

## CHAPTER 12

### LATER JOURNEYS AND SECOND ROMAN IMPRISONMENT

According to Paul's Prison Epistles, he expected to be released from prison in Rome (Phlm 22; Phil 2:24). Since Paul's two years in prison ended in A.D. 59, and Nero's anti-Christian persecutions did not begin until A.D. 64, it is reasonable to assume that, in fact, he was released.

There is no narrative to tell us of Paul's activities after his release. All we have are various statements in the Pastoral Epistles and various church traditions. Yet it appears that Paul was busy and traveled extensively during these last years of freedom. His later imprisonment and martyrdom in Rome is evidenced by 2 Timothy, and by the early church fathers. It probably took place in the interval A.D. 64-67.

#### Paul's anticipated travels

When Paul wrote the Prison Epistles, he indicated some travel plans after his expected release. He also mentioned travel plans earlier, in the letter to the Romans. We do not know if in fact he made these trips; but, since he was able to make other trips, we can assume that he made these.

(The NT evidence for all these trips is laid out well in Goodwin, *Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*, pp. 176-86; traditional evidence for the period is discussed well by F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, pp. 441-55)

#### 1) Philippi (Phil 1:25-26; 2:24)

Paul expected to visit them soon after his release. The Philippian church would have been on his way, traveling overland through Macedonia on the Egnatian Way, to Asia.

#### 2) Colossae (Phlem 22)

Paul told Philemon to prepare a room for him, as he expected to visit Colossae. Perhaps Paul needed to go there to counteract the Colossian heresy, and to strengthen his position in the churches of Asia.

At the same time Paul would visit Laodicea and Hierapolis, the other cities in the Lycus Valley. He and Epaphras had a great concern for these churches (Col 2:1; 4:12-13).

### 3) Spain (Rom 15:24, 28)

Paul's original intention was to travel to Spain after visiting Rome. He does not mention this intention in his Prison Epistles. However, it appears that he still had this desire. There is considerable discussion as to whether Paul actually did reach Spain. The primary evidence is the statement of Clement of Rome in his letter to the Corinthians (*1 Clement*, ch. 5, *ANF* 1:6; ca. A.D. 95):

Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.

Clement's phrase "the extreme limit (τὸ τέρμα *to terma*) of the west" can be interpreted as "goal" (perhaps meaning Rome), but more probably as "limit" (indicating Spain). Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:30-31, "the extreme west."

For archaeological evidence concerning some of Paul's conjectural travels, see articles by Otto F. A. Meinardus, "St. Paul Shipwrecked in Dalmatia" (traditions appear early), and "Paul's Missionary Journey to Spain" (tradition late, but before 8th century), *Biblical Archaeology* 39:4 (Dec., 1976) 145-47, and 41:2 (June, 1978) 61-63.

During these last travels of Paul, James the Just, brother of Jesus, was put to death by the Jews in Jerusalem, A.D. 62. Within five years the Jewish rebellion was to begin, ending with the destruction of the city in A.D. 70.

## **Paul's travels mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles**

While it is not certain that Paul actually made the trips he hoped to, as mentioned in the Prison Epistles and Romans, according to the Pastoral Epistles, Paul did travel extensively after his first Roman imprisonment. He mentions having been in several different localities or cities:

### 1) Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3)

Paul left Timothy there, as Paul traveled to Macedonia. Paul's intention was to return to Ephesus after this trip (1 Tim 3:14-15).

2) Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3)

Paul planned to stay briefly in Macedonia (1 Tim 3:14). During his time there he wrote his first epistle to Timothy (1 Timothy), and sent it to him back in Ephesus.

3) Crete (Titus 1:5)

Paul visited the island of Crete with Titus, and left Titus behind to establish the churches that had sprung up there.

4) Miletus (2 Tim 4:20)

Miletus was a city just south of Ephesus, where Paul had spoken to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20). Paul left Trophimus there sick. Trophimus had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem on his last visit, and had gone with him to Rome.

5) Ephesus again (2 Tim 1:16-18)

When Paul was there with Timothy, Onesiphorus ministered to him. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy from Rome, Onesiphorus had come to Rome to help Paul there also. This second stay in Ephesus may be the same as that indicated in 1 Tim 3:14-15.

