

A Holy Temple

In this final lesson, we will survey the last phase of biblical history. We will cover the time of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem to the last apostle, John, who authored the book of Revelation in the mid 90s AD. The last major map assignment that you will work on will cover Paul's voyage to Rome.

To Carry My Name Before the Children of Israel

Near the end of Paul's time in the temple, an opposition had risen against him that had no merit (Acts 23:12 ff). This resulted in his near death. Had not the local Roman cohort come to the scene, Paul would have been killed. Notice that this did not come as a result of Paul's preaching in Jerusalem. Their reaction to him was based solely on his reputation. It was about AD 56, which means that it had been over twenty years since Paul's conversion. He had a distinct and well known reputation for his shameless proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The fact that he had almost regularly visited synagogues on his missionary journeys allowed his reputation to spread through the channels of Jewish society. The continued preaching of the Gospel did not soften the hearts of those particular Jews in Jerusalem. Their hatred for Christ was just as furious as it was when Stephen testified that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Scriptures. After these several years had passed, they were still ready to disdain the prohibition of execution. When Paul had the opportunity to address the Jews, he presented the account of his conversion in Hebrew. This he did as a way to relate to the Jews, showing them that he belonged to their race. However, as soon as he said that the Lord sent him to the Gentiles (22:21), the crowd broke out again. His enemies used every opportunity, even the least of accusations, to bring shame and guilt on Paul's character and reputation.

A Roman Citizen

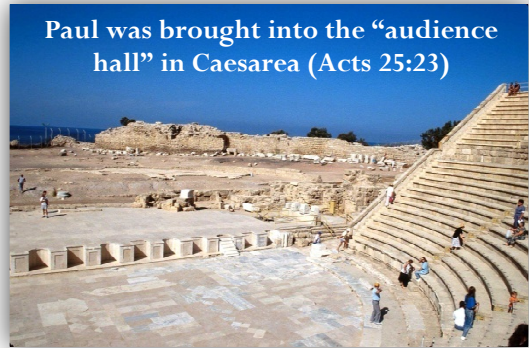
When Paul was brought before the Roman tribune, he faced the possibility of corporal punishment. To be flogged meant to be stretched out, tied down and brutally whipped. It could have killed Paul. However, the fact that he was a Roman citizen of more nobility than the tribune (22:28), and had committed no crime, kept him from this torture. With an angry mob on one side, and a guiltless Roman citizen on the other side, the tribune was not sure what to do. From this scenario, you can see how quickly a man would have been punished just to silence a mob. It was not until the next day that the tribune finally tried to find out why the Jews were in a rage (22:30).

Paul was brought to a formal meeting before Ananias the high priest. This was not the high priest Annas, but possibly Caiaphas' son. As you are aware, the Sadducees were associated with the high priest, but they along with Pharisees comprised the council before whom Paul spoke (23:1-11). Paul shrewdly used this situation to his advantage by rightly testifying that he was on trial for proclaiming the resurrection of the dead (23:6). This divided the party, and eliminated some Pharisees. Nonetheless, a formal plot was made to execute him. Paul was again put in the barracks after another uproar had risen. Because the Jews could not manage to solve the problem, Paul was brought before governor Felix. On Map 8, move from **Jerusalem** to **Caesarea**. Use whatever color you want! When Paul had arrived under much Roman protection (God's protection) to Caesarea, so had Ananias. We are told that Ananias came "down" from Jerusalem. This means down in elevation, not south (24:1). Paul presented his case before Felix: "I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust."

