

# Study 6: Acts 19 - 28

DO NOT SKIP OVER THIS STUDY. IT ALSO SETS THE SCENE FOR MANY OF PAUL'S LETTERS.

The focus on Paul's ministry, and the growth of the church "...in the rest of the world..." continues. In this study we see Paul's third missionary journey and his journey to Rome as the gospel continues to spread around the Roman Empire.

## ***Introduction***

**Chapter 19 –Third Journey, Ephesus, AD 54**

**Chapter 20 –Third Journey, Corinth, Macedonia AD 57-58**

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## ***Homework and preparation for next week:***

- Read the notes as a review of the study
- What event triggered Paul's arrest and his subsequent imprisonment?
  - Where was he?
  - How long from the time of his imprisonment until his final release?
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- Did this help or hinder the spread of the gospel?
- Skim-read 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Philippians
  - Who are the major players in these letters?
  - What are the major issues?

## Notes for study 6: Acts 19 - 28

### Introduction

The focus on Paul's ministry, and the growth of the church "...in the rest of the world..." continues. In this study we see Paul's third missionary journey and his journey to Rome as the gospel continues to spread around the Roman Empire.

### Chapter 19 –Third Journey, Ephesus, AD 54

The third journey began after Paul had spent *some time* in Antioch (presumably a few months), and Luke then covers quite a bit of Paul's travels that must have taken several months in less than a full verse (18:23). Revisiting again the churches that he had previously established, this was the fourth time that Paul had visited the (southern) Galatian cities and churches.

Returning to Ephesus, Paul found some brethren who must have been converted by Apollos before he moved on to Corinth (19:1). Aquilla and Priscilla were still there (1 Cor 16:19) but returned to Rome during Paul's stay (Rom 16:3-4, written from Ephesus towards the end of Paul's visit at this time). He asks these brethren whether they had received the miraculous spiritual gifts (which came through the laying on of the apostles hands, and since he was an apostle, he could give them to them). The answer to Paul's question led to a surprising revelation. Not only had they not received the spiritual gifts, ***they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit!*** That was when things got interesting! It revealed a problem with their baptism (which originated from Apollos), and Paul corrected it by re-baptizing them. After this, Paul laid his hands on them and they received the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit (19:6).

On his first visit to Ephesus, Paul had a very positive reception from the Jews, and now he gets similar enthusiasm. Eventually he was thrown out of the Synagogue and went to the *lecture room* of Tyrannus, which "...continued for two years..." (19:10). When added to the three months he had already been teaching in the Synagogue, makes two years and three months before the riot. As a result "...all who dwelt in Asia heard the word ... both Jews and Greeks" (19:10).

As a major centre of trade with people coming and going all of the time, Ephesus provided a great opportunity to teach the travellers, and spread the gospel. The *seven churches of Asia* are all in the vicinity, and were most likely planted as a direct result of Paul's work – quite likely from evangelistic tours from Ephesus. John later lived in Ephesus and worked amongst the churches.

During this time, Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians (1Cor 4:17; 16:5-9), because he had heard about what was going on there. It is possible that he even made a quick trip to Corinth (not recorded by Luke). The church in Corinth wrote a letter to Paul asking several questions. Paul responds in the letter we know as 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians (more on this in a few studies time).

After casting out some demons from *the seven sons of Sceva*, the people of Ephesus reacted with great fear and respect (19:17). They then turned away from their belief in magic and turned to God, becoming Christians. Renouncing their former occult practices, they "...came and openly confessed their evil deeds..." (19:18). To put an end to their practice of the magical "arts" they also "...brought their (occult) books together and burned them in the sight of all..." (19:19). The price of the books was reckoned at fifty thousand pieces of silver, the equivalent to about \$10 Million in today's dollars.

After two and a half years in Ephesus, the church had grown and Paul was thinking about moving on to other areas – including revisiting Corinth. "...After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also."..." (19:21 NIV). His plans also included a visit to Spain (Rom 15:24, 28). In preparation for the journey, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus on ahead, and Titus to Corinth with the letter.

