

Paul Beyond Acts

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60 - 68 A.D.

Faithfulness to God and His Word should be an absolute priority in our lives and all Christian churches; sadly, wherever we look, it seems, we are seeing a steady decline in faithfulness. From the very first pages of Genesis to the very last pages of Revelation, there is a constant call for God's people to remain faithful to Him and His Word. As we have seen in our study through Acts, the Apostle Paul (along with many others) proved himself to be a faithful servant of Jesus the Messiah, devoting his life to disciple-making in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth." As Paul neared the end of his life, he deeply desired to see those 1st-century believers remain faithful.

In our study today, we will look at some of the ways Paul sought to encourage the believers in their faithfulness during the last few years of his life. During his first house arrest in Rome (60-62 A.D.), Paul wrote numerous letters to the churches he had visited. Upon his release, he embarked on his fourth missionary journey (62-67 A.D.), ending with another arrest and imprisonment in Rome and, ultimately, his death. There are many details that we just cannot be sure about through these final years, but what we can be sure of is that Paul finished his race in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's House Arrest In Rome (60 - 62 A.D.)

As the book of Acts came to a close, we saw Paul freely ministering "boldly and without hindrance" in Rome (Act 28:31). During that time, not only was he actively ministering in Rome, but he also authored the epistles (letters) to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. The first three are letters to churches, and the last is a personal letter to a man named Philemon. After about two years of house arrest, as God had promised, Paul stood before Nero, who was Ceasar. It was at that point that Paul secured his release and headed out on his fourth missionary journey.

Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey (62 - 67 A.D.)

Regarding this fourth journey, there is good evidence for the following events, though their sequence remains elusive. During this journey, he also authored the epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus. Here are the possible events of this journey and where Paul spoke of them in his writings.

- Paul evangelizes in Spain (Rom 15:22-29 Expresses his plan to go to Spain)
- Ministry on Crete, where he left Titus to continue the work (Titus 1:5)
- Visited Ephesus, where Timothy was serving. Here he was opposed by Alexander (2 Tim 4:14-15), and many in Asia turned away, but Paul was helped by Onesiphorous (2 Tim 1:15-18) He then urged Timothy to stay and fight false doctrine.
- Visit to Philemon (Philemon 22)
- Went to Miletus, leaving a sick Trophimus there (2 Tim 4:20)

- Visit to Troas where he left some personal items (2 Tim 4:13) and Macedonia, possibly Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth, leaving Erastus there (1 Tim 1:3, 2 Tim 4:20).
- He headed to Nicopolis hoping Titus would join him (Titus 3:12)
- Arrested again and sent to Rome

Paul Finished His Race (67 - 68 A.D.)

After Paul's arrest, he was taken to Rome and imprisoned again. But this time, it was not a pleasant house arrest as before. Instead, he suffered greatly in the Roman Mamertine prison (2 Tim 1:8, 16-17; 2:9). Despite the conditions, he was able to write a second letter to Timothy. Onesiphorus and Luke ministered to Paul during this time (2 Tim 1:16-17; 4:11) though none stood beside him at his first trial (2 Tim 4:16). At that point in history (67-68 A.D.), Nero was brutally killing Christians and Paul is believed to have died of beheading due to his Roman citizenship. Paul was very aware of his impending death when he authored 2nd Timothy, and under that dark cloud, penned this final charge and encouragement to Timothy.

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. "

2 Timothy 4:1-5

GRACE NEWS AND NEEDS

- **"Lifemark" Movie: Sign Up On Patio**
Today! 3 pm in the Modular. Hosted by Women's Clinic.
- **Men's Horseshoe Tournament & BBQ. Sign Up On Patio, \$10**
Feb 11th @ noon, Wellfield Park (by adult softball fields).
- **Youth Mexico Missions Meeting: Feb 5th, 11:15 AM in Youth Room.**
- **Family Desert Trip. Mark Your Calendar**
Feb 24-26 @ Ocotillo Wells. Dinner will be provided Saturday night.
- **Spring Bible Studies & Home Groups are starting up!**
Groups and studies for everyone. Check the website for info. gccramona.com
- **Pick up your 2022 donation receipts on the patio.**

- VOM Needs for January: Donations for tarps; Band-Aids.