

1. On the 27th day of June I began a study of the life of Paul. Since that first lesson we have completed a review of the early life of Paul, his conversion experience, the first missionary journey (47-48), the second missionary journey (51-53) and a travelogue of Paul's third missionary journey (53-57).

2. Last week when the clock tolled 7:45 p.m. we were about to study what can best be called "The Imprisonment Period." I want to review some of that learned and then begin new material on page three.

**The Third Missionary Journey**

1. Paul with several disciples went on the third missionary journey. A partial listing of those traveling with him is Timothy, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Tychicus and Trophemus. To determine the make-up of the cadre one must study carefully Acts 19:24-40.

2. Traversing once again to the Galatian region and Phrygia, Paul spent some time in follow-up work, strengthening his disciples in the Galatian cities.



3. Then he pursued his journey westward, coming into Asia and to its key city Ephesus.

4. Here he spent approximately three years, his longest stay in any single place.

5. At this point in history, Ephesus was the leading center of the Roman province of Asia. It will later become the center of 1st and early 2nd century Christianity.

6. A number of evil practices found in Ephesus proved to be a challenge to Paul. The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision saying, do not be afraid but keep on speaking, do not be silent.

6.1 One such practice was the “magical arts.” Acts 19:13-23

6.2 Another such practice was the worship of statuary representing Diana who was purported to have fallen from heaven. Acts 19:24-41

7. In spite of these opposing influences, significant results were recorded by Luke: "All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks; and "the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."

8. Thus Ephesus became a “light on a shining hill,” and the careful student of the New Testament should take notice of its subsequent history. It is the only church in the New Testament whose history is traced in various stages from the time of its founding to the end of the Apostolic Age.

9. From Ephesus Paul crossed over the Hellespont into first Macedonia and then south to Corinth before returning to Syria and ultimately Jerusalem. On the return trip he was warned three times by God the Holy Spirit not to go into the “Holy City.”



10. As we noted last week Paul refused to heed these warnings. At Jerusalem Paul and James became full fledged “reversionist.” Acts 21:3-24

10.1 Notice Paul does what he has warned all his gentile converts never to do: "get involved again with the evil legalism of the Mosaic Law."

## The Imprisonment Period

1. At first sight it appears strange that Luke should have given so large a section of his narrative to Paul's imprisonments, when it was the missionary expansion of the early church that had occupied him up to this point.

2. But it would seem it was one large part of his apologetic for early Christianity that showed how this "prisoner" would, like many to come, suffer for his faith in Christ.

2.1 Luke's writing of this embarrassing segment of Paul's life also supports the truth of Dr Luke's chronicle. If Luke was trying to aggrandize Paul and his team, he clearly would have left this part out.

3. Concerning this period of Paul's life, it will be well to study Paul's relations with the following persons and groups:

3.1 With James and the Jerusalem elders; (Acts 21:18-26)

Acts 21:18 The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.

Acts 21:19 Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

Acts 21:20 When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law.

Acts 21:21 They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.

Acts 21:22 What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come,

Acts 21:23 so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow.

Acts 21:24 Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.

Acts 21:25 As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

Acts 21:26 The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

3.2 With the Jewish population of Jerusalem in general; (Acts 21:27-32)

Acts 21:27 When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him,

Acts 21:28 shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place."

Acts 21:29 (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)

Acts 21:30 The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.

### 3.3 With the Jewish mob outside the temple area; (Acts 21:40-22:22)

Acts 21:40 Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:

Acts 22:1 "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."

Acts 22:2 When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said:

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Acts 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

Acts 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

Acts 22:6 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.

Acts 22:7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

Acts 22:8 "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.