It seems to be during this time that Paul wrote his epistle to Titus, shortly after he left Crete, on his way to go through Troas and Corinth to winter in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12).

6) Troas (2 Tim 4:13)

This visit must have been close to the end of Paul's travels, because when Paul wrote from his second Roman imprisonment, he requested the cloak he had left there. In Troas he stayed with Carpus, who is not mentioned elsewhere in the NT.

7) Corinth (2 Tim 4:20)

Paul mentions that Erastus, the treasurer and public road builder, stayed behind in Corinth. He does not mention the reason, which may have been either adequate or inadequate. Erastus probably is the same person whom Paul had sent on a mission with Timothy from Ephesus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22).

8) Nicopolis (Titus 3:12)

When Paul wrote to Titus, he determined to spend the approaching winter in the port city of Nicopolis, commonly called Nicopolis of Achaia, on the western shore, northwest from Corinth. His companions as he wrote were Tychicus (who

had delivered Ephesians and Colossians), and Artemas (not mentioned elsewhere in the NT).

It is possible that Paul was arrested while in or on his way to Nicopolis, since it was almost winter when he wrote 2 Timothy from prison in Rome, and he had left his cloak in Troas.

The order of Paul's visits to these cities is not clear. The notes have followed the order used by Goodwin. Other orders are possible. In any case, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fit these visits in with Paul's ministry before his first Roman imprisonment. For this reason those who accept the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline maintain that Paul was released from prison and made these trips afterwards, being later arrested and brought to Rome again for a second imprisonment.

## **Paul's second Roman imprisonment**

After the Roman fire of A.D. 64, Nero persecuted the Christians until his death in A.D. 68.

(cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44; and Suetonius, *Life of Nero* 16:2; text of both in F. F. Bruce, *Paul*, pp. 441-42)

Paul could have met his death any time during that interval. Peter's martyrdom in Rome was during this time also, ca. A.D. 65.

Paul's final travels were interrupted when he was arrested again by the Romans, "being chained like a criminal" (2 Tim 2:9). His second Roman imprisonment was under harsher conditions than the first, as he must ask for Timothy to bring books and parchments, and his cloak to fend off the chill of winter (2 Tim 4:13).

Paul's first appearance before the tribunal (perhaps before Nero himself) went better than he had expected (2 Tim 4:14-17); however, some men (such as Alexander the metal worker) openly opposed him, while others had refused to come to his support; he was held over for more thorough investigation.

(for legal details, cf. Bruce, pp. 445-46; especially A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, ch. 5b, "Paul at Rome," pp. 108-19)

Now he was lonesome in his imprisonment. Only a few were with him. He names Luke, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia. In addition, Onesiphorus from Ephesus had sought him out and was serving him (2 Tim 1:16-18; 4:11, 21; cf. v. 19).

In spite of these people, Paul missed being with many of his former associates (2 Tim 1:15; 4:10, 12, 19-20):

- In some cases they had adequate reason to be away (Tychicus, Trophimus, Priscilla and Aquila [now in Ephesus]);
- Others are mentioned as being absent with no reason given (Erastus [perhaps the city treasurer of Corinth], Crescens, Titus [cf. Titus 3:12]);
- And others Paul said had “deserted” him (Demas “having loved this present age,” Phygelus and Hermogenes and “everyone in the province of Asia”)

Paul asked Timothy to come quickly (“before winter,” 2 Tim 4:21), and to bring Mark with him (who is described as being “helpful to me in my ministry,” v. 11). This latter request strikes a happy note, in view of their former estrangement (Acts 15:38). Mark had persevered and had shown himself to be a valuable worker in the spread of the gospel. He was soon to come to Rome and there produce his gospel, based largely on the preaching of Peter.

Paul expected that his next hearing would be his last opportunity to bear his witness for Christ, and that he would be put to death. He was trusting in Christ to be with him, to give him a good testimony, and to receive him into glory (2 Tim 1:12; 2:11-13; 4:6-8).

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” (2 Tim 4:6-8)