more important than how you start” (Leadership Gold, p. 278).

## WHAT THEY DID: TURN EVERY SETBACK INTO A SETUP

### PHASE 1: LEADERSHIP DURING CRISIS (Acts 27:1–44)

Against Paul’s counsel, the centurion chose to sail during dangerous weather. Paul warned plainly, “I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also” (27:9–10). A hurricane-force Northeaster seized the ship; for fourteen days they saw neither sun nor stars, and “all hope of being saved was given up” (27:14–20). Then Paul stood and led. He acknowledged the ignored warning, offered God-grounded hope, and relayed a promise: “Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ So keep up your courage... it will happen just as he told me” (27:23–25). He coupled faith with practical leadership—preventing sailors from deserting, urging everyone to eat, giving thanks to God publicly, and restoring confidence. The ship broke apart, but “everyone reached land safely” (27:44), exactly as God had said. As Maxwell’s Law of Navigation reminds us, “Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course” (The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, p. 17).

## PHASE 2: SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTERS (Acts 28:1–10)

Washed ashore on Malta, they received “unusual kindness” from the islanders. While serving—gathering brushwood for the fire—a viper fastened on Paul’s hand. The islanders expected him to die, but he shook it into the fire and suffered no ill effects (28:3–6). Doors opened for ministry as Paul healed Publius’s father and then many others on the island. Honor replaced suspicion; the islanders supplied all that was needed for the journey (28:9–10). Paul’s servant posture and God’s supernatural power established credibility and created opportunity. As Maxwell notes, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” (Winning with People, p. 67).

## PHASE 3: THE ROME ARRIVAL (Acts 28:11–16)

After three months, they sailed on toward Rome. Believers traveled out to meet Paul at the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns; “at the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged” (28:15). In Rome, he lived under house arrest, guarded by a soldier, but with room to receive visitors (28:16). Reputation and relationships paved the way for influence despite chains.

## PHASE 4: THE JEWISH OUTREACH (Acts 28:17–29)

Three days in, Paul summoned the local Jewish leaders, affirmed his loyalty to Israel’s hope, and explained his chains: “It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain” (28:20). They had heard no formal accusations from Judea but wanted to hear his views, acknowledging controversy surrounding “this sect.” Paul arranged a large meeting and, from morning till evening, explained the kingdom of God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Law and the Prophets (28:23). Responses were mixed; some believed, others would not. Citing Isaiah 6, Paul concluded, “God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” (28:28).

## PHASE 5: THE ROMAN MINISTRY (Acts 28:30–31)

For two full years, Paul welcomed all who came to him and “proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!” He was restricted, but the gospel was not. As Maxwell writes, “Leadership is not about the position you hold but the influence you have” (The 360 Degree Leader, p. 89).

## WHAT THEY GOT: FINISHING STRONG IN THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE

Paul reached Rome, the center of the known world, fulfilling a long-held calling and securing a strategic base for global expansion. His influence under house arrest was paradoxically enlarged; officials and ordinary people alike heard the message, and the Gentile mission advanced as Jewish rejection continued and Gentile responsiveness grew. His leadership legacy crystallized. He saved lives through decisive crisis leadership, demonstrated supernatural authority through divine protection and healings, and never wavered from his mission despite relentless obstacles. The church network now stretched from Jerusalem to Rome, with leaders like Timothy and Titus carrying the work, letters providing doctrinal foundations, and a missionary model others could reproduce.

Methodologically, the house-church strategy flourished. Intimate settings enabled deep conversation, ongoing access, and natural relational networks that multiplied the message. Two years of open-door teaching allowed Paul to address complex theological questions without time pressure. The prison-ministry model emerged as well: a captive audience of guards and officials heard the gospel; daily conduct validated the message; suffering authenticated the witness; and divine interventions underscored God's power. As Maxwell observes, "Successful leaders see opportunity in every obstacle" (The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth, p. 134).

## MAXWELL'S LEADERSHIP LAWS IN ACTION

The Law of Legacy covered Paul's final years as he established a ministry that outlasted his life (The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, ch. 21). The Law of Victory appeared as he found ways to win under house arrest. The Law of Sacrifice defined his willingness to lay down personal freedom to complete his mission (The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, ch. 18). The Law of the Test refined his character through every storm, snake, and cell (The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day, p. 156).

## MODERN APPLICATION: THE FINISHING STRONG PRINCIPLES

Lead through storms with prophetic perspective and practical direction. Name realities honestly, offer God-centered hope, prevent panic, meet basic needs, lead by example, and refuse to abandon people when pressure mounts. Keep mission focus when everything tries to detour you—remember your calling, trust divine timing, use crises as testimonies, and expect God to keep His word. Turn restrictions into opportunities by embracing forced focus, leveraging intimate ministry, investing in sustained impact, and building strategic networks as

people come and go. Cultivate the supernatural dimension of leadership through prayer, fasting, and spiritual discernment; follow God's guidance into calculated risks; and pray for others as a public witness to God's power. As Maxwell writes, "Spiritual leadership requires both natural ability and supernatural empowerment" (Spiritual Leadership, p. 89).