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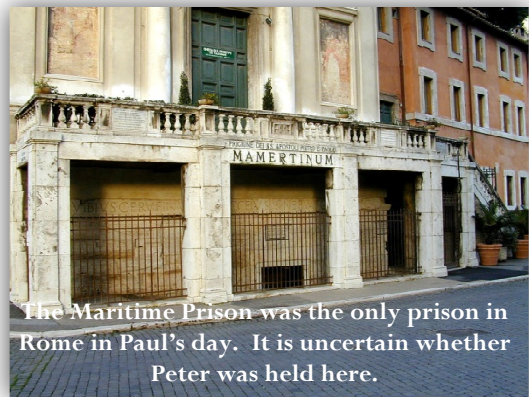
(Acts 24:14-15). Felix rightly saw no guilt in him, but kept him in prison, which protected Paul, but kept the Jews happy (24:27). We find the same predicament as in Jerusalem. There was intense pressure from the Jews, but also from the legal responsibility Felix had as a Roman official. Porcius Festus replaced Felix after two years had passed. Because nothing had been accomplished under Felix, the Jews now took the opportunity to present their case against Paul. Festus wanted to do the Jews a favor by having Paul tried in Jerusalem, because he knew that would allow for the Jews to kill him (25:9). Paul was wiser than that. When in Jerusalem, Paul already knew that the Lord was going to have him go to Rome (23:11). Knowing this, he appealed to the authority of Caesar for his case. The genius of God's providence cannot be overemphasized. Paul took advantage of his legal rights to get to Rome for the Gospel ministry. While he had been arrested for preaching Christ, he would take advantage of Roman law to preach in Rome. In order for this to take place, Paul would be heard before Herod Agrippa II. We are told that he and Bernice came to Caesarea with "great pomp" (25:23). This shows that what was happening was a big deal. It also begins to show the significance of Christianity's impact on the Roman Empire. When Paul presented his case to Festus and Agrippa, no guilt was recognized by either of them. Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." But if Paul had been set free, he would have been killed. And Paul knew that.

Paul was brought into the "audience hall" in Caesarea (Acts 25:23)



To Caesar You Shall Go

Paul's journey to Rome was a wild adventure at sea. Few accounts from the Bible involve seafaring tales. Because of the evidently prominent hand of God in this account, we can see it right along with Noah's flood, Jonah, and the disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee. Even at the outset, Paul the prisoner is allowed to visit his friends after stopping in **Sidon**. Because of the heavy winds, the ship sailed around the northern side of Cyprus to **Myra**. They arduously continued on the northern side of Rhodes to **Cnidus**. Continuing to struggle, they sailed around the eastern cape of Crete to **Fair Havens and Lasea**. Because they could not spend the winter in this location, they attempted to sail to Phoenix, but the wind drove them out to sea, sailing south around the island **Cauda**. As they sailed northwest toward the Adriatic Sea, they became completely lost in the storm, and realized their mistake in leaving Crete, which Paul had told them. However, he encouraged them that they would reach Rome. But it would not be without trouble (27:21-26). When they had reached the island of **Malta**, they attempted to sail the ship directly up to the beach. This was their only option, as the ship's boats had already been let go (27:32). However, the ship was torn to pieces by a reef, and the men were



The Maritime Prison was the only prison in Rome in Paul's day. It is uncertain whether Peter was held here.



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brought ashore by swimming or hanging on planks (27:43-44). Just as Paul had said, they all safely reached land. While they stayed on the island for the winter, the people of Crete treated them well. Paul healed many who had diseases. After a three month stay, they set sail for **Syracuse**. They reached **Rome** by traveling through **Rhegium**, **Puteoli**, and **the Forum of Appius**.

They Will Listen

When Paul was in Rome, Luke tells us nothing about his testimony before Caesar. As you are aware, the objective of going to Caesar was to preach the Gospel to the Romans, which is what Luke writes about. When the book of Acts began, Jesus told the apostles how they will testify about him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Paul was now in Rome, the heart of the empire. Just as Jesus had taught his disciples about the kingdom of God, so we find Paul doing this here. Yet, though he preached to the Jews, it was not them who listened. Acts closes with the words of Isaiah, which had been used by Jesus to pronounce judgment on Israel (see Matthew 13:14). Just as we saw in the beginning of Acts, the kingdom of God is not the same thing as the kingdom of Israel. For at this time, those who had believed were Gentiles.

Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.

Acts 28:28

Lest you become confused, this does not mean that God has completely rejected Jews. The scope of God's plan includes the inclusion of Jews, which you can read more about in Romans 11.

So, What Happened Next?