Christianity had grown so much in Ephesus that those who made and sold trinkets to the goddess Diana rose up, considering that their jobs would be threatened. They then stirred up a crowd and “...seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul’s travelling companions...” (19:29), and dragged them into the theatre. Paul wanted to go to the theatre himself, but the brethren restrained him. The frenzy continued for the space of 2 hours, with most of the mob not knowing why they had come together. Eventually the town clerk quietened them down and dismissed the assembly.

## **Chapter 20 –Third Journey, Corinth, Macedonia AD 57-58**

After travelling through Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea are the only churches that we know about), Paul came to Greece (specifically Corinth).

He had expected to meet Titus in Troas (2 Cor 2:12-13), However when he arrived, Titus was not there. This caused Paul to change his travel plans, and rather than go from Troas to Corinth and then into Macedonia, he went into Macedonia first. The Corinthians criticised him for changing his plans, and Paul responds to this in the second letter (2 Cor 1:15- 24).

Paul describes his feelings at this time: “...For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn--conflicts on the outside, fears within. <sup>6</sup> But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, <sup>7</sup> and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever...” (2 Cor 7:5-7 NIV)

Paul was concerned as to what was happening in Corinth, and why Titus had not joined him at Troas. He thought of the problems that Titus must still have been trying to sort out. Paul then moved on to Macedonia, where he found Titus (most likely) at either Thessalonica or Philippi. He then immediately wrote the second letter to the church at Corinth, and writes of his relief that the church had corrected the problems and had received Titus, who “...told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more...” (2 Cor 7:7).

Around this time Paul heard about the Judaising teachers harassing the churches in Galatia, and consequently wrote the Galatian letter. (Second Corinthians and Galatians have many similarities, suggesting that they were written around the same time). When he came to Corinth, he then wrote the letter to the church at Rome, which also has many similar characteristics

Paul “...came to Greece, and spent three months...” (18:2-3), almost certainly in Corinth. This was a follow-up after his initial 18 months visit (now around 5 years earlier).

Paul was making a collection for the poor at Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4). His instruction was for Titus or Timothy to collect the money, but the Corinthians had ignored the instruction, and Paul had to write about it again in the second letter (2 Cor 8:1 – 9:15). He almost embarrasses them into doing the right thing by comparing them with the Macedonians (meaning the Philippians). Corinth was a wealthy city which made its money from the taxes applied to the trade through the city in both directions (North-South, and East-West).

The large sum of money Paul was carrying may have been the motivation for the Jewish attack against him. He intended to return to Jerusalem with the benevolent gift, and then visit Rome and Spain (Rom 15:24). He planned to make the trip to Jerusalem by sea (20:3), but “...when the Jews plotted against him, as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia...” (20:3). The Jews had probably heard about the large sum of money, so he changed his travel plans. Several brethren accompanied him, from many of the churches that he had established. These brethren set sail from Cenchrea as intended, but without Paul. They then waited for him at Troas.

The collection came from the different churches – Gaius and Timothy had come from Galatia, and Tychius and Trophimus from Asia (*the seven churches of Asia*).

Luke joined Paul at Philippi, and he again uses the first person to describe Paul's travels "...were waiting for us at Troas...but we sailed away from Philippi..." (20:5-6 NKJV). Luke represented the church at Philippi, where he had laboured for five years.

The journey from Philippi to Troas was made by ship, after "...the Days of Unleavened Bread..." (20:6), placing his departure as early AD 58, nearly a year after leaving Ephesus.

At Troas, Paul caught up with the brethren who came from Corinth, and "...stayed there for seven days..." (20:6). After meeting with the church on the first day of the week (20:7), Luke travelled with the other brethren to the ship "...we went ahead to the ship..." (20:13NKJV). Paul travelled overland, "...when he met us at Assos, we took him on board..." (20:14 NKJV) which would have given him more time in Troas, perhaps a few hours sleep, and also some time of solitude on his walk. He met the ship and the others at Assos, and sailed to Mitylene, and then past Ephesus to Miletus where he "...called for the elders of the church..." (20:17).

Paul believes that this might be the last time that he will see them. It was 5 years earlier (AD 53) that the church began, and Paul worked with the church for half of that time – the longest that he worked anywhere (that we know of). He predicts that heresies will arise from among them, causing division in the church (20:30). This passage sets the scene for the Ephesian letter (a call to faithfulness, to be written 5 years later), and the two letters to Timothy (about 5 years after that), where Timothy is commissioned to sort out the disorderly elders.