## YOUR WEEK 11 CHALLENGE

On Monday, assess the storms you face and plan how to provide hope and practical direction so you can lead people through the crisis rather than around it. On Tuesday, review your mission focus and ask whether you are still headed toward your original calling; identify distractions and recommit to your "Rome." On Wednesday, list current limitations—financial, organizational, health, or otherwise—and design ways to turn each constraint into an opportunity for influence. On Thursday, strengthen your supernatural dependence by scheduling regular times to seek God's direction, and begin praying specifically for His interventions in your leadership. On Friday, plan your legacy by asking what would continue if your active ministry ended today; identify the core elements to preserve and transfer. On Saturday, evaluate your network by mapping your present sphere of influence and identifying key relationships that could multiply your impact. On Sunday, make a finishing-strong commitment; teach your people the importance of completing God's calling, challenge them to stay faithful regardless of obstacles, and celebrate how God uses difficulties to advance His kingdom.

Week 11 Goal: Establish at least one system or relationship that will extend your ministry impact beyond your current limitations.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do you respond when hope is gone—do you navigate or drift? What obstacles are threatening to derail your calling, and how will you persist? Are you treating limitations as barriers or as setups for new opportunities? Where are you relying more on human planning than on divine guidance? If your active ministry ended unexpectedly, what would continue—and what needs to be built so it can?

The Acts 27–28 formula is clear: crisis leadership plus mission persistence plus supernatural dependence plus strategic networking equals finishing strong. Maxwell reminds us, "The secret to success is not starting strong but finishing strong" (Leadership Gold, p. 289). Paul's final chapters show that great leaders

don't just begin well—they complete their mission despite obstacles, restrictions, and setbacks.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Storms reveal real leaders. Mission focus overcomes obstacles. Restrictions can become opportunities. Supernatural power validates leadership. Character under pressure builds credibility. Strategic relationships multiply impact. Finishing strong defines legacy.

## THE ACTS COMPLETION CHECKLIST

Clarify your “Rome” and align daily work to your ultimate purpose. Prepare for crises so people look to you for hope and wise decisions. Maintain a living connection to God’s guidance and power. Build relationships and partnerships that multiply your influence and continue your work. Maximize opportunities within limits so effectiveness endures despite barriers. Create systems and train successors so the mission outlasts you. Guard your integrity under accusation and pressure so trials strengthen, not sour, your soul. As Maxwell challenges, “The test of a leader is not how well he or she functions in times of comfort and convenience, but how they lead under fire” (The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader, p. 67).

## THE ROME PRINCIPLE

Rome represents the ultimate destination of your calling—completing what God assigned despite every storm Satan can send. Identify your Rome. Ask whether you are still on course. Name the storms that threaten to shipwreck your mission. Recognize who needs your leadership in the crisis. Decide now how you will finish—with a plan and a legacy that endures.

Paul’s Rome results were unmistakable. Geographically, he reached the empire’s center. Strategically, he established a base for global expansion. Theologically, he completed a doctrinal foundation through his letters. In leadership, he developed a team that continued after his death. In legacy, he catalyzed a movement that changed world history. If you finish like Paul finished, your influence can extend far beyond anything you imagine today.

## FINAL CHALLENGE: THE ACTS LEGACY

As this eleven-week journey closes, fix your eyes on Acts' final snapshot: "He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!" (Acts 28:31). Are you proclaiming God's kingdom or just building your own organization? Are you teaching about Jesus Christ or promoting yourself? Are you doing it with boldness, or holding back in fear? Are you pressing forward without hindrance, or letting obstacles stop you? The promise remains: "If we do what they did, we'll get what they got." They got a movement that transformed the world and continues to grow after two thousand years. They did what you have studied in these chapters—timeless principles, Spirit-empowered methods, courageous leadership. Will you apply what you've learned and join the ranks of leaders who change the world for Jesus Christ?

"Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less. The question is not whether you will influence someone. The question is how you will use the influence you have" (The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, p. 11). Your Acts moment is now. Your Rome awaits. Your legacy begins today.

## CONCLUSION: YOUR ACTS LEGACY

Congratulations. You have completed an eleven-week journey through the greatest leadership case study ever written. The early church started with nothing and changed everything. Now the continuing journey begins. Review these chapters regularly; principles require reinforcement. Share what you've learned; teaching others will deepen your own mastery. Apply one principle at a time; sequence beats scatter. Expect opposition; the same forces that opposed them will oppose you. Trust God's timing; their "sudden" breakthroughs were decades in the making. Build for legacy; construct systems and develop leaders that will outlast your personal involvement.

"If we do what they did, we'll get what they got." They followed Spirit-led, time-tested principles. They received fruit that outlived them. You serve the same God, empowered by the same Holy Spirit, carrying the same gospel. "The greatest leaders are not those who achieve the most for themselves, but those who empower others to achieve beyond what they thought possible" (Developing the Leaders Around You, p. 198). Your Acts legacy starts now. Your Rome awaits. The world needs leaders who will do what they did to get what they got. Will you be one of them?