When Paul was imprisoned in Rome, it was sometime in the early 60s AD. The remaining history available to us depends on comments from the rest of the New Testament, and traditional history. Most understand that while Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he wrote Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. These are often called the "prison epistles." After a two years of house arrest (28:30), Paul was released. Based on comments from Titus (1:5, 3:12), Paul seemed to have spent time in Crete and Greece. He also may have traveled to Asia Minor again, and Macedonia. It is possible that he traveled to Spain as well (Romans 15:28). Towards the end of his life, he was taken to Rome again, and executed in the mid 60s AD. Because of his Roman citizenship, most believe that he was beheaded. Roman citizens could not be crucified, burned, or sent to the lions. Tradition holds that Peter was taken to Rome about the same time, and crucified upside-down because he did not consider himself worthy to be crucified in the same way as his Lord. In AD 62, James the brother of the Lord was killed in Jerusalem. It is most likely that this is the James who had written the epistle of James several years earlier. By AD 66, the Jewish revolt arose, which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. However, it was not until AD 132 that Christians were driven out of Jerusalem for refusing to participate in the Bar-Kochba revolt. Subsequently, all Jews and Christians were forbidden from entering the city by Rome. First Corinthians 9:5 indicates that Jesus' other brothers had become Christians, and were involved in some kind of missionary work. They had mocked him in his earthly days, but later served him.

To the End of the Earth

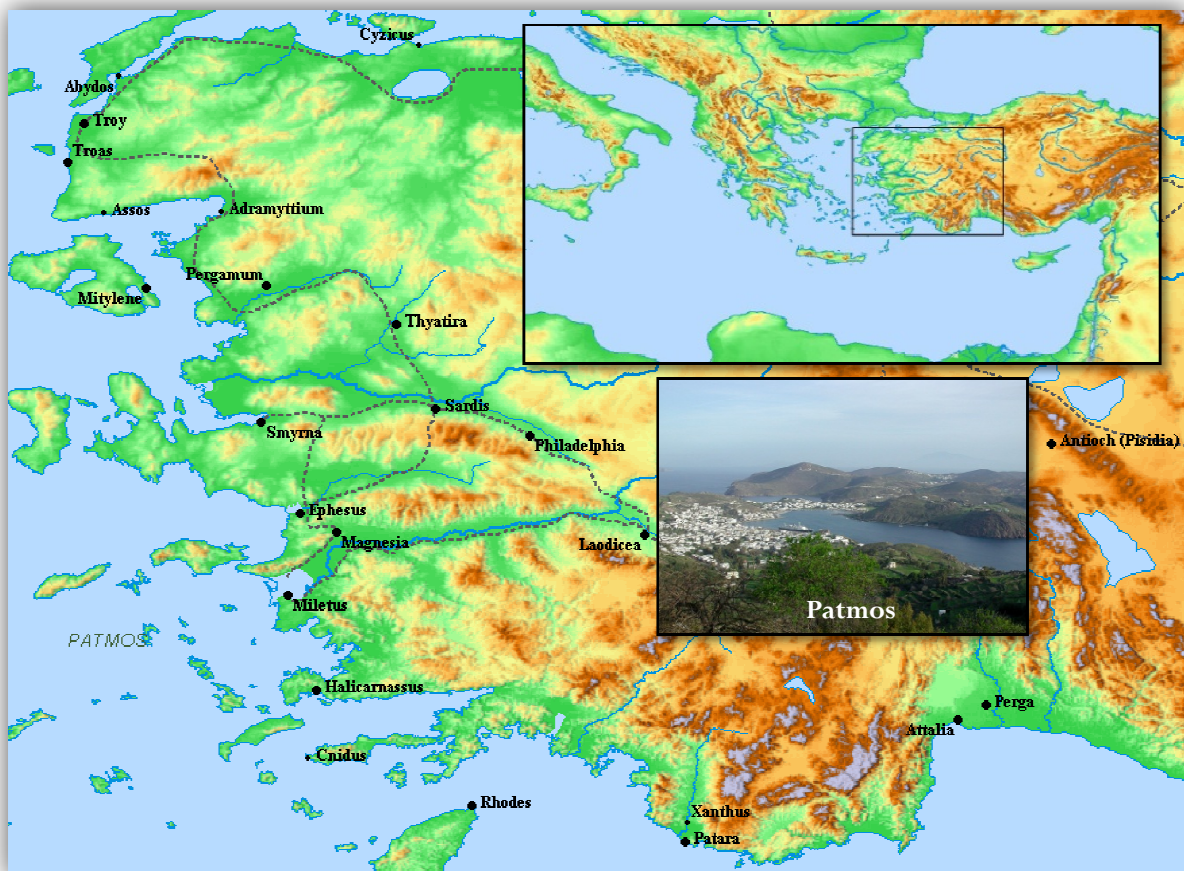
In the time following the destruction of the temple, the New Testament books of Jude; John; 1,2,3, John; and Revelation were written. What we know as the twenty seven books of the New Testament had all been authored by AD 100. However, several generations would pass before the church would universally recognize the "canon" of Scripture. On the verge of the second century, Christianity had wrapped around the Mediterranean world. The Roman Empire was permanently