### **Chapter 21 –Third Journey, Caesarea, Jerusalem, AD 58**

The journey back would have taken around four weeks. Eventually arriving at Caesarea, they left the ship and completed the journey overland. At Caesarea, he found "...Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven..." (21:8) deacons appointed in Jerusalem in chapter 6, and is last mentioned in 8:40 as having made his way to Caesarea 20 years earlier.

A "...certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea..." (21:10), and predicted Paul's arrest in Jerusalem. However Paul insisted that he was going to go despite the consequences. He took the eight brethren who had travelled with him from Corinth to Jerusalem with him, as well as some of the brethren from Caesarea (21:16), so there must have been around 12 or so of them all together, bringing with them money collected for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

They arrived in Jerusalem before the feast of Pentecost (around 40 days had passed since leaving Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread). The day after arriving, Paul went to visit James, also taking Luke "...with us..." (21:18) and some other brethren as well.

A rift still existed between the Jews and the Gentiles, despite the Jerusalem conference 7 years earlier. The Jewish believers were zealous to keep the Law and had supposed that Paul had been saying that the Jews should forsake Moses' Law (21:20-21). However, Paul never advocated the abandonment of Jewish practices, nor commanded the Gentiles to follow and keep them. Paul showed that he practised Jewish rites by purifying himself and going into the Temple (21:26).

He was seen by some of the Jews from Asia who had come to Jerusalem for the feast, and had recognised Trophimus the Ephesian, and seen him with Paul. When they saw Paul in the Temple they wrongly concluded that Paul had taken Trophimus into the Temple with him.

They then stirred up the whole city, and seized Paul. The penalty of defiling the Temple was death – even to Roman citizens – and the Jews were about to administer it to Paul. The huge commotion attracted the attention of the Roman soldiers who overlooked the Temple courts from the fortress of Antonia above, and rescued Paul, placing him in protective custody.

This event sets in motion the events for the next 5 years, including Paul's house arrest in Rome.

## **Chapter 22 – Jerusalem, AD 58**

Paul spoke to the crowd in Hebrew. He introduced himself and his Jewish background, and his education under Gamaliel, who had died about 6 years previously. He was zealous to keep the Law, even to persecuting Christians in foreign cities. But Jesus revealed himself, and Paul was confronted with the truth that Jesus really was the Messiah, and appointing him as the gospel messenger to the Gentiles. Up to this point the Jews were listening, but their hate for Gentiles was so strong that the thought of being commissioned to go to the Gentiles was anathema to them.

They went back into riot mode again, and cried “...*Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!*...” (22:22) – the very action they were undertaking when the Romans intervened.

Paul was taken into protective custody “...*the commander ordered that he be brought to the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him...*” (22:24) until he confessed to whatever it was that he had done. At this time Paul announced his Roman Citizenship. The next day he was brought to the Sanhedrin, and appeared before them just as Jesus had (Lk 22:66-71), just as Peter and John had (Acts 4:5 – 23), and just as the twelve together had (Acts 5:18 – 41).

## **Chapter 23 – Jerusalem, Caesarea, AD 58**

As far as the Jews were concerned, Paul had taken Trophimus into the temple. When he commenced to explain the situation, he was cut off before he could finish the explanation (22:22). Paul later addresses the Sanhedrin, and *knew* about the mix of Sects, and used this for his advantage. He sided with the Pharisees, and divided them against the Sadducees.

He was then taken again into protective custody, and the Lord appeared to him in a vision. Paul must have been feeling very low, and not sure if this was the end. He seemed to be facing death at every turn of event, and must have been expecting to be taken and stoned at anytime. Jesus assured him to “...*be of good cheer...for you must also go to Rome to testify of me...*” (23:11).

About forty Jews formed a plot “...*saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul...*” (23:12). They hatched a plot to have him released from custody, but Paul’s nephew heard about it and arranged to have him transported away from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

Felix was the Governor, and resided in Caesarea, and he was the highest official who could deal with Paul’s case – if indeed there was anything that could be legitimately brought against him. Felix decided judiciously to wait to hear what the accusers had to say. “...*I will hear you when your accusers also have come...*” (23:35). Paul would be given a fresh and thorough hearing, but first he must have something to be accused of before he could defend himself.