Acts 22:9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

Acts 22:10 "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

Acts 22:11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

Acts 22:12 "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

Acts 22:13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

Acts 22:14 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

Acts 22:15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

Acts 22:17 "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance

Acts 22:18 and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

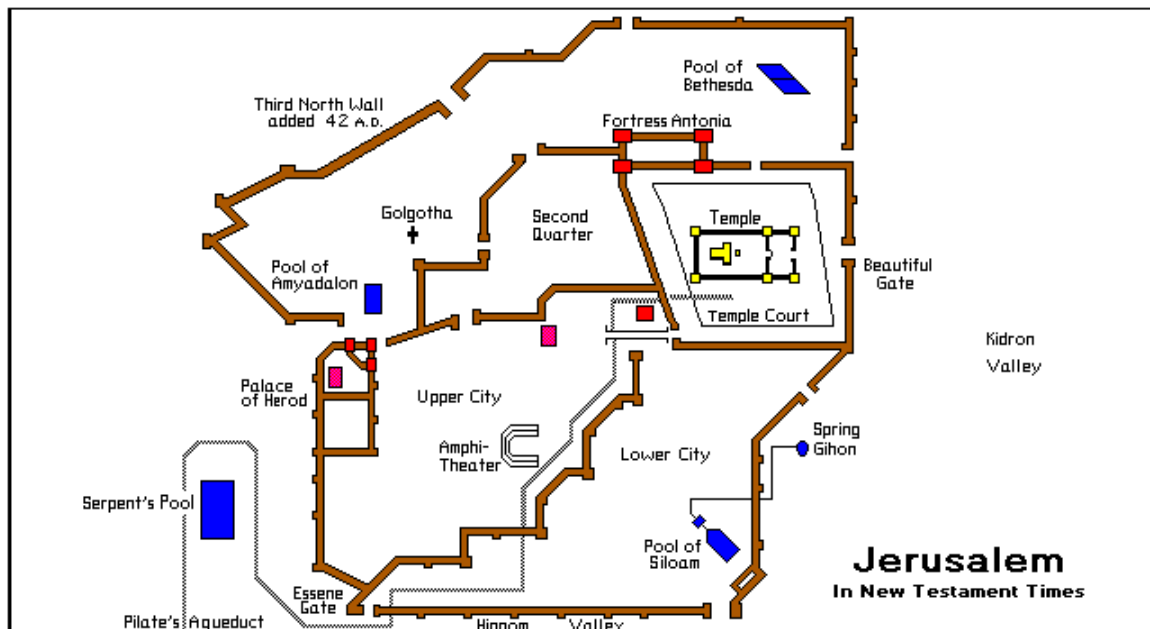
Acts 22:19 "'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you.

Acts 22:20 And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

Acts 22:21 "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Acts 22:22 The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

3.4 With Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:26), the captain of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem. (Acts 21: 31-40)



Acts 21:31 While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

Acts 21:32 He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Acts 21:33 The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

Acts 21:34 Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks.

Acts 21:35 When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers.

Acts 21:36 The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!"

Acts 21:37 As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied.

Acts 21:38 "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"

Acts 21:39 Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

Acts 21:40 Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Hebrew:

3.5 With the council (or the Sanhedrin, the supreme governing body of Judaism in Jerusalem, consisting of 70 men plus the high priest; (Acts 22:30-23:11)

Acts 22:30 The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Acts 23:1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."

Acts 23:2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth.

Acts 23:3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

Acts 23:4 Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?"

Acts 23:5 Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"

Acts 23:6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead."

Acts 23:7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

Acts 23:8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

Acts 23:9 There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

Acts 23:10 The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

Acts 23:11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

3.6 With Felix, the procurator of Judea; (Acts 24:1-27)

3.6.1 The Prosecution's Case

Acts 24:1 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor.

Acts 24:2 When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation.

Acts 24:3 Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude.

Acts 24:4 But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

Acts 24:5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect

Acts 24:6 and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him.

*Act 24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,*

Acts 24:8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

Acts 24:9 The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

### 3.6.2 The Defendant's Case

Acts 24:10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense.

Acts 24:11 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

Acts 24:12 My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city.

Acts 24:13 And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.

Acts 24:14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,

Acts 24:15 and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Acts 24:16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

Acts 24:17 "After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings.

Acts 24:18 I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance.

Acts 24:19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me.

Acts 24:20 Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin --

Acts 24:21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

### 3.6.3 Judge Felix orders an indefinite continuance.

Acts 24:22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way (Christianity), adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."

Acts 24:23 He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

Acts 24:24 Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 24:25 As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."

Acts 24:26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

Acts 24:27 When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison (Paul's third imprisonment).

### 3.7 With Festus, successor to Felix; (Acts 25:1-12)

Acts 25:1 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem,

Acts 25:2 where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul.

Acts 25:3 They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way.

Acts 25:4 Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon.

Acts 25:5 Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong."

Acts 25:6 After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

Acts 25:7 When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

Acts 25:8 Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

Acts 25:9 Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

Acts 25:10 Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well.

Acts 25:11 If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"



Acts 25:12 After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

### 3.8 Herod Agrippa II

3.8.1 Agrippa was a Roman-appointed king over certain territories adjacent to and within Palestine; Agrippa listens to Paul's defense. Paul gives Agrippa an historical account of Israel and the coming of the Messiah. Paul asks "do you believe Israel's prophets? Agrippa answers "I am almost persuaded to be a Christian."

4. Let me summarize these troubling relationships: During this period, Paul claimed his Roman citizenship, appealed to Caesar for a fair trial, and was judged to be innocent of the charges against him by both Festus and Agrippa.

5. Agrippa tells Festus "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment. He might have been set free had he not appealed to Caesar." Paul is sent to Rome.

Acts 27:1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.



6. His voyage to Rome eventuated in a two-year period of unhindered preaching and teaching, practically on Caesar's doorstep. (Acts 28:30-31)

6.1 It is here the story penned by Luke comes to its end. What happened to Paul then? Did he ever appear before Nero?

6.2 If so, was he condemned and executed, or released?

6.2.1 There is a great deal of disputation concerning whether Paul endured two Roman imprisonments.

6.2.2 I am certainly of the opinion that he most certainly did.

6.2.3 My position recognizes the two with an approximate year of liberty between the two.

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