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affected by this. Some have argued that it was Christianity that brought the Roman Empire to an end several centuries later. Jesus' words were being fulfilled, and continue to be today.

His Servant John

The last writings of the New Testament belong to the apostle John. He is responsible for the Gospel of John; 1,2,3 John; and Revelation. The only New Testament books not assigned to you are Revelation and the epistles of John. However, if you read John's epistles, you will encounter his sensitivity to Greek philosophy, which had crept into the church. In Lesson 6, it was argued that John was not necessarily interacting with Greek thought. However, in his first epistle, he is explicit: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God" (1 John 4:1-3). The church would later encounter Greek philosophy in the form of Gnosticism, which was embraced by many who called themselves Christians. However, the church rejected this almost universally. At the end of John's life, he was exiled on the island of Patmos. From there he wrote "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." It was addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor. Despite contemporary sensationalism surrounding this book, we need to keep two things in mind as we read it. First, the book was written as a blessing to those who read it. Why? Because it is God's Word, and you are blessed when you read God's Word. Secondly, it needs to be read in light of its historical context. It was addressed to the churches for whom the time was near (1:3). This, and its address to seven actual churches help in providing clarity to us. Whether you read or survey the first three chapters, use the map below to identify each of the seven churches as well as the island of Patmos. What do they have in common?



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As we close the final lesson, we need to step back and look at what the Lord has done among this people. In the time of Adam and Eve in the garden, God promised a seed to the woman (Genesis 3:15). As the Old Testament unfolds, we see the covenant promise to the patriarchs through the generations from Abraham to David. God had delivered his people from Egypt, and while in the land, from Canaanite oppression. As the people dwelt in the land, their continued plummeting into sin and idolatry caused them to be thrown out of the land (2 Kings 17). Additionally, the weight of their sin had continually been reminded to them through the sacrificial system. When Israel returned to the land, the former glory days of Solomon would not be recovered. As the Old Testament closes, there still remains Israel's central problem: sin. This is reinforced further from what we have learned about the intertestamental period. But when we come to the New Testament, we find a people not looking for salvation from sin, but deliverance from the Romans. The God of Israel came to his people. Born of the most humble estate, Jesus was no proud nationalist. The Lord taught that one must repent of his sins and follow him. This is what Israel was supposed to do. However, they hated to hear this, and as a result, violently killed Jesus. Yet it was by his death that Christ would save sinners. As we see in the Gospels, and more clearly in Acts, the good news of salvation in Christ is open to Gentiles as equally as Jews. No longer do the people of God approach him through the Levitical temple system. No longer is there a requirement for the sacrifice of bulls and goats. No longer has God made himself known to the children of Israel. The temple of God is no longer a tent being carried through the desert, or stone building in Jerusalem. The temple of God is his people, who he calls from every tribe and tongue.

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:11-22

Greek	Pronunciation	English	Part of Speech
ekklesia	ekk-ley-see-a	assembly, gathering, church	noun
eklektor	ek-lek-toss	chosen, selected, elect	noun
pneuma	(p)nouma	wind, breath, (a) spirit	noun
doul o~	do-loss	slave	noun
agaph	aw-gawp-ay	love	noun
ai hqeia	all-ai-thea	truth	noun