## **Chapter 24 – Caesarea, AD 58 – 60**

After five days in Caesarea, Paul’s accusers arrived. Ananias the High Priest himself came, and brought an orator named Tertullus with him.

Tertullus gave an outline of the case against Paul. Because Paul was being judged by the Roman governor under Roman law, Tertullus probably wanted the case to sound like sedition against Rome. The accusations were partly correct, but were designed to present Paul in a bad light.

A fair inquiry soon revealed that the case was trumped up, and the essence of Paul’s defence was that the charges could not possibly be correct. How could he have stirred up such problems in such a short time? He did not come there to bring trouble to the Jews, he came bringing gifts! How could he be the ringleader of the Nazarenes when he had been out of Jerusalem for many years?

Felix was cruel and tyrannical, and kept Paul in Jail wanting a bribe for his release. However, he showed some sympathy to Paul, “...*So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him*”

*have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him...*” (24:23). Felix was recalled to Rome and tried before Nero for cruelty around AD 60. He escaped punishment because his brother Pallas – a great man in the court of Claudius – intervened on his behalf.<sup>1</sup>

Felix kept Paul in prison for 2 years, until being called back to Rome in AD 60. “...*after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix...*” (24:27). Festus made a strong attempt to right many of the wrongs of Felix, but he died in office after only about 2 years.

Some writers place Paul’s “Prison Epistles” from this period of imprisonment. However, the Caesarea imprisonment is very soon after he had left Ephesus, and the things that Paul wrote in the Ephesian letter do not fit with preparation for the impending apostasy (it’s too soon after Paul’s warning to the elders 20:29-31) – it fits much better with his later imprisonment in Rome.

## **Chapter 25 – Caesarea, AD 60**

Three days after arriving in Caesarea to replace Felix, Festus went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with the local leaders – notably the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders. His objective was to rebuild the relationships that had been destroyed by Felix. The High Priest and the leaders of the Jews immediately made approaches concerning Paul (25:2-3). Their anger toward Paul was still strong, even though he had been imprisoned (and out of circulation, although not without influence) for two years. They plotted to have Festus “...*summon him to Jerusalem – while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him...*” (25:3). However, Festus was alert to their scheming, and he determined that Paul should remain at Caesarea.

He was not fully aquatinted with all of Paul’s circumstances, and agreed to deal with the matter promptly. He asked the Jews to argue their case against him. Immediately on returning to Caesarea, Festus “...*sat on the judgement seat, and commanded Paul to be brought...*” (25:6). The Jews “...*laid many complaints against Paul, which they could not prove...*” (25:7).

We get some idea of the charges from Paul’s response (25:8), “...*I have not committed any offence: Not against the Jewish Law; Nor against the Temple; Nor against Roman Law...*”

If justice were to be served, then Festus should have released Paul, however the Jews would have taken the opportunity to have Paul murdered. He suggested that Paul stand trial before the Sanhedrin, with himself as an official observer and final arbiter to ensure justice and avoid violence (25:9). This would have been a waiver of Paul’s rights as a Roman citizen, and essentially it meant that Festus was about to hand him over to the Jews (as Pilate did with Jesus).

Paul had been pushed into a corner, and again proclaimed his innocence “...*if I have done anything worthy of death, then I am prepared to die or face whatever the penalty might be...*” (25:11) and so he had no option but to use his Roman citizen rights and appeal to Caesar. This took the case immediately out of Festus’ hands. A report needed to be written outlining the facts, and the opportunity for further information came with Agrippa and Bernice’s visit to Caesarea.

Marcus Julius Agrippa 2 was the son of Herod Agrippa 1 (12:23). For four or five years he had been king of Galilee and Perea and for eight years had been in effect in control of the Temple, appointing and deposing the High Priests. He was not only a powerful leader in the area, but would have been regarded as an authority in matters regarding the Jewish Religion, and would have been somewhat acquainted with Jesus – it was his great grandfather Herod the Great who tried to kill the infant Jesus, and had all of the young boy children in the land murdered in the process. His uncle had sat at Jesus’ trial, and his own father had tried to suppress Christianity and had James killed to please the Jews.

