



Ascribed to Valentin de Boulogne  
of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Century

## The Life of Paul Part 5 of 5

Paul's Trial and Appeal to Rome

Acts 21: 17 to the end of the book.

58 - 63 AD

Our concluding study explores the final segment of Paul's life for which we have a detailed record. After concluding what we call his "Third Missionary Journey" Paul travelled from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Not long after he arrived in Jerusalem Paul was spotted in the temple area and some Jewish opponents were stirred into action. A tumult ensued. The Roman authorities in Jerusalem, anxious to preserve the peace, removed Paul from the midst of the crowd though they did allow him to speak to the crowd from the steps of the Roman barracks.

The people listened to Paul's testimony until he began to talk about God sending him to the Gentiles and then their anger was reignited. The Romans were about to beat him and question him about why he upset people so much when he told them that he was a Roman citizen. The authorities immediately became more cautious in how they treated him. There was more trouble the next day when Paul appeared before the Jewish Sanhedrin under a Roman guard. He was again removed for his own safety. When the Roman Commander heard that there was a plot amongst the Jews to kill Paul he detailed a large detachment of soldiers to escort Paul to Caesarea so that his case could be heard by the Governor Felix. (Acts 21:27-23:35)

The High Priest and others from Jerusalem came to Caesarea to press charges against Paul. They accused him of being a ringleader in the Nazarene sect and of stirring up trouble everywhere. When Paul was given a chance to reply he admitted being a follower of "the Way," which he acknowledged the Jews called a sect. According to the account in Acts, Felix, who was married to a Jewess, was already acquainted with "the Way" and was curious to hear more of Paul's story. To placate the Jews, Felix kept Paul imprisoned in Caesarea for two years although he allowed him access to friends. (Acts 24:1-27)

When Felix was replaced as Governor by Festus, the Jews again tried to revive the case against Paul. Festus agreed to hear his case. When he had done so he felt that it was all an internal religious matter, but Paul refused to be taken to Jerusalem to be tried by the Jews. Instead, as a Roman citizen, he appealed to the Emperor. Before Paul was sent to Rome, King Agrippa from Galilee visited Festus and asked to hear Paul's story. Festus was pleased to let Agrippa hear Paul's testimony because he was having some trouble deciding what to put in the report that he had to send to the Emperor to explain why Paul was a prisoner. After Festus and Agrippa had interviewed Paul they agreed that Paul had done nothing wrong. However, since he had appealed to the Emperor then the Emperor would have to hear his case. (Acts 25:1-26:32)

Shortly afterwards, arrangements were made for Paul to be taken to Rome under guard along with some other prisoners. Some fellow believers were allowed to accompany Paul on this trip. Rome was about 1500 miles by sea away from Caesarea It was a very dramatic journey. The

first part of the ship voyage went smoothly but it was getting into the stormy season on the Mediterranean. When they were sailing past Crete Paul warned them of danger, but the captain who owned the ship wanted to press on to what he thought would be a better wintering spot. Unfortunately Paul was right and the ship sailed into a violent storm that lasted for days. The events of the storm are described in considerable detail in Acts. (Acts 27:13-44) Eventually the ship ran aground on the island of Malta. The ship was destroyed but everyone on board managed to make it ashore alive. After a harrowing landing they were given hospitality in the home of Publius, the chief official of the island. Paul continued to minister while he was on Malta. The group travelling to Rome waited three months on Malta until the winter was over and then they resumed their trip. They landed at Syracuse in Sicily and then went on to Italy and eventually to Rome.

When they reached Rome Paul was allowed to live in his own house with a soldier to guard him. Three days after he arrived in Rome, Paul met with the Jewish leaders there and told them his story. They professed not to know Paul's story and were anxious to hear it. As one would expect, some believed Paul's teaching and became converts to the Way and some did not. With considerable freedom Paul stayed in his rented house in Rome awaiting a hearing from the Emperor. Paul's imprisonment in Rome can be dated as being from 59 AD until 61 or 62 AD.

The Book of Acts ends abruptly leaving our curiosity about Paul's final days unsatisfied. Paul's "pastoral letters" to Timothy and Titus appear to have been written after the events described in Acts and so shed some light on Paul's final days. There is a tradition that he made a trip to Spain. Tradition also suggests that he was executed in Rome in 67 or 68 AD. It is thought that Paul's second letter to Timothy was written during that second imprisonment in Rome just before his death.

Concerning Paul's letters:

Four of Paul's letters are assigned to the period that Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Ephesians, Philemon and Colossians are thought to been written in 60 AD and Philippians perhaps in 61 AD.

This map will be helpful in tracing the route followed on Paul's journey to Rome.