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<sup>1</sup> Reese, p. xvii

Agrippa said to Festus “...I also would like to hear the man myself...” (25:22). Paul’s appearance before Agrippa explicitly brings to fulfilment the promise that the Lord made to him “...you shall bear my name before Kings...” (9:15). Festus outlined the facts of Paul’s case.

### **Chapter 26 – Caesarea, AD 60**

Paul’s speech before Agrippa was masterly as he presented his case to the King, and provided a defense of the gospel – outlining not only what he believed, but also exactly why it is that he believed it. He began a long way back – in this case his upbringing in the Jewish religion. Not only was this a *logical* place to start, but it also showed his utter and complete respect for the Jewish religion and culture – which he was being accused of breaking. He tells of his conversion and his commission from Jesus to go to the Gentiles.

Festus had very little understanding of the Jewish history and culture – and Paul’s discussion on the resurrection from the dead confirmed Paul as mad (in Festus’ eyes). On the other hand, Agrippa was very carefully considering and understood *exactly* what Paul was said.

Agrippa decided that the hearing was over, and left to discuss with Festus and Bernice what they had heard (26:31). Lysias, Felix, Festus, and then Agrippa had all heard Paul’s case and had all concluded him to be innocent “...This man is doing nothing worthy of death or chains... Then Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar”...” (26:31-32). The problem was that Paul had appealed to Caesar, and only Nero could find him guilty or not guilty. Based on the hearing before Agrippa, there is no doubt that Festus would have written the letter to Nero saying that this innocent man had been imprisoned for several years under Felix, and explained that Paul was innocent under Roman Law.

### **Chapter 27 – Journey to Rome, AD 60**

Paul is sent to Rome under a Centurion’s guard along with some other prisoners, and Aristarchus and Luke accompany him. He describes Aristarchus as his “*fellow-prisoner*” during the Roman imprisonment (Col 4:10, about 2 years later). It is possible that Aristarchus was arrested in Jerusalem along with Paul, - or he may have mentioned him as a prisoner in a figurative sense. He may have been travelling back home to Thessalonica, and then later joined Paul in Rome.

They initially joined a coastal trading ship that would have stopped at many ports along the way. The ship landed at Myra (on the edge of Pamphylia), and there “...the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy...” (27:6). This was a grain ship supplying food from Egypt to Rome. Sailing conditions were difficult, and they sailed South of Crete as it offered some shelter from the island. They found difficulty passing the island, and came to the small bay at Fair Havens on the island’s South side. There was no town, and the nearest habitation was at Lasea, two hours walk away. This was hardly a suitable place to stay for several months of winter, but they were unable to go on as the winds were against them, and the sailing by this time was dangerous. Sailors in the Mediterranean called the period between September 14<sup>th</sup> and November 11<sup>th</sup> as the “danger season”, and all sailing ceased. Luke tells of when “...sailing was dangerous because the Fast was already over...” (27:9), referring to the Day of Atonement. In the year AD 59 it fell on October 5<sup>th</sup>, and in the year AD 60 fell on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The time of waiting in Fair Havens therefore was October, and right in the middle of the *danger season* for sailing.

Paul predicted that “...our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also...” (27:10), and after being caught in a massive storm they were lost (no navigation devices) and eventually shipwrecked on the island of Malta. There is a place on Malta that is still known as St Paul’s bay, and is the traditional site of the shipwreck (although this site is somewhat disputed, as it is not now a sandy beach). All 276 of them made it to shore, and just as Paul had said – none of them perished but the ship was lost.

## **Chapter 28 – Journey to Rome, Rome, AD 60 – 63**

Having 276 shipwreck survivors arrive for the winter with no supplies placed a considerable burden on the Maltese people, but they “...showed us no unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold...” (28:2).

After successfully wintering on Malta for a period of 3 months, it was time to move on. Another ship (probably another grain ship) had also wintered on the island, and was about to leave for Italy. They took just over a week to travel from Malta to the Bay of Naples.

On arrival at Puteoli “...we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days...” (28:14 NKJV). Luke gives us a small note that tells us just how far the church had spread over the previous 25 years since the dispersion. But how had the gospel arrived here? Paul’s visit is the first (that we know about) of an evangelist or apostle to Italy. Pompeii is not very far away, and was destroyed in AD 79 (18 years after Paul’s arrival here). There is Christian evidence amongst the ruins within the city – although it may have flourished as a result of Paul’s work in Italy.

The brethren in Rome “...had heard that we were coming, and they travelled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us...” (28:15). Paul and the others from the ship had a 3 to 5 day walk on the Appian Way to Rome.

Luke accompanied Paul on the journey to Rome (his use of “we” in vs 16 “...Now when we came to Rome...”), but this is his last use of the term in the book of Acts. So Luke and Paul must have been separated for a time. However, Paul says that Luke was with him when he wrote the letters to Philemon (vs 24), and to the church at Colosse (4:14).

Upon arriving in Rome, Paul was delivered to the captain of the guard. Between the years 51 and 62 AD there was only one, and his name was Afrianus Burrus<sup>2</sup>. However “...Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him...” (28:16). He came as an uncondemned Roman citizen who had appealed to Caesar, and with a letter from Festus that would have had favourable wording and no doubt a good commendation from Julius the Centurion.

The soldiers who guarded him would have changed from time to time. They would have repeatedly heard the story of his missionary journeys, his sufferings for Christ, and the story of salvation through Jesus the Messiah. Consequently, Paul tells the Philippians “...Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup> Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly...” (Php 1:12-14).

Almost immediately he called for the Jews to come and listen to him, and explains his situation. The Jews responded that they had heard nothing from the Jews in Judea concerning him, but they were willing to hear what he had to say.

Luke tells us in just a few words, that “...For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him...” (28:30 NIV). It is during this two-year period that four of the epistles of the New Testament were written – Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. [And if Paul did write Hebrews (and I do not believe that he did) then it was also written during this time].

Under Roman law, a two year statute of limitations required charges to be pressed against a man by his accusers. It would appear that the accusers never did come and press their charges, and so at the end of that time Paul would have been released.

It was just at the end of that time that Luke wrote (or finished writing) the book of Acts, and concluded somewhat abruptly the story of Paul’s life and work.

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<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, Annals 13:42:1

Whilst under house arrest, Paul's movements were limited, but there was no limit as to who could come and visit him. Paul had many faithful co-workers to help him during this time. including:

- Luke the beloved physician (Col 4:14)
- Timothy (Col 1:1; Phm 1; Php 1:1 )
- John Mark (Col 4:10)
- Aristarchus, who started off to Rome with Paul & Luke (Col 4:10; Phm 24)
- Demas – who later left him (Col 4:14)
- Epaphras, a preacher from the Lycus valley (Col 4:12)
- Tychius from Ephesus (Eph 6:12; Col 4:7)
- Epaphroditus who came from Philippi to bring money for Paul. Whilst in Rome he became sick and nearly died (Php 2:25-27)
- A Jew named Jesus (also called Justus) Col 4:11)
- Onesimus the runaway slave from Colosse who became a Christian whilst in Rome (Phm 10)

The letter writing is worthy of some further comment. Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon form a trilogy that were written about the same time. Ephesians deals with Christ and the church, and is a call to faithfulness; Colossians deals with our relationship to God; and Philemon deals with our relationship to each other. Philemon was written close to the end of Paul's imprisonment, as he is soon expecting to be released and asks Philemon to prepare the guest room for his imminent arrival. In both the Colossian and Philemon letters, Luke is still with Paul in Rome. The Philippian letter omits to mention Luke (who had worked with the that church for five years), so it must have been written after the other letters – at the very end of Paul's 2-year imprisonment, after Luke had left Rome, and when Paul is expecting an immediate verdict on his case.

Paul would have been busy indeed, not only in his letter writing, but with his co-workers in the gospel, and also with “...*all who came to him...*” (28:30).

The Roman authorities *knew exactly* what Paul was doing for this two-year period – as a prisoner who had appealed to Caesar awaiting trial, and right in the heart of the Roman Empire. He was with one of their soldiers night and day, possibly chained to him!!! The fact that the Romans put absolutely no obstacle in Paul's way gives full assurance that the Romans did not regard what Paul was doing or teaching as being in any way as illegal, subversive, or propaganda. He was “...*preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him...*” (28:31 NKJV).

But we are left to ask further questions:

- What happened to Paul?
- What did he do when he got out of house arrest?
- How did he die?

These questions will be answered during the Pastoral Epistles study (